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EDITOR'S NOTE

The 79th edition of our journal, the second in 2021, comprises ten articles which deal with a diverse set of topics, from “17 + 1” *Initiative*, continuing with the *EU-Turkey relationship*, *US policy issues*, *MENA multilateral conflict*, as well as other subjects of interest in the field of security studies.

The first rubric, ***Geopolitics and Geostrategies: Trends and Perspectives***, one can find an analysis on *China's economic diplomacy to Central and Eastern Europe*, which aims to expand regional political influence and its implications for the security of NATO's eastern flank; the article is written by Mr. Tudor Cherhaț, PhD Student in the field of International Relations and European Studies at “Babeș-Bolyai” University.

Under the same heading, we have included an analysis regarding the *EU-Turkey relationship*, which deals with both the advantages that the two actors can obtain from Turkey's accession, but also the tense aspects, the paper being signed by Mr. Romeo Buhai, PhD Student within “Carol I” National Defence University.

The rubric ***Dynamics of the Security Environment*** encompasses two articles carried out by CDSSS researchers that approach the issue of conflict in MENA in the first half of 2021. Thus, Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță, PhD Researcher, addresses the alarming situation in North Africa and the Sahel region in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Mirela Atanasiu, PhD Senior Researcher, highlights both the historical sources and the current forms of conflict in Palestine, with an emphasis on recent developments, as well as possible trends in the evolution of the Palestinian issue.

The rubric the ***Terrorist threat*** brings to your attention the study of Mr. Iulian Dinulescu, PhD, who outlines the attitude of the Christian community in relation to the assault on the US Congress, revealing the result of the manifestation of ultra-religiosity combined with an extremist political ideology; the approach is a continuation of the article written by the same author, published in the previous issue of the journal.

In the second article, Mr. Daniel Șoimaru analyses the main factors that determined Hezbollah making, starting with the historical context of Lebanon in the '80's, emphasizing the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah from the perspective of motivations and interests that decision makers in Tehran have in relation to the growing Iranian influence in the Middle East.

In the section ***Defence and Security Concepts***, Mr. Alexandru Lucinescu, PhD, Associate Professor, advances an in-depth analysis of the logical connections between two definitions given to security, one belonging to Arnold Wolfers and the other to Walter Lippmann.

The second paper, co-authored by Mr. Ionuț Cioranu, PhD Student within “Carol I” National Defence University, and Mr. Ion Chiorcea, PhD, Professor affiliated to the “Mircea cel Bătrân” Naval Academy, emphasizes that the effective integration of elements which lead to obtaining and maintaining optimal capabilities must represent a synergistic action, in order to increase the effectiveness of military actions.



The fifth rubric, *Intelligence Studies*, comprises an article written by Mr. Daniel Mihai Duțu, in collaboration with Mr. Teodor Badiu, which deals with the role of intelligence services in the US foreign policy, using as a case study the conflict in Afghanistan from 1979-1989.

Also, in the *Military History* column, Mr. Stelian Tampu, External Researcher of African Research Centre of Obudai University in Hungary, has conducted a research on the political-historical backgrounds of the popular movements of the 20th century, such as 1989 GDR refugees.

The current edition also includes the *Book Review* rubric that presents a comprehensive historical account of a peace support operation amidst the Darfur crisis and genocide complemented by the author's János Besenyő personal experience.

In the *Scientific Event* section, one may find matters of interest from the International Seminar with the theme "*Effects of the Pandemic on International Security*", organized online, on May 20, 2021.

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

Strategic Impact is being printed in Romanian language for twenty-one years and in English for sixteen years and approaches a complex thematic: political-military topicality; security and military strategy; NATO and EU policies, strategies and actions; geopolitics and geostrategies; information society and intelligence, military history. Readers may find in the pages of the publication analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, points of view which study the impact of national, regional and global actions dynamics.

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

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

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

Editor-in-Chief, Colonel/Florian CÎRCIUMARU, PhD
Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies



CHINA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY IN EUROPE: THE "17+1" INITIATIVE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO'S EASTERN FLANK SECURITY

*Tudor CHERHAȚ**

This paper illustrates how People's Republic of China has applied a form of economic diplomacy to Central and Eastern Europe in order to extend its regional political influence. Using the "17+1" Initiative, the Chinese state sought to provide financial privileges to member states so that they would later become dependent on Beijing's political and economic visions. However, despite the European Union's concern, the results of the project were not as expected, with great doubts about the initiative's future. These were confirmed by the position of NATO, which considered that China's efforts do not represent a security issue for the Alliance's eastern flank.

Keywords: *China; economic diplomacy; Central and Eastern Europe; "17+1" Initiative; NATO's eastern flank.*

Introduction

Over the past decade, The People's Republic of China has developed a global strategy based on economic diplomacy, using its financial capabilities to try to expand its influence in several countries. To this end, several bilateral and multilateral development frameworks have been created, including in Central and Eastern Europe, where China has established an economic network known as the

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17+1 Initiative (formerly known as 16+1). As part of the great Chinese project *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI), it aimed to boost Chinese regional influence at the expense of NATO and EU.

Taking these considerations into account, this article illustrates the evolution of the *17+1 Initiative* and analyses the political and security implications for NATO's eastern flank. Thus, we will identify the extent to which China's economic diplomacy serves as an analytical tool for understanding its geostrategic intentions. The first section examines China's foreign policy from an economic perspective, as presented in the existent literature. The second part is dedicated to the Chinese initiative in Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC) and explores the result of this multilateral agreement. The last part assesses the geopolitical challenges of China's strategy and provides an insight into NATO's future security dilemmas at its eastern border.

1. Theoretical Debates Regarding China's *Economic Diplomacy*

There are many academic studies that have analysed China's foreign policy in terms of economy, with an emphasis on how China will integrate into the international system once it becomes a major economic power. In this regard, Joseph Nye of Harvard University defined *soft power* as the ability of a state to impose its political vision through attractiveness, stating that "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants might be called power of influence or *soft power*, as opposed to the imposed or *hard power* by which they are ordered to do what it wants".¹ Nye's hypothesis became popular in Chinese academia in the early 2000s because it was a convenient way for China to show the world that it had made a peaceful ideological transition. As such, the number of scientific publications on this topic increased considerably, foreshadowing an East-West competition to strengthen Chinese philosophy.² The term has become well-known officially, and is constantly used by Chinese leaders – even current President Xi Jinping declared that China's message can be more easily understood through the concept of *soft power*.³

However, other researchers have sought to understand how China is trying to project its peaceful development into a global strategy. For example, Niall Ferguson

¹ Joseph S. Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power", in *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 105, no. 2, Summer 1990, pp. 181-182.

² Hongyi Lai, "Introduction: the soft power concept and a rising China", in Hongyi Lai, Yiji Lu (editors), *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, Routledge, New York, 2012, pp. 2-3 and 5-6.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-12; David Shambaugh, "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect", in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 4, 2015, p. 99.



and Ernest Wilson considered that a clear distinction could not be made between a strategy based on soft power and one focused on hard power, because military power is directly proportional to economic capabilities. Therefore, soft power capabilities alone cannot meet the strategic objectives of a state.⁴ This led to the idea that China is trying to summarise the concept of soft power as a gradual inclusion of socialist principles in the monopoly of Western capitalism.

The debates on the dynamics of foreign policy then turned to the emergence of new theoretical concepts such as *economic diplomacy*. As domestic reforms became the central theme of the Chinese government after Mao Zedong's death, China sought to improve the country's international competitiveness, and its strategy began to be analyzed from the perspective of economic diplomacy. In this regard, Evan Medeiros noted that financial instruments, such as the exchange of goods or access to global markets, have become a central piece of China's diplomatic purposes.⁵ Andreas Fuchs concluded that Beijing prefers economic relations to be preceded by strong political ties. His empirical findings suggests that Chinese leaders pay attention to political and diplomatic issues when it comes to economic partnerships, which is due to the fact that they seek to achieve consistent financial benefits at the expense of altruistic incentives.⁶ Shuxiu Zhang explained how Chinese leaders have reformed economic diplomacy to serve their own interests, abandoning their traditional ideology-based diplomacy, which they have described as ineffective in expanding economic partnerships. China is currently aware of the political benefits that can be gained from economic influence, and has managed to significantly improve its relations with important actors such as the EU or the United States.⁷

There have also been some researchers who have observed how China exports its economic model differently, depending on the level of development of the target countries. For developed countries, the Chinese government is moving on investment and cultural diplomacy, while in the case of developing countries it is trying to implement large-scale economic programs to project its political influence.⁸ Others accused Beijing of pursuing a form of imperialism by extracting natural resources

⁴ Niall Ferguson, "Think Again: Power", *Foreign Policy*, 3 November 2009, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/03/think-again-power>, accessed on 20.02.2021; Ernest J. Wilson, "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power", in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, 2008, p. 114 and 117.

⁵ Evan Medeiros, *China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunities, and Diversification*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 2009, p. 61.

⁶ Andreas Fuchs, *China's Economic Diplomacy and the Politics-Trade Nexus*, Discussion Paper Series no. 609, Alfred Weber Institute, University of Heidelberg, 2016, pp. 3, 5 and 7-8.

⁷ Shuxiu Zhang, *Chinese Economic Diplomacy: Decision-making actors and processes*, Routledge, New York, 2016, pp. 10 and 12-13.

⁸ Nilgün Eliküçük Yildirim, Mesut Aslan, "China's Charm Defensive: Image Protection by Acquiring Mass Entertainment", in *Pacific Focus*, vol. XXXV, no. 1, 2020, pp. 141-142 and 145-146.



from underdeveloped countries and promoting unfair economic projects.⁹

Research on how China can impose its economic influence can also be found in Chinese academia. Attempts have been made since the '90s to formulate a national strategy based on economic diplomacy, with studies focusing on topics such as geopolitics and geo-economics, and examining ways in which Beijing can maximize its economic and political benefits.¹⁰ The trend has been maintained to this day, a sign that China's international economic decline has remained a major problem for Chinese leaders. For example, Yong Deng considers that expanding economic influence is essential for the Chinese state to be recognized as a strong and responsible player on the international stage and to maintain its internal stability.¹¹ Wang Yiwei makes a comparison between the differences in the perception of power in the West and the East and argues that it is the duty of Chinese leaders to export their own development model to Western civilizations, in order to strengthen their image of a benign power.¹² His views are shared by Luo Jianbo, who believes that a state is truly recognized as a global power only when it exports its own economic policies.¹³ Zhen Binxi goes further and considers that economic diplomacy operates in a broader framework, encapsulating even military or cultural characteristics as long as it promotes economic gains.¹⁴

With regard to China's economic initiatives in Europe, observers have sought to identify causal inferences between the Chinese government's desire to make massive investments in several regions of the world and the current geopolitical context. Although it is clear that a state's economic initiatives automatically contain some political incentives, the debate has perpetuated two major currents of opinion: the possibility of China's projects pursuing predominantly win-win economic benefits and suspicions about Beijing's secret political agenda. For example, Richard Turcsanyi and Eva Kachilkova suggested that BRI and "17+1" are a convenient economic way for obtaining political leverage, especially through mass-media.¹⁵

⁹ Yang Yao, "Chinese Approach to Economic Diplomacy", in John G. Ikenberry, Wang Jisi, Zhu Feng, *America, China and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies, and Global Visions*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015, p. 161.

¹⁰ Jeremy Garlick, "China's Economic Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe: A Case of Offensive Mercantilism?", in *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 71, no. 8, 2019, p. 4.

¹¹ Yong Deng, "The New Hard Realities: 'Soft Power' and China in Transition", in Li Mingjiang (ed.), *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2009, p. 64.

¹² Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, 2008, pp. 262–263.

¹³ Nilgün Eliküçük Yildirim, Mesut Aslan, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁴ Timothy R. Heath, "China's Evolving Approach to Economic Diplomacy", in *Asia Policy*, vol. 22, 2016, p. 163.

¹⁵ Richard Q. Turcsanyi, Eva Kachlikova, "The BRI and China's Soft Power in Europe: Why Chinese Narratives (Initially) Won", in *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2020, pp. 72-73.



Francois Godement and Abigail Vasselier argued that the projects are part of China's grand strategy of weakening European Union through the "divide and conquer" tactic.¹⁶ The latter view was also shared by Angela Stanzel, who considered that the members of the initiative (11 EU countries and 5 non-EU countries) had been deliberately selected to undermine Community policies.¹⁷ There have also been voices that have shared the idea that the main risks are represented by economic and legal conundrums rather than political issues, and may include restrictions on foreign investment, antitrust regulations or environmental provisions.¹⁸

It can be seen, therefore, that China's interest in exporting its own economic model contains both political and strategic insertions. Gaining international influence is a slow process that requires, in addition to strong economic partnerships, a favorable political and diplomatic climate. Thus, Chinese initiatives need to be analyzed in terms of their ability to lead to a possible system of pro-China political or ideological alliances. In this regard, an in-depth study of the "17+1" initiative is needed to extract distinctive models of the Chinese approach to the CEEC.

2. China's International Economic "Offensive": from BRI to the "17+1"

With the end of the Maoist era, China pursued a strategy focused on domestic reforms aimed at boosting its economic growth, with the government focusing primarily on expanding exports and absorbing foreign direct investment. The first signs of improvement appeared in the 1980s, after Deng Xiaoping became the paramount leader of Chinese Communist Party, and his famous *socialism with Chinese characteristics* theory became a landmark of the new socio-economic reforms. As a result, all his successors have to some extent continued these reforms and stressed the importance of maintaining China's economic rise in the context of a new security concept.¹⁹

After four decades, China has managed to become the world's second largest economy in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the largest in terms of purchasing power parity, with a high chance of overtaking the United States in the near future. This outward-oriented model of economic governance has also turned China into a global stakeholder willing to become more involved in the development

¹⁶ François Godement; Abigail Vasselier, *China at the Gates: A New Power Audit of EU-China Relations*, London, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017, pp. 64-65.

¹⁷ Angela Stanzel, *China's Investment in Influence: The Future of 16+1 Cooperation*, European Council on Foreign Relations, London, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁸ Baker McKenzie, *Belt & Road: Opportunity & Risk. The prospects and perils of China's New Silk Road*, Silk Road Associates, 2017, pp. 22-24.

¹⁹ Mădălina Virginia Antonescu, "The New Chinese Security Concept and the "Peaceful Rise of China" as two basic pillars of the contemporary Chinese Foreign Policy", in *Polis*, vol. 3, no. 1(7), 2015, pp. 59-62.



of international relations. The financial crisis of 2008 was the ideal opportunity for Beijing to include the European market in its “*going out policy*”. The main target of Chinese foreign direct investment were infrastructure projects initiated through bilateral agreements.²⁰

At the same time, China has begun to launch its own economic initiatives and take leadership roles in international organizations. To demonstrate its proactive approach, Beijing engaged in several multilateral projects such as Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, China-ASEAN Free Trade Area or the ASEAN Plus Three. The Chinese government has even managed to set up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a Beijing-based multilateral financial institution whose main goal is to improve its socio-economic support mission.²¹

Its flagship project however was represented by the “*Belt and Road Initiative*” – *BRI*, formerly known as “One Belt, One Road”. The BRI aims to strengthen China’s economic diplomacy by promoting infrastructure development and financial integration across the globe, and focuses mainly on expanding road, rail and maritime communications, with the potential to become the world’s largest economic cooperation platform. The project was proposed by Xi Jinping in 2013 and is estimated to cost about \$4-\$8 trillion dollars, being the largest contemporary economic initiative. The BRI was also integrated into the Chinese Constitution in 2017.²²

As its name suggests, the BRI aims to connect the economies of East Asia with those of Europe and offer new development perspectives to the countries of the Middle East and North-East Africa. It consists of a land corridor that includes countries in central and western Asia, the Middle East and Europe. It also contains a sea route that runs from the Chinese coastal areas and crosses the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea to the Adriatic region. As such, it was presented by the Chinese president as a huge project that wants to become the new “Silk Road”.²³

In addition to the trade component, the BRI also contains an essential geopolitical incentive for Beijing. Its implementation could significantly change the dynamics of China’s relations with Europe, the Russian Federation and the United States, given that a possible success of the project would attract many emerging

²⁰ Philippe Le Corre, “Chinese Investments in European Countries: Experiences and Lessons for the “Belt and Road” Initiative”, in Maximilian Mayer (ed.), *Rethinking the Silk Road*, Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore, 2018, pp. 162-163.

²¹ Hideo Ohashi, “The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the context of China’s opening-up policy”, in *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, p. 92.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 86.

²³ Zhao Minghao, “The Belt and Road Initiative and its Implications for China-Europe Relations”, in *The International Spectator*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2016, p. 109.



economies to the Chinese sphere of influence.²⁴ The initiative also aims to improve China's international image as a result of its willingness to invest heavily in Western markets.

Last but not least, the BRI is a domestic landmark for the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese economy has contracted steadily since the 2008 financial crisis, failing to record annual growth above 7%. Causes include an aging population, rising labour costs and overproduction in the manufacturing sector.²⁵ These considerations may jeopardize the image and internal legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, which has been perceived for the past three decades as a model of economic stability and modernization, especially for the Chinese middle class and the spheres of influence around the party.²⁶

Despite the optimism of Chinese leaders, however, there have been several voices questioning the applicability of the project due to the large number of government actors required. Numerous questions were also raised about the concrete means of implementing the project and the prospect of the BRI being just a tool for political rhetoric. Other voices have linked the Chinese initiative to a neo-colonial policy, due to its willingness to accept agreements with states recognized for their level of corruption and human rights abuses. In general, the Chinese government pursues a strategy of acquiring natural resources in exchange for manufactured goods, encouraging foreign investment by Chinese state-owned companies in parallel with increasing its energy independence.²⁷ At the same time, China's initiative has been categorized as "predatory lending" due to the fact that it embodies numerous political traps. US officials have drawn attention to the strategic vulnerabilities generated by the Chinese project in Europe and mainly in the Balkans.²⁸

Given that the BRI was conceived as a global project and that Europe is a major strategic market, the Chinese government developed a regional economic cooperation format known as *Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries* or "17+1" Initiative. The format was established in 2012 and includes 16 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

²⁶ Linda Glawe, Helmut Wagner, *The People's Republic of China in the Middle-Income Trap?*, *Asian Development Bank Institute Working Paper*, no. 749, June 2017, pp. 12-15; Ruixue Jia, Masayuki Kudamatsu, David Seim, "Political Selection in China: The Complementary Roles of Connections and Performance", in *Journal of the European Economic Association*, vol. 13, no. 4, August 2015, p. 666.

²⁷ Yang Yao, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182.

²⁸ Karen P. Y. Lai; Shaun Lin; James D. Sidaway, "Financing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): research agendas beyond the "dept-trap" discourse", in *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2020, p. 110.



Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia), being expanded in 2019 at 17 (Greece).²⁹

According to the official presentation, the Initiative aims to strengthen economic cooperation between China and CEEC by improving the business sector and other practical financial areas, organizing official meetings, coordinating trade forums and implementing the outcomes.³⁰ The “17+1” format is also designed to improve cooperation in transport and infrastructure segments, as it is a complementary BRI project. In this regard, the two initiatives have been strongly promoted by Chinese leaders as pillars of a sustainable partnership between China and Europe.³¹ Starting with 2012, a summit is held every year in which the level of project implementation and the viability of future investments are analyzed. A virtual summit was held in 2021, in which President Xi Jinping offered assurances that all parties involved would share the benefits of this cooperation.³² Over the past decade, China has invested more than \$15 billion in infrastructure, energy, communications and transport, with highway construction in Serbia, Hungary, Montenegro and the Czech Republic, along with oil exploration in Albania. Thus, it is easy to identify a pattern focused on infrastructure development, the acquisition of strategic assets and the promotion of large credit lines by the Chinese government.

Since 2012, China has invested over \$15 billion in infrastructure, energy, communications and transportation. Among its most important objectives, the initiative focused on highway construction in Serbia, Hungary Montenegro and Czech Republic, and oil exploration in Albania.³³ Thus, it is easy to identify a pattern of infrastructure development, acquisition of strategic assets and promoting large credit lines by the Chinese government.

The emergence of the “17+1” initiative confirmed the pivotal role that Sino-European trade relations play in Chinese foreign policy. The European Union is

²⁹ ***, *Embassies of CEE Countries to China*, Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries, 2021, URL: http://www.china-ceec.org/eng/lj_5/zgzzdo16gsg/t1410687.htm, accessed on 24.02.2021.

³⁰ ***, *Introduction of the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries*, Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries, 2013, URL: http://www.china-ceec.org/eng/msc_1/msejj/t1411097.htm, accessed on 24.02.2021.

³¹ ***, “16+1” mechanism set to bolster China-Europe ties, Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries, 2018, URL: http://www.china-ceec.org/eng/zdogjhz_1/t1575579.htm, accessed on 24.02.2021; Astrid Pepermans, “China’s 16+1 and Belt and Road Initiative in Central and Eastern Europe: economic and political influence at a cheap price”, in *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, vol. 26, no. 2-3, 2018, p. 184.

³² ***, “Full Text: Keynote Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the China-CEEC Summit”, in *China Daily*, 9 February 2021, URL: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202102/09/WS6022920ba31024ad0baa8699.html>, accessed on 26.02.2021.

³³ Jeremy Garlick, *op. cit.*, p. 18.



currently China's main partner, while China is the EU's second largest trading partner after the United States.³⁴ Also, there is no geopolitical conflict between the two entities that does not allow the development of the partnership. The initiative was also approached with optimism by Central and Eastern European leaders, who saw an opportunity to develop infrastructure and increase exports to China.³⁵ The CEEC region has remained deficient in the high-speed road network, requiring investments of about \$615 billion to reach the level of infrastructure in the West, and faces a trade deficit compared to China. In this context, the "17+1" Initiative was also seen as a way to reduce this imbalance.³⁶

3. The Evolution of the "17+1" Initiative and the Strategic Implications for NATO's Eastern Flank

Although the "17+1" format was created as an economic initiative, it began to be seen more as a political statement by China, as all members except Greece came from the old communist bloc. As a result, the possibility of expanding Beijing's political influence in CEEC has raised the issue of NATO's eastern flank security. The concerns of Euro-Atlantic supporters were justified, given that China's strategy illustrated a series of actions aimed at extending its political leverage.

Firstly, the analysis of Chinese investment showed that 70% of it was destined for non-EU countries, despite the fact that only five of the 17 countries are not part of the EU and their combined GDP represents only 6% of the group.³⁷ Secondly, Chinese investment has targeted countries with the highest levels of corruption, according to Transparency International.³⁸ Last but not least, analyzes have shown that, as in the case of China, nationalist currents are present in the collective consciousness of the CEEC. Serbia is an eloquent example due to its many ethnic conflicts in the 1990s, similar to the tensions between China and its autonomous regions. At the same time, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, in 1999, marked a moment that strengthened diplomatic relations between the two countries. In turn, Hungary announced in 2011 a policy of openness to the East in order to increase economic opportunities and reduce dependence on the West. Poland and the Czech Republic have also promoted a form of economic nationalism, based on

³⁴ ***, *Countries and regions: China*, European Commission, 22 April 2021, URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/china>, accessed on 10.05.2021.

³⁵ Astrid Pepermans, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Jonathan E. Hillman, Maesea McCalpin, "Will China's "16+1" Format Divide Europe?", Center for Strategic and International Studies, URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/will-chinas-161-format-divide-europe>, accessed on 26.02.2021.

³⁸ ***, "Corruption Perceptions Index", *Transparency International*, URL: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nzl>, accesat la 26.02.2021.



interventionism and conservatism.³⁹

All these aspects can also be seen from the perspective of a strategic opportunity for the Chinese government to renew its historical connections with the CEEC. There have been concerns among officials in Brussels about how the “17+1” Initiative will influence EU political unity and the dynamics of reforms in the Western Balkans, as several European countries have expressed pro-Beijing diplomatic positions to the detriment of the EU community policies. (South China Sea disputes, minority rights).⁴⁰ As a result, the EU insisted on assessing any bilateral agreement with China to ensure compliance with European legislation and policies⁴¹ and proposed a new strategic agenda for cooperation in order to strengthen relations with the Chinese government.⁴²

At the same time, there have been debates over China’s strategy of providing a € 10 billion line of credit for investment, which has been associated with the so-called *debt-trap diplomacy* of Beijing authorities in Africa or Asia.⁴³ Questions have been raised about the sustainability of Chinese investment and how China will take advantage of the vulnerability of European economies to secure access to certain strategic objectives. According to existing studies, all member states of the “17+1” Initiative are at risk of debt distress in case of excessive loans.⁴⁴

Despite these considerations, however, there is sufficient data to indicate that China’s economic efforts would not necessarily generate political-military instability in CEEC. Firstly, the economic issue of the “17+1” Initiative is far from a success. Although the Chinese government praised and promoted this project, the economic results remained modest compared to those in other regions, such as Africa or even Western Europe.⁴⁵ Empirical evidence has shown that China’s foreign direct investment has not increased significantly since the launch of the project. The implementation of the initiative was, in turn, criticized, emphasizing the lack of

³⁹ Andreea Budeanu, *The “16+1” Platform: China’s Opportunities for Central and Eastern Europe*, Asia Focus #86, Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques, October 2018, p. 4; Mihai Varga, “The return of economic nationalism to East Central Europe: Right-wing intellectual milieus and anti-liberal resentment”, in *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 27, no. 1, Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, January 2021, pp. 208 and 214.

⁴⁰ Gisela Grieger, Eulalia Claros, *China, the 16+1 format and the EU*, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018, pp. 2-3.

⁴¹ ***, *State of EU-China relations*, European Parliament resolution, 12 September 2018, p. 1.

⁴² ***, *Elements for a new EU strategy on China*, Joint Communication to the Parliament and the Council, Brussels, 22 June 2016, pp. 1 and 4-5.

⁴³ Jeremy Garlick, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ John Hurley, Scott Morris, Gailyn Portelance, “Examining the debt implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a policy perspective”, in *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2019, p. 141 and 146; Henrik Larsen, *The Western Balkans between the EU, NATO, Russia and China*, CSS Analyses in Security Policy, no. 263, Zurich, 2020, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Andreea Budeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 7.



coordinated policies that converge to concrete objectives. For example, in Romania no project has been implemented so far despite the numerous discussions between the two governments.⁴⁶ The situation is similar in Serbia, where the modernization of the railway between Belgrade and Budapest is in its initial phase, although it has been announced since 2015.⁴⁷ Dissatisfaction with the lack of relevant investments have also arisen from the main supporters of the project, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.⁴⁸ Thus, the initiative gave the impression of a political and diplomatic platform rather than a regional plan capable of stimulating economic cooperation.

Secondly, although the strengthening of economic ties should have softened the political positions of European governments, their attitude has become much more reluctant towards the future of this project. As such, at the most recent summit (February 2021) no less than six countries were not represented at the highest level (president or prime minister), but preferred to delegate the responsibilities to ministers.⁴⁹ The message was quite clear given how much emphasis Chinese leaders place on diplomatic protocols, with the attitude of those states illustrating the importance they attach to the NATO security umbrella. For the Baltic states, the North Atlantic alliance is a guarantee of security in front of Russia, while Romania and Poland form the “pillars” of NATO’s missile defence shield.

Thirdly, China’s proposed Huawei 5G infrastructure project, to which the United States has expressed its biggest concerns, seems to have reached a stalemate. Initially, it appeared that it would overshadow Beijing’s other economic movements, due to its potential to penetrate the digital networks essential to NATO’s functioning.⁵⁰ However, the latest developments have shown a reluctance of CEEC towards China’s entry into the European 5G networks and its access to digital infrastructure across the continent. Almost all “17+1” members (except Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary and Montenegro) have signed agreements with the United States or declared their intention to join the *5G Clean Network* program launched by the US government. This project aims to limit access to the Euro-Atlantic market for Chinese companies that do not comply with Western regulations

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Samuel Rogers, “China, Hungary, and the Belgrade-Budapest Railway Upgrade: New Politically-Induced Dimensions of FDI and the Trajectory of Hungarian Economic Development”, in *Journal of East-West Business*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2019, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁸ Jeremy Garlick, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 and 17.

⁴⁹ Stuart Lau, “China’s Eastern Europe Strategy gets the cold shoulder”, *Politico*, 9 February 2021, URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/china-xi-jinping-eastern-europe-trade-agriculture-strategy-gets-the-cold-shoulder>, accessed on 28.02.2021.

⁵⁰ Andrew A. Michita, *China in Europe and Transatlantic Security*, International Centre for Defence and Security, Tallinn, 2020, p. 1; Francois Heisbourg, “NATO 4.0: The Atlantic Alliance and the Rise of China”, in *Survival*, vol. 62, no. 2, 2020, pp. 96 and 99.



on data transmission and protection or cyber security.⁵¹ The United States' approach was welcomed by NATO Deputy Secretary General, Mircea Geoană, who stressed the strategic importance of a secure digital network.⁵²

Another factor to mention is that the “17+1” Initiative did not attract NATO’s attention in terms of security of its eastern flank. Although China aims to develop a sphere of influence by addressing strategic objectives such as transport hubs, NATO leaders doubt that this initiative will have a significant impact on regional security. They also believe that the involvement of Chinese companies is quite modest and cannot be used as a political and military tool against NATO. China is rather seen as an amalgam of opportunities and threats that can be managed through a responsible approach.⁵³ As such, there was no official position of the Alliance on the Chinese initiative. According to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, China is not a direct military threat at the moment and this is unlikely to change any time soon. In his view, Russia will represent the main threat to the eastern flank in the next decade, and therefore the Alliance should focus on managing Moscow’s asymmetric threats.⁵⁴

All these aspects strengthen the general perception regarding the usefulness and evolution of the “17+1” Initiative, which tends to remain an ambitious project at a declarative level, materialized mainly through forums and exchange programs. Therefore, the political future of the project is uncertain.

Conclusions

This study provided an assessment of Chinese economic diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe and the geopolitical implications for NATO’s eastern flank. Aware of its financial strengths and the need for foreign investment in the region, China has launched the “17+1” Initiative to facilitate its access to the emerging markets in CEEC. The project was promoted in the form of financial flows directed by China to these countries, which were to be used for infrastructure development and trade. Its configuration encompassed most states in the former Soviet bloc, and

⁵¹ Andreea Brînză, “How China’s 17+1 Became a Zombie Mechanism”, in *The Diplomat*, 10 February 2021, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/how-chinas-171-became-a-zombie-mechanism>, accessed on 28.02.2021.

⁵² ***, *Remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană at the Brussels Forum*, NATO, 29 June 2020, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_176949.htm, accessed on 28.02.2021.

⁵³ ***, *NATO 2030: United for a New Era*, Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General, 25 November 2020, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁴ ***, *Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on launching #NATO2030 - Strengthening the Alliance in an increasingly competitive world*, NATO, 8 June 2020, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_176197.htm, accessed on 02.03.2021.



was perceived by a significant portion of Europe's academic and political elites as a way for China to expand its political influence rather than as an economic move. Their views centered on the idea that the Chinese government is trying to speculate on strategic opportunities to renew historical ties with CEEC, raising fears at EU level.

Despite the initial optimism of its members, the "17+1" Initiative did not enjoy the expected success. Chinese investment has been modest and most large-scale projects have not been implemented with visible shortcomings in their coordination. As a result, members' confidence in the future of the initiative has fallen sharply, as evidenced by the low interest shown by European leaders at the last summit. The lack of horizon of the project was also noticed by NATO leaders, who considered it sufficient to perpetuate cordial relations with China in order to maintain the current security climate on its eastern flank.

On the other hand, China has maintained an optimistic rhetoric regarding the evolution of Sino-European partnerships, insisting on a win-win cooperation through fair trade and mutual gains. However, this discourse must be viewed from an overall perspective, outlined around China's geopolitical ambitions and which its leaders are trying to expose in the form of a multifaceted soft power.

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RELEVANT ACTORS AND INTERDEPENDENCES IN REGIONAL SECURITY: EU-TURKEY RELATIONSHIP

*Romeo-Dacian BUHAI**

The EU-Turkey relationship finds its basis in the EU Enlargement Policy, which is one of the organisation's most important foreign policy instruments. Thus, the integration of a relevant actor such as Turkey gains important regional connotations, with one of Turkey's gains in this relationship being the access to the EU single market. Although the beginning of the relationship seemed promising, its subsequent development is governed by countless divergences and tensions, the result reached so far being eloquent: of the 35 chapters negotiated for accession only 16 were opened, of which only one was provisionally closed. This article aims to highlight the relationship between the two actors, with the effort being directed towards analysing Turkey's EU accession process. Through a critical analysis of the literature, statements and official documents devoted to the subject, the article provides an overview of the accession process and presents some ideas on the advantages that both actors can gain from this relationship. Subsequently, some opinions are issued on the evolution of the EU-Turkey relationship, concluding that in the near future we cannot expect Turkey to fully integrate into the EU.

Keywords: *European Union; Turkey; partnership; security environment; security actor.*

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Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century leads to a paradigm shift in security, its scope being widely extended by accepting the multisectoral character. Furthermore, the significant events that have followed since the end of the Cold War, the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity and the current trend towards multipolarity have had far-reaching effects on the international security environment, leading to an increase in its complexity, fluidity and unpredictability.

In this context, the great actors with global and regional demands understood that in order to achieve their strategic interests and objectives they cannot act in isolation, on their own, as partnerships are the optimal solution to achieve their own goals. However, while the beginning of the millennium shows a strong trend towards the realization and development of partnerships, the second decade seems to have decelerated it amid the tensions generated by the increasing struggle for resources and the aspirations of some actors to play a greater role in the system of international relations.

Faced with significant changes at regional level, from a relatively peaceful state that foreshadowed nothing but peace and prosperity at the end of the Cold War to a state of real uncertainty, aggression and expansionary tendencies outside its borders, a migration crisis that threatens the preservation of social order and beyond, within its borders, complemented by the development of cross-border threats, the European Union continuously adapts its security strategies and policies, becomes much more vocal, more determined and more active through the measures taken at the level of the international relations system, being the main promoter of regional dialogue and integration, a real exponent of the stability and security of the European space, with aspirations as a global security actor.

On the other hand, Turkey, NATO's second-largest military power, has come a long way in the last three decades, substantially increasing its political, military and economic power, which has propelled it into the regional hierarchy as one of the significant players. As a bridge between the West and the Middle East, 21st-century Turkey seems to understand its important role at regional level and propagates its interests in both The European and Asian areas, which gives it a rather controversial portrait in the landscape of international security. Actions taken at regional level over the past decade reveal a more active, ambitious Turkey with a status of player in relations with the West and East, which indicates that the regional actor has higher aspirations within the international relations system than in the past.

However, the gradual degradation of the internal situation caused by the opposition's decline, the increasing polarisation of society, the repressive actions carried out after the failure of the coup attempt in 2016, the deepening of the imbalance of powers in the state as a consequence of the 2017 referendum's results,



reveal a Turkey that slips, under Erdogan's leadership, towards authoritarianism, thus affecting its credibility and legitimacy in international relations.

It is therefore interesting to look at the nature and evolution of the relationship between the two major actors at regional level and finally to formulate an opinion on the future of cooperation relations.

1. Coordinates of EU-Turkey Cooperation

Started more than half a century ago, in 1959, with the signing on 12 September 1963 of the *Agreement establishing an association between the European Economic Community and Turkey*, with the aim of “promoting the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Parties, taking full account of the need to ensure the accelerated development of Turkey's economy, raising the level of employment and living conditions of the Turkish people”¹, the relationship between the two actors is one governed by ups and downs. These are generated by the tensions created by Turkey through military interventions on the territory of other states, non-compliance with international agreements and a derailment towards authoritarianism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by EU's attitude that seems to indicate a lack of concrete intention to integrate Turkey. The proof is also the result reached to date: of the 35 chapters negotiated for accession, of which only the “Science and Research” chapters have been provisionally closed.

Confirmed as a candidate State for accession to the Union at the 1999 Helsinki European Council² and agreed to start accession negotiations at the Brussels Council in December 2004, Turkey appears to be caught between two trends – on the one hand, EU accession and, on the other hand, difficulties in implementing the necessary reforms, which presents it as a difficult partner in relation to the EU.

Turkey of the last decade is much more active and determined to take on a more important role as a power pole at regional level, with actions taken often generating tensions in relation to important actors in the neighbourhood. Thus, although European integration was initially seen by Ankara officials as a “total sum of the values of the present such as freedom, justice, common sense, moderation, peace, unity, security, prosperity, tolerance, cultural diversity”³, the divergences arising in relation to the EU on the background of non-compliance with international

¹ ***, “Acord de instituire a unei asocieri între Comunitatea Economică Europeană și Turcia”, *EUR-Lex*, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A21964A1229%2801%29>, accessed on 03.03.2021.

² ***, “Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999 Presidency Conclusions”, European Parliament, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm#a, accessed on 05.03.2021.

³ Călin Felezeu, Radu Gabriel Safta, *Turcia contemporană între moștenirea kemalistă și Uniunea Europeană*, Editura CA Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 154.



agreements, the increasing degradation of the internal situation and authoritarian policy promoted by President Erdogan, causes real obstacles to accede.

Maintaining the refusal of Ankara officials to recognise the Republic of Cyprus and the repeated non-acceptance of the implementation of the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement in relations with that state, as well as the conditionality of the application of the above mentioned Protocol in exchange for lifting the embargo imposed on the Republic of Northern Cyprus, a state not recognised by the international community⁴, has generated tensions and concern within the Union since the beginning of the accession process, leading to the blocking of negotiations on eight chapters: “Chapter 1: free movement of goods, Chapter 3: right of establishment and freedom to provide services, Chapter 9: financial services, Chapter 11: agriculture and rural development, Chapter 13: fisheries, Chapter 14: transport policy, Chapter 29: customs union and Chapter 30: external relations”⁵.

In the context of EU-promoted trans-government, which involves Member States playing a significant role in establishing the Union’s negotiating position in cooperation relations, maintaining conflicting relations between the Turkish State and the members of the Union has often proved unproductive to accession. In this respect, France’s opposition to Turkey’s integration is well-known, by blocking in 2007 the negotiating chapters covering regional policy, financial and institutional provisions, economic and monetary union and the common agricultural policy.

Relations with Germany are also no less difficult in this area, which is largely overshadowed by the failure to resolve the Cypriot problem. At the same time, tensions between the two actors have evolved, with eloquent examples being the statements of the Ankara leadership in 2011, which urged the Turkish population in Germany to integrate, but not to assimilate, the brutal intervention of the Turkish police to suppress anti-government demonstrations in Taksim Square in June 2013, prompting Germany to block the opening of the negotiating chapter on regional policy. The divisions peaked in 2017, amid the growing deterioration of the rule of law, repeated violations of human rights, increasing censorship of the press, a ban on the visit of German soldiers stationed at military bases in Turkey and the political arrest of German citizens.

At the same time, the divisions created by the non-recognition of the sovereignty of the Government in Nicosia and the continued support for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus led to the blocking of other negotiating chapters by Cyprus in 2009 and continue to be one of the main obstacles to the accession process.

⁴ Călin Felezeu, Radu Gabriel Safta, *Turcia contemporană între moștenirea kemalistă și Uniunea Europeană*, Editura CA Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 149.

⁵ ***, “2770th Council Meeting General Affairs and External Relations”, European Commission, Brussels, 11 decembrie 2006, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/PRES_06_352, accessed on 07.03.2021.



Moreover, tensions between the two countries intensified in 2020 amid Turkey's repeated violation of Cypriot territorial waters for the purpose of exploiting energy resources, with the EU's response being first a call for dialogue and a diplomatic resolution of differences, followed by the imposition of new sanctions on Turkey.

From the zero-problem policy with neighbours promoted by Abdullah Gul, Turkey has now become a factor of instability in the area, having the relations with almost all neighbours being governed by tensions. The relationship between Athens and Ankara has worsened particularly after 28 February 2020, when Turkey reopened its borders with Greece for refugees, generating a new crisis and prompting Greece declare a state of emergency. This time, however, the EU's reaction was prompt, demonstrating that 2015 was a lesson learned for the EU. Thus, in the press conference, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated: "this border is not only a Greek border, but also a European border. ... We came here today to send Greece a very clear declaration of European solidarity and support. Our first priority is to ensure that order is maintained at Greece's external border, which is also a European border."⁶ Tensions between the two countries are aware of new values due to repeated violations of airspace and Greece's Exclusive Economic Zone in order to exploit gas resources in the Mediterranean. The discovery in recent years of major gas deposits in the eastern Mediterranean has led to escalating divisions over their exploitation between Ankara and Athena. Moreover, Athena is also joined by Nicosia, along accusing Turkey of violating their territorial sovereignty, implicitly, that of the EU. Increased tensions and an increase in incidents in the area have prompted EU to respond appropriately to Turkey. EU's response to Turkey's challenges⁷ is much more prompt than in the past, with the most important measures taken to freeze the accounts of all persons and entities involved in the conduct of illegal actions in the eastern Mediterranean, the suspension of negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and the temporary cancellation of EU-Turkey high-level meetings, and the reduction of pre-accession assistance to Turkey for 2020. Although the two countries decided to resume talks to resolve their disputes at the end of January 2021, the conflict, which beyond its economic aspect also aims to establish zones of influence in the Mediterranean, is far from being resolved.

Moreover, the transformation of Turkey's leadership, especially after December 2013, from a reforming regime to an authoritarian, democracy-resistant one and the

⁶ ***, "EU-Turkey relations in light of the Syrian conflict and refugee crisis", European Parliament, URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/649327/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)649327_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/649327/EPRS_BRI(2020)649327_EN.pdf), accessed on 15.03.2021.

⁷ ***, "Council decision concerning restrictive measures in view of Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean", *EUR-Lex*, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019D1894>, accessed on 15.03.2021.



regression in the area of reforms leads to multiple implications for the accession process. Edifying in this respect is the inflection point that EU-Turkey relations are reaching with the drastic measures taken by the Ankara leadership after the July 2016 coup attempt failed. Thus, the policy of arrests, actions of censorship of the press and the limitation of the freedom of expression of journalists, as well as actions to suppress the participants in the coup, lead the European Parliament to adopt on 24 November 2016 a resolution calling for the freezing of negotiations with Turkey⁸. Also, it needs to be highlighted the worrying developments in Turkey on the rule of law, respect for human rights and corruption, proposals to amend the constitution, in particular the reintroduction of the death penalty, resulting in a re-establishment of the suspension of accession negotiations by adopting a new resolution in July 2017. In this respect, the European rapporteur, Kati Piri, said: “if Turkey reintroduces the death penalty, if this constitutional package comes into force, the only real consequence will be the end of talks on Turkey’s EU integration. But that does not mean we have to stop all forms of cooperation.”⁹

The experience gained by the EU in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy has ensured the development of a shrewd diplomacy in relations with partners. Even though EU’s behaviour towards Turkey’s skids sometimes seems tolerant, the measures taken to restore the Turkish state to a liberal trajectory are substantial. Thus, in February 2018, the European Parliament issues a new resolution on the human rights situation in Turkey¹⁰, explicitly calling on Turkey to lift the state of emergency, which was established immediately after the coup attempt, respect for human rights, expressing concern about reports on ill-treatment and torture of prisoners. Other important paragraphs of the document also aim to reiterate the November 2017 position, which called for financial support for pre-accession to be provided in the light of progress in areas such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In addition, Parliament is concerned about proposals to amend the constitution and the values of the Secular Turkish State, the deterioration of respect for religious freedom, including the deepening of discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds.

The foreign policy change that Ankara’s leadership has been promoting in recent years aims to maintain a position that will strike a balance in this broad

⁸ ***, *Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 24 noiembrie 2016 referitoare la relațiile UE-Turcia*, European Parliament, 2016, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0450_RO.html, accessed on 13.03.2021.

⁹ ***, *Politici și orientări europene: Sinteza activităților UE 3-9 iulie 2017*, Deputy Chambers, Directorate for the European Union, p. 5, URL: http://www.cdep.ro/afaceri_europene/afeur/2017/szs_2255.pdf, accessed on 14.03.2021.

¹⁰ ***, *European Parliament resolution of 8 February 2018 on the current human rights situation in Turkey*, European Parliament, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0040_EN.html, accessed on 14.03.2021.



process of reconfiguring power centres and a greater place in the regional hierarchy. In all this amalgam of conflict situations created in relations with actors such as the US and Russia through interventions in Libya and Syria, by increasingly promoting a nationalist-xenophobic and anti-European discourse, Turkey risks further isolating itself and losing important partners. An eloquent example is Turkey's unilateral launch in October 2019, of the military operation on the territory of Syria, with the aim of creating a buffer zone in the northern part of the country, where Syrian refugees can be repatriated from Turkey, an act that raises EU-Turkey tensions to an unprecedented level. The response is not late, with the EU adopting a new resolution calling for sanctions to be imposed on Turkey¹¹, on 24 October. In addition, the document presents Turkey's action not only as a violation of international law, but as a threat to regional security and stability, recalling the large number of victims and displaced persons. It also evokes the danger of reorganizing and increasing the intensity of the actions of Islamic groups, which can be complemented by ISIS prisoners escaped from prisons in northern Syria.¹²

In this context, of the foreign policy reorientation, it must also be understood the search for powerful new partners such as China and Russia, Turkey's national interests being greatly limited by the neighbouring conflicts (Iraq, Libya, Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean). Another reason is the sense of abandonment that Turkey is feeling from Western states, not understanding that its own behaviour is one of the main causes of the Western attitude. Thus, even if Turkey does not share Russia's vision on issues such as supporting the Assad regime or the Crimea situation, the international community's joint front in condemning Turkey on issues such as intervention in Syria, illegal exploitation in the Eastern Mediterranean and the FETO organisation has led Turkey to move towards concluding relations in certain areas of common interest with Russia. Eloquent examples of this are the partnership in the Astana process and the acquisition of S-400 air defence systems. The acquisition of the S-400 system has been the subject of widespread debate within NATO, creating tensions between the US and Turkey, amid incompatibility with NATO systems and the possibility of revealing secret technical data on US F-35 aircraft.

Of course, the sources of tensions are not only on the side of Ankara, but also on the side of the European Union, whose approach seems to show a lack of real intention to integrate Turkey. In this respect, we can recall the differentiated treatment applied to Turkey for accession by setting different standards, with

¹¹ ***, *European Parliament resolution of 24 October 2019 on the Turkish military operation in northeast Syria and its consequences*, European Parliament, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0049_EN.html accessed on 14.03.2021.

¹² ***, "MEPs call for sanctions against Turkey over military operation in Syria", European Parliament, URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/press-room/20191017IPR64569/meps-call-for-sanctions-against-turkey-over-military-operation-in-syria>, accessed on 15.03.2021.



negotiations comprising 35 chapters to be closed, compared to only 31 chapters for the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.¹³

At the same time, it is necessary to specify the context in which the accession process takes place, marked after 2007 by numerous challenges arising from the economic crisis, the instability of the euro exchange rate, the intensification of Euroscepticism caused by the refugee crisis and beyond, negatively influencing the Union's regulatory and attraction power. Therefore, EU's enlargement policy is secondary, as a political priority for many Member States, bringing into question the integration capacity of a state with different traditions and mindsets such as Turkey.

In addition to this, there are controversial discussions on Turkey's membership in the European area, given that more than three quarters of the country's territory is part of Asia¹⁴ – a reason supported by strong voices of the European elite such as Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, and often used as an excuse to prolong the accession process. Furthermore, opinions on the form of cooperation between the two actors are different. On the one hand, opinions are increasingly being formed to support Nicolas Sarkozy's view that an association treaty developing relations in the economic and security fields would be most appropriate in relation to Turkey. In support of this view, arguments are made concerning the model of Turkish democracy, the history, traditions and mentality of the Muslim people, which could make it difficult the European project to be carried out. On the other hand, states supporting Turkey's accession to the Union are positioned, their reasoning being supported by the Turkish state's geostrategic position as a buffer between the West and the Islamic world, considerable military power and increased capacity to manage security challenges when needed, and could be an important factor in managing migration.¹⁵

However, despite tensions between the two actors, the EU continues to support Turkey's integration for reasons of the importance of the Turkish state for the development of the EU economy, strategic positioning, the large market and its economic potential. A number of measures and initiatives are therefore being adopted to motivate and support the Turkish State in the accession process. One such act is the adoption of the revised Accession Partnership in February 2008, which

¹³ Bogdan Mureșan, "Dinamica relațiilor UE-TURCIA", in *Microstudii IER*, no. 33, European Institute in Romania, Bucharest, 2016, p. 21, URL: http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/publicatii/Working_Paper_nr.33_Dinamica_relatiilor_UE-Turcia.pdf, accessed on 09.03.2021.

¹⁴ Șerban F. Cioculescu, Octavian Manea, Silviu Petre, *Fața întunecată a globalizării: războaie civile, state eșuate, și radicalizare religioasă în lumea contemporană*, RAO Publishing, Bucharest, 2016, p. 196.

¹⁵ Cristian Eremia, "Uniunea Europeană-Turcia, după 20 de ani de negocieri de aderare eșuate", in *Monitorul Apărării și Securității*, 2019, URL: <https://monitorulapararii.ro/uniunea-europeana-turcia-dupa-20-de-ani-de-negocieri-de-aderare-esuate-1-23178>, accessed on 11.03.2021.



provides the basis for a number of political/financial instruments to support Turkey in its preparations for accession, constitutes support for future political reforms and a benchmark against which future progress will be measured.¹⁶ Furthermore, Turkey's efforts to resume accession negotiations through participation in missions¹⁷ such as EUFOR-ALTHEA, the EU police mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM), the mission to maintain the EU rule of law in Kosovo (EULEX), participation in the European Jandarmerie Force with a monitoring and communication team for operations in Afghanistan, are rewarded by joint adoption, in May 2012, a new complementary dialogue mechanism "Positive Agenda"¹⁸. In this respect, the organisation of joint working groups for each negotiating chapter is intended to support the continuation of reforms at the level of the Turkish state in order to align with the EU rules, so that when the negotiations are unblocked, they can be achieved much faster.

In all this complex of tensions between the two actors, it is also necessary to recognise Turkey's special role in managing the European refugee crisis of 2015, which remains Turkey's main asset in its negotiating relationship with the EU. The measures¹⁹ taken under the EU-Turkey Summit of 29 November 2015, as well as the signing on 18 March 2016 of the EU-Turkey Agreement on Migration, which aims primarily to reduce the number of refugees arriving in the European Union, are evidence that there can be effective cooperation between the two actors. Thus, the agreement on migration has led to a considerable decrease in the number of refugees arriving in the European Union and to a reduction in deaths at sea in the context of this crisis.²⁰

The continuation of the Ankara leadership skids, the deterioration of the internal situation, the deepening of the imbalance of powers in the state, and the regression in the field of reforms are the main arguments for the suspension of Turkey's accession process, with the Council conclusions of 18 June 2019 being

¹⁶ ***, "Council Decision 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey and repealing Decision 2006/35/EC", *EUR-Lex*, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:051:0004:0018:EN:PDF>, accessed on 10.03.2021.

¹⁷ ***, "Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations", Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, URL: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-_esdi_p_.en.mfa, accessed on 11.03.2021.

¹⁸ ***, "Positive EU-Turkey agenda launched in Ankara", European Commission, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_12_359, accessed on 12.03.2021.

¹⁹ ***, "Reuniunea șefilor de stat sau de guvern din UE cu Turcia, 29/11/2015", Consiliul European, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2015/11/29/eu-turkey-meeting-statement/>, accessed on 13.03.2021.

²⁰ ***, *Fourth Report on the Progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement*, European Commission, 2016, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0792>, accessed on 13.03.2021.



as follows: “The Council notes that Turkey is still moving further and further away from the European Union. Recalling its conclusions of 26 June 2018, the Council notes that, therefore, accession negotiations with Turkey have reached a virtually dead end, that the opening or closure of other chapters cannot be considered and that further work is not foreseen to modernise the EU-Turkey customs union”²¹.

At the same time, in economic terms there is a decrease in performance and macro-economic parameters. A first reason for this is the lack of a systematic approach to reforms. Another reason is that the degradation of Turkey’s democracy and image at Union level has made the state no longer attractive to foreign investors. While the EU seeks to maintain economic-trade cooperation and the Agreement on Migration, Ankara regularly threatens to suspend this agreement by claiming that the EU has allocated only funds to support refugees, leaving the issue of visa liberalisation unresolved, with tensions between the two players on accession increasing from day to day.²²

The end of 2020 is a tense one, being best highlighted by the issues presented in the European Council Conclusions of 10-11 December 2020. In this regard, the document condemns Turkey’s provocative actions and the intensification of speeches against the EU, Turkey’s unilateral measures in Varosha, while stressing that the EU remains interested in achieving a cooperative relationship with Turkey and will keep the communication channels open: “the offer on a positive EU-Turkey agenda remains valid, if Turkey shows its willingness to promote a genuine partnership with the Union and its Member States and to resolve differences through dialogue and in accordance with international law.”²³

2. Implications of the EU-Turkey Relationship at Regional Level

Trends in the current international security environment show us that, in an appropriate time frame, strengthening partnerships between the major actors will be the optimal solution for the resettlement of power centres and ensuring security and stability not only at regional level, but even at global level. In this context, the EU-Turkey relationship, whether it is one that will be fully successful and will ultimately lead to the integration of the Turkish State into the Union, or it will continue by deepening the tensions that will result in the definitive break-up of negotiations, has

²¹ ***, *Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilisation and association process*, Council of the EU, 18 June 2019, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/18/councilconclusions-on-enlargement-and-stabilisation-and-association-process/>, accessed on 15.03.2021.

²² Cristian Eremia, „Uniunea Europeană-Turcia, după 20 de ani de negocieri de aderare eşuate”, in *Monitorul Apărării și Securității*, 2019, URL: <https://monitorulapararii.ro/uniunea-europeana-turciadupa-20-de-ani-de-negocieri-de-aderare-esuate-1-23178>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

²³ ***, *Concluzii – 10 și 11 decembrie 2020*, European Council, URL: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-22-2020-INIT/ro/pdf>, accessed on 15.03.2021.



a major role in ensuring security and stability at regional level.

Thus, an interesting question we intend to answer is: what advantages EU could gain from this relationship?

The last decade has presented an EU, particularly in terms of economic development. With the use of new technologies, consumption of energy resources and raw materials increased considerably, in 2018, 58.2%²⁴ of the raw energy available in the EU being from imports, which brought to the fore a new priority for the EU – ensuring energy security. In this respect, Turkey could play a key role in ensuring the Union's energy resource needs, by controlling the access through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits in the most important transport corridor for EU raw materials and energy resources crossing the Black Sea.

As a result, Turkey's geographical location near about three-quarters²⁵ of the world's discovered oil and gas resources, complemented by the fact that it is home to the Trans Anatolian Pipeline, the central part of the Southern Gas Corridor, on its territory, recommends it as an important transit corridor of Caspian energy resources in Europe. This is an important opportunity for the EU to secure its energy needs at a better price and to diversify its sources of gas imports, reducing its energy dependence on Russia, which in 2013 supplied about a third²⁶ of Europe's gas import.

Although an older EU concern, the reduction of the EU's energy dependence on Russia has become more important following the crises caused by Moscow's halting of Ukraine's gas supply during the winters of 2006 and 2009, with fears of repeating similar situations being expressed also amid the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia, which significantly affects the EU and calls into question Russia's status as a reliable supplier, all the more so as energy is increasingly used as a tool for exerting pressure by the Russian actor. This is also expressed in the Energy Union Strategy, which aims to strengthen sustainability, competitiveness and energy security by addressing five lines of effort: "energy security, solidarity and trust; achieving a fully integrated European energy market; energy efficiency in support of demand moderation; decarbonisation of the economy and research, innovation and competitiveness."²⁷

²⁴ ***, "Producția și importurile de energie", *Eurostat*, 2020, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Energy_production_and_imports/ro accessed on 09.06.2021.

²⁵ Tamás Szigetvári, "EU-Turkey Relations: Changing Approaches", in *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, vol.14, no. 1, 2014, URL: http://rjea.ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/articole/RJEA_2014_vol14_no1_art3.pdf, accessed on 15.03.2021.

²⁶ ***, "Russian gas imports to Europe and security of supply-factsheet", *Clingendael International Energy Programme*, 2013 URL: <https://www.clingendaelenergy.com/files.cfm?event=files.download&ui=9C1DEEC1-5254-00CF-FD03186604989704>, accessed on 09.06.2021.

²⁷ ***, "A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy", *EUR Lex*, 2015, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2015:80:FIN>, accessed on 09.06.2021.



However, even though the EU's efforts to achieve an integrated energy market are consistent, this is not accomplished yet, which shows that only certain Member States can benefit from the energy resources transported through the Southern Gas Corridor. Although Ankara and Athens have resumed talks on differences over the exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean, the relationship with Cyprus remains tense. So one question that needs to be answered is whether the energy independence contribution that Turkey could possibly bring can compete with the effects produced within the Union by the conflicts that Turkey has with some Member States, with the EU expressing its total solidarity with Athens and Nicosia in condemning Turkey's illegal actions in the Mediterranean and the Cypriot issue.²⁸

Another advantage of Turkey's integration could be the increase of EU's military force at regional level, especially after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, in the context of an increasing development of the security and defence side. Turkey has one of the largest armies at regional level and is the second largest military force within NATO, surpassing Germany and France. While NATO remains the primary guarantor of European security, the EU could thus become a more robust player, more able to provide regional security in complementarity with NATO, with greater bargaining power in relations with the East, a more significant threat deterrent and a broader sphere of influence. Also, in the context of a Russian Federation that promotes an increasingly aggressive foreign policy with the aim of restoring the sphere of influence formerly held by the Soviet Union, Turkey's contribution, as an EU Member State, to achieving a balance of power at regional level could be significant, which would allow EU to change the way relations with Russia is approached. Turkey has proven several times that it has a bargaining power to resolve conflict situations with major regional actors such as Russia and even Israel, an eloquent example of how to solve the aviation incident that brought down the Russian SU-24 plane.

But in order for this to become a reality, it is necessary for Turkey to stop the foreign policy currently promoted which reveals a derailment from the European path to Russia and China, especially when they have the same interests, and is causing confusion and concern in the EU, increasingly calling into question Turkey's status as a reliable partner. If at first we could talk about mutually beneficial Turkey-Russia economic relations in the areas of trade, tourism and investment, the last few years reveal an increase in Turkey's dependence²⁹ on the economic relationship with

²⁸ ***, *Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 19 mai 2021 referitoare la Rapoartele Comisiei pe 2019 și 2020 privind Turcia*, European Parliament, 2021, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0243_RO.html, accesed on 09.06.2021.

²⁹ Horia Ciurtin, "Un echilibru (economic) fragil: Turcia, Rusia și cealaltă hartă strategică", *New Strategy Center*, 2017, p. 12, URL: <http://newstrategycenter.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2017->



Russia, especially in the energy sector, which presents it as a risk factor for Europe and can explain to some extent Ankara's closeness to the Russian actor. Moreover, the controversies caused within NATO by the acquisition of the S-400 air defence system, as well as NATO's intention to build a military pipeline to transport fuel between Alexandroupolis and Mihail Kogălniceanu to supply Allied bases in Bulgaria and Romania, thus avoiding transit through the Turkish-controlled Bosphorus Strait, are to reinforce the downward trend of Turkey's credibility within the Alliance.

However, Ankara is of particular importance to both NATO and the EU, in its strategic position at the confluence of the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia, representing the bridge and negotiator between the West and the East, and, if it returns to the European trajectory, can be a stronghold against Russia and Iran. From this point of view, Zbigniew Brzezinski captures almost perfectly the role of Turkey's strategic pivot at regional level: "Turkey provides stability in the Black Sea region, controls access from this direction to the Mediterranean, counterbalances Russia in the Caucasus, still provides an antidote to Muslim fundamentalism and serves as a southern support point for NATO."³⁰ Its role is supported by the fact that it lies at the border of threats that cause major concerns at EU level such as terrorism, drug and arms trafficking, migration, and it may, if necessary, be a basis for launching preventive action against these types of threats. In this respect, an eloquent example is Turkey's role in reducing the number of migrants arriving in Europe, as well as managing a number of refugees on its territory which reached 3,691,333 in December 2019³¹, and in 2021, reaching 3,988,411³², contributing decisively to reducing the pressure that a wave of migration of such proportions would exert on the EU.

Even though "the EU's relative share of Turkey's external trade has decreased (the EU share in Turkish exports has fallen from 50% in 2018 to 48.5% in 2019 and, in terms of imports, has decreased from 36.25% to 34.2%), amid the growing number of Turkey's failure to comply with its obligations under the EU-Turkey customs union"³³, Turkey's trade and investment relations remain important in the EU market, with the Turkish State being EU's fifth³⁴ largest partner, while the EU

Iunie-%E2%80%93H.-Ciurtin-%E2%80%93Turcia-Rusia-si-cealalta-harta-strategica.pdf accesed on 11.06.2021.

³⁰ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Marea Tablă de Șah*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2000, p. 60.

³¹ Mirela Atanasiu, "Politica externă a Turciei – între Est și Vest", în *Impact strategic*, nr. 3-4/2019, București, 2019, p. 105.

³² ***, "Transnational Issues", *The World Factbook*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/turkey/#transnational-issues>, accesed on 11.06.2021.

³³ ***, "Comunicare din 2020 privind politica de extindere a UE", *EUR-Lex*, 2020, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0660>, accesed on 11.06.2021.

³⁴ ***, „Relațiile UE-TURCIA: între cooperare și tensiuni”, Parlamentul European, URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/headlines/world/20170426STO72401/relatiile-ue-turcia-intre>



is Turkey's largest export market. A development of the customs union would also benefit both sides and allow the creation of an improved regulatory framework for investment, an increase in employment in both the EU and Turkey, and keep Turkey within the limits of the EU regulatory framework.³⁵ However, this is now difficult to achieve due to the actions taken to block some EU Member States and Turkey's increasingly non-compliance with obligations arising from the customs union. Another aspect to consider is that in Turkey the majority of population is young³⁶, able to work, which could complement the necessary labour needs of the EU, with the ageing of the population within the Union being a reality of the present. However, we must recognise that developments over the past year reveal a new approach to Turkey in international relations, with regional aspirations surpassing those of the past. At the level of the international community, Turkey is perceived as a problematic state, with internal challenges related to human rights violations, the affectation of the rule of law, the limitation of freedom of expression, along with a foreign policy that is increasingly moving away from European values (Turkey's degree of alignment with the PESC is 14%³⁷) and provocative actions against some EU Member States. In this respect, the EU-Turkey relationship and eventual accession to the Union would mean that the EU would take on all these problems, thus putting the whole European project at risk.

Moreover, within the EU there are strong voices, such as Germany and France, that would prefer an EU-Turkey relationship only in the court of economic and security cooperation, considering that Turkey is not suitable to become a full member of the EU. In this respect, according to opinion polls, there is "Turkish-scepticism on land, with only 17% (France) and 26% of the population (Germany) expressing in favour of Turkish Muslims joining European construction".³⁸ In addition, it is the German Conservatives who have proposed the concept of an EU-Turkey strategic partnership, replacing accession with a form of cooperation only in the economic and security fields³⁹, while France opposes integration by calling into question the European Union's limited ability to integrate such a different state as a model of

cooperare-si-tensiuni accesed on 16.03.2021.

³⁵ ***, *Raport referitor la Rapoartele Comisiei pe 2019 și 2020 privind Turcia*, European Parliament, 2021, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0153_RO.html, accesed on 13.06.2021.

³⁶ ***, "People and society", *The World Factbook*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/turkey/#people-and-society> accesed on 11.06.2021.

³⁷ ***, *Raport referitor la Rapoartele Comisiei pe 2019 și 2020 privind Turcia*, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Bogdan Mureșan, "Dinamica relațiilor UE-TURCIA", in *Microstudii IER*, no. 33, European Institute of Romania, Bucharest, 2016, p. 28, URL: http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/publicatii/Working_Paper_nr.33_Dinamica_relatiilor_UE-Turcia.pdf, accesed on 16.03.2021.

³⁹ Călin Felezeu, Radu Gabriel Safta, *Turcia contemporană între moștenirea kemalistă și Uniunea Europeană*, CA Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 150.



democracy , traditions and mentality.

The beginning of 2021 presents an attempt on both sides to normalise relations. In this respect, the importance of strengthening dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Turkey is underlined in the discussions on the relationship with Turkey at the Foreign Affairs Council, on 25 January 2021.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Turkish President wishes to normalise relations with the EU and resume negotiations: “it is our priority to make 2021 a successful year for EU-Turkey relations. We can achieve this if we have a long-term vision, far from prejudice and misunderstanding.”⁴¹

Conclusions

In conclusion, the tensions manifested in recent times between the two actors reveal that the option of Turkey’s full integration into the EU is unviable in the near future. The Cypriot issue will remain a difficult obstacle to address and resolve, which is matched by the opposition of the Member States with whom Turkey continues to maintain conflicting relations.

The most probable evolution of relations is aimed at further development of economic relations by liberalising trade in services and the exchange of agricultural products, updating the Customs Union Agreement and allowing Turkey access to the single market. With regard to security and defence cooperation, Turkey will maintain its support for the EU as a NATO member, with the central effort aimed at strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism, although there will continue to be difficulties of cooperation in the other areas created in particular by the failure in solving the Cypriot problem.

With regard to political-diplomatic relations, subject to developments in the international security environment, the two actors will officially maintain an open dialogue and will not allow tensions to deepen to a level that will not allow the resumption of relations in certain areas in the future in order to achieve certain strategic objectives and interests. EU will seek to find new solutions for another way of approaching Turkey that will restore it to the Western trajectory and counter Turkey’s drift trajectory towards Russia. At the same time, Turkey, which is beginning to feel the sanctions imposed by the EU and the US, is aware that access to the market offered by the EU is essential to economically relaunch, as are the EU funds for the management of refugee situations under the Migration Agreement.

⁴⁰ *** , *Consiliul Afaceri Externe*, European Council, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/meetings/fac/2021/01/25/>, accessed on 15.03.2021.

⁴¹ *** , “Președintele turc Erdogan declară că vrea să „repună pe șine” relațiile Turciei cu Uniunea Europeană”, *Agerpres*, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2021/01/12/presedintele-turc-erdogan-declara-ca-vrea-sa-repuna-pe-sine-relatiile-turciei-cu-uniunea-europeana--641666>, accessed on 15.03.2021.



However, the future of relations remains difficult to predict, with the EU more determined than ever to pursue its objectives set out in the Global Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, while Turkey creates uncertainty and causes real concerns in the international community through the new foreign policy promoted and the growing derailment towards authoritarianism.

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SECURITY DYNAMICS IN NORTH AFRICA AND SAHEL REGION IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2021

*Crăişor-Constantin IONIŢĂ, PhD**

The first half of 2021 was marked by the continued spread of the Sars-CoV-2 virus throughout the African continent, by the desperate attempts of the UN and regional powers to implement the Ceasefire Agreement in Libya and keep security situation under control, and increasing the number of illegal migrants to Europe.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not reduce terrorist acts in the Sahel region, nor did it stop the wave of small immigrant boats to Spain and Italy from Africa. But the coronavirus pandemic has led to the closure of many African borders, bringing the economies of those countries to the brink of bankruptcy and deteriorating the humanitarian situation in North Africa and the Sahel region.

The international community has difficulty monitoring the situation in the area, especially the humanitarian crisis and illegal migration, which is seriously affecting security in its vicinity.

Keywords: *North Africa; Sahel region; Civil War; interim Government of National Union; transborder terrorism; illegal migration; ECOWAS; Barkhane Operation; Frontex.*

Introduction

The multiple conflicts and terrorist activities that took place during 2020 and continue to take place this year throughout Africa have exacerbated the coronavirus pandemic in the region, leading to the emergence of a so-called African virus strain

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and making it difficult to control the implementation of anti-COVID-19 measures at the African Government's level. The emergence and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the areas of bloody conflicts and crisis has increased insecurity, forcing a lot of civilians to take refuge in much stable areas and significantly hampering sanctions, counterterrorism or humanitarian operations. There have been human casualties and destruction of humanitarian facilities, especially in Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Congo and Somalia. There is also a risk of a recurrence of famine in Northeastern Nigeria, parts of the Sahel region and South Sudan.

The end of 2020 was marked, in North Africa and the Sahel region, by the signing, on 23 October 2020, of a fragile Ceasefire Agreement between Libyan warring parties and their foreign sponsors, followed by the establishment of an interim government to organize the first free and democratic elections in Libya, in December 2021. The biggest challenge for this interim Libyan Government of National Unity is the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, especially by taking all measures to remove foreign mercenaries who fought on one side or the other, as well as the development of a plan to unite the different parts of Libya under the leadership of one party. To date, the UN embargo on illegal arms trafficking in the area has proved ineffective, with diplomats around the world associating the assassination of Chadian President Idriss Deby on April 19, 2021, with a group of trained and armed rebels in Libya. The great fear of these diplomats is that what happened in Chad could be repeated in the Sahel province and then spread to the Horn of Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, Niger, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and even Mozambique, if not undertaken effective actions to counter that threat.¹

Also, the middle of 2020 was marked by a military coup in Mali, resulting in the removal from power of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita by a military junta led by Colonel Assimi Goita. Subsequently, under pressure from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a transitional government was set up towards the end of last year, led by interim President colonel (ret.) Bah N'Daw, with Colonel Goita as Vice President. But, in March 2021, this Government was also overthrown, the interim President and Prime-minister being arrested, and colonel Goita took over the Government again, being elected interim President of the country on June 7, 2021. In return, at the ECOWAS Summit on May 29, 2021, African heads of state and government decided to suspend Mali's membership from their regional organisation. The same measure was taken by the African Union (AU), and France suspended its military cooperation with the Malian junta.²

¹ Edith M. Lederer, "UN focuses on demand to repatriate foreign fighters in Libya", *Associated Press News*, 30 April 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-libya-europe-africa-middle-east-5746eb32c1f3ac676d8f37dacec3213c>, accessed on 15.05.2021.

² Baba Ahmed, "Mali junta leader sworn in as president after 2nd coup", *Associated Press News*, 7 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/africa-mali-government-and-politics->



The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) continues to deteriorate, being characterised by repeated violations of the Peace Agreement signed in February 2019 between rebel groups and the Central African Government, through violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law – illegal taxation, sexual abuse, all kinds of robbery, illegal arms trafficking and smuggling of foreign fighters, weapons and natural resources across the border. Even if a new President was elected in December last year, in the person of Faustin Archange Touadera, the armed groups have continued to control most of the national territory, while the Armed Forces, trained by Russian military advisers, attacked, on May 30, 2021, a border checkpoint with Chad, killing six Chadian soldiers and creating tensions with the neighbouring country. During the clashes, three Russian instructors died because of a mine explosion.³ As a result of the crisis, the Central African Prime-Minister resigned and France suspended its military and financial aid to the country.

A special situation is the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray area, where clashes with Ethiopian military forces continue, directed mainly against the civilian population and where, until March 2021, international and regional humanitarian organisations did not have access. Although the UN has recently managed to provide the food and medicine supplies for the internal displaced persons (IDP) in the four emergency areas, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen with the intervention of Eritrea in the conflict, which has led to food insecurity, starvation of local population and the increase of diseases, including the SARS-CoV-2 virus. UN officials draw attention to the growing risk of famine in Tigray and parts of northern Ethiopia for hundreds of thousands of people as a result of humanitarian convoys being retained or delayed from providing aid to the local population and the transformation of food and medicine use into warfare tactics. Both the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments accuse the Biden administration of continuing support for the Tigray People's Liberation Movement (TPLF), considered by them a terrorist organisation, as well as intimidation and interference in their internal affairs, by restricting the visas of officials from the two countries.

Although fighting in Sudan stopped last year because of the danger of contamination with COVID-19, recent attempts to resume peace talks between the Sudanese interim Government and the leaders of major rebel groups, under the patronage of South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, have failed and there are no positive prospects in this endeavor. Thus, in early June 2021, tribal fighting have resumed between Taaisha and Falata in the Darfur region of Western Sudan,

60afe11f3629bc3440b4b2dab14e476a, accessed on 09.08.2021.

³ Edith M. Lederer, "UN strongly condemned violations in Central African Republic", *Associated Press News*, 8 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-europe-africa-central-africa-central-african-republic-6419b744546276d77498bc5a99b0614e>, accessed on 11.06.2021.



resulting in 36 dead and 32 wounded.⁴

The situation in the Blue Nile area is no longer relaxed, after Ethiopian authorities start to fill up the Great Dam of the Renaissance with water, thus triggering a political and security crisis with Egypt and Sudan. To prevent the Ethiopian Government from filling the dam's basin, Egyptian diplomacy is seeking to restore damaged relations with Djibouti to lure it to its side in the regional water dispute. They have already managed to draw the attention of the US President, Joe Biden, to a possible military conflict in the area as a result of the competition for water and to request the intervention of the international community to sign an agreement for the sharing of Blue Nile water.

The May eruption of Nyiragongo volcano near the Eastern city of Goma, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, also worsened the precarious humanitarian and medical situation in the area, killing 32 locals and destroying more than 500 homes. The ensuing lava waves forced 25,000 people to relocate to the Northwestern city of Sake, and about 5,000 civilians emigrated to Rwanda.⁵ After the first decade of June, these emigrants began to return to their locations, hoping to find their homes intact.

But the most disastrous situation in North Africa and the Sahel region is the illegal migration phenomenon, especially the desperate attempts of African emigrants to move internally to more stable African states or to cross the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean to territories/islands belonging to European states. Currently, the most attractive areas for emigration are the Spanish enclave Ceuta, in North Africa, and the island of Lampedusa, in Southern Italy.

1. Implementing the Ceasefire Agreement in Libya

February 2021 was marked by the holding of elections in Libya, under the auspices of the UN and an interim Government of National Union started to work at the beginning of March, led by Abdul Hamid Dbeibah. This Government has two major goals on their agenda – the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement signed by the belligerents in October 2020 and the holding of general elections on December 24, 2021.

With regard to the ceasefire agreement, one of its essential provisions stipulates the withdrawal of all foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya within 90 days,

⁴ Samy Magdy, "Report: Tribal clashes in Sudan's Darfur kill at least 36", *Associated Press News*, 7 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-africa-sudan-456165e4b100419fa2308be478fa26ba>, accessed on 11.06.2021.

⁵ Jean-Yves Kamale, "Death toll from Conge volcano eruption rises to at least 32", *Associated Press News*, 25 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/world-news-africa-science-health-coronavirus-pandemic-74ef0b8ec0c838933ab625d80e538752>, accessed on 28.05.2021.



but does not clearly specify the date from which this term is calculated – starting with the establishment of the interim Government or after the general elections. As a result, the latest UN report states that there has been no reduction in the number of mercenaries, estimated at over 20,000 (Syrians, Russians, Sudanese and Chadians), whilst violations of the UN arms embargo on Libya continue to take place. Moreover, it is estimated that the number of foreign fighters would have increased, stating that there were, at the end of April, 13,000 Syrians and 11,000 Sudanese in the area.⁶

The purpose of the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries is to allow the future free elected Government to fight terrorism. This desideratum is the basic condition for the reopening of the diplomatic missions of Great Powers in Tripoli, especially of the USA and Italy. To date, several European countries, including France and Greece, have already reopened their embassies in Libya.⁷ In early June, Spain also announced the reopening of its embassy in Tripoli, after seven years of severing diplomatic relations between the two countries.⁸ This event took place on the occasion of the visit of the Spanish Prime-Minister, Pedro Sánchez, in the Libyan capital, on June 4, 2021.

A report of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), established since 2011, shows that the fortification of some settlements and the construction of defence positions in Central Libya have started, on the key roads between the strategic city of Sirte, the gateway to the great fields oil and port terminals, and the city of Jufra. The report states that “despite the commitments made by the parties, air freight activities continued with flights to various air bases in the Western and Eastern regions of Libya”, and “the data indicate that no reduction in the number of foreign fighters or of their activities in Central Libya has been achieved”⁹. Following the uncertain situation, on 7 April 2021, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres submitted a letter to the Security Council calling for a resolution to speed up the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya, and this activity to be monitored by 60 Observers deployed within the UNSMIL Mission.

One of the most difficult tasks of the current interim Libyan Government will be to persuade Turkey to withdraw its military forces and Syrian mercenaries from the

⁶ Noha Elhennawy, “Senior US diplomat in Libya to support interim government”, *Associated Press News*, 18 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-libya-africa-joe-biden-ad3786c02e74bbb7b1d922b357afbc51>, accessed on 25.05.2021.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Noha Elhennawy, “Spain reopens its embassy in Libya after 7 years of closure”, *Associated Press News*, 3 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/libya-africa-europe-spain-middle-east-b802474d9e715be8bbf2227c040c3437>, accessed on 09.06.2021.

⁹ Edith M. Lederer, “UN chief: Foreign fighters in Libya are violating cease-fire”, *Associated Press News*, 15 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-libya-africa-middle-east-f3a758d5ab63f21e71a50ee1c95b9a8c>, accessed on 15.05.2021.



area. The agreements signed by the Turkish Government with the UN-recognized Libyan one (GNA) on military support for loyal forces in Tripoli and the new delimitation of Libyan territorial waters in the Mediterranean Sea, to the detriment of Greece and Cyprus, were based on the hypothesis of a long-term Turkish military presence in the area. In fact, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated, in April 2021, that he had agreed with the Libyan Prime-Minister to maintain the provisions of the controversial Maritime Agreement signed in 2019, in exchange for medical aid of 150,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine and Turkey's management of a pandemic hospital in Tripoli.¹⁰ Turkey's intention is to replace the military presence with a political-economic one, concluding five economic agreements with Libya for the construction of a power plant and the return of Turkish companies in the field of liquid fuel extraction and production.

For its part, Russia is playing on two fronts so as not to acknowledge its active involvement in Libya. On one hand, it continues to maintain the Wagner Group of mercenaries in the area, loyal to Kremlin, and on the other hand it voted the Security Council Resolution of 16 April 2021, on authorising the 60 UN Monitors to support the new UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya Ján Kubiš to implement the October 2020 Ceasefire Agreement and streamline the 10-year embargo on illegal arms trafficking.

Italy maintains its interest in reducing the number of illegal immigrants from North Africa and wants to strengthen its military agreement with the Libyan Coast Guard on efforts to block Libyan ports and return immigrants leaving the Libyan coast with makeshift boats. To this end, Italian Prime-Minister Mario Draghi met in Tripoli with his Libyan counterpart, in early April 2021, to discuss the strenghteen of bilateral relations and, in particular, the cessation of Libyan human trafficking groups' activities and decreasing Libyan rescue authorities' work on migrants detention in illegal detention centers.¹¹ He presented to his Libyan counterpart the European Union's intentions to become more effectively involved in stopping illegal human trafficking and illegal migration to Europe.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi also met with the newly elected interim Libyan Prime-Minister in Cairo, immediately after his recognition by the House of Representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to increase the support of regional powers for the unification of Libya, by concluding expanded partnerships to bring Egyptian economic projects to the country.

¹⁰ Suzan Fraser, "Turkey, Libya recommit to contested maritime borders deal", *Associated Press News*, 12 April 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-libya-recep-tayyip-erdogan-tripoli-ankara-9faece0a5a1751c58df7b6739318bff7>, accessed on 17.05.2021.

¹¹ Rami Musa, "In the first travel abroad, new Italian PM visits Libya", *Associated Press News*, 6 April 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-italy-libya-middle-east-14fde11cc7caf013e34f67c17cae90d7>, accessed on 30.05.2021.



Under the United States pressure the rest of the regional powers which were behind one of the rival factions, such as France and the United Arab Emirates, officially confirmed unconditional diplomatic support for ending the Libyan Civil War and the immediate departure of foreign fighters and mercenaries from the area. However, illegal arms trafficking continues unabated to both warring sides in Libya, undermining ceasefire efforts and the establishing of a lasting peace in the region.

2. Migrants Situation in North Africa

Europe continues to face a new influx of African immigrants this year trying to illegally reach the continent, crossing the Mediterranean Sea in atypical boats, unsuitable for navigation in international waters. Moreover, the large number of people embarking on such ships far exceeds the carrying capacity of those vessels, and the storms that often break out at sea lead to the sinking of some of them and the drowning or disappearance of many migrants.

The combined efforts of the Libyan Coast Guard's ships and those of the EU Naval Operation "IRINI" off the Libyan coast to prevent the illegal departure of African immigrants to Southern European countries have only partially demonstrated their effectiveness since the beginning of this year. Thus, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), out of more than 1,000 illegal migrants leaving Libya by sea alone, a number of nine boats carrying more than 800 people¹² were intercepted and the migrants were returned to internal detention centers. Unfortunately, there are currently about 11,000 African migrants in these detention centers, where the humanitarian situation and personal safety are precarious.

Since the beginning of this year, media sources has shown that the most accessible European areas for emigration have become the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, in North Africa, and the island of Lampedusa, in Southern Italy. Thus, almost 13,000 African immigrants arrived in Italy, and almost 8,000 sub-Saharan Africans passed through the Spanish enclave of Ceuta¹³ in Morocco, of which about 2,000 are minors.¹⁴ Approximately 80 Africans also emigrated to the other Spanish

¹²***, "UN agency: Libyan navy intercepts over 800 EU-bound migrants", *Associated Press News*, 5 February 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-libya-middle-east-mediterranean-sea-5a155e8c9df4b7292ea66d3dd4fbbefc>, accessed on 25.05.2021.

¹³ A.N: The Spanish enclave Ceuta is a Spanish city of 20 km² and 85,000 inhabitants, located in North Africa on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and separated from Morocco by a double fence made of wire mesh 10 meters high. It has an autonomous political status and is led by President Juan Jesús Vivas.

¹⁴ Vlad Mironescu, „Copii morți aduși de valuri pe plajele din Libia, după ce ar fi încercat să ajungă în Europa”, *Digi Tv*, 26 May 2021, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/copii-morti-au-fost-adusi-de-valuri-pe-plajele-din-libia-sustine-o-organizatie-caritabila-1541849>, accessed on 31.05.2021.



enclave in the region, Melilla, 350 km east of Ceuta.¹⁵ Moreover, the arrival of the hit season could lead to an increase in their number. Following the relaxation of border control by Moroccan border police, the Spanish Army redeployed troops and armored vehicles to the border with Morocco, intervened repeatedly and returned half of the emigrants to Morocco. However, the current situation in the enclave has continuously deteriorating, culminating with the biggest humanitarian, diplomatic and political crisis between Spain and Morocco since the territorial dispute of 2002, and Spanish political leaders believe that the situation was created especially by Rabat, as a result of bilateral assistance granted by Spain to Brahim Ghali, the leader of the Polisario Front, an Algeria-sponsored Western Sahara liberation movement.

The desperate attempt by African emigrants to illegally leave the coasts of North Africa and escape the humiliating humanitarian conditions from the area, under the clandestine actions of human illegal traffickers, continues to result in large numbers of people drowned and missing in the Mediterranean Sea. According to the IOM project on the disappearance of migrants' data, this year the number of people drowned or missing in the entire Mediterranean Sea is 827, much higher than last year, and 691 migrants drowned in the Central area of the sea (see Fig. no. 1)¹⁶.

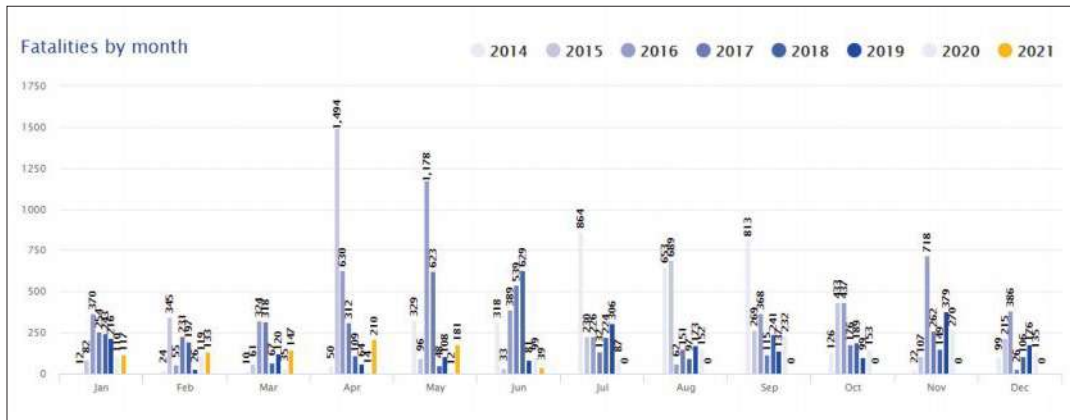


Figure no. 1: The Situation of Drawed Migrants in the Mediterranean Sea between 2014-2021¹⁷

¹⁵ Renata Brito, Aritz Parra, “Spain, Marocco square off after 8,000 migrants arrive by sea”, *Associated Press News*, 18 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/spain-europe-africa-morocco-migration-9833744a7058cc9438a8d7417d2944c6>, accessed on 27.05.2021.

¹⁶ A.N.: The project on the disappearance of migrants on the main routes in the Mediterranean Sea is an initiative of the International Organization for Migrants (IOM), started in 2013, under the 2030 Agenda, to sustain the development, and the data are listed on the website <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>?, accessed on 25.06.2021.

¹⁷ Source: Deaths of migrants recorded in the Mediteranean, *Missing Migrants*, URL: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>?



The first disastrous event of this year took place on January 19, when a boat carrying illegal immigrants to Europe sank off the Libyan coast, killing 43 people, all men from West African states. At the end of March 2021, another boat capsized off the Libyan coast, killing five people (2 women and 3 children) and 77 migrants were rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard and returned to internal detention centers.¹⁸ The most tragic naval accident since the beginning of illegal migration in North Africa took place in April, in which at least 130 people lost their lives. In early May 2021, at least 11 illegal migrants drowned when a rubber boat carrying 20 people capsized off¹⁹, and on May 9, 2021, a boat with 66 people on board also sank off Libya, 24 Africans drowned and 42 were rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard and transported to Tripoli.²⁰

But not only the Mediterranean Sea has had such maritime accidents. On June 13, 2021, a boat with 200 migrants from the Horn of Africa, which departed from Djibouti, capsized off the coast of Yemen, all those on board being reported missing. Since the beginning of the year, another 40 migrants have drowned off the coast of Djibouti.²¹

All these unfortunate events led the IOM representatives to ask the European states from the Mediterranean Sea neighbourhood to analyse the situation created and to redeploy naval Search-and-Rescue capabilities in the area.

3. The Impact of North African's Situation on Regional and European Security

The existing crisis situations, ongoing conflicts and humanitarian disasters in some African states in North Africa and the Sahel region, which continued also during the first half of 2021, have deteriorated and continue to significantly deteriorate regional and European security. Moreover, the acute shortage of COVID-19 vaccines and specialised medical personnel in the area amplifies the economic and health insecurity of African states, and the intensification of illegal trafficking of

¹⁸ Samy Magdy, "UN: 2 women, 3 children drown in shipwreck off Libya's coast", *Associated Press News*, 31 March 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-north-africa-drownings-libya-africa-eda22245e6ddb9543b41a457bf2cc2fb>, accessed on 27.04.2021.

¹⁹ ***, "UN agency: Libyan navy intercepts over 800 EU-bound migrants", *Associated Press News*, 10 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-libya-middle-east-mediterranean-sea-5a155e8c9df4b7292ea66d3dd4fbefc>, p.2, accessed on 25.05.2021.

²⁰ Samy Magdy, "UN: Migrant boat capsized off Libya; 2 dozen presumed dead", *Associated Press News*, 10 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/world-news-united-nations-libya-africa-middle-east-111ea2236cf6b278d49c5fc1201d67cd>, accessed on 25.05.2021.

²¹ Ahmed Al-Haj, "Officials: Migrant boat capsizes off Yemen, some 200 missing", *Associated Press News*, 14 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-yemen-africa-immigration-health-fcd4add84264d9add649d8351cdb2bc6>, accessed on 16.06.2021.



African immigrants to Southern Europe further affects European security, damaging diplomatic relations between states.

Thus, in addition to the Spanish-Moroccan crisis created by the situation in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, a diplomatic crisis also arose between Morocco and Germany, as a result of supporting the liberation movement in Western Sahara, both internationally and with information, but also of undermining Rabat's regional involvement in solving the Libyan Civil War by not inviting Morocco to the Berlin peace talks, in January 2021. As a result, in early May 2021, the Moroccan ambassador to Berlin was recalled to the country and diplomatic relations between the two countries has frozen.²²

The impossibility of solving the dispute over sharing the Blue Nile water between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, as a result of starting to fill up the "Great Ethiopian Renaissance" dam and the failure of US-led diplomatic negotiations on the subject, have determined Cairo and Khartoum to request the involvement of the African Union (AU) in this dispute with tendencies to turn into a regional conflict and the possibility of a deterioration of the security situation in the Horn of Africa. But the African Union Summit in April 2021 on water security in the area did not have the expected effect, even though all Arab states have shown solidarity with the Egyptian-Sudanese position. As a result, the AU called for the urgent involvement of the UN Security Council in this dispute, in order to begin an extensive negotiation process with a view to concluding a tripartite agreement.²³

One of the most disastrous terrorist attacks in recent years took place in early June 2021 in Burkina Faso. Jihadist insurgents affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State groups attacked the local population of the Solhan village, killing at least 132 civilians and setting fire to their homes.²⁴ Also in June, an Islamist suicide bomber belonging to the al-Shabab extremist group, an al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist organisation, blew himself up in a military training center in Mogadishu, killing 15 people and injuring 20 others.²⁵

The internal security situation in West Africa also suffered this year - six

²² ***, "Morocco recalls its ambassador to Germany as tensions rise", *Associated Press News*, 6 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-germany-africa-morocco-government-and-politics-f1d59cf3edaa36f368b15a58d8b53eca>, accessed on 22.05.2021.

²³ Samy Magdy, "Arab League backs calls for UN intervention in the dam dispute", *Associated Press News*, 6 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/arab-league-united-nations-europe-africa-middle-east-5fd51629f3158936afe3fae2da69f5b0>, accessed on 15.06.2021.

²⁴ Sam Mednick, "Death toll rises after Burkina Faso village attack", *Associated Press News*, 7 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/world-news-islamic-state-group-burkina-faso-africa-religion-2430cbdf4e324f49e20612e94ba5a800>, accessed on 14.06.2021.

²⁵ Hassan Barise, "Suicide bomber kills at least 15 at Somalia military site", *Associated Press News*, 15 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/somalia-suicide-bomber-2d3c682a38bbb75eb1cd3dbc89f26810>, accessed on 16.06.2021.



kidnappings have taken place in educational institutions from Northern Nigeria and Niger for ransom reasons, three of which were violent and resulted in eight deaths.²⁶

The continuation of terrorist attacks in the Sahel region, despite the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, has forced France to rethink its African policy, especially the continuation of military intervention in the area. Although the latest French military interventions have been a real success, with the killing of jihadist leader Baye ag Bakabo of the al-Qaeda group in the area, French President Emmanuel Macron mentioned that, by the end of June 2021, Paris will terminate Operation Barkhane, which will replace with another military operation to fight Islamist extremists in the area, based on increased participation from partners. At the end, the French military presence in the Sahel region will be significantly reduced.²⁷

The precarious economic situation in Tunisia, which has led to joblessness, rising youth unemployment and declining tourism, amplified by prolonged quarantine across the country to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, was materialised earlier this year through civil demonstrations, large-scale and long-term riots against the Tunisian Parliament. Originally started in the capital, these demonstrations spread to other cities such as Kasserine, Gafsa, Sousse and Monastir, becoming more and more violent - Molotov cocktails, burglaries, vandalism of shops and clashes with Internal forces. In an attempt to resolve the situation created by force, the authorities used the Army's tear gas and arrest hundreds of protesters. The social crisis has forced Tunisian Prime-Minister Hichem Mechichi to revise his own cabinet, with some ministers deemed corrupt or suspected of such acts.²⁸

The uncertain situation regarding the delimitation of territorial waters, contiguous areas and exclusive economic zones in the Mediterranean basin, amplified by the illegal trafficking of Africans who continue to migrate to the Greek islands and seek asylum, continues to sustain the politico-military crisis between Turkey and Greece. Even though there is an agreement to reduce migration, signed in 2016 between the EU and Turkey, the large number of illegal immigrants arriving on the shores of the Greek islands coming from Turkey remains high. As a result, despite pressure from the EU to manage asylum for immigrants inside the country, Greek leaders have decided to ask Ankara to look into asylum applications for

²⁶ Sam Olukoya, "1 student fatally shot in new abduction in Nigeria's north", *Associated Press News*, 11 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/africa-nigeria-shootings-cf0591261074099da45365fd6859760b>, accessed on 15.06.2021.

²⁷ Edith M. Lederer, "UN envoy: More insecurity in Mali will have 'drastic' impact", *Associated Press News*, 15 June 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-mali-europe-africa-c66fb06c992ff6fd5435c973dbaa6eb7>, accessed on 16.06.2021.

²⁸ Bouzza Ben Bouzza, "Tunisians protest arrests; government faces confidence vote", *Associated Press News*, 26 January 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/north-africa-cabinets-tunisia-coronavirus-pandemic-africa-819dbd16717fe092a16fa18e1dac57ea>, accessed on 15.04.2021.



immigrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia, and no longer sends them to Europe. Moreover, they demanded that Turkey receive back 1,453 illegal immigrants who have entered into Greece since the beginning of 2021, which has not happened so far.²⁹

Following the inactivity of Turkish leaders, the Greek border police began using a high-tech automatic surveillance network, such as long-range “sound cannon”, digital barriers, sensors and cameras with high range and night vision, intelligent analytical systems and lie detectors, biometric identification by palm scanning, autonomous interview machines, integration of satellite data obtained from terrestrial, aerial, maritime and underwater drones and moved to the construction of a steel fence, similar to the one from the US-Mexico border. The investment, worth about 3 billion euros, was financed with European money, and Greece called on European leaders to turn the Southern European border protection mission “Frontex” into a full-fledged multinational security force to patrol the territorial waters of the Member States and stop the phenomenon of illegal migration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Conclusions

The first half of 2021 is characterised by an improvement of some conflict situations in North Africa and the Sahel region (Libya, Sudan), but also by the continuation of some older ones or even their amplification (Mali, Tigray / Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Somalia) . The second year of the pandemic in Africa, as well as the inefficient and chaotic politico-military interventions of international organisations and regional powers, have failed to manage the roots / causes of these conflicts and have not helped African governments to cope.

The difficult pandemic situation has continued, especially in Central and Southern Africa, being amplified by the lack of qualified medical staff and, in particular, by the insufficient number of vaccines in the region. Thus, countries such as South Africa have been re-quarantined, and North African countries have continued to implement anti-COVID-19 measures, which are ineffective due to the poor international supply of vaccines and medicines.

We must not forget that, in the 21st Century, the international community is witnessing ethnic cleansing in the Tigray region, where the Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities have joined forces to wipe this ethnicity / tribe off the face of the earth., either through expulsion and genocide, or through starvation, which also leads to genocide.

²⁹ Derek Gatopoulos și Costas Kantouris, “In post-pandemic Europe, migrants will face digital fortress”, *Associated Press News*, 31 May 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-europe-migration-technology-health-c23251bec65ba45205a0851fab07e9b6>, accessed on 17.06.2021.



Changes in the EU policies on illegal migration have led to an increase in sea casualties and illegal human trafficking. Moreover, spending European funds on advanced technological tools to stop or delay migrants' access to Europe's Eastern borders, as well as the withdrawal of Search and Rescue ships and aircraft from areas often crossed by the improvised vessels of African migrants, did not have the intended effect of discouraging the maritime crossings of these ships and the desperate attempts of migrants to force illegal entry into the Greek islands. The new more aggressive European strategy on anti-migration has had, as severe side effects, harsh criticism from the EU's neighbours, as well as the emergence of diplomatic crises between some states bordering the Mediterranean Sea - Spain-Morocco, Greece-Turkey etc. Another effect that may arise in the near future is concerns about the ethics of the measures taken, which could lead to the deepening of European autocracy and those about the possibility of access to new technologies used at EU borders by non-member states or non-state actors.

An important step towards a review of European policies was taken by Denmark when approving, in early June 2021, the opening of a reception center for migrants in an African country, where the process of verifying asylum applications to this country should take place. We are talking about countries such as Rwanda, with which Denmark has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) since April 2021, but also Tunisia, Ethiopia or even Egypt. The same procedure was requested by Athens of the Turkish leaders in Ankara, in order to analyse and approve the asylum applications of the MENA refugees before they were sent to Europe. But their request remained so far unanswered.

The insecurity situation in North Africa and the Sahel region caused by unsolved conflicts, inter-ethnic / tribal crises, the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, terrorist actions and weapons, people and drugs illegal trafficking, hunger and poverty continue to show negative effects on African states in the region, but also on relations with European neighbours. In turn, the political, diplomatic, economic and military measures taken by European states and international organisations in Africa to manage the existing situation are inefficient and discordant, amplifying crises / conflicts in the area instead of solving them. All these negative effects have led to dissensions and even crises between certain states and even among the UN, AU and EU.

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MULTILATERAL CONFLICTS OF PALESTINE – HISTORY, PRESENT AND TRENDS

*Mirela ATANASIU, PhD**

Palestine, a historical land inhabited by both Jews and Arabs, has been the source of disagreement for the two ethnic communities since their establishment in this territory. Over time, as a consequence of this antagonism, the Middle East region has hosted a multilateral conflict generated by a number of factors (historical, ethnic, national and religious), which is currently manifested in three subsequent disputes: Arab-Israeli, Israeli-Palestinian and religious.

The social dispute was initially generated by the inter-communal misunderstandings between Arabs and Jews, in the territory of the British mandate of Palestine and degenerated into a series of wars between Israel and the Arab states that led to an open armed conflict between Israel and Gaza. Also, the religious dispute, which permanently accompanied the other two, is related to the equally claiming by Jews and Muslims of both the entire territory of this historical land, as well as Jerusalem.

The paper is intended to be a clarification of what the historic Palestinian region represents and how it has transformed under the impact of the conflict generated against the background of the desire for statehood expressed by Jews and Arabs in the same space. In the following, some aspects will be shown presenting the historical sources of territoriality, statehood and conflict in the region, and current forms of Palestinian multilateral conflict, as well as the predominant side of the conflict in the contemporary period, focusing on developments in the first half of 2021, but also some trends that are expected in the evolution of the Palestinian issue.

Keywords: *Palestinian issue; Gaza; West Bank; Israel; two-state solution.*

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1. Palestine – Geographical Area with a Long History of Conflict

Some archaeologists' studies claim that in historical documentary sources (especially Abbasid inscriptions and coins) references have been made to this territory under the name "Filastin" since the Late Bronze Age (starting with 1300 BC)¹. Those who wrote in ancient times about the territory of Palestine referred to it as the biblical "Peleshet" (Land of the Philistines) or the territory of Israel². Later, in the 5th century BC, the "father of history" Herodotus referred to Palestine as the geographical area between Phoenicia and Egypt, which included both the land of the Philistines and Israel (Figure no. 1). We will continue to refer to this space in the paper when we use the phrase "historical Palestine".

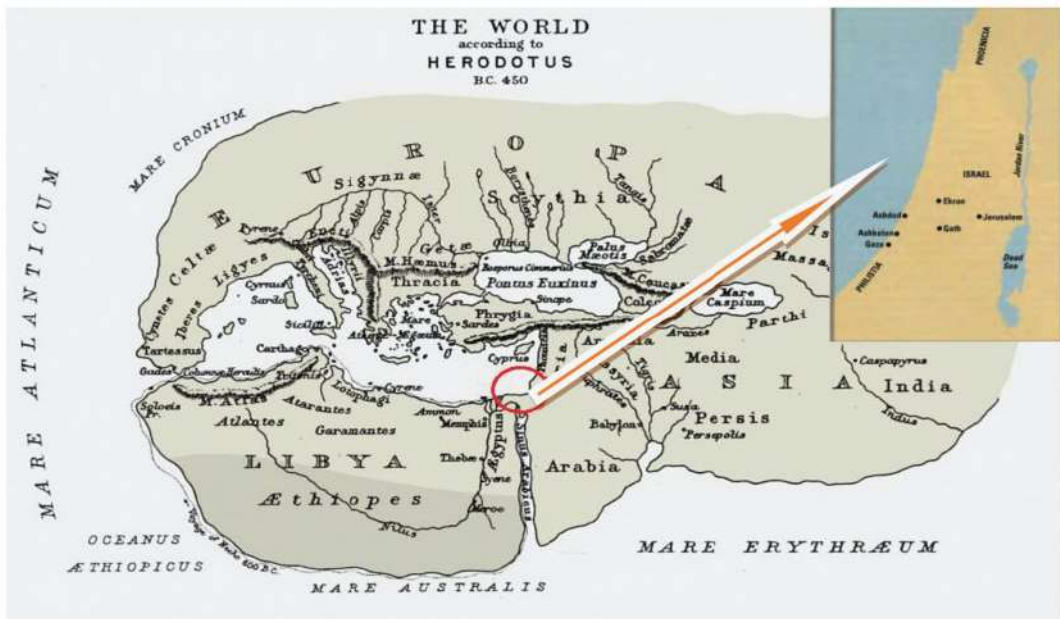


Figure no. 1: Palestine in the 5th century BC³

¹ Masalha DeNur, *Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History*, Zed Books Ltd., London, UK, 2018, p. 1.

² David Jacobson, "When Palestine Meant Israel", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, vol. 27, no. 03, May/June 2001, p. 45.

³ Sources: ***, "Human landscapes and maps", *Panorama of the world*, November 26, 2017, URL: <https://holylandmap.blogspot.com/2017/11/the-world-map-of-herodotus-in-shape-of.html>; David Jacobson, "When Palestine Meant Israel", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, vol. 27, no. 03, May/June 2001, URL: http://cojs.org/when_palestine_meant_israel_david_jacobson_bar_27-03-may-jun_2001/, accessed on 22.06.2021.



Throughout history, Jews have claimed Palestine as the “Promised Land”, based on biblical narratives and asserting their uninterrupted presence in this territory⁴. On the other hand, the Arabs questioned the uninterrupted presence of the Jews and claimed Arab roots dating back more than a millennium ago⁵. There is another category of ethnic Arabs, who claimed (or still claim) to be ancestors of the Canaanites⁶, settled in the territory before the Israelites⁷. Moreover, in the context of the ethnic-religious conflict between Jews and Arabs, places and their names have gained great significance in efforts to legitimize the particular historical right over this territory.

Today, the area of historic Palestine is geographically the region of the Eastern Mediterranean, comprising parts of modern Israel and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip (along the Mediterranean coast) and the West Bank (west of the Jordan River)⁸, including East Jerusalem. Thus, the borders of historic Palestine have changed over time, in modernity (since the establishment of the British mandate), effectively encompassing the territories of the current states of Israel and Palestine (which, although largely recognized as a state by the international community, has an unfinished, fragmented statehood).

The creation of Palestine as a political entity originates in the penetration of Israeli tribes into its territory. Around 1250 BC, under the leadership of Moses, the Israelite tribes from Egypt settled in this area, along with the existing Canaanite tribes. Around the same time, the Philistine tribes⁹ began to populate the Mediterranean coasts of historic Palestine and an alliance of the city-states of

⁴ ***, “Genesis 15:18-21”, *The Bible*, URL: <https://www.bible.com/ro/bible/1713/GEN.15.18-21>, accessed on 22.06.2021.

⁵ A.N.: According to some theories, the Arabs had Bedouins as their ancestors a thousand years ago. To be seen: Werner Caskel, “The Bedouinisation of Arabia”, *American Anthropologist*, no. 56, 1954, p. 38; G.E. von Grunebaum, “The Nature of Arab Unity before Islam”, *Arabica*, no. 10, 1963, p. 12; Maxime Rodinson, *Islam et capitalisme*. Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1966, p. 15.

⁶ Author’s note: The Canaanites are the ancestors of the Palestinians who settled in Canaan in 3000 BC. Between 1200 and 975 BC, the “peoples of the sea” settled on the coast of Canaan, becoming known as the Philistines. To be seen: Alex Shalom, Stephen Roskamm Shalom, “The Palestinian question”, *Harper’s Magazine*, December 2001, p. 87.

⁷ A.N.: Israelis are the ethnic ancestors of modern Jews and Samaritans. To be seen: Peidong Shen, Tal Lavi et al, “Reconstruction of Patrilineages and Matrilineages of Samaritans and Other Israeli Populations From Y-Chromosome and Mitochondrial DNA Sequence Variation”, *Human Mutation*, Wiley-Liss Inc., no. 24, 2004, pp. 248-260.

⁸ ***, “Palestine”, *Britannica*, 25 June 2021, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine>, accessed on 22.06.2021.

⁹ A.N.: Philistines (In Latin *palaestina*) are ancient population, of Indo-European origin, established between the 13th and 11th centuries BC on the southeast coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The Latin name prevailed in Roman times over the whole area, becoming Palestine. To be seen: ***, “Filistina antică, Palestina”, *Israel și Palestina*, URL: <https://sites.google.com/site/israelsipalestinaorigini/filistina-antica-palestina>, accessed on 01.06.2021.



Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza, and Gath was formed, located between present-day Tel Aviv and the Gaza Strip.¹⁰ Then, in the 11th century BC, the Kingdom of Israel was formed to remove the danger posed by the strong pressures exerted by migrant peoples.

In the 10th century BC, King David of the Jewish tribe had united the two existing state entities at that time – Judah and Israel – and conquered Jerusalem, which he transformed into the religious and political capital of the new state. But the political entity created in the territory of historic Palestine did not last long, so that after King Solomon's death, in 926 BC, it was again divided into Israel and Judah¹¹. Subsequently, the two state entities evolved in parallel, the relations between them being marked by long wars.

For about two centuries (539-332 BC), after the entire Palestine became part of the Persian Empire, beginning with 332 BC, it came under the rule of Alexander the Great and included in the Macedonian Empire created by him. Subsequently, a series of other dominations followed –Roman, from 66 BC until 313 AD, when it is replaced by the Byzantine domination –, early Muslim (637-1098), Catholic crusader (1099-1291)¹², Mamluk (1291-1517)¹³, Ottoman (1517-1918)¹⁴, British (Great Britain and League of Nations created the Palestinian Mandate¹⁵ as a state entity that functioned between 1920-1948). Thus, in political terms, part of or the entire historical region of Palestine was for the most part a province within a large empire (only rarely and for short periods it formed an independent political unit).

In the 1880s, the Palestinian Jewish community amounted to 3% of the total population and did not aspire to build a modern Jewish state in Palestine, this was an idea issued later by the British in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which they promised to support “the establishment in Palestine of a nation-state for the Jewish people”¹⁶. Moreover, earlier in 1915, Britain had promised Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, that it would support the creation of an independent Arab empire under his

¹⁰ Aren M. Maier, “The Philistines and Their Cities”, *Bible Odyssey*, URL: <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/philistines-and-their-cities>, accessed on 02.06.2021.

¹¹ ***, *Marea istorie ilustrată a lumii*, vol. I, Litera Internațional Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008.

¹² Malcolm Barber, “The Challenge of State Building in the Twelfth Century: The Crusader States in Palestine and Syria”, *Reading Medieval Studies*, XXXVI, University of Reading, 2010, pp. 7-22.

¹³ ***, “Mamluks”, *Jewish Virtual Library*, URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/mamluks>, accessed on 28.06.2021.

¹⁴ ***, “Return to Timeline of Jewish History: Table of Contents”, *Jewish Virtual Library*, URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-of-ottoman-empire-dominance-1500-1920>, accessed on 28.06.2021.

¹⁵ ***, *C. 529. M. 314. 1922. VI., Communiqué au Conseil et aux Membres de la Société, Mandate for Palestine*, League of Nations, Genève, 12 August 1922.

¹⁶ ***, “The Nakba did not start or end in 1948”, *Al Jazeera*, 23 May 2017, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/5/23/the-nakba-did-not-start-or-end-in-1948>, accessed on 14.06.2021.



rule in Palestine, in exchange for organizing an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, Germany's ally in the war¹⁷. So the territory had been promised by the British to both sides.

Meanwhile, based on the British promise to Jews and their hostile historical context in other parts of the world, but also encouraged by the Zionist movement¹⁸, Jewish immigration to Palestine was massive. In 1923, when the international community (the League of Nations, at the time) appointed the Great Britain, concomitantly with the mandate of administrative control over Palestine, the task of establishing a Jewish state, the ethnic-religious dispute between Jews and Arabs was triggered in this territory.

Then, in 1947, through the steps initiated by the Great Britain, the UN proposed "a two-state solution"¹⁹, a plan to divide Palestine into two territories: one allocated to an independent Jewish state, the other to an independent Arab state, and the city of Jerusalem being designated international territory with respect to both states to be created.

2. Modern Palestine²⁰, Three Disputes – One Territory

Following the issuance of the UN proposal for a two-state solution, two types of *Arab-Israeli tensions* erupted in the area: *regional*, between Zionist Jews who

¹⁷ A.N.: The promise was contained in a letter dated 24 October 1915, by Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner to Egypt, to Sharif of Mecca, in what later became known as the McMahon-Hussein correspondence. The Sharif in Mecca assumed that the promise included Palestine. Details in: Pauline Kollontai, Sue Yore, Sebastian Kim (eds.), *The Role of Religion in Peacebuilding. Crossing the Boundaries of Prejudice and Distrust*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia, 2018, p. 251.

¹⁸ A.N.: Zionism, a Jewish nationalist movement that aimed to create and support a Jewish nation-state in Palestine, considered by them as the ancient homeland of the Jews. See: ***, "Zionism", The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism>, accessed on 16.06.2021.

¹⁹ ***, *A/RES/181(II), Resolution adopted on the report of the ad hoc committee on the Palestinian question*, UN General Assembly, 29 November 1947.

²⁰ A.N.: As it has already been mentioned in the text, when we refer to modern Palestine we refer strictly to the part of the historical space of Palestine that is still in dispute between Jews and Arabs. Thus, by eliminating the territories of historic Palestine, which currently belong to other states (Syria, Jordan, etc.), and are not the subject of the analyzed theme in this paper, we refer to Palestine as a territorial area comprising both the state of Israel and its current occupied territories, respectively the West Bank (with Eastern Israel) and Gaza, in order to make it easier to connect with the territory of historic Palestine and see the transformations undergone by both the disputed territories in different historical epochs, and how statehood developed in the region. In fact, the current occupied territories may or may not become a state in the true sense of the word, and if they become a whole state, they may not extend exactly to the territorial footprint they occupy today, as their borders are in motion, not being established through Israeli-Palestinian mutual negotiations.



wanted to establish a state of their own in this Middle Eastern area, and predominant Arab states in the region; *intercommunal*, between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the common space of the British Mandate of Palestine. As a result, after the British left in 1948, when Israel declared itself an independent state taking advantage of the favorable moment, the first side of this conflict was immediately exacerbated by the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war between Israel and five of the Arab nations in the region (Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon), which supported the Arab-Palestinian community in establishing its own state in the region. Thus, in a year of fighting (1948-1949), until the conclusion of an armistice, Israel had conquered almost all of Palestine, Jordan took advantage and occupied the West Bank and Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Jerusalem was now divided between Israeli forces in the west and Jordanian forces in the east. This was followed by the 1967 “Seven Days War”, in which Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the territory of the Syrian Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. In figure no. 2 is shown the evolution of the borders of historic Palestine during this period (during the British mandate, according to the plan of division between the two states and after the Israeli conquests following the 1967 war).

The two Arab-Israeli wars have led to the departure, starting with 1948, of some 700,000 Palestinian Arabs from the territory that became the state of Israel, to neighboring states (especially in the West Bank, Libya, Syria, Egypt)²¹, and, since 1967, 280,000-360,000 Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights²². At the same time, against the background of the same wars, there was the exodus of about 860,000 Jews from Arab countries, of which more than 600,000 arrived in Israel, the rest opting for Europe or America²³.

In 1973, a third war broke out between Egyptian and Syrian forces against Israel, on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, hoping to regain territory lost in the 1967 war. Muslim forces were militarily supported by Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Cuba, Morocco and Libya²⁴. The armed conflict ended with the signing, on September 4, 1975, in Geneva, of an Egyptian-Israeli agreement that provided

²¹ Colin Chapman, Kate Benson, *Whose Promised Land: The Continuing Conflict Over Israel and Palestine*, Lion Hudson, Oxford, England, 2015, p. 151.

²² Antonio Carnovale, *The Middle East: Everything That You Always Wanted to Know and No One Would Tell You*, Universe LLC, Bloomington, USA, 2013, p. 126.

²³ Carole Basri, “The Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: An Examination of Legal Rights - A Case Study of the Human Rights Violations of Iraqi Jews”, in *Fordham International Law Journal*, vol. 26, Issue 3, 2002, p. 659.

²⁴ Stan Alexandru Bogdan, “Războiul de Yom Kippur – Armageddonul din 1973”, *Historia*, URL: <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/razboiul-de-yom-kippur-armageddonul-din-anul-1973>, accessed on 17.06.2021.



for the withdrawal of Israeli troops back from the area a few kilometers away²⁵. However, Israel still controlled 2/3 of the Sinai Peninsula. Later, in 1978, at Camp David, a treaty was signed by the presidents of Egypt and Israel, concluded with the mediation of the American President, Jimmy Carter, which provided for the normalization of relations between the two states after the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt²⁶. Following the signing of these agreements, Egypt was excluded from the Arab League for a 10-year period.

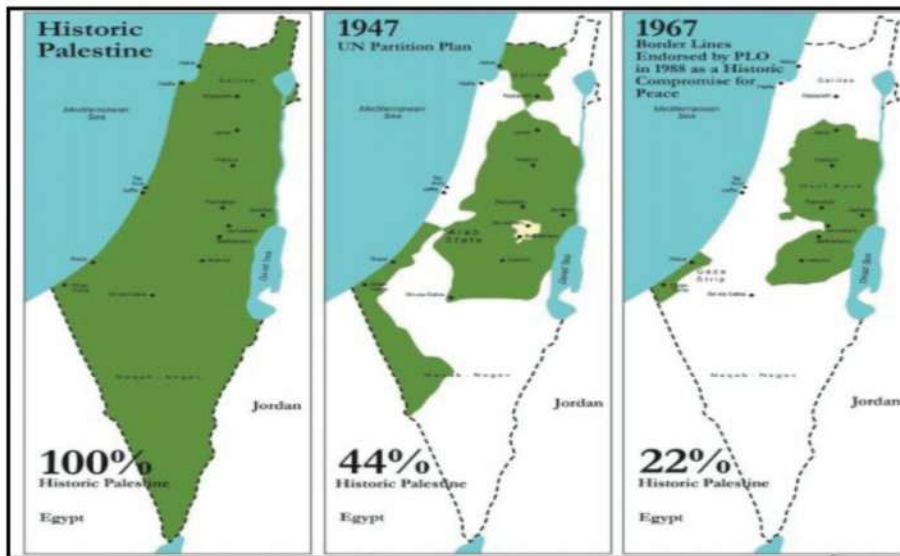


Figure no. 2: Borders' evolution of the historical territory of Palestine²⁷

Thus, the immediate result of Israel's self-declaration as a state was the unfolding of the three major Arab-Israeli wars (1948-1949, 1967, 1973) previously presented, but also of other lesser conflicts (1956-Suez Crisis, 1982-First Lebanese War, 2006-Second Lebanese War), all representing open conflicts involving military forces from outside Palestine. But in the long run, the political dispute between the Arab states and Israel has resulted in some of them not recognizing Israel's legitimacy and sovereignty, considering that the lands occupied by Israel by military force belonged to the Palestinian Arabs. However, there were Arab states that used

²⁵ ***, *Interim Agreement between Israel and Egypt*, 4 September, 1975.

²⁶ ***, *The Camp David Accords The Framework for Peace in the Middle East*, 17 September 1978, URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/camp-david-accords-egypt-1978.pdf>, accessed on 20.06.2021.

²⁷ ***, "Mapping Apartheid: 6 Digital Initiatives Reclaiming The Palestinian Map", Scene Arabia, 16 March 2020, URL: <https://scenearabia.com/Life/Mapping-Apartheid-6-Digital-Initiatives-Reclaiming-the-Palestinian-Map?M=True>, accessed on 02.06.2021.



this diplomatic leverage in favor of their political rise. For example, immediately after the first Arab-Israeli war, Iran recognized Israel in 1950, a recognition later withdrawn as a result of the frictions between the two states, amplified by the struggle for regional supremacy. Subsequently, Egypt (1978) and Jordan (1994) signed peace agreements with Israel and established diplomatic relations with Israel, actions determined by national interests: Egypt regained the Sinai Peninsula from Israel, and Jordan ceded as a result of economic and trade incentives granted by Israel and the USA. Oman and Qatar recognized Israel in 1996, but later withdrew their declaration of solidarity with other members of the Arab League who, in 2002, at the suggestion of Saudi Arabia, through the Arab Peace Initiative, promised Israel full diplomatic ties with the Muslim world in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian state situated between the borders existent in 1967, with the capital in East Jerusalem²⁸, a promise that was reiterated at the 2007 and 2017 Arab League Summits.

A key factor in the evolution of the Palestinian situation has been the continued involvement of the USA in the Middle East. The most recent involvement dates back to the tenure of US President Donald Trump (2017-2020), when several decisions were made in clear support of his strategic ally Israel, to the detriment of Palestinians. These included²⁹: the recognition, in 2017, of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel and the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; the legal acceptance, in 2019, of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories (West Bank) and the recognition of the Golan Heights as part of Israel, to the detriment of Syria; declaring in 2020 the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions – BDS (founded to challenge Israeli policies and support Palestinian independence) movement as anti-Semitic; and announcing a two-state solution plan, with the option of Israel to annex the West Bank. These US decisions, obviously in support of the Jewish state, led the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to suspend administrative and security coordination with Israel in May 2020, including the issuance of travel permits. Fighting between Israel and Palestinian armed groups has also continued, especially in the Gaza Strip. However, following US-mediated negotiations, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain resumed relations with the Jewish state in 2020, based on the Abraham Accords, and the Palestinian National Authority in the occupied West Bank, in response, recalled the ambassadors of the two Arab states³⁰

²⁸ *** , *Beirut Declaration on Saudi Peace Initiative*, The Arab Peace Initiative, 28 March 2002.

²⁹ Mirela Atanasiu, “Dinamica conflictualității Orientului Mijlociu și Africii de Nord în pandemie”, in *Dinamica mediului de securitate 2020. Securitatea, între pandemie și competiție*, “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing, 2021, pp. 95-122.

³⁰ *** , “Arab normalisation with Israel in 500 words”, *Al Jazeera*, 23 November 2020, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/23/the-normalisation-of-ties-between-israel-and-arab-countries>, accessed on 12.03.2021.



and relinquished the presidency of the Arab League meetings when the organization refused to sanction these two states' decision to resume ties with Israel.

The PNA's reaction, despite the explicit condition imposed by the two that the Jewish state "refrain from any annexation of the West Bank territories"³¹, is due to the less firm wording, compared, for example, with that advocated by the Saudi foreign minister, in December 2020, that "Saudi Arabia remains open to fully normalize ties with Israel, if Palestinian statehood is provided"³², which clearly shows that the Saudis adhere to the political line established by the Arab Peace Initiative, leaving no room for political interpretations or compromises. In fact, at the end of 2020, among the Arab states of the Middle East that were presented as not recognizing Israel were only Syria, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Lebanon, Qatar and Saudi Arabia³³. Therefore, the oscillations in the political positions of the 20 Arab League states that signed the Arab Peace Initiative are obvious – there are states that strongly support the acceptance of the Palestinian state by Israel and states that gave up supporting the Palestinian cause when the possibility arose of its own national interest.

The second manifestation of the conflict in Palestine is the *Palestinian-Israeli Arab dispute* that erupted with the emergence of a Palestinian identity of Arabs in the territory of historic Palestine. This identity began to assert itself even in Israel, especially in the territories occupied by it after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip). The Palestinian-Israeli conflict stemmed from the inability to determine sovereignty over Palestinian territories that include East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In 1974, the international community (the UN, the Arab League and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation) recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people in these territories, and the *1978 Camp David Accords* recognized their ethnic identity, specifying in the documents that the term "Palestinians" or "Palestinian people" actually refers to "Palestinian Arabs"³⁴. Subsequently, the PLO proclaimed the independence of the state of Palestine in 1988 (currently, the state of Palestine is

³¹ Kenneth Stein, *Israel and Arab-Israeli Conflict Timeline – 1800s to the Present*, Centre for Israel Education, 26 January 2021, URL: <https://israeled.org/israel-and-arab-israeli-conflict-timeline-1800s-to-the-present/>, accessed on 14.03.2021.

³² Lauren Holtmeier, "Saudi Arabia open to full ties with Israel, on condition of Palestine state: Saudi FM", *Al Arabiya*, 5 December 2020, URL: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2020/12/05/Saudi-Arabia-open-to-full-ties-with-Israel-on-condition-of-Palestine-state-Saudi-FM>, accessed on 25.06.2021.

³³ ***, "Israel International Relations: International Recognition of Israel", *Jewish Virtual Library*, URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/international-recognition-of-israel>, accessed on 25.06.2021.

³⁴ ***, *The Camp David Accords The Framework for Peace in the Middle East*, doc. cit., p. 14.



recognized by 139 states of the international community³⁵).

Following the conclusion of the *Oslo Accords* (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements) between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington in 1993, after months of secret negotiations³⁶, the Palestinian National Authority was established as a governing body for the period 1993-1999 and the two state entities recognized each other's right to exist³⁷. Under the accords, control of civil and security affairs in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was transferred to the PNA. Subsequently, in 1994, the process of building the Palestinian state began in the Middle East peace process. All these Palestinian initiatives to move towards a form of statehood in this territory have aroused Israel's dissatisfaction, and the situation has turned into a long-running violent conflict.

This conflict, although with an accentuated political dimension, being first of all a dispute between two nations in order to legitimize their state prevalence in a common territory, also has an external humanitarian dimension. There are currently four million stateless Palestinian refugees in the world, many of them in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, Egypt, Libya, other parts of the Arab world or the Gulf, as well as in Europe, North America, Australia, etc.³⁸ This situation persists, although the Commission for the Conciliation of Palestine has been established since 1949 to support the parties in reaching a political solution on the rights of Palestinian refugees (first generation or their descendants) to return and to be returned their property left in Palestine.

There is also an internal humanitarian dimension to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, manifested by Palestinians being denied civil, political and economic rights and subject to systematic discrimination and denial of basic freedom and dignity, as was often shown in reports issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights³⁹.

The military dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was mainly concentrated in the Intifadas, which consisted of Palestinians protests and riots in

³⁵ ***, "Diplomatic Relations", Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, New York, URL: <https://palestineun.org/about-palestine/diplomatic-relations/>, accessed on 25.06.2021.

³⁶ ***, *The Oslo Accords*, 13 September 1993.

³⁷ ***, *Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition, Letters and Speeches*, 10 September 1993.

³⁸ Cindi Katz, Neil Smith, "An interview with Edward Said", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 21, 2003, p. 637, URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1068/d2106i>, accessed on 18.06.2021.

³⁹ Examples of such reports: ***, *A/71/355, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, Report of the Secretary-General*, UN General Assembly, 24 August 2016; ***, *A/71/364, Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Report of the Secretary-General, UN General Assembly, 30 August 2016.



particular in the occupied territories, but also throughout Israel: the first (December 1987-1993), was triggered as a result of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza; the second (September 2000-2005), was triggered by the tightening of living conditions for Palestinians in the occupied territories (deportations, demolition of houses, collective punishment, state of siege, suppression of political institutions)⁴⁰. To these Intifadas, the Israeli army responded in force. Regarding the first Intifada, Human Rights Watch said that in the first 31 months, Israeli security forces killed more than 670 Palestinians and wounded many thousands more⁴¹.

The revolutionary struggle waged by the Palestinians materialized mainly in the activity of two Palestinian movements that dominate the Israeli occupied territories: *Fatah* – former Palestinian National Liberation Movement –, nationalist social-democratic political party, part of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority President is a member, and *Hamas* – a radical Islamic movement backed by Iran. Each of them fights with the available military means against the occupation of Israel, but, from a political point of view, they are also rivals. The formal political separation between Hamas and Fatah dates back to June 2007, when Hamas militias took over the Gaza Strip after attacking Fatah-led Palestinian Authority security forces. This separation led to the establishment, by presidential decree, of an interim government in the West Bank, and Hamas retained its own government in Gaza⁴². Currently, each has a monopoly on the force in its controlled area.

Sometimes a more acute form of political violence has been expressed in conflict. For example, the Federation of American Scientists states that in the 1970s several PLO-affiliated groups carried out international terrorist attacks, but later, under international pressure, Fatah/PLO stated that it would restrict attacks on Israel and the occupied territories. However, terrorist attacks were later reported by Fatah-affiliated groups against targets inside and outside Israel.⁴³ As for Hamas, according to one of its aims stated in its Organizational Charter – the destruction of Israel⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*, Indiana University Press, US, 1994, p. 677.

⁴¹ ***, “The Israeli Army and the Intifada Policies that Contribute to the Killings”, *Human Rights Watch Report*, August 1990, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/israel/intifada-intro.htm>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴² Margret Johannsen (coordinator), “The Reconciliation of Hamas and Fatah Smoothing the Way to the Middle East Conference by Contributing to Peace and Security in the Region”, *Policy brief for the Middle East Conference on a WMD/DVS free zone*, no. 3, December 2011, p. 1.

⁴³ ***, *Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)*, Federation of American Scientists, URL: <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/plo.htm>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴⁴ ***, *The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)*, translated and annotated by Raphael Israeli, Harry Truman Research Institute, The Hebrew University,



(a state recognized by much of the international community) –, it was considered a broad-based terrorist organization (Hamas is still designated as a terrorist organization by Israel, USA, EU, Japan and Canada), but the fact that it used its social services to support the Arabs in Palestine gave it legitimacy from the local population. After 2017, when it issued a new principle document of the organization⁴⁵ from which the radical formulations were removed and on the background that it fought and is fighting for the establishment of a (Islamic) Palestinian state, Hamas also won the sympathy of a part of the international community, being seen by them as a revolutionary organization and a future political option for the Palestinian government.

In terms of *religious dispute*, Palestine has been the scene of violent clashes between Mosaic and Muslim practitioners for 100 years. The motivation of the Jews is that, for them, Palestine is the “Promised Land”, Israel being the only country in the world where they form the majority of the population, and for fundamentalist Muslims the whole of historical Palestine must be under Islamic rule. Jerusalem is also home to holy places for Christians, Muslims and Jews alike, being claimed as the capital by both Israelis and Palestinians, and for Christians it is the “Holy City”, the birthplace of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jerusalem has 1,200 synagogues and over 150 churches derived from the 17 Christian denominations⁴⁶ and 73 mosques⁴⁷. The parties justify their requirements by providing, as historical evidence of their right of pre-emption over the historical territory of Palestine, interpretations of the Bible, the Talmud and/or the Qur’an. Therefore, the fact that the Israeli Parliament declared “the whole of Jerusalem as the indivisible capital of Israel”⁴⁸ had a double consequence that aroused discontent in the region. On the one hand, a capital, no matter where it is located, reconfirms the existence of a state, Israel’s decision contradicting the policy of Arab states that denies legitimacy as a state of Israel and, on the other hand, establishing the capital in Jerusalem hierarchize the Mosaic religion over other religions. Israel’s decision, although

Jerusalem, Israel, URL: <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818.htm>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴⁵ ***, *Hamas: General Principles and Policies*, Jewish Virtual Library, 2017, URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hamas-2017-document-of-general-principles-and-policies>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴⁶ ***, “What Is The Holy City Of Christianity?”, *The World Atlas*, URL: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-holy-city-of-christianity.html>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴⁷ ***, *Behind the Headlines: Facts and Figures - Islam in Israel*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 9 June 2016, URL: <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Issues/Pages/Facts-and-Figures-Islam-in-Israel.aspx>, accessed on 19.06.2021.

⁴⁸ ***, “Cui îi aparține Orașul Sfânt? Șase întrebări despre statutul Ierusalimului”, *Deutsche Welle*, 06.12.2017, URL: <https://www.dw.com/ro/cui-%C3%AEi-apar%C8%9Bine-ora%C8%99ul-sf%C3%A2nt-%C8%99ase-%C3%AEntreb%C4%83ri-despre-statutul-ierusalimului/a-41678762>, accessed on 19.06.2021.



unapproved by the international community, has triggered new ethno-religious tensions in the modern era between Muslims (Arabs or other ethnic groups), Jews (Israelis or Palestinians) and Christians, regardless of whether they are from Israel or its occupied territories.

Against this background of religious tensions, community violence is taking place in the occupied territories between ethnic Arab Palestinians and Christians, on the one hand, and Jews, on the other, some of them carried out violently, with the help of firearms or improvised explosive devices. Also, although there are these religious factors relevant to Islam, Christianity and Judaism, which dictate the role of religion as the main factor in the conflict in the region, this side of the conflict has faded in recent times, and the focus moved on the conflict within Israel, carried out in the occupied territories inhabited by Palestinians. Moreover, whether considered “Arab” or “Islamic”, the unresolved issue of Palestine plays an important role in the development of the currents of Arab nationalism and political Islam, both related to the emergence of extremist movements such as Hamas which, under religious impetus, become a model of insecurity in the region.

3. The Palestinian Issue in the First Half of 2021 and Evolutionary Trends

Israel still occupies the West Bank, although it got out of the Gaza Strip in 2005, therefore the UN still considers it part of the occupied territory, as Israel retains full military control over it, managing its borders and airspace, restricting what is allowed in inside and outside and periodically engaging in the territory with armed forces. Israel also claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital city, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. The Fatah government in the West Bank is the only internationally recognized representative of the state of Palestine, so it refers to the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian state and does not recognize the Hamas government. However, the two, Fatah and Hamas, have reached an agreement to allow a joint Palestinian presidential election to be held, allowing the leadership of the Palestinian state composed of the two occupied territories by a single president.

The Gaza Strip has a population of about 2.1 million people, including about 1.4 million Palestinian refugees and a steadily declining socio-economic situation⁴⁹. The main problem that needs to be urgently solved is the humanitarian issue, stemming from the fact that in Gaza about 80% of the population depends on international aid and about one million people rely on daily food aid⁵⁰. In fact, in 2020, the average

⁴⁹ ***, “Gaza Strip”, *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*, 2021, URL: <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip>, accessed on 20.06.2021.

⁵⁰ ***, “Israel-Palestinian conflict: Life in the Gaza Strip”, *BBC News*, 20 May 2021, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20415675>, accessed on 21.06.2021.



unemployment rate got near 50%, one of the highest in the world, and the trend has gotten worse in 2021. Socio-economic problems are also related to access to clean water and electricity, as the clean water is available to a small margin of the population and electricity is delivered only a few hours a day, which negatively affects all other essential services, especially health and sanitation, but also the production and agricultural sectors in Gaza. Moreover, the blockade imposed by Israel, on land, air and sea, following Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, continues to have a devastating effect due to the fact that population movements to and from the Gaza Strip, as well as access to markets, remain severely restricted. This situation persists, although at the level of the international community (especially the UN), it has been found that the blockade and its restrictions are contrary to international humanitarian law, due to the difficulties caused to the civilian population.

In the West Bank, between 2.1 and 3 million Palestinian Arabs are under both limited self-government and Israeli military leadership, along with about 430,000 Israeli Jews living in 132 settlements (and 124 smaller "outposts") built under the occupation of Israel⁵¹. But of these, 900,000 Palestinians in an Israeli-controlled area (including East Jerusalem) that spans more than 60 percent of its territory have limited access to water, health care, education and other critical services. According to the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Bureau (ECHO), as a result of violence, intimidation and non-construction permits, the Palestinian population is increasingly forced to evacuate and has their homes and infrastructure demolished, which has intensified despite the pandemic, Palestinians being separated from their land and families, as well as from schools, hospitals, jobs and places of worship⁵².

The beginning of 2021 finds the occupied territories in a tense environment, with intermittent violent escalations, marked by rocket launches and air strikes. For example, on January 18-19, three missiles were launched from Gaza into southern Israel, followed by Israeli airstrikes⁵³. Also, on at least 84 occasions, Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinians near the fence built by Israel and off the coast of the Gaza Strip, an increase of about 14% in conflict action compared to the monthly average of these incidents recorded in 2020⁵⁴. Such actions persisted in the coming months, however, with violence remaining relatively low. Moreover, some UN

⁵¹ ***, "Explainer: Israel, annexation and the West Bank", *BBC News*, 25 June 2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-52756427>, accessed on 18.06.2021.

⁵² ***, "Palestine", European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, European Commission, 17/11/2020, p. 1, URL: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/palestine_2020-11-18.pdf, accessed on 18.06.2021.

⁵³ ***, "Gaza Strip: Snapshot - January 2021", *OCHA*, 2021, URL: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/gaza_snapshot_january_2021.pdf, accessed on 20.06.2021.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.



officials were optimistic, arguing that the Israeli and Palestinian elections to be held in 2021 could pave the way for the restoration of a legitimate political horizon in the Middle East⁵⁵. But in late April 2021, amid evictions and confiscations of some Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem, tensions rallied in Jerusalem over protests and civil demonstrations by Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza.

Another factor that sparked popular discontent in the West Bank was the restriction by Israeli security forces of access and limitation of Palestinian movement to the Al-Aqsa Mosque⁵⁶ in Jerusalem's old city in the last days of Ramadan. Thus, civil demonstrations erupted that culminated in the May 7 clashes, at the mosque, between Palestinians armed with stones and incendiary bottles and Israeli forces using tear gas, grenades and rubber bullets, resulting in 25 Palestinians killed and 6,309 wounded throughout the West Bank, of which at least one Palestinian was killed in East Jerusalem and 1,011 wounded⁵⁷.

From Gaza on May 10, Palestinian armed groups began firing missiles at populated areas of Israel after Hamas issued an ultimatum to Israeli forces to withdraw from the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and they did not comply. Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, launched missiles at Jerusalem⁵⁸, with the Israeli army retaliating with missiles and artillery, targeting populated areas of the Gaza Strip⁵⁹. On this occasion, the Israeli armed forces said they had killed a top commander of the Islamic Jihad armed group, Hussam Abu Harbeed⁶⁰. According to Gaza authorities, at least 219 Palestinians were killed in the military clashes that took place between May 10 and 20, of which at least 63 children and 35 women and another 1,570 people were injured⁶¹. The situation is all the worse as the health system in Gaza, already overwhelmed by many years of blockade and the COVID-

⁵⁵ ***, *SC/14453, Upcoming Israeli, Palestinian Elections Could Pave Way to Restoring Legitimate Political Horizon in Middle East, Top Official Tells Security Council*, United Nations, 26 February 2021, URL: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14453.doc.htm>, accessed on 23.06.2021.

⁵⁶ A.N.: Al Aqsa is one of the most revered places of Islam, but also the holiest place in Judaism. Details: ***, "Al-Aqsa mosque: Dozens hurt in Jerusalem clashes", *BBC News*, 8 May 2021, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-57034237>, accessed on 23.06.2021.

⁵⁷ ***, "Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Israel", *Situation Report No. 1*, United Nations Population Fund, 13 April - 20 May 2021, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Adnan Abu Amer, "How the Gaza war affected Palestinian politics", *Al Jazeera*, 7 June 2021, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/6/7/gaza-war-leaves-its-mark-on-the-palestinian-political-system>, accessed on 20.06.2021.

⁵⁹ ***, "Q&A: 2021 Hostilities between Israel and Palestinian Armed Groups", *Human Rights Watch*, 28 May 2021, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/28/qa-2021-hostilities-between-israel-and-palestinian-armed-groups>, accessed on 22.06.2021.

⁶⁰ Virginia Pietromarchi, Usaid Siddiqui, "Israel kills Islamic Jihad commander, Gaza death toll above 200", *Al Jazeera*, 17 May 2021, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/17/israel-launches-heavier-raids-in-second-week-of-gaza-bombing>, accessed on 23.06.2021.

⁶¹ ***, "Escalation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Israel", *op. cit.*



19 pandemic, is overworked.

Israeli attacks have caused widespread destruction and damage to civilian buildings (government buildings, residential complexes, headquarters of international humanitarian organizations, medical facilities, media offices and roads linking civilians to essential services, such as hospitals), which can be non-discriminatory attacks and disproportionate to civilians and civilian objects, respectively war crimes⁶². In fact, between April 13 and May 17 alone, the World Health Organization reported at least 91 attacks on medical units in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (70 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 21 in the Gaza Strip)⁶³. In fact, the overall situation of Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza has deteriorated significantly as a result of escalating violence in May 2021. At the same time, missiles fired by Hamas, the Islamic Jihad group and other armed Palestinian groups have killed 10 Israeli citizens and residents, including two children, and forced thousands of Israelis to take refuge in shelters⁶⁴. However, most of the missiles fired by Palestinian armed groups were blocked by the Israeli air defence system.

Following the launch of reciprocal airstrikes, Israel, through its UN representative, sent a letter to the Security Council invoking Israel's right and duty to defend its people and sovereignty and calling on the international community to uphold its "fundamental right to self-defence"⁶⁵. On the other hand, Palestine argued that "the principle of self-defence cannot be applied by Israel to itself in the occupied territory of the state of Palestine"⁶⁶. Following this correspondence, on 27 May the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, which mandated the Human Rights Council to establish, as a matter of urgency, a permanent, independent and international commission of inquiry to investigate, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel, all the alleged violations and abuses registered, starting with April 13, 2021, in order to be able to identify the causes of the recurring tensions

⁶² ***, "Statement by Michelle Bachelet UN High Commissioner for Human Rights", *Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Geneva, 27 May 2021.

⁶³ ***, "Escalation in Occupied Palestinian Territory", Issue 2, *World Health Organization*, 17 May 2021, p. 1.

⁶⁴ ***, *SC/14521, Senseless Cycle of Bloodshed, Destruction between Israel, Palestinians in Gaza Must Stop Now, Secretary-General Tells Security Council*, UNSC, 16 May 2021, URL: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14521.doc.htm>, accessed on 22.06.2021.

⁶⁵ ***, *21 May 2021 – Letter on Article 51 – Self-Defense*, Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, New York, 2021, URL: <https://palestineun.org/21-may-2021-letter-on-article-51-self-defense/>, accessed on 24.06.2021.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.



but also of the instability and prolongation of the conflict⁶⁷.

Tensions continued in June, albeit on a lower note, despite the ceasefire agreement reached on May 21, 2021 and the meeting of Egyptian mediators with Israeli and Hamas officials to try to support the Israeli-Hamas armistice. In fact, after a calmer period, in which Israel's domestic political forces were more concerned with the removal of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from power in mid-June, after the change of government, Israel resumed airstrikes in force on the Gaza Strip, in response to incendiary balloons sent across the border by Palestinian armed groups.

The trends identified regarding the Palestinian issue in mid-2021 are: the stagnation of the political effort made by the parties towards establishing the statehood of Palestine; the possible increased dynamics of the mutual military effort between Hamas and Israel; gaining a Hamas image capital over Fatah, which can give it an advantage in the presidential election with an uncertain future.

Political stalemate in the process of obtaining Palestinian statehood emerged at the time of Mahmoud Abbas' decision to postpone elections in the Palestinian territories, based on the finding that the organization of elections in East Jerusalem is not facilitated by Israel. But the change of US administration, taken over by Joe Biden, the arrival of Isaac Herzog as the President of Israel and the replacement of former Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, suspected of corruption, with Naftali Bennet, are factors that can bring advantages to Palestinian negotiations with Israel. However, there is still a risk that the decisions of the newly empowered politicians, whether they are taken at random or partisan, on the current background of maintaining the conflict between Hamas and Israel at an oscillating intensity, will present the danger of new violent escalations, destroying the ceasefire agreement, already weakened by recent actions. In fact, the Arab mass-media claims that Bennet is a supporter of Jewish settlements and the annexation of most of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and opposes a two-state solution⁶⁸. In the American studies, President Biden is seen as a supporter of the two-state solution as the only viable solution to the conflict and seeking to reset relations with the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah⁶⁹, and Herzog is presented by news agencies that he "opts

⁶⁷ ***, A/HRC/47/57, *Agenda item 7. Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, Human Rights Council Forty seventh session, 21 June–9 July 2021, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Anchal Vohra, "Will Israel's Bennett be worse than Bibi for Palestinians?", *Al Jazeera*, 17 June 2021, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/17/will-bennett-be-worse-than-bibi>, accessed on 20.06.2021.

⁶⁹ Hesham Youssef, "10 Things to Know: Biden's Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *United States Institute of Peace*, 10 June, 2021, URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/10-things-know-bidens-approach-israeli-palestinian-conflict>, accessed on 20.06.2021.



for maintaining dialogue with the Palestinian leaders”⁷⁰. We consider that, although the Middle East Quartet, made up of the European Union, the Russian Federation, the USA and the United Nations, is focused on returning to negotiations with a two-state solution to the Palestinian problem, the opposition of an Israel that remains inflexible and unsanctioned for the violations of international law in relation to the Palestinians, as well as the lack of political unity between the two Palestinian governments in the West Bank and Gaza are major obstacles in this direction.

As for Hamas’ image gain, it was based on two concrete issues. In the West Bank, President Mahmoud Abbas has extended for months the state of emergency declared for the COVID-19 pandemic, restricting the right of movement of Palestinians, the last period being set until the beginning of July 2021⁷¹, although the overall medical situation had improved significantly compared to Gaza, where Hamas eased restrictions as SARS-CoV-2 cases declined in number and intensity. Also, Abbas’s reaction to the Israeli armed forces’ demonstrations by Palestinians, which was limited to speech, was seen as weak and inappropriate by public opinion, where the population took to the streets in solidarity with Palestinians in Jerusalem and Gaza. Moreover, in this context, the discontent people demanded an end to the Palestinian National Authority’s “security cooperation” with Israel, some of them singing pro-Hamas anthems during demonstrations, and PNA security forces also intervened and attacked the protesters, arresting some activists⁷². The violent intervention of the Palestinian Authority’s security forces is another aspect for which Hamas, already seen in support of the raids on Israel by the demonstrative population, has gained popularity, meaning more chances to take over the presidency of the Palestinian territories, whether a consensus will be reached on the organization of the presidential elections.

Conclusions

Of the one part, in the history of Palestine, the involvement of Western colonizers, Zionists and neighboring Arab countries has played an instrumental role in shaping the course of the Palestinian problem. Of the other part, the Palestinian problem sets the regional dynamic as one of the main factors shaping Middle East policy, due to its threefold conflict: the Arab-Israeli problem, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the religious conflict. Israel is at the heart of the multidimensional

⁷⁰ Gulsen Topcu, *Israeli president pledges to maintain dialogue with Palestinian counterpart*, Anadolu Agency, 12.07.2021, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-president-pledges-to-maintain-dialogue-with-palestinian-counterpart/2301487>, accessed on 20.06.2021.

⁷¹ ***, “Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report 77”, *World Health Organization*, 17 June 2021.

⁷² Adnan Abu Amer, *art. cit.*



conflict in Palestine, manifested in the three existing conflicts. The Palestinians are backed by Israel, supported by the Arab world, which, in turn, is supported by the Muslim world. Israel has been supported by the USA since its inception as a state. The USA have regional interests mainly related to securing their energy sources and counteracting the influence of Iran and Russia, which have been successfully promoted by Israel, which is why most of the time American policy has tilted in favor of this state even when fundamental human rights have been violated; this has led to a stalemate in the process of implementing the two-state solution or at least in advancing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The side of the Palestinian problem manifested by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict within the occupied territories is the most acute at the moment, with the religious and Arab-Israeli conflict taking a back seat as a level of intensity. This transgression took place in stages marked by different historical periods, starting with the inter-communal (religiously based) conflict between Jews and Arabs during the British Mandate, then the emphasis shifted to the ethnic dimension of the Palestinians' right to statehood (when the Israel state was created and the outbreak of the inter-state conflict marked by the three main Arab-Israeli wars), and then the emphasis shifted to the political dimension marked by the desire to delimit territoriality between Israelis and Palestinian Arabs.

With regard to the occupied territories, there are currently some major issues here: the political divide in the Palestinian arena between Hamas and Fatah; security tensions between Hamas and Israel; how to establish Palestine (as an independent state or as an autonomous political entity vis-à-vis Israel), how to regulate the situation of Jerusalem and the Jews living in Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem).

The escalation of the conflict in May 2021 was directly linked to the exaggerated response by Israeli security forces to protests in East Jerusalem at the al-Aqsa Mosque, which then spread throughout the occupied Palestinian territory and also in Israel.

The consequences of the indiscriminate destruction by the Israeli air force of Palestinian infrastructure, especially water, sanitation and electricity, as well as medical infrastructure, will cause considerable and long-term social effects on the population of Gaza, deepening the already existing humanitarian crisis and appearing at risk of increasing the effects of the pandemic. Moreover, the unilateral actions of the actors involved continue to erode the perspective of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state, moving the parties away from constructive dialogue and compromise.

After decades of failed peace negotiations and initiatives, a first step toward pacifying the region is to grant equal rights to Arab Jews and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as equal access to Jerusalem for representatives of all religions that have holy places here. In this regard, USA must make a change



in the type of policy pursued in the Palestinian issue and shift the focus from supporting, with priority, its strategic partner, Israel, to an approach based on equal rights between the two sides. A plus for such an approach, based on the actual implementation of respect for the rights of ethnic Jews and Arabs in Palestine, is compatible with the revival of the two-state solution, while remaining open to other political alternatives.

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RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 6 JANUARY 2021 ASSAULT ON THE US CONGRESS

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On January 6, 2021, an angry mob attacked security forces and stormed the United States Congress, a significant portion of which carried placards containing Christian symbols and manifested ultra-religious conduct. The crowd chanted religious slogans and songs mixed with extremist ideological-political landmarks, QAnon conspiracy theories and racist attitudes. The protesters also followed a ritual found in the Bible, in the Old Testament, in the book of Joshua Navi, an Israelite leader to whom God indicated how he would conquer the City of Jericho, full of corrupt and fornicating people if he obeyed the divine command. The participants in the assault followed the same ritual to “conquer” the fortress of the Capitol a month before and repeated it starting with January 5, 2021.

Since religion is the belief in God and represents the relationship between the faithful man and divinity, the acquisition of elements of political ideology by ultra-religious people was considered natural and mandatory in shaping a society to develop on Christian principles in the form of a “Christian city”.

In this article, by analyzing the attitude of the Christian community in two distinct phases, before and during and after the assault on the US Congress, the result of the manifestation of the phenomenon of ultra-religiosity combined with an extremist political ideology will be revealed.

Keywords: *QAnon movement; ultra-religion; the assault on the US Congress; extremist politics; religious symbols; political ideology; conspiracy theories.*

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Introduction

On various occasions throughout history, religious faith has been used as a justification for committing violence, initiated by its practitioners in the name of divinity. Thus, the most violent actions were justified by religious beliefs; for ultra-religious followers, their faith is the only thing that matters, and for those who practice it, religious extremism is considered legitimate from their own perspective.

The same happened in the case of the assault on the Congress of the United States of America (USA) in which many ultra-religious people participated, some of them being exponents of far-right or religious groups and organizations. They were convinced that they had no choice but to storm the US legislature and prevent it from certifying the election of President-elect Joseph Robinette Biden.

Sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer argues that “many of them were white heterosexual Christians, disturbed by the increasing multiculturalism of American society and the attempts to expand governmental power to provide welfare benefits to all. For a variety of reasons they felt alienated and humiliated in a new world order that seems to leave them behind”.¹

Moreover, the assault on the US Congress involved ultra-religious people who were firmly convinced that they were “participants in a kind of holy war”.² In fact, some of them admitted that they traveled significant distances, thousands of miles, to participate in the protest because they received a “sign from God” and were encouraged by the pastors of the congregations they were part of to “stop the steal”.³ The opinion of some of them was that the fight is between good and evil, darkness against light,⁴ thus justifying their participation in this action. In fact, Tom Gjelten, a researcher of the phenomenon, states that Nationalist Christians and militants are “a strong force” in society, and against the background of deep political convictions they reject the surrounding “reality” and, like any fanatic, become violent.⁵ Other

¹ Mark Juergensmeyer, “The three qualities marking the Capitol assault as terrorism”, in *Religion Dispatches*, January 8, 2021, URL: <https://religiondispatches.org/the-three-qualities-marking-the-capitol-assault-as-terrorism/>, accessed on 08.03.2021.

² Elizabeth Dias, Ruth Graham, “How White Evangelical Christians Fused With Trump Extremism – A potent mix of grievance and religious fervor has turbocharged the support among Trump loyalists, many of whom describe themselves as participants in a kind of holy war”, in *The New York Times*, January 19, 2021, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/us/how-white-evangelical-christians-fused-with-trump-extremism.html>, accessed on 12.03.2021.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Tom Gjelten, “Militant Christian Nationalists Remain a Potent Force, Even after the Capitol Riot”, in *NPR*, January 19, 2021, URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/19/958159202/militant-christian-nationalists-remain-a-potent-force>, accessed on 06.03.2021.



authors believe that such a phenomenon is not new and did not appear untimely, but has developed in recent years amid a “potent mix of grievance and religious fervor”.⁶

Against such a background of widespread dissatisfaction not clearly located, by presenting seemingly solid arguments to support their accusations, with the combination of QAnon conspiracy theories (election fraud, the existence of the parallel child abuser and corrupt state, etc.) The Bible and political ideology, in all this acquiring not only nationalist Christians, but also far-right groups and organizations, it was inevitable that the exponents of the phenomenon would trigger violence and come into conflict with the authorities. More serious and with short and medium term repercussions is the full conviction of the exponents of such a phenomenon that it is their divine right to create a society as they see it from their own perspective without taking into account the wishes of others.

1. The Attitude of Members of Christian Congregations Before the Assault on the United States Congress

Just days before the inauguration of the new US President Joseph Robinette Biden on January 20, 2021, Darryl Knappen, pastor of the Cornerstone Church Christian Congregation in Alexandria, Minnesota, refused to accept his democratic election and “even declaring himself willing to take up arms” to support incumbent President Donald Trump. In a Facebook post, the cleric likened the current situation in the United States to that of the American Revolution which took place over two hundred years ago. “It was pastors who led the way in colonial times to encourage our country to shake off the totalitarian regime of the king of England”, said the cleric, referring to the “Black Robed Regiment”, the name given to pastors who supported and became actively involved in the War of Independence of the United States of America against the United Kingdom.⁷

Franklin Graham, one of the leaders of a major religious congregation, predicted four months before the assault on the US Congress what would happen. Thus, on August 28, 2020, he declared “I think God brought him here for this season, for these four years”,⁸ referring to Donald Trump, the incumbent president at the time. Graham also stated, “I believe the storm is coming. You’re going to see

⁶ Elizabeth Dias, Ruth Graham, *op. cit.*

⁷ Tom Gjelten, “Militant Christian Nationalists Remain A Potent Force, Even After The Capitol Riot”, *op. cit.*

⁸ David Brody, “Exclusive: Franklin Graham Tells CBN News He Thinks Democratic Party is ‘Opposed to Faith’”, in *CBN News*, 08-28-2020, URL: <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/2020/august/exclusive-franklin-graham-tells-news-he-thinks-democrats-are-opposed-to-faith>, accessed on 06.03.2021.



Christians attacked; you're going to see churches close; you're going to see a real hatred expressed toward people of faith. That's coming."⁹ Religious participants in the assault on the Capitol were convinced that "God anointed" Donald Trump to lead the United States and that his appointments to key positions in the state were part of the objectives of the restoration of "the United States as a Christian nation." Following the presidential election and their winning by Joe Biden, they showed their loyalty "to their divine leader"¹⁰

Regarding the accumulation of tension in Christian communities, Jerushah Duford, the granddaughter of the late American preacher Billy Graham, said that what happened on January 6, 2021 was the result of tension accumulated among religious people before the event.¹¹ In fact, in the weeks leading up to the event, there were organizations that "worked to foment a bellicose Christian narrative in defence of Trump's coup attempt and justify a holy war against an illegitimate state."¹² Among them is the Christian group Jericho March, formed in late November 2020 by two employees of Christian organizations, Arina Grossu and Rob Weaver, with the aim to "prayerfully protest and call on government officials to cast light on voter fraud, corruption, and suppression of the will of the American people in this election."¹³ The group's involvement in the assault on the Capitol highlighted the opposite of their statements, as well as the organization in the preamble of a march on December 12, 2020 in Washington, that degenerated into violence. Also, during the protest, the participants amalgamated conspiracy theories and "battle cries with appeals to Christianity."¹⁴

In the same vein, Christian publicist and journalist Eric Metaxas stated on December 9, 2020 on a radio show, "We need to do absolutely everything we can. What's going to happen is going to happen. But we need to fight to the death, to the last drop of blood, because it's worth it."¹⁵ Later, on December 12, 2020, Metaxas led a religious gathering called The Jericho March in Washington where, along with other participants, they "implored God to keep Trump in office."¹⁶ According to the

⁹ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰ Sarah Posner, "How the Christian Right Helped Foment Insurrection – Christian-right activists inside and outside of government promoted the election fraud lie and claimed God told them to "let the church roar", in *Rolling Stone*, January 31, 2021, URL: <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/capitol-christian-right-trump-1121236/>, accessed on 08.03.2021.

¹¹ Ed Pilkington, "Evangelical leaders condemn role of Christian nationalism in Capitol attack", in *The Guardian*, 24 February 2021, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/24/evangelical-leaders-christian-nationalism-capitol-riot>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

¹² Sarah Posner, *art. cit.*

¹³ *Ibidem.*

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ Tom Gjelten, "Militant Christian Nationalists Remain A Potent Force, Even After The Capitol Riot", *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibidem.*



statement of the group Jericho March of January 14, 2021, posted on its website, this is a “peaceful prayer march where people of Judeo-Christian faith pray together, sing songs, and blow *shofars*”¹⁷.¹⁸

Robert Weaver, co-founder of Jericho March, present at the march on December 12, 2020, which replicated the biblical ritual that took place over the city of Jericho, told participants that “God had appeared to him in a vision after Biden’s election victory and told him, “It’s not over.”¹⁹ Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the OathKeepers militia, was also present at the march, stating that “he hoped Trump would use the Insurrection Act to “drop the hammer” on his opponents.”²⁰ Rhodes also said that God “needs to know” from each person that he is with Him and that “if he does not do it now, we’re going to have to do it ourselves later, in a much more desperate, much more bloody war.”²¹

Pastor Greg Locke²² stated in a book published in September 2020 entitled “This Means War” that “We are one election away”, referring to the US presidential election in November 2020, “from losing everything we hold dear”, and the struggle is “against everything evil and wicked in the world.”²³ This is “a rallying of the troops of God’s holy army. This is our day. This is our time. This means something for the Kingdom. As a matter of fact, THIS MEANS WAR.”²⁴ The day before the assault on the Chapter, Pastor Greg Locke wrote a message on the social networking platform Twitter calling on believers in the American capital: “May the fire of the Holy Spirit fall upon Washington DC today and tomorrow. May the Lamb of God be exalted. Let God arise and His enemies be brought low”²⁵; the post is no longer

¹⁷ Horns of rams used by ancient Jews in religious ceremonies as well as a signal of struggle.

¹⁸ ***, “Statement from Jericho March”, *Jericho March website*, January 14, 2021. URL: <https://jerichomarch.org/>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

¹⁹ Tom Gjelten, “Militant Christian Nationalists Remain A Potent Force, Even After The Capitol Riot”, *op. cit.*.

²⁰ *Ibidem.*

²¹ *Ibidem.*

²² Founder of *Global Vision Bible Church* based in Mount Juliet, Tennessee.

²³ Thomas B. Edsall, “The Capitol Insurrection Was as Christian Nationalist as It Gets.’ Religious resentment has become a potent recruiting tool for the hard right”, in *The New York Times*, January 28, 2021, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/opinion/christian-nationalists-capitol-attack.html>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

²⁴ Greg Locke, *This Means War: We Will Not Surrender through Silence*, Locke Media Publishing, 2020, *apud* Thomas B. Edsall, “The Capitol Insurrection Was as Christian Nationalist as It Gets’. Religious resentment has become a potent recruiting tool for the hard right”, in *The New York Times*, January 28, 2021, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/opinion/christian-nationalists-capitol-attack.html>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

²⁵ Greg Locke, *Twitter account “Pastor Locke”*, URL: <https://twitter.com/pastorlocke/status/1346476581904994309>, accessed on 12.03.2021, *apud* Thomas B. Edsall, “The Capitol Insurrection Was as Christian Nationalist as It Gets’ Religious resentment has become a potent recruiting tool for the hard right”, in *The New York Times*, January 28, 2021, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/opinion/christian-nationalists-capitol-attack.html>, accessed on 09.03.2021.



available from March 12, 2021.²⁶

On January 5, 2021, a religious procession took place in Washington organized by “fervent religious supporters of President Trump”, whom they named Jericho March, similar to the Christian organization of the same name. They waved Christian crosses and sang religious songs as they circled the US Congress, asking God to help them conquer the building, replicating the biblical account of the siege of Jericho by the Israelites.²⁷ The parallelism made with the biblical Jericho is determined by the conception of the followers of the Jericho March movement regarding the US Congress, namely that it is identical with Jericho, “a city of false gods and corruption.”²⁸ This statement posted on its own website by Jericho March was deleted on March 11, 2021.²⁹

Proponents of the far-right QAnon movement were also involved in the assault on the US Congress. Long before this moment, QAnon’s conspiracy theories about the existence of “a satanic, child-sex-trafficking deep state”, shaped the faith of religious people and prepared “the shock troops” for intervention against those who stole the election, a belief that became “article of faith”.³⁰ Also, among the far-right groups that demonstrated on January 6, 2021 in the assault on the US Congress was “Proud Boys” – an organization that supports the supremacy of the white race and previously, on December 12, 2020, members of the group had participated armed in a protest in Washington organized by Jericho March – and “The Three Percenters” – a far-right militant movement.³¹

Therefore, the attitude of some followers of Christianity was frustrating, tense and full of hatred, even before the assault on the US Congress on January 6, 2021, they resorted to the springs of religious faith to achieve their goals including changing the social order. The protesters chose the American Congress because they represent the state and, according to their own conception, they no longer represent them, in the sense that they considered that the people must re-enter natural rights and take control of that institution, which is fundamental for any democracy.

[nytimes.com/2021/01/28/opinion/christian-nationalists-capitol-attack.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/28/opinion/christian-nationalists-capitol-attack.html), accessed on 09.03.2021.

²⁶ Greg Locke, *Twitter account “Pastor Locke”*, URL: <https://twitter.com/pastorlocke/status/1346476581904994309>, accessed on 12.03.2021.

²⁷ Harry Farley, “Trump’s Christian supporters and the march on the Capitol”, in *BBC News*, 15 January 2021, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55578096>, accessed on 10.03.2021.

²⁸ Jericho March, *Statement on the Jericho March website*, December 2020, URL: <https://jerichomarch.org/2020/12/elementor-2213/>, accessed on 11.03.2021, *apud* Emma Green, “A Christian Insurrection – Many of those who mobbed the Capitol on Wednesday claimed to be enacting God’s will”, in *The Atlantic*, January 8, 2021, URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/01/evangelicals-catholics-jericho-march-capitol/617591/>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

²⁹ Jericho March, *Statement on the Jericho March website*, December 2020, URL: <https://jerichomarch.org/2020/12/elementor-2213/>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

³⁰ Sarah Posner, *art. cit.*

³¹ *Ibidem.*



2. Attitudes of Members of Christian Congregations *During and After the Assault on the United States Congress*

The attitude of some of the religious participants in the assault on the US Congress was an aggressive one as they were firmly convinced of the correctness of their efforts. Even Paula White, Trump’s presidential spiritual adviser, spread information about “demonic plans and networks working on Joe Biden’s behalf”,³² so that during the “Save America” march on January 6, 2021, he invoked “God to give holy boldness in this hour and... to let every adversary against democracy, against freedom, against life, against liberty, against justice, against peace, against righteousness be overturned right now in the name of Jesus”.³³ And Pastor Darryl Knappen said he was tempted to wear the black coat that day and cover his automatic weapon (AR-15) under it,³⁴ such militant rhetoric not being isolated but part of that of Christian leaders.

Members of the far-right organization Proud Boys, before going to the US Congress, “stopped to kneel in the street and prayed in the name of Jesus”. They also asked God for “reformation and revival” and the “restoration of their value systems”, but also for sacred protection in future actions.³⁵ In fact, the participants in the assault on the US Congress appropriated these religious precepts so amalgamated with political ideology that they “literally tore down the walls of government, some believing that they were marching under the banner of Jesus to carry out God’s will to keep Trump in the White House.³⁶ They carried flags with symbolism related to Jesus, recited biblical quotations and gave sermons in loudspeakers, the assault taking place in the name of faith, according to the participants’ own statements.³⁷ Some of them ritually knelt and prayed to God, some carrying a large solid wood cross, others singing shofars, and others holding banners with Donald Trump or containing the red-and-white stripes and white stars of the US flag.³⁸ Christian flags with a red cross on a blue and white background were also waved, symbolizing the

³² Peter Manseau, “Some Capitol rioters believed they answered God’s call, not just Trump’s - A relentless religious framing of the election led many Christians to Washington on Jan. 6”, in *Washington Post*, 11 February 2021, URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/02/11/christian-religion-insurrection-capitol-trump/>, accessed on 06.03.2021.

³³ Sarah Posner, *art. cit.*

³⁴ Tom Gjelten, *art. cit.*

³⁵ Elizabeth Dias, Ruth Graham, *art. cit.*

³⁶ Emma Green, “A Christian Insurrection – Many of those who mobbed the Capitol on Wednesday claimed to be enacting God’s will”, in *The Atlantic*, January 8, 2021, URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/01/evangelicals-catholics-jericho-march-capitol/617591/>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

³⁷ *Ibidem.*

³⁸ Harry Farley, *art. cit.*



unity of all Christians in the world,³⁹ a flag promoted since 1897 by the Methodist movement in the USA, “the colors on the flag, not surprisingly, match those on the American flag. White represents purity and peace, blue indicates fidelity, and red stands for Christ’s blood sacrifice”⁴⁰.

Some of the participants in the assault on the US Congress carried banners with religious messages or religious symbols such as the fundamental symbol of Christianity, the cross. Messages such as “Jesus saves” or “In God We Trust” could be seen on them.⁴¹ Other messages were “JESUS 2020”, as if Jesus Christ were running in the US presidential election,⁴² “God Bless America”,⁴³ and “Make America Godly Again”⁴⁴. Among the banners displayed during the assault on the US Congress on January 6, 2021 was one that read “JESUS SAVES”, being identical to some previously observed on the occasion of Jericho March on December 12, 2020.⁴⁵ Moreover, during the assault, they were waved flags with weapons drawn next to the phrase “GOD, GUNS & GUTS MADE AMERICA, LET’S KEEP ALL THREE”⁴⁶ or the phrase “Armor of God”⁴⁷. Protesters also used other Christian symbols on flags, one such flag being brought to the US Senate, and another bearing the inscription “Proud American Christian” along with the symbol of the beginnings of Christianity (IHTIS⁴⁸), inside which was the US flag, being worn by another protester.⁴⁹ In fact, IHTIS represented for the Christians of the first centuries of our

³⁹ Samuel Perry, “The Capitol siege recalls past acts of Christian nationalist violence”, in *The Conversation*, January 15, 2021, URL: <https://theconversation.com/the-capitol-siege-recalls-past-acts-of-christian-nationalist-violence-153059>, accessed on 11.03.2021.

⁴⁰ Elesha Coffman, “Do You Know the History of the Christian Flag? White represents purity and peace, blue indicates fidelity, and red stands for Christ’s blood sacrifice”, in *Christianity Today - Christian History*, August 2008, URL: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/do-you-know-history-of-christian-flag.html>, accessed on 12.03.2021.

⁴¹ Ed Pilkington, *art. cit.*

⁴² Tom Gjelten, “Faith Leaders Nearly Unanimous in Condemning Assault on Capitol”, in *NPR*, January 7, 2021, URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/07/954581163/faith-leaders-nearly-unanimous-in-condemning-assault-on-capitol>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

⁴³ Jon Ward, “Assault on Capitol was also an attack on Christian faith, Baptist leader Russell Moore says”, in *Yahoo!news*, January 15, 2021, URL: <https://news.yahoo.com/assault-on-capitol-was-also-an-attack-on-christian-faith-baptist-leader-russell-moore-says-182410188.html>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

⁴⁴ Sarah Stankorb, “What Place Did Jesus Have at the Capitol Hill Riot? – Pastors who preached Christian nationalism and Trump’s promise from God are complicit in this violence”, *Gen*, January 9, 2021, URL: <https://gen.medium.com/jesus-at-the-capitol-attack-5db3601d4ee5>, accessed on 12.03.2021.

⁴⁵ Tom Gjelten, “Faith Leaders Nearly Unanimous in Condemning Assault on Capitol”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ Emma Green, *art. cit.*

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Dias, Ruth Graham, *art. cit.*

⁴⁸ Which means “fish” in Greek translation.

⁴⁹ Jim Denison, “Was the Capitol riot a “Christian insurrection”? Why we must “live as though the



era the symbol of divinity because it was the Christological acrostic of the Greek phrase “Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior”.⁵⁰

But in addition to flags and banners with religious messages, the protesters also had on them Bibles, crosses, and resumed in their procession the biblical theme of the conquest of Jericho.⁵¹ There were also exhortations such as: “shout if you love Jesus” as people entered the US Congress building.⁵² In fact, prayer was also used as a propaganda tool by Jacob Chansley, one of the so-called leaders of the assault on the US Congress, who asked the participants in the assault to stop for a moment and pray to God, the protesters agreeing with the idea and shouting *amen* at the end.⁵³ Other participants mixed Christian ideals with political ones, for example, one of them commented that “Jesus is my Savior. Trump is my president”⁵⁴, a phrase also found on the flags, being claimed that “The blood of Jesus covering this place”⁵⁵. Some people wore t-shirts with the Maltese cross or the cross worn by the Knights Templar,⁵⁶ which have gone down in history as defenders of Christians and for this reason are still invoked today.

Social networks have been an important element in spreading information and mobilizing Christians in the assault on the US Congress. For example, when Franklin Graham said on the morning of January 6, 2021 that “The votes are in, but is the election over? I have no clue”, it was watched by over 9.7 million people. The same religious leader also said on the same occasion: “I guess we just have to

truth were true””, in *Denison Forum – News Discerned Differently*, January 11, 2021, URL <https://www.denisonforum.org/columns/daily-article/was-the-capitol-riot-a-christian-insurrection-why-we-must-live-as-though-the-truth-were-true/>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

⁵⁰ Ene Braniște, Ecaterina Braniște, *Dicționar Enciclopedic de Cunoștințe Religioase*, Diocesan Publishing House Caransebeș, Caransebeș, 2001, pp. 211-212.

⁵¹ Gregory E. Sterling, “Capitol rioters made a mockery of Christian values”, in *CNN*, January 14, 2021, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/14/opinions/capitol-rioters-made-mockery-of-christianity-sterling/index.html>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

⁵² Samuel Perry, *art. cit.*

⁵³ Tom Gjelten, *art. cit.*

⁵⁴ Jim Denison, *art. cit.*

⁵⁵ Matthew Avery Sutton, “The Capitol Riot Revealed the Darkest Nightmares of White Evangelical America - How 150 years of apocalyptic agitation culminated in an insurrection”, in *The New Republic*, January 14, 2021, URL: <https://newrepublic.com/article/160922/capitol-riot-revealed-darkest-nightmares-white-evangelical-america>, accessed on 12.03.2021.

⁵⁶ Morgan Lee, “Christian Nationalism Is Worse Than You Think – Millions of Americans believe in this political ideology. What church leaders need to know – and how they can help those under its influence”, *Christianity Today*, January 13, 2021, URL: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/quick-to-listen/christian-nationalism-capitol-riots-trump-podcast.html><https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/quick-to-listen/christian-nationalism-capitol-riots-trump-podcast.html>, accessed on 13.03.2021.



wait and see. But I do know that we need to pray for our nation. We are in trouble. I believe God’s judgment is coming, for the sins of our nation are great and they are a stench in the nostrils of our Creator”. The post had on March 6, 2021 over 62 thousand comments, over 322 thousand people had reacted and had been distributed over 59 thousand times.⁵⁷ Also, one of the first to enter the US Congress illegally declared on Facebook “Trump will be your president four more years in Jesus name”.⁵⁸ In a post on Facebook on January 9, 2021, Darryl Knappen called on his own church for American patriots to be ready to arm themselves and join a civilian militia to protect their freedoms.⁵⁹

Another phenomenon that was appropriated by some of the Christians participating in the assault was that of QAnon, an extreme right-wing movement whose ideology consists of conspiracy theories. Christian followers of the QAnon movement were present at the assault on the US Congress on January 6, 2021, blaming unfounded allegations of US presidential election fraud. “Shaman QAnon”, Jacob Chansley, known for his horned hat he wears in protest, “said a prayer” after the Christian ritual, thanking God: “thank you for allowing the United States to be reborn”, an approach that other outraged people agreed to.⁶⁰ During the prayer, all those present adopted pious behavior, a sign that they had acquired religious conduct.⁶¹ Raising the arms of the protesters during the prayer is related to the invocation of the divinity, but also as a thank you “for allowing the United States of America to be reborn”.⁶² In the same context, Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt, who was shot dead during the congressional assault, was declared a “martyr” by the religious participants in the assault.⁶³

The religious contexts and motives of the attack on the US Congress were an important element in the reaction of the protesters who took part in the assault.⁶⁴ Christian nationalism ideologically substantiated the assault by creating a false belief among the participants that “their actions were blessed by God”.⁶⁵ Russell Moore, leader of the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States, said he was deeply

⁵⁷ Franklin Graham, *Post on Facebook account “Franklin Graham”*, January 6, 2021, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/FranklinGraham/posts/4023059261083558>, accessed on 06.03.2021.

⁵⁸ Peter Manseau, *art. cit.*

⁵⁹ Tom Gjelten, “Militant Christian Nationalists Remain A Potent Force, Even After The Capitol Riot”, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ *Ibidem.*

⁶¹ Luke Mogelson, “A Reporter’s Video from Inside the Capitol Siege”, in *The New Yorker*, 01/17/2021, URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/a-reporters-footage-from-inside-the-capitol-siege>, accessed on 09.03.2021.

⁶² Sarah Posner, *art. cit.*

⁶³ Jim Denison, *art. cit.*

⁶⁴ Peter Manseau, *art. cit.*

⁶⁵ Ed Pilkington, *art. cit.*



affected by the display on January 6, 2021 of placards reading “Jesus Saves” along with an ad-hoc “gallows” near the US Congress. The same cleric stated that such manifestations are dangerous because they affect the faith and society.⁶⁶ Moreover, according to interviews conducted by the New York Times, the event of January 6, 2021, which was the culmination of fake news about fraudulent presidential elections by occult and evil forces, “only fueled a deeper sense of victimhood and being misunderstood”.⁶⁷

Peter Manseau concludes that although the Christian participants in the assault on the Capitol do not represent the Christian religion as a whole, Christians immediately and firmly condemned what happened on January 6, 2021, however, due to the spread in the public space of political ideas with strong religious values to some leaders of important Christian congregations, it came to pass that during the assault, Christians formed “the core of the mob”, their actions being the natural consequence of such rhetoric.⁶⁸ Also, the director of the Washington Public Religion Research Institute, Robert P. Jones, said that what happened in the US Congress was generated by “an unholy amalgamation of white supremacy and Christianity”.⁶⁹ Therefore, religion determined the behavior of a part of the crowd that assaulted the US Congress, performing a religious act in their opinion, meaning that they displayed Christian symbols as assault flags, invoked God in the belief that they were fulfilling the divine will and replicated biblical rituals regarding the fall of Jericho.

Conclusions

Ultra-religious participants in the assault on the US Congress believed they had been called by God to conquer the federal building in which the US legislature operates. They behaved in this way because they believed that there was no other way to fight against a “deep state” whose representatives considered to be in that building. The political approach of the assault aimed at blocking the certification as president of Joseph Robinette Biden, so that Donald Trump will remain President of the United States after January 6, 2021.

Both before the US presidential election and during the assault on the Capitol, false information was spread through social networks about the election fraud

⁶⁶ Elana Schor, “Christianity on display at Capitol riot sparks new debate”, in *APnews*, January 28, 2021, URL: <https://apnews.com/article/christianity-capitol-riot-6f13ef0030ad7b5a6f37a1e3b7b4c898>, accessed on 06.03.2021.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Dias, Ruth Graham, *art. cit.*

⁶⁸ Peter Manseau, *art. cit.*

⁶⁹ Robert P. Jones, “Comment on Twitter Account “Religion Media Centre (@RelMedCentre)””, January 7, 2021, URL: <https://twitter.com/RelMedCentre/status/1347187954079444997>, accessed on 09.03.2021.



that was lost by President Donald Trump. Such information has been spread by important religious leaders who are followed online by millions of people and whose congregations have a very large membership.

The amalgamation of the religious faith with political ideology generated a special conduct among those who appropriated them. Religious behavior was directed towards shaping society according to their own visions as they were projected by their own beliefs, such people becoming violent in pursuit of their goals. Nothing has censored them in pursuing their goal of supporting Donald Trump to remain in the United States for another four-year term.

The religious dominance over some participants in the assault on the US Congress is undoubted, being highlighted by the presence and display of symbols specific to Christianity, the performance of religious rituals, the attitude and conduct adopted during the utterance of prayers, and slogans, statements, language and religious songs during the event. Some of the ultra-religious people were also followers of QAnon conspiracy theories (such as the fraud of the 2020 presidential election), a fact highlighted in the mixing of Christian symbols with those specific to the QAnon movement and those of the American far right.

Congress is the expression of US democracy, and its attack on ultra-religious people denotes the importance of religious beliefs in the manifestations they have in certain situations or against the background of certain events that they consider an attack on themselves, which causes them frustration and anxiousness. The desire to create administrative institutions under the obedience of divinity, without those who share their vision have the power to oppose, is not new in the expression of ultra-religiosity, which is found in the history of Christianity, the end of this desire being violent and bloody every time.

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HEZBOLLAH – BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

*Daniel ȘOIMARU**

Hezbollah (Allah's Party) is a non-state actor that has a decisive influence on how political and security dynamics in Lebanon evolve but also manages to have an important impact on the evolution of the entire security complex in the Middle East. However, in order to understand the behavior of this actor, we must understand its main ideological landmarks. Thus, the research question which formed the basis of this study is: How the ideology assumed by Hezbollah leaders influenced the behavior of the organization? Through this study we aim to highlight the historical context of Lebanon during the '80s, as well as make an analysis of the main factors that determined the materialization of the Hezbollah organization; to understand Hezbollah's main ideological pillars and how they influence the organization's goals and actions; to examine how Hezbollah and Western states perceive each other; and to present the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah from the perspective of the motivations and interests that decision-makers in Teheran have in relation to the growth of their area on influence in the Middle East.

Keywords: *Hezbollah; security; strategy; terrorism; Iran; Israel.*

Introduction

In terms of security dynamics, the Middle East has a unique feature being characterized as a volcano in activity of geopolitics (...) whose interrupted eruptions (...) destabilizes the region (...) and makes it the most virulent outbreak of religious, civil and/or interstate and terrorist wars.¹ Thus, one of the researched fields in the academic literature on the security complex in the Middle East is represented by

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¹ Pascal Lamy, Nicole Gnesotto, Jean Michel Baer, *Where is the world going?*, Niculescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, p. 105.



how religious terrorist organizations manage to destabilize this region. To be more specific, the concept of religious terrorism implies what is posited as a distinct category of political violence, namely violence perpetrated in the name of religion by religiously motivated militants.²

Hezbollah (Allah's Party) is a religious entity that has a crucial influence on how political and security dynamics evolve in Lebanon, while also having a significant impact on the regional security complex in the Middle East. Therefore, through this paper, we would like to highlight Hezbollah's main ideological features, the way leaders of the organization perceive its actions, as well as the position of Western states in relation to this non-state actor.

In this regard, the research this study presents is focused around the manner ideology assumed by Hezbollah leaders influenced the behavior of the organization. The research methodology is based on a systematic approach with a double dimension, one stands in the historical narrative from the perspective of the factors that favored the emergence of Hezbollah as well as the analysis of the ideological pillars of this organization, and the latter stands in its attitude towards Western states and its relationship with Iran. Therefore, the essential elements used for this purpose are represented by the analysis of official documents, speeches, but also the consultation of books and specialized articles dealing with this subject.

The paper is divided into four main sections. The first presents the historical context of Lebanon during the '80s, as well as the analysis of the main factors which determined the materialization of the Hezbollah organization. The second part highlights the main ideological pillars of Hezbollah and how they influence the organization's goals and actions. The third part examines how Hezbollah and Western states perceive each other. Thus, this section analyzes the strategy of Hezbollah leaders to build a moderate image of the organization within the international community, as well as the attitude of Western leaders who fail to understand this mechanism of manipulation. The last part presents the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah in terms of motivations and interests that the decision-makers in Teheran have in relation to the growth of the area on influence in the Middle East.

1. The Factors that Favored the Emergence of Hezbollah

Analyzing the evolution of radical Islamist movements, one can notice that they have been increasingly influential in the Arab world since the late '70s and they have consolidated their presence since the beginning of the '90s. This revival

² Gunning Jeroen, Jackson Richard, "What's so religious about "religious terrorism"", in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 2011, pp. 369-388.



was accompanied, more generally by a worldwide Islamic resurgence.³ The rise of Islamic revivalist movements, in general, and the rise of Hezbollah, in particular, have been connected to the crises conditions that beset the Middle East: the Arab defeats by Israel, the failure to achieve balanced socioeconomic development, the pervasiveness of political oppression, gross uneven distribution of wealth, and the disorienting psycho-cultural impact of Westernization.⁴

This state of affairs has contributed to the growing political and social cleavages in Lebanon, leading to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975. From the point of view of the Shi'a militias involved in the war, the Amal organization (Movement of the Deprived) led by Musa al-Sadr's had the most important role. However, this organization was only the first prototype of Shi'a militia organized in southern Lebanon, later assimilated into Hezbollah, which by far exceeded the performance of the first.

One of the main factors that led to the emergence of the terrorist organization Hezbollah was the reorientation of the foreign and security policy of the state of Iran, following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Thus, since 1979, Iran has been one of the world's most active sponsors of terrorism. Iran's leaders have sought the support of Shiite communities in neighboring states and turned them into its proxy agents, providing them with weapons, training, and inspiration.⁵ Therefore, given the geopolitical importance of Lebanon (access to the Mediterranean Sea and position on the border with Israel) and the fact that the southern part of the country was inhabited by a majority of Shiite population, Iranian leaders wanted to control this region through a proxy agent.

Another important aspect that led to the emergence of Hezbollah was represented by the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli military forces in June 1982. The main objectives of the invasion were to eliminate the infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization from southern Lebanon and withdraw Syrian troops from Lebanese territory. Israel imposed itself militarily and led to the eradication of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon, but the radicalization of the Shiite population in southern Lebanon (who initially supported the Israeli invasion because they perceived the Palestinians as a factor of instability, but who with the prolongation of the invasion turned against Israel), contributed to the emergence of a new terrorist organization – Hezbollah.⁶ In the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Hezbollah appeared as the result of the mobilization of several groups of

³ Rosita Di Peri, "Islamist Actors from an Anti-system Perspective: The Case of Hizbullah", in *Politics Religion and Ideology*, vol. 15, no. 4, 2014, pp. 487-503.

⁴ *Idem.*

⁵ Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections States that Sponsor Terrorism*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 79.

⁶ *Idem.*



Islamic Shi'i militants (clerics, al-Da'wa Party members, and dissidents members of Amal) that wanted to go to war against the Israeli occupier.⁷ The dispatch of 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards to the Syrian controlled Biqa region in the summer of 1982, under the pretext of fighting Israel, brought Iran into Lebanon. Therefore, the Syrian-Iranian agreement on stationing the Iran Revolutionary Guards contributed to consolidating the emergence of Hezbollah.⁸

Also, another factor that allowed the materialization and emergence of this organization, until today's "state in state" status, was generated by the lack of strong institutions in Lebanon to ensure state cohesion. Due to the fact that the loyalty of Lebanese citizens is directed primarily to the religious group they belong to (fragmentation of civil society), as well as the Lebanese political system (based on a compromise that allows each major religious group in Lebanon to be represented in leadership structures, but which at the same time is too weak and leads to the paralysis of the state), represents vulnerabilities that Hezbollah has managed to exploit in its interest, and without the possibility of foreign intervention, there is little chance that it will give up.

However, Hezbollah waited until 1984 to declare its birth publicly through a communiqué, on the second anniversary of Sabra and Shatilla's massacre, promising to "continue the march for the liberation of Palestine"⁹. In February 1985, Hezbollah officially adopted the political manifesto of the organization, highlighting the characteristics of the movement: Islam is the only solution to bring mankind out from the darkness and the need to implement Jihad against the influence of the West and of the Soviet Union.¹⁰

2. The Pillars of Hezbollah

To understand Hezbollah's motivations and actions, we need to identify the main ideological coordinates of the organization. According to Naim Qassem (deputy secretary general of Hezbollah since 1992), from the moment Hezbollah was founded, it had three pivotal objectives: Islam is the comprehensive, complete, and appropriate program for a better life; resistance against Israeli occupation (this necessitates the creation of a jihad structure that should complete this obligation, and in favor of which all capabilities were employed); and the legitimate leadership

⁷ Daniel Meler, "(B)ordering South Lebanon: Hizbullah's Identity Building Strategy", in *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2015, pp. 1-13.

⁸ Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", in *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1993, pp. 321-337.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ ***, "An Open Letter-The Hizbullah Program", in *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 48, 1998, URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20060821215729/http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/Hiz_letter.htm, accessed on 06.03.2021.



is designated to the Jurist Theologian who is considered to be the successor of the Prophet and the Imams (his commands and proscriptions are enforceable).¹¹ Therefore, these three pillars represent the fundamental foundation of Hezbollah, providing both an ideological framework (inspired by Islam), an immediate concrete goal against an enemy (the destruction of Israel), and the hierarchical model of the organization (The Jurist Theologian representing the supreme leader of the organization).

Regarding the first pillar (Belief in Islam), Naim Qassem mentions eleven subcategories: Belief in God Almighty; Worship; Self-discipline; Concern for Politics; Jihad in the Name of God (“to be carried out even using the dearest of man’s belongings of soul and wealth without hesitation and whenever obliged to”); Economics; Joint Social Responsibility (“invoked through the distribution of charity (zakat) funds among society’s needs”); Using reason and refusing subordination; Communication; Justice; Piety.¹² He summarizes this section, mentioning that “Islam is both worship and policy applicable for both life and afterlife, relevant to the individual and society, the mosque and the ruling authority, calling for mercy and firmness, jihad and peace”¹³. In other words, what Qassem is trying to argue through the first pillar refers to the fact that Islam is the best form of political organization because it prevails in successfully combining theological, political, and social fields.

Naim Qassem argues that the ultimate goal of the organization is to establish an Islamic state based on the free choice of the Muslim population: “Where the freedom of choosing a governing system is attributed to our people in Lebanon, they will not find a better alternative to Islam. Hence, we call for the implementation of the Islamic system based on a direct and free choice of the people, and not through forceful imposition as may be assumed by some”¹⁴. This idea of laying the foundations of a religious state is one of the goals of radical religious organizations, including using terrorist actions to materialize it. Naim Qassem is trying to promote the idea that Hezbollah is not a radical religious organization because it is unwilling to use violence in order to establish an Islamic state. However, using the Iranian model (which Hezbollah also wants to implement), it can be seen that once the Islamic States materializes and its institutions gain enough power to control the population, any kind of opposition to the regime is not accepted.

Moreover, Naim Qassem said in 2008 that “the Party’s final objective, in its political jihadist vision and program of work, is not to reach ultimate ruling power

¹¹ Naim Qassem, *Hezbollah. The Story from Within*, Saqi Books, London, 2005, p. 64.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 67-75.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 81-82.



within the current sectarian system”¹⁵. The real reasons why Hezbollah promotes the idea of an Islamic state, as a result of the desire of the population, is that it tries to create an image of moderate both to the non-Shiite population in Lebanon and the international community, but also because at the moment it does not yet have the necessary power to be able to fully impose its will in Lebanon.

Thus, in order to achieve its political and military ambitions in Lebanon, Hezbollah needs to gain the support of the population. Hezbollah was able to find a role within Lebanese society and state by exploiting the principle mentioned above “Joint Social Responsibility”. Hence, Hezbollah established a dynamic social program, funded by sources of zakat (Islamic alms), financial support from Iran (financing 90 percent of Hezbollah’s social programs),¹⁶and donations from wealthy Lebanese abroad, through which it has managed a nationwide network of social, educational, and charitable programs. This social services network included: Jihad for construction (Jihad Al-Bina’); the Islamic Health authority; the non-interest loan society; Islamic beneficiary support society; the Martyr association; the Islamic institution for education. In addition, there were also sports, cultural, and informational institutions such as the Imam Khomeini center, Al’hd magazine, and the al-Manar TV channel.¹⁷Therefore, it can be seen that Hezbollah has managed to develop an entire social network which proves to be one of the most successful propaganda tools of the organization.

The important investments in the social field can be understood as the political step in its general strategy to spread resistance values on its image of a Shiite movement able to build social welfare institutions to bring the Shi’as out of marginalization.¹⁸This argument is supported by Hassan Nassrallah statement (Hezbollah’s leader): “the main aim of the social, educational, political, media, cultural, organizational, and service-related aspects which Hezbollah undertakes in all the regions and with all political forces, is to support and reinforce the resistance and preserve its continuity”¹⁹.

Furthermore, in order to succeed in attracting the sympathy of the Lebanese people to other denominations than the Shiite, Hezbollah also allows their members access to social facilities. Last but not least, regarding the social capabilities that Hezbollah controls, we can highlight that it plays an important role in increasing

¹⁵ Lina Khatib, “Hizbullah’s Political Strategy”, in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, vol 52, no. 2, 2011, pp. 61-76.

¹⁶ Daniel Byman, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹⁷ Mariam Farida, “Field Notes on Hizbullah’s Recruitment, Training and Organisational Structure”, in *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, vol 5, no. 2, pp. 71-72.

¹⁸ Daniel Meler, “(B)ordering South Lebanon: Hizbullah’s Identity Building Strategy”, in *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2015, pp. 1-13.

¹⁹ Adham Saouli, “Hizbullah in the Civising Process: anarchy, self-restraint and violence”, in *Third World Quarterly*, vol 32, no. 5, 2011, pp. 925-942.



the number of the members of the organization. In a poor country like Lebanon, Hezbollah members receive 150-200 USD per month, along with free education and medical care²⁰ and their families enjoy much better socioeconomic conditions than most Lebanese citizens.

The second pillar of Hezbollah is represented by the materialization of the concept of Jihad (Holy War). First, Naim Qassem accepts the existence of two types of jihad: the military (directed against unbelievers) and the heart one (representing the believer's struggle against his sinful nature)²¹. Regarding this topic, he mentions that "Jihad with the soul is the larger of the two challenges, as it is a daily and permanent struggle, present in any conflict between virtue and vice, between obedience to God and the soul's impulses. Struggle with the enemy is the lesser test, for it is called upon during specific occasions of one's life as part of rising to the triumph of principles, morals, righteousness and the victory of the nation, when the nation is subject to oppression, occupation or humiliation"²². Therefore, according to Naim Qassem vision, the two notions of jihad are complementary and represent a duty for every true believer.

Regarding military jihad, Naim Qassem is a follower of defensive jihad (which means to preserve the independence of the Muslim country and the repulsion of foreigners, also any territory ever captured by Islam belongs to Islam for eternity and therefore an attack on a once Muslim land ruled by non-Muslims is considered defensive and can be carried out by individuals and not just organized military), claiming that: "This is the defense by Muslims of their land, their people or their own selves upon facing aggression or occupation. This is considered not only legitimate, but a duty"²³. Also, Naim Qassem points out that: "To the extent that jihad achieves honor and freedom, so does its abandonment lead to disgrace, loss, demise and crumbling of the individual and the nation"²⁴. These statements made it very clear that the concept of military jihad is one of the most important ideological features of Hezbollah.

Another topic of debate chosen by Naim Qassem refers to the issue of martyrdom, which he mentions: "We thus notice that a large number of martyrdom seekers hope to be assigned a martyrdom mission as part of their aim to please God and win His acceptance of their obedience. This is only a result of spiritual cultivation, a product of active religious worship"²⁵ and "Martyrdom is thus the supreme manifestation of self-giving, a form of confrontation with the enemy within

²⁰ Daniel Byman, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²¹ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah, the Story from Within*, Saqi Books, London, 2005, pp. 85-86.

²² *Idem*.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

²⁴ *Idem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 102.



clear, legitimate Shari'a guidelines"²⁶. For a better understanding of the concept of Islamic martyrdom, we must point out that one of the main aims of radical terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah is represented by the desire to eradicate the "infidels" (the unfaithful within their tradition or in other religions).²⁷ Naim Qassem goes further with his argument, extending the implications of the concept of military jihad on women as well, claiming that: "Some women went as far as requesting permission to carry weapons and go to battle. But religious commandment does not require this form of sacrifice from women given the sufficient number of men, which renders female participation in combat unnecessary. The woman's role in this context is in the back ranks, through support and recruitment. This is deemed more befitting of a woman's physical capabilities and of the sharing of responsibilities between her and man. Her Godly reward is thus not diminished, for reward is linked to religious commandment, which she fulfills from her own position"²⁸. Therefore, in Hezbollah's view, all members of the Muslim community must participate in one way or another in the military jihad. I would go further and say that Hezbollah membership is due to the desire of its member to contribute to military jihad. As a result, of its rigid ideology, Hezbollah cannot be reformed, abandoning the military jihad would cause the organization to disintegrate.

The third pillar of Hezbollah is referred to the Jurisdiction of the Jurist-Theologian (al-Wali al-Faqih). Regarding this topic, Naim Qassem quotes Imam Khamenei on the need for the function of Jurist-Theologian: "The purpose of such absolute custodianship by the Jurist-Theologian, who fulfills all qualifications, is that Islam, this true religion—the end of all heavenly religions and one that shall remain until the Day of Resurrection—is the religion of ultimate verdict and societal organization. As such, Islamic society needs a curator, a jurist and a leader who would guard the nation of Islam and Muslims against enemies protect the nation's structure and ensure justice among its constituents, deterring the might of the strong from the weak, securing the means for cultural, political and social developments and prosperity for all"²⁹. Subordination to the supreme Iranian leader is also provided in the Hezbollah program: "We are the sons of the umma (Muslim community) – the party of God the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran" and "We obey the orders of one leader, wise and just, that of our tutor and faqih (jurist) who fulfills all the necessary conditions: Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini"³⁰.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

²⁷ Gregg Heather, "Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious Terrorism.", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2014, pp. 36-51.

²⁸ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah. The Story from Within*, Saqi Books, London, 2005, p. 105.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 115.

³⁰ ***, "An Open Letter-The Hizballah Program", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 48, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 1998, URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20060821215729/http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/Hiz_letter.htm, accessed on 06.03.2021.



Moreover, Naim Qassem claims that the Jurist-Theologian has the authority to decide on issues of war and peace and sets the guidelines for any Islamic state upon its inception, directing it towards abidance by doctrinal jurisprudence and to the preservation of its constituents' interests following Islam.³¹ Therefore, according to this argument, the Jurist-Theologian represents a continuation of the Prophet becoming infallible and representing the supreme authority of the believers on earth. In accordance with this principle, we can conclude that there is no distinction between religious and political leadership within Hezbollah.

3. Hezbollah and the West

Regarding the way in which the western states position themselves in relation to Hezbollah, it can be noted that only one of the two actors manages to implement a successful strategy.

One of the mistakes that Western policymakers make when are referring to the relationship between Hezbollah and the state of Israel lies in the fact that they are trying to promote a compromise solution, through which to reach an agreement between two warring parties. This naive approach has its origins in the fact that Western policymakers believe that Hezbollah is an actor that can make compromise decisions in relation to political reality.

The truth is that Hezbollah operates according to Jihadi logic which means that this organization must win in the end and there can be no mutual recognition. However, Hezbollah does not want to accept a compromise solution to Israel, and this is very clear from the organization's program: "Our primary assumption in our fight against Israel states that Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception, and build on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people. Therefore, our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated"³². Thus, given that Hezbollah has declared jihad on Israel, there is no compromise solution to persuade or force them to give up their aggression. Indeed, Hezbollah may temporarily abandon its attacks on Israel or reduce their intensity, but this only happens when it faces weaknesses and needs time to recover.

Although Westerners have major concerns about how they should relate to Hezbollah, the leaders of the terrorist organization perfectly understand how to negotiate with the West. Naim Qassem states that in recent years, the Western perception of Hezbollah has changed, especially on a popular level. He points out the fact that even governments have started to look for a reason to communicate and

³¹ Naim Qassem, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 117.

³² ***, "An Open Letter - The Hizballah Program", *doc. cit.*



have relations with Hezbollah. His argument is based on the fact that most European countries have refused to put Hezbollah on the list of terrorist organizations.³³

This is generated by the fact that Western politicians prefer to distinguish between the political and military factions of Hezbollah. In their representation, on the one hand, they refer to Hezbollah as a legitimate and responsible political party, being composed of moderate politicians willing to reach a compromise. On the other hand, Western policymakers believe that Hezbollah's terrorist actions are generated exclusively by the military faction, which is made up of extremist, but which is in minority relation to the political faction of the organization.

This confusion is highlighted by Naim Qassem, who states regarding the Western powers that they establish "relations with Hezbollah by distinguishing two different sections that don't actually exist— the so-called political and military wings—because the party is by nature unified"³⁴. Also, Naim Qassem states that "All political, social and jihadi work is tied to the decisions of the leadership. The same leadership that directs the parliamentary and government work also leads jihadi actions in the struggle against Israel"³⁵. Therefore, Hezbollah must be perceived as a single organization, which uses political, military, and social means to achieve its goals.

Moreover, Hezbollah leaders try to inoculate the West with the idea that their organizations is independent of Iran. They claim that "Hezbollah works in the Lebanese arena. It does not work for regional or international interests"³⁶, but this is impossible given that the Jurist-Theologian is both the supreme leader of Iran and the *de facto* leader of Hezbollah. However, given Iran's reputation in the international community, Hezbollah's official association with it would lead to its total discredit, because it would be perceived only as an instrument through which Iran seeks to materialize its interest in the Middle East and not as a legitimate representative of the Shiite population in Lebanon.

Another aspect found in the approach of Western politicians is the assumption that initiating and intensifying diplomatic negotiations with Hezbollah represent a successful strategy to persuade the organization to give up the use of violence. The limitation of this approach is highlighted by one of the mottos of the organization, which claims that "Hezbollah's weapons are part of the resistance, not separate from it"³⁷. The main problem for Western policymakers regarding maintaining a diplomatic dialogue with Hezbollah is that they refuse to explicitly condemn the

³³ Naim Qassem, "Hezbollah: Islamist Resistance Comes of Age", in *New Perspective Quarterly*, 2009, pp. 8-11.

³⁴ *Idem.*

³⁵ *Idem.*

³⁶ *Idem.*

³⁷ *Idem.*



organization's terrorist actions.

To analyze Hezbollah's perspective in relation to the negotiations with the West, we must point out Naim Qassem's statement: "We are open to dialogue with the West as long as both parties are equal and the dialogue is not just superficial"³⁸. In other words, it is not enough for the West to show indulgence in Hezbollah's actions, but it must agree with the legitimacy of the organization's goals. Hezbollah's approach is not original; it was first used successfully by Arafat in emancipating Palestine Liberation Organization as a legitimate player in the international community.

Thus, Hezbollah seeks to create an image of a moderate organization within the international community, arguing that the organization represents the interest of the Lebanese people and that they are willing to reach a compromise with Israel (which is, of course, denounced as an oppressive state, whose geopolitical interests contradict the national interests of Lebanon), if Israeli political and decision-makers are willing to make certain concessions. Nevertheless, even if Israel compromises, Hezbollah will not change its policy, taking advantage of the new benefits, while calling for even more international pressure on the Israeli authorities.

Moreover, the lack of implementation of a coercive mechanism by the international community in relation to Hezbollah creates the optimal conditions for the development of the organization: "When Hezbollah gains international friendship and support, it is better for its position. It helps gain members and expend among peoples instead of the whole being against this party"³⁹. The fact that most Western states prefer to tolerate Hezbollah's actions allows the organization to expand its influence in Lebanon and become an increasingly important non-state actor in the Middle East security complex.

Also, at the one hand, an important aspect that I want to highlight is the misperception of Western leaders that Hezbollah's hostile actions are directed exclusively against Israel. In the Hezbollah program, it is mentioned that "We see in Israel the vanguard of the United States in our Islamic world. It is the hated enemy that must be fought until the hated ones get what they deserve"⁴⁰. We can deduct from this statement that Israel is an extension of the Western world to the Middle East and for this reason must be destroyed. We must not forget that in the rhetoric promoted by Teheran and taken over by the Hezbollah, the United States of America is perceived as the "The Great Satan" and Israel as the "Little Satan". Therefore, one of the reasons why Hezbollah declared jihad on Israel is that it promotes values and principles associated with the Western culture (secularism, democracy, etc.). Hezbollah is not content with just destroying Israel but wants to eliminate the Western influence in the Middle East.

³⁸ *Idem.*

³⁹ *Idem.*

⁴⁰ ***, "An Open Letter - The Hizballah Program", *doc. cit.*



Western leaders prefer to delimit themselves from Israel's military actions against Hezbollah (which considers that the only solution to end the conflict is the destruction of Israel), considering that such a strategy ensures a position of mediators. As I pointed out above, such a strategy is wrong because Hezbollah leaders see the West as an enemy and not as a mediator. The only effective solution that could lead to the stabilization of security dynamics in this region would be the full cooperation between Israel and Western states on neutralizing the threat posed by the existence of Hezbollah.

Unfortunately, Naim Qassem intentionally omits when describing political Islam is the concept of Jihad which represents one of its pillars. If we analyze the Quran, we can see that the use of violence against the non-Muslim population is encouraged and even rewarded by Allah. According to Quran, unbelievers must be punished for not listening to the message of Allah, promoted by his messenger (Mohammed).⁴¹ Moreover, the killing of the unbelievers is done under the guidance of divinity, and the believer acts only as a tool: "It was not you believers who killed them, but it was Allah Who did so. Nor was it you 'O Prophet' 'who threw' a handful of sand at the disbelievers, but it was Allah Who did so"⁴². Also, there can be no definitive armistice between believers and unbelievers.⁴³ Of course, we can consider that these Quranic verses are no longer relevant, or we can go even further, stating that at present the concept of Jihad is associated only with the inner struggle, no longer a connotation that would involve violence in relation to unbelievers.

Nevertheless, analyzing the Hezbollah program, as well as the pillars of this organization, we can see that the military jihad represents the ideological foundation of the organization. Also, in order to understand the true meaning of the political Islam assumed by Hezbollah, all we have to do is observe Iran's behavior after 1979, in which jihad was used both as a means of internal repression (against any form of resistance – anyone who opposes the regime is an unbeliever) as well as foreign counteract (against Western secularism and Israel).

4. The Relationship Between Iran and Hezbollah

Regarding the Iran and Hezbollah relationship, we need to point out that is perhaps the strongest and most effective alliance between a state sponsor and terrorist group in history. Iran helped to the foundation, organization and training of Hezbollah. In exchange, Hezbollah has served Iran by striking Iran's foreign enemies, assassinating Iranian dissidents, and advancing the interest of the Islamic

⁴¹ *Qur`an*, Chapter 8, URL: <https://quran.com/8>, accessed on 06.03.2021.

⁴² *Idem*.

⁴³ *Idem*.



Republic in the Middle East.⁴⁴ In this sense, one of the leading Hezbollah figures declared in 1985: “Our relationship with the Islamic revolution [in Iran] is one of a junior to a senior, of a soldier to his commander”⁴⁵. Therefore, from the beginning of Hezbollah’s foundation until now, this organization has been under the tutelage of Iran.

However, Naim Qassem tries to argue that the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah is not based on subordination, but represents a partnership generated by common goals: “The relationship between Hezbollah and Iran was forged through the Party’s efforts to make use of this innovative experience in the region and to secure a champion for the cause of confronting Israeli occupation. Iran’s choice of an Islamic republican government coincided with the Islamic principles held by Hezbollah. Harmony at the general guideline or theoretical level was thus present, although the detailed application of these guidelines was subordinate to the particular characteristics of each country in question”⁴⁶. As I already mentioned above, this narrative has the role of increasing the legitimacy of Hezbollah in Lebanon and also within the international community, but it does not correspond to the political reality.

One of the most important reasons Iran backed Hezbollah was the desire of Teheran’s leaders to spread its Islamic revolution in the Middle East. Given the fact that Iran after the 1979 revolution faced diplomatic isolation (that determined the reorientation of foreign and security policy), as well as the desire to increase the internal legitimacy of the new regime, led the Iranian leaders to promote its Islamic revolution in the Middle East (by organize and found radical Shiite groups). The theological justifications of the Iranian revolution emphasized the spread of Islam regardless of state boundaries. Ayatollah Khomeini declared, “We should try hard to export our revolution to the world...we [shall] confront the world with our ideology”⁴⁷ and Iran’s constitution “extend the sovereignty of God’s law throughout the world”⁴⁸. In retrospect, we can point out that in terms of the export of the Islamic revolution in the Middle East, the Teheran regime failed. However, Hezbollah can be considered a success, as the organization has accepted the authority of Iranian leaders, as well as the goal of laying the foundations of an Islamic state in Lebanon (following the Iranian model).

This view is also shared by Naim Qassem, who believes that the Islamic revolution has had a positive impact on the Middle East, as it has contributed to the emancipation of an Islamic regime in Iran, as well as to the decline of Western

⁴⁴ Daniel Byman, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 90.

⁴⁶ Naim Qassem, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 236.

⁴⁷ Daniel Byman, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 92.



influence in the Middle East: “It is also in harmony with Hezbollah’s conviction of the soundness of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s approach and practice, in the change it brought to the region’s map through independence from subordination to the West and adoption of a promising Islamic version”⁴⁹. Moreover, another evidence of Hezbollah’s strategic relationship with Iran is represented by the statement of Iranian Shiite cleric Mohtashemi: “The relationship between Hezbollah with the Iranian regime exceeds the simple relationship of a revolutionary regime with a party or a revolutionary organization that exists outside of Iran’s borders. It seems clear that Hezbollah has been part of the Iranian regime and a major factor in its military and security institutions”⁵⁰.

To achieve its ambitions in Lebanon and in other countries in the Middle East where Hezbollah operates, Iran provided military support, training, financial backing, organizational aid, and numerous other forms of assistance.⁵¹ Some Lebanese leaders, such as Walid Jumblatt and Samir Geagea pointed out the fact that Hezbollah is serving Iran’s “ambitious Islamic project that considered Lebanon an advanced combat front against Israel, and when necessary, the West”⁵². Hezbollah’s actions are aimed at destabilizing the Middle East region and implicitly Lebanon (in order to be able to control it more easily), to maintain a climate of insecurity that will favor the increase of Iranian political and military influence.

Furthermore, Iranian officials provided Hezbollah with both tactical and strategic direction. A relevant example in this regard is represented by Iran’s Ambassador to Syria, Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour who helped supervise attacks such as the bombing of the US and French multinational forces contingents, the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut. Also, in the 1990s, Iranian intelligence officials helped coordinate and direct many Hezbollah operations, particularly those that occurred outside Lebanon (bombing of the Israeli Embassy from Argentina-1992, car bombing of the Jewish welfare center in Buenos Aires-1994).⁵³ Iran and Hezbollah have also been involved in the Syrian Civil War, fighting to keep the Assad regime in power.

Another important reason why Iran supports Hezbollah is due to strategic reasons. Thus, Hezbollah fought Iran’s enemies (Israel and other Western powers) and served as a proxy of Iranian influence in the Middle East. In addition to combat Iran’s new enemies, Hezbollah also allowed Iran to project power well beyond

⁴⁹ Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah. The Story from Within*, Saqi Books, London, 2005, p. 123.

⁵⁰ Ohannes Geukjan, “Which State for Lebanon in the Aftermath of the Hizbullah-Israeli War of July-August 2006? A Critical Analysis”, in *Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, vol 17, no. 2, pp. 135-153.

⁵¹ Daniel Byman, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁵² Ohannes Geukjan, “Which State for Lebanon in the Aftermath of the Hizbullah-Israeli War of July-August 2006? A Critical Analysis”, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-153.

⁵³ Daniel Byman, *op. cit.*, p. 88.



its borders. Given that Israel poses the greatest threat to Iran's interest in the region, Tehran's leaders are using Hezbollah in order to destabilize their adversary without attacking directly. Moreover, support for Hezbollah allowed Iran to obtain advantages over the United States of America (the hopes of gaining the release of hostages held by Hezbollah led the United States in 1985 and 1986 to send weapons to Iran).⁵⁴ Also, Iran in order to be perceived within the international community as a moderate actor is reluctant to use its military power directly, but it uses its armed branch in the region (Hezbollah) to implement such actions.

Therefore, given the reasons mentioned above, it can be seen that there is a clear relationship of subordination between Iran and Hezbollah (even if the leaders of this organizations prefer to use the phrase of partnership). Thus, Hezbollah's actions are interdependent with Iran's interests in the Middle East.

Conclusions

To understand Hezbollah's actions and its role in the Middle East regional security complex, it is important to identify the main factors that have allowed this organization to materialize, its ideological pillars, its strategic partnership with Iran, and its attitude toward the Western state.

Thus, we can say that the emergence of Hezbollah took place in the context of the growing influence of radical Islamist organizations from 1970-1990 and as a result of political, social, and religious fragmentation in Lebanon. Also, a crucial role in the emergence of Hezbollah was the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution, whose new leadership sought the support of Shiite communities in neighboring states and turned them into its proxy agents, providing them with weapons, training, inspiration, and money. Last but not least, Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon led to the radicalization of Shiite communities in the region, creating all the conditions for Hezbollah to gain as much influence as possible.

Regarding the ideological pillars of the organization, we must highlight the three main ones: Belief in Islam, Jihad, and the Jurist-Theologian). Through the first pillar, Hezbollah leaders try to argue that Islam is the best form of political organization because it succeeds in successfully combining theological, political, and social field, having as fundamental objective the establishment of an Islamic state according to the Iranian model. By mentioning the second pillar, Hezbollah leaders are trying to argue the need to adopt military jihad as a tool of resistance against Western influence in the Middle East, as well as against Israel. The third pillar is the official recognition of Hezbollah's subordination to the supreme Iranian leader and the prerogatives he has over it.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 96.



Given the ideological pillars of the organization, Hezbollah's negotiating strategy in relation to Western states can be understood. At the one hand, Hezbollah leaders have used propaganda instruments to promote a moderate image of the organization in the international community representing a legitimate actor that seeks to promote the interests of the Lebanese people. On the other hand, Western leaders and international organizations still perceive the Hezbollah party as a separate entity from the military wing of the organization and negotiate with it as if it were a rational actor that may be willing to reach a compromise solution.

Finally, analyzing the motivations for its creation, its ideology and its type of relationship with other actors, Hezbollah is a proxy for Iran, acting in following Iran's strategic interests in the Middle East. Iran's motives for supporting Hezbollah are due to its desire to use the organization as a propaganda tool to spread Islamic radicalism and combat Western influence in the Middle East, to attack Israel, and to carry out other destabilizing actions in the region that cannot be directly implemented by Teheran.

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THE RELEVANCY OF WALTER LIPPMANN FOR ARNOLD WOLFERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SECURITY

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Currently, the definition of security that was put forward in 1952 by Arnold Wolfers in his article “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol” is widely cited within the field of security studies while the definition of this concept that have been advanced by Walter Lippmann in his book from 1943, “US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic” is largely absent, a situation which hinders the turning into a research topic of the connections between these definitions. However, there are authors who cite both the definition of security advanced by Wolfers and the definition of it put forward by Lippmann, but they either do not mention the existence of connections between these definitions or take notice of them but do not investigate them, with the consequence that a thoughtful consideration of this problem is lacking. In order to fill this gap in the study of the early stages of the development of security studies, this article provides an in-depth investigation of the links between the two definitions of security which reveals that Wolfers’ reflection on security was meant to explain implicit aspects of Lippmann’s definition of this concept but that eventually and somehow unintentional Wolfers advanced a different perspective on security.

Keywords: *Walter Lippmann; Arnold Wolfers; definition of security; security studies; realism; foreign policy.*

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Introduction

The relevancy that Walter Lippmann's definition of security from his 1943 book *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic* has to the well-known definition of security put forward by Arnold Wolfers in his 1952 article *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* is the topic of this article and the reason for choosing it is represented by the fact that the links between these definitions are generally neglected and, when noticed, they are not explained or subjected to thoughtful consideration, with the effect that the connections between these definitions are yet to be studied in detail. This assessment is grounded on a literature review that covers the period from 1983 until today and which, alongside the formulation and the justification of the importance of both the research topic and the research question of the paper and the description of the research methods applied herein, make up the first section of this paper which is concerned with its methodological aspects. Its second section consists in analysing and interpreting Lippmann's view on the meaning of security as it appears in his mentioned book, while the last section of the paper deals with placing Lippmann's understanding of security in the context of Wolfers' article, with presenting Wolfers' reading of it, and with comparing the views of the two authors on the definition of security both from Wolfers' viewpoint and from an objective point of view.

1. Methodological Considerations

Scholars considering the meaning of the concept of security have cited the contribution to its definition made by Water Lippmann and/or Arnold Wolfers but either did not refer to the relevancy of Lippmann's understanding of security for Wolfers' account of it or acknowledged that but did not consider it. Thus, back in the 1980s, in the first edition of his book *People, States, and Fear*, Barry Buzan cited one after another the definition of security that Lippmann put forward in *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*, and the definition of it provided by Wolfers in his famous article *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*¹. The excerpt from Lippmann reads that "a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by such victory in such a war", while the excerpt from Wolfers is the following one: "security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values

¹ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, p. 216, Brighton, Wheatsheaf Books, 1983. The citation from Wolfers is taken from his collection of essays entitled *Discord and Collaboration* which includes that article (Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Cooperation. Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press, 1962).



will be attacked”. Despite the fact that Buzan mentioned that the citation from Lippmann was taken from Wolfers’ book², he established no connection between these definitions. Buzan took the same approach in the second edition of this book that was published after the end of the Cold War and where both citations appeared, with the difference that they did not figure side by side but were separated by other definitions of security³.

Also in the 1980s, Mohammed Ayoob indicated that Lippmann’s definition of security cited by Buzan had been considered by Wolfers in *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* and that Wolfers understood it as referring to the ability of a state to deter or defend an attack directed against it⁴. However, Ayoob did not further explore the implications of Lippmann’s definition on Wolfers’ perspective on security as developed by the latter in that article. It is to be remarked that Ayoob chose to take that citation not from Wolfers’ article, as Buzan did, but from Lippmann’s book *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*, an option which obscured an aspect that could point towards a closer connection between the two authors.

The existence of a connection between the definition of security provided by Wolfers in *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* and Lippmann’s view on security was signalled out latter by Graham M. Smith who, in an article from 2005, indicated that, in formulating the above-mentioned definition, Wolfers “draws on the thought of Walter Lippmann”⁵. Despite noticing the connection between their views, Smith did not explore it so that he opened up a research direction but did not pursue it, its readers being left uncertain about the exact meaning of his words. Moreover, Smith did not indicate that Wolfers cited Lippmann in his paper and equally did not mention the work of the latter that was used by Wolfers. However, given that *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic* is Lippmann’s book referred to by Wolfers in that article, it is obvious that Smith identified a link between these two works.

Smith’s suggestion is absent from a 2021 book on critical security studies by Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams where both Lippmann’s and Wolfers’ contributions to the definition of the concept of security made by them in the works

² *Ibidem*, p. 216.

³ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p. 36, Colchester, ECPR Press, 2009.

⁴ Mohammed Ayoob, “Security in the Third World: the worm about to turn?”, in *International Affairs*, vol. 60, no. 1, 1984, pp. 41-51. Similar to Buzan, Ayoob used Wolfers’ collection of essays *Discord and Collaboration* when he made reference to his article *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*.

⁵ Graham M. Smith, “Into Cerberus’ Lair: Bringing the Idea of Security to Light”, in *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 485-507.



previously indicated are mentioned⁶. People and Vaughan-Williams do not refer to a connection between their perspectives on security and do not even indicate that Wolfers included Lippmann's ideas into his 1952 article with the overall effect that one is provided with no grounds for considering that their views on this issue could be related.

In many recent works designed to provide guidance through the field of security studies, the contribution of Lippmann to the definition of security, unlike that of Wolfers, is no more acknowledged so that it became virtually impossible to even take into consideration the fact that Wolfers could have been influenced by Lippmann in formulating his definition of security that is to be found in *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*. Thus, one could mention the 2010 handbook edited by Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer⁷, the reader edited in 2011 by Christopher W. Hughes and Lai Yew Meng⁸, the handbook from 2017 whose editors are Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Thierry Balzacq⁹, the introduction to the field of security studies edited in 2018 by Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald¹⁰, and the 2021 book on theoretical and practical aspects of international security studies authored by Peter Hough, Andrew Moran, Bruce Pilbeam and Wendy Stokes¹¹, with all of them mentioning the contribution that Wolfers made in *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* to the definition of the concept of security. Lippmann is equally not mentioned in the influential article from 1997 that David Baldwin elaborated on the concept of security, albeit he indicates therein that Wolfers, in the mentioned article, conceived security as “the absence of threats to acquired values” and attributed to it both an objective and a subjective meaning¹². Lippmann is also absent from a 2009 book by Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen which retraces the evolution of international security studies, a book where figures instead the distinction made by Wolfers in that article between the objective and the subjective

⁶ Columba Peoples, Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies. An Introduction*, pp. 2, 5, London, Routledge, 2021, 3rd edition.

⁷ Myriam Dunn Cavelty, Victor Mauer, “Introduction”, in Myriam Dunn Cavelty; Victor Mauer (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 2.

⁸ Christopher W., Hughes, Lai Yew Meng (eds.), *Security Studies. A Reader*, London, Routledge, 2011 p. 1.

⁹ Myriam Dunn Cavelty, Thierry Balzacq, “Introduction”, in Myriam Dunn Cavelty Thierry Balzacq (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, London, Routledge, 2017, 2nd edition, p. 1.

¹⁰ Matt McDonald, “Constructivism”, in Paul D. Williams, Matt McDonald (eds.), *Security Studies. An Introduction*, London, Routledge, 2018, 3rd edition, p. 50.

¹¹ Edward Smith, “The Traditional Routes to Security. Realism and Liberalism”, in Peter Hough, Andrew Moran, Bruce Pilbeam, Wendy Stokes (eds.), *International Security Studies. Theory and Practice*, 2nd edition, London, Routledge, 2021, p. 15.

¹² David Baldwin, “The Concept of Security”, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1997, pp. 5-26.



meaning of security¹³; given that this book traces back the origins of international security studies to the 1940s and that Lippmann's book *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic* appeared in 1943, one could reasonably conclude that, for its authors, Lippmann, unlike Wolfers, had no relevant contribution to the development of the concept of security and, implicitly, that he did not exert an important influence on Wolfers' account of security.

Even if, presently, the significance of Lippmann's view on security for Wolfers' account of it is not a research topic, the fact that Lippmann's definition of security was cited by Wolfers in his much-celebrated article *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, together with the fact that Wolfers commented on it herein and it is considered by Smith to have been influenced by the way Lippmann conceived security, justify the conduct of a research on this issue. Further grounds for assuming such a research topic result from closer examination of Wolfers' article, given that it indicates the citation from Lippmann is included in the paragraph which precedes the paragraph where the distinction between the objective and the subjective meaning of security is made. The viability of this topic is equally supported by the fact that in *The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference*, an article by Wolfers which appeared one year before the publication of *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, he argued that a prudent foreign policy requires statesmen to pursue only goals that are within the reach of actual or potential national power and indicated that this idea represented the central thesis of Lippmann's book *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*¹⁴. One could also justify the research on this topic by pointing out that both Lippmann and Wolfers belong to the realist approach in international relations¹⁵ and that, two years after the publication of *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, they have worked together for exploring the possibility of developing a theory of international relations¹⁶.

This research topic could be considered as highly relevant for the field of security studies for the following reasons: Wolfers' definition of security is a prominent one, the clues that could direct research on this topic are virtually missing today, there is yet no thoughtful investigation of this topic, and, finally, it provides

¹³ Barry Buzan, Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 32, 33.

¹⁴ Arnold Wolfers, "The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference", in *World Politics*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1951, pp. 39-63. This article is included alongside *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* in the collection of essays *Discord and Cooperation* by Wolfers.

¹⁵ Robert E. Williams Jr., "The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory, Edited by Nicolas Guilhot", in *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2012, pp. 284-286.

¹⁶ Nicolas Guilhot (ed.), *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 239.



a better understanding of the early stages of the development of security studies in view of filling a gap in the study of this field.

Taking into consideration all these aspects, the research question guiding this article could be formulated as follows: How much Wolfers' definition of security provided in *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol* was influenced by the definition of this concept advanced by Lippmann in *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*? To answer this question, a qualitative research will be conducted by subjecting relevant sections from the two works to both content analysis and comparative analysis. Thus, in the case of Lippmann's book, the paragraph where the definition of security is formulated is subjected to content analysis with its meaning being discussed in connection with the central ideas of the chapter it belongs to. As for Wolfers' article, the content analysis is applied to the three paragraphs where the definition of security is provided and illustrated, the way he refers therein to Lippmann's definition of security being of peculiar analytical concern. By means of comparative analysis, the definition of security included in the specific paragraphs from Wolfers' article is considered from the point of view of its similarities and dissimilarities with the definition of it put forward by Lippmann.

2. Walter Lippmann on the Meaning of Security

Lippmann advanced the definition of security reproduced above in a chapter from *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic* where he criticized the US foreign policy for pursuing peace at the expense of national security, an error that he characterized as turning an illusion into a paramount aim¹⁷. He strongly argued that national security should be such an aim and he linked national security with the vital interests of a nation, a type of interests that he equally designated as legitimate ones¹⁸. According to that definition, security means for a state that it is able to advance its vital interests even in case of war¹⁹, an idea which, on grounds of Lippmann treating war as being the most adverse circumstance that a state could face in pursuing its vital interests, could be restated as follows: a state disposes of security if it is able to advance its vital interests in any circumstances, irrespective how dangerous. It is then possible to maintain that, by establishing the highest threshold for security, Lippmann advances what could be called a maximalist account of security.

Because Lippmann speaks about security not only during war but also in peacetime²⁰, it follows that he considers the risk of war as the highest danger in

¹⁷ Walter Lippmann, *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1943, p. 50.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 51.



times of peace for the vital interests of a state, and that he treats the defeat in war as the greatest danger for those interests when a state is at war. It is to be remarked that Lippmann emphasized that the assessment of the capacity of a state to advance its vital interests in both contexts must result from an extremely accurate analysis or, in other words, that it must reflect the best available knowledge; the words used by Lippmann are very explicit in that sense: “as far as human foresight and prudence can make it so”²¹. It is obvious that Lippmann excludes the possibility of this assessment being just an impression, a mere opinion, maintaining instead that it must be as little subjective as possible or, put differently, as objective as a human assessment could be. Thus, Lippmann puts forward a maximalist understanding of the objective nature of the assessment implied in the definition of security so that one could observe that this definition is maximalist with respect to both the degree of security and the assessment of the capacity to cope with threats to vital interests or, in other words, it implies what one could designate as both an ontological maximalism and a cognitive maximalism.

This analysis reveals that neither Buzan, nor Ayoob provide an exact quotation from Lippmann given that he maintained that “a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war”²², while the quotation reproduced by the two authors is, as previously indicated, the following one: “a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by such victory in such a war”. If in the case of Buzan the differences could be explained as resulting from the fact that he took the quotation from Wolfers’ article and not directly from Lippmann’s book, no viable explanation for them could be provided in case of Ayoob who clearly indicated that he retrieved the quotation from its original source, namely *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*. It is then possible to maintain that Ayoob equally took the citation from Wolfers and, consequently, that he wrongly indicated Lippmann’s book as its source.

Because Lippmann takes prudence in the field of foreign policy to mean a perfect match established by statemen between the pursued goals and the power, expressed in military terms, that a state disposes of, and having in view the fact that, according to him, national security must be the paramount goal of every state, it could be concluded that, for Lippmann, a state has security only if it disposes, according to an evaluation by statemen that is as objective as humanly possible, of the needed power to accept the risk of waging a war for advancing its vital interests, or to win a war fought for this purpose and, equally, that assuming security as a foreign policy objective when the state lacks the required power to assume the risk

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 51.



of such a war or to win a war aiming at that represents a political imprudence. In other words, it has to be considered that, in Lippmann's view, security cannot be prudently turned into a foreign policy goal by any state, but only by those states disposing of the appropriate power, with this evaluation being made by statemen from a point of view that is as objective as it could be. Moreover, Lippmann considers prudence as the capacity enabling statemen to make the most possible objective assessments with respect to the ability of a state to advance its vital interest in face of the most dangerous threats to them, namely as the capacity in virtue of which statemen evaluate whether or not a state has security.

It is to be observed that what became known as Lippmann's definition of security was not remarked in reviews of his book, such as those by Leland M. Goodrich²³, James C. Malin²⁴, and Mary Sumner Benson²⁵ that appeared at the time of its publication.

3. The Characteristics Attributed to Security by Arnold Wolfers as Seen through the Lens of Lippmann's Understanding of Security

In his article *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, Wolfers starts his reflection on security from Lippmann's account of it that is to be found in *US foreign policy: Shield of the Republic*. However, Wolfers did not cite Lippmann, as Buzan and Ayoob indicate, but has interpreted his definition of security, equating vital/legitimate interests of a state with its core values, maintaining that this definition implicitly refers to a degree of protection of these values that could range from virtually no protection, and thus from virtually no security, to almost total protection and thus to almost total security, and considering that, in peacetime, security represents a state's ability to deter a war against it²⁶. Except for the existence of degrees of security, Wolfers' reading corresponds to Lippmann's understanding of security. The incompatibility of security being a matter of degree with Lippmann's ideas on security results from him having a maximalist understanding of security which presupposes that a state has security only when it disposes of the needed power to protect its vital interests by means of taking the risk of war or of winning

²³ Leland M. Goodrich, "U. S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic by Walter Lippmann" in *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 37, no. 5, 1943, pp. 935-938.

²⁴ James C. Malin, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic by Walter Lippmann; America's Foreign Policies, Past and Present by Thomas A. Bailey" in *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1943, pp. 417-418.

²⁵ Mary Sumner Benson, "U. S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic by Walter Lippmann; Collective Security: The Why and How. by Joseph H. Ball" in *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1944, pp. 263-265.

²⁶ Arnold Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol", in *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 67, no. 4, 1952, pp. 481-502.



the war. Consequently, one could argue that Lippmann considers that if there is insufficient power to do these things, a state does not dispose of less security but has no security at all. In other words, it could be said that in Lippmann's view there is only total security, anything below it being simply insecurity.

Wolfers continued his analysis of Lippmann's implicit understanding of security by maintaining that, according to it, security is in itself a value which, given that there are degrees of security, a state could have more or less of it and which a nation could aim at having more or less of it²⁷; the fact that Wolfers attributes these ideas to Lippmann results from Wolfers' using the word *then* to introduce them²⁸. Deepening this analysis, Wolfers argues that security is for Lippmann just one among other values that inform the foreign policy of any state, namely power and wealth. It is, however, to be observed that, for Lippmann, power is a mean for achieving security so that power and security are not put on the same level and therefore they could not be both considered as foreign policy values, that is as its final goals.

In order to differentiate security from power and wealth, Wolfers indicates in a much-quoted paragraph that "security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked"²⁹. It could be argued that this characterization of security is meant to explain the definition of security advanced by Lippmann, more exactly some implicit features of it, so that it is possible to say that Wolfers does not necessarily consider it as his own contribution to that definition. Assuming such a reading of Wolfers' article, one could remark that, from the point of view of Lippmann's perspective on security, this quotation means that, in an objective sense, security refers to the fact that a state has the needed power to risk a war for protecting its vital interests and to win a war it is engaged in for this purpose, while in a subjective sense, security designates the fact that nationals do not experience fear that their state lacks the power enabling it to risk a war for protecting these interests and to prevail in a war fought for this aim. Thus, in line with Lippmann thinking on security that the mentioned quotation is supposed to be designed to explain, the threat Wolfers refers to is not the risk of war or the war itself, but the lack of sufficient power enabling a state to prudently assume the risk of war and to win a war in which it takes part. However, one could remark that Wolfers' explanation could be read as turning the war and the risk of war into threats to security.

Equally in line with Lippmann's perspective on security, which necessary connects security with the least humanly possible subjective assessment by statemen of the capacity of a state to assume the risk of war and to win it once it begins,

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 484.

²⁸ "Security is a value, *then* [emphasis added], of which a nation can have more or less and which it can aspire to have it in greater or lesser measure" (*Ibidem*, p. 484).

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 485.



the subjective meaning of security has to be understood as the feeling aroused by such an assessment, while the objective meaning of it should be understood as the least subjective assessment of the national power that humans could do. Therefore, the distinction between the objective and the subjective meaning of security that Wolfers refers to should not be read as a distinction between an assessment that is well founded (the objective meaning), and an assessment that is not well founded (the subjective meaning), but as a distinction between an assessment that is well founded and its psychological effects on those making the assessment. However, Wolfers does not have this reading of the objective and subjective terms, considering instead that the subjective assessment is opposed to the objective one, the former distorting the reality, while the latter accurately capturing it; he illustrates this difference by mentioning that, in the aftermath of World War I, France operated with a subjective meaning of security because it exaggerated the risk of a new war with Germany, while other great powers from the League of Nations operated with an objective meaning of security because they correctly appreciated that such a risk was reduced³⁰. Wolfers admits that a purely objective assessment of the risk of war is impossible so that such an assessment could be objective only in a relative sense, an idea which corresponds to Lippmann's idea that in the field of foreign policy one could speak only of a humanly attainable objectivity.

Results and Conclusions

The paper provided arguments in support of the idea that Wolfers' much celebrated distinction between the objective and the subjective meaning of security, as well as the description of security it belongs to, was originally designed to explain implicit aspects of Lippmann's definition of security, but that it ended up as a new perspective on security. This outcome resulted from Wolfers providing an inaccurate account of Lippmann's views on security by mentioning that the latter conceives security as a matter of degree, treats security and power as similar values within the field of foreign policy, and, most importantly, accepts the possibility for security to exist when grounded on erroneous assessment and for it to be equated with the absence, be it real or apparent, of threats to vital national interests. The first misreading of Lippmann leads to what he considers as insecurity to be turned by Wolfers into less security, an interpretation which results from security being understood as a value, and, consequently, as something that one could have more or less; the ontological maximalist account of security is thus replaced with a far less demanding view on it which encompasses even a minimalist account of this concept with the result that security becomes affordable, ceasing to be a great

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 485.



performance. The second misreading of Lippmann further explains the introduction of degrees of security, given that the value of security is understood similar to that of power whose possession by states in various degrees is accepted as a common fact. This misreading equally turns power from a mean desired in view of acquiring security into something desired for itself with the effect that security is no more the unchallenged single most important aim of a nation. As for the last misreading of Lippmann's perspective on security, on one hand it focuses security on external aspects, namely on threats coming from the international realm, instead on the internal ones, that is on the capacity of a state to successfully cope with these threats, and, on the other hand, it allows for the lack of prudence to be compatible with security thus making possible for a cognitive non-maximalist account of security to be put forward.

It is then possible to provide two answers to the research question of this paper, the first being that, taking into account Wolfers' intention, Lippmann's definition of security exercised an overwhelming influence on his own account of it, while the second answer is that, considering how Wolfers actually read Lippmann's definition, the view of the latter on this issue did not significantly influence the former understanding of it. Put it differently, Wolfers was, subjectively speaking, highly influenced by Lippmann but, objectively speaking, he was little influenced by him. In final analysis, both answers to the research question contribute to a better understanding of how security is conceived by Wolfers and Lippmann, of the interplay between their views on this issue, and of what is peculiar to each of them, with the overall effect that a more accurate account of the early stages in the development of security studies is made possible.

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INTEGRATING CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES – NECESSARY ACTION TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITARY ACTIONS

*Ionuț CIORANU**
*Ion CHIORCEA, PhD***

“In today’s world, there is no credibility without capability”
Lord Robertson Earl Grey¹

In the increasingly uncertain future conditions, because the lost time cannot be recovered, the only one within reach remains the future. Thus, defence planning is about planning for an uncertain future, about reducing the level of uncertainty, or about increasing the level of tolerance for uncertainty. Therefore, we consider that it is time to move on to prospective planning, to the management components reprioritization, with an emphasis on foresight, especially as we observe the security environment new specifics, in order to choose, develop and maintain those capabilities to meet current and future challenges.

In this article we will analyze all these aspects, in an attempt to highlight the fact that the efficient integration of those elements, which lead to obtaining and

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¹ Lord Robertson Earl Grey, NATO General Secretary’s speech, “NATO: what have you done for me lately?”, February 2001, URL: <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010216a.htm>, accessed on 26.10.2020.



maintaining optimal capabilities, must represent a synergistic action in order to increase the effectiveness of military actions.

Keywords: *integrated planning; capabilities; effectiveness; conceptual planning; detailed planning.*

Introduction

In an ongoing effort to be prepared for the future, defence planning is a mandatory step in order to identify reactions to the multiple and complex disruptions of the future, thus achieving an optimal level of resilience and discouraging potential adversaries.

Regardless of the historical moment, defence planning tried to find answers to the questions *what?* and *how?*, with the aim to ensure the necessary level of impact of the armed forces, which would produce discouragement or defeat of the opponent, which is an expression of fighting power, this being an effect of capabilities. Therefore, identifying ways to establish, obtain and maintain the optimal set of capabilities remains an ongoing challenge.

In this sense, starting with 2002, the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation system (SPPBE) became operational in Romania, having as main objective the integration of the efforts of the National Defence Ministry for using the available resources in an efficient way in order to obtain and maintain planned military capabilities. SPPBE has four interrelated phases: Planning, Scheduling, Budgeting and Evaluation. In the planning phase, at the level of the National Defence Ministry, the White Paper on Defence, the Military Strategy (MS), the Defence Planning Directive (DPA) and the SPPBE Specifications are elaborated and studies and analyzes are carried out on important planning issues, as well as the long run plans, which focuses on the synergy of the actions of the structures involved. Defence Planning Directive aims to clarify the directions for the ministry's major programs development and provide funding limits for this year, with a perspective for the next ten years, being developed on the basis of national defence planning legislation and documents – the White paper on defence and the Military strategy, as well as the documents underpinning the defence planning process conducted at NATO level and EU – NATO defence policy directive and the EU global security strategy, the interdependencies between which are shown in Figure no. 1.

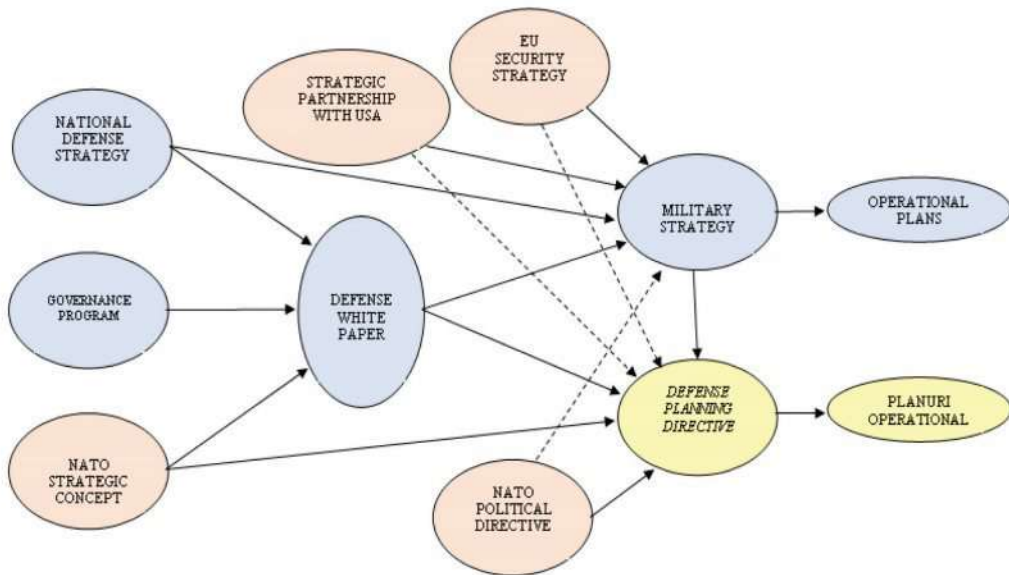


Figure no. 1: The system of interdependencies between the elements of the defence planning system

Therefore, the Defence Planning Directive regulates the integrated defence planning at the level of the National Defence Ministry, regarding the relationship policy-resources-capabilities and ensures a common vision regarding the objectives, priorities and opportunity of resource allocation, also establishing links with the defence planning system that takes place within NATO.

Defence Planning Directive is developed by the Integrated Defence Planning Directorate (DPIA) and approved by the National Defence Ministry, with a ten-year time horizon and an annually review.

1. Defence Integrated Planning

In an increasingly uncertain and complex security environment, the need to coordinate the processes of elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the defence policy acquires a special importance. In our country, this mission belongs to the Department for Defence Policy, Planning and International Relations (DPAPRI), through the Defence Policy Directorate. Integrated Defence Planning Directorate (DPIA), another component of DPAPRI, ensures integrated defence planning and participates in the coordination of defence policies, coordinating the development and maintenance of optimal capabilities, in order to meet the objectives of defence policy. In fact, DPIA ensures the correlation between the objectives of the defence policy, the available resources and the developed military capabilities



and participates in the elaboration and implementation of the defence policy both at national level and in an allied context.²

Therefore, DPIA monitors the implementation of the defence planning directive, which specifies the major programs and their structure, the general and specific objectives regarding the operational readiness, the dynamics of the forces, but also the necessary resources to achieve the objectives.

In order to meet the general objectives of the defence policy, specific objectives are identified, at organizational and domain levels, as well as corresponding to the areas of interest induced by the system of alliances and partnerships, all these objectives, their opportunity and prioritization being harmonized within the specific steps of integrated defence planning.

In addition, the management of human, material and financial resources in a holistic approach is the type of management that is based on integrated planning in order to coordinate the acquisition and maintenance of the capabilities needed to achieve the set objectives. These capabilities are obtained following the development of major programs of National Defence Ministry, which integrates the specific objectives of different areas of defence planning, depending on the priorities and resources available.

Therefore, defence integrated planning development ensuring involves identifying the optimal answers to the “What?” and “How?” questions, by rigorously setting objectives and priorities and pursuing them in parallel with ensuring the necessary resources, pursuing the threat-based and capability-oriented approach, thus providing a favorable framework for increasing the military actions efficiency and effectiveness.

The implementation of capability-based planning varies from country to country, from the approach that gives scenarios a very important role, to approaches that use geopolitical, technological and operational perspectives in the capabilities acquisition and maintenance. However, there is also a common point that capability-based planning seeks to achieve the most effective cost and functionalities to meet new challenges, with flexibility in meeting capability requirements.

This capability requirements fulfillment occurs under ideal conditions. Therefore, the capabilities approach, in terms of efficiency, from the perspective of Doctrine, Organization, Training, Means, Leadership, Staff, and Facilities (DOTMLPF), in order to achieve the desired effects, in terms of effectiveness, becomes a challenge with an emphasis on capability development lines, corresponding to capability elements, presented in Table no. 1.

² Source: URL: <https://dpap.mapn.ro/pages/view/100>, accessed on 15.06.2021.



Table no. 1: The development lines of capability³

Development lines	Remarks
Doctrine	The way we fight
Organization	How we organize ourselves to fight
Training	How we prepare to fight
Material	All that is needed to equip our forces that do NOT require a new development effort (weapons, spare parts, test sets, etc.)
Leadership & education	How we prepare our leaders to lead the fight
Personnel	Availability of people able to participate in peacetime, war and various emergencies
Facilities	Real estate, industrial installations (ammunition production facilities, training centers)
Policy	Defence Department, interagency or international policies affecting the other intangible elements

As the implementation of capability-based planning varies from country to country, there are different approaches to capability development lines. That is why we will continue to make a comparative analysis of the development lines of capability in several NATO/EU member countries, according to the table below.

Table no. 2: The development lines of capability – comparison

ROM ⁴ DOPILPII	SUA ⁵ DOTMLPFI	NATO ⁶ DOTMLPFI	UE ⁷	UK ⁸ TEPIDOIL
Doctrine	Doctrine	Doctrine	Doctrine	Concepts and Doctrine Information
Organization	Organization	Organization		Organization
Training	Training	Training	Training	Training
Material	Material	Material	Material	Equipment Logistic
Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	
Personnel	Personnel	Personnel	Personnel	Personnel
Infrastructure	Facilities	Facilities	Infrastructure	Infrastructure
Interoperability		Interoperability	Interoperability	
	Policy			

³ Neal D.J., Wells II L., *Capability Development in Support of Comprehensive Approaches*, The Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, DC, December 2011, pp. 41-46, URL: <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/CTBSP-Exports/Capability-Development-in-Support-of-Comprehensive-Approaches.pdf?ver=2017-06-16-110221-453>, accessed on 11.11.2020.



It is easier to notice a high level of similarity of the sets of capabilities development lines, which highlights, with a few exceptions, standardization and coherence within existing alliances, unions and partnerships. In addition, the constant presence between the lines of development, doctrine, training, staff and leadership, proves their importance once again.

Also, even if it appears as a capability development line only in the case of the USA, taking into account its influence on the defence planning process, in general, we consider important to analyze, in the future, the opportunity of introducing the policy between capability development lines, both at national and allied level.

We can therefore appreciate that the effectiveness of the defence integrated planning system depends on the effective integration of capability development lines and is directly proportional to ensuring consistency between the proposed objectives and the appropriate allocation of resources.

In conclusion, the general objective of defence integrated planning is to optimize the process of allocation and use of resources for the army to obtain and maintain the capabilities needed to meet Romania's commitments to NATO and the EU, thus becoming an important element in effectiveness increasing.

2. Another Integrated Planning Approach

Another approach to integrated planning can be provided by the analysis of the operational planning types integration, which is not very clear in national doctrines, with the exception of the Manual for the organization and planning of naval operations, according to which "planning consists of two separate components, but interdependent: a conceptual component and a detailed component. The success of planning depends on the integration of the two components".⁹ However, not enough

⁴***, Carta albă a apărării, Bucharest, 2021, URL: <https://sgg.gov.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CARTA-ALBA-A-APARARIL.pdf>, pp.14-21, accessed on 11.11.2020.

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⁷ M. Gahler, Pons E. González, Report on constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty, European Parliament, 2017, p. 12, URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2017-0042_EN.pdf?redirect, accessed on 20.10.2020.

⁸***, "Britain's National Audit Office Focuses on Ministry of Defence Capability Delivery, Not Just Equipment", *WiredGov*, URL: <https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/Britains+National+Audit+Office+Focuses+on+Ministry+of+Defence+Capability+Delivery+Not+Just+Equipment+15042020142500?open>, accessed on 15.06.2021.

⁹***, *FN-2, Manualul pentru organizarea de stat major și planificare a operațiilor navale*, Bucharest, 2019, p. IV-2.



details appear, useful for understanding the need to integrate these components.

This approach has appeared since 2010 in the U.S. Land Forces Doctrine, which presents the interdependencies between design-centered planning (ADM), military decision-making (MDMP), and troop leadind procedures (TLP) and leadership and management ties, tracking how conceptual problem analysis and detailed planning can be used to identify and minimize inefficiencies and maximize effectiveness.

ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, describes ADM as “a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understanding, visualizing, and describing unknown problems and approaches to solving them”¹⁰, while the MDMP is presented as “an iterative planning methodology to understand the situation and mission, develop a course of action and produce a operations plan or order”¹¹.

As shown in Figure no. 2, AMD creates the conceptual framework for the analysis, providing planning staff with the necessary understanding of the problem and the ability to identify optimal approaches to generate solutions. Defining the environment and understanding the problem then allows the planning staff to start the detailed planning.

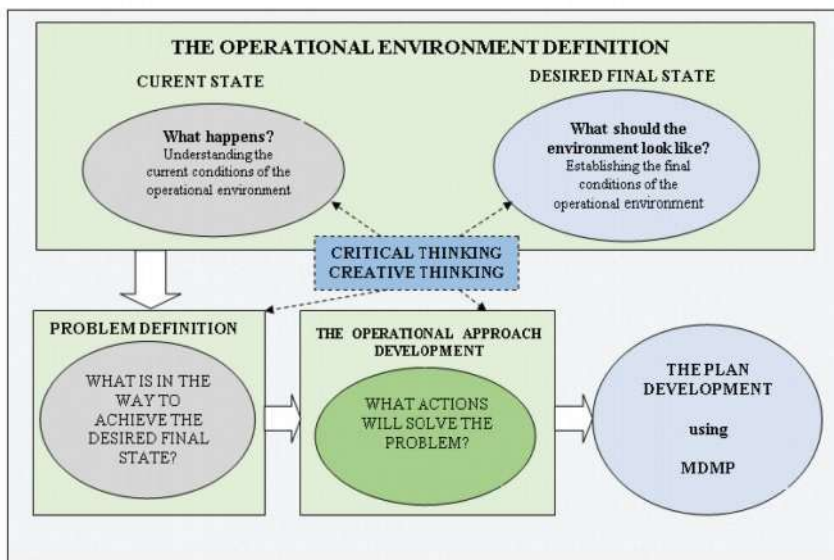


Figure no. 2: Design-centered planning¹²

¹⁰ ***, *ADP 5-0 The Operations Process*, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, July 2019, p. 2-16, URL: https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN20305_ADP%205-0%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf, accessed on 20.11.2020.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 2-17.

¹² Translation and completion from *ADP 5-0 The Operations Process*, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, July 2019, pp. 2-17, URL: https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN18126-ADP_5-0-000-WEB-3.pdf, accessed on 20.11.2020.



MDMP is a flexible process, which ensures continuous clarification of the situation and the generation of problem-solving options, which provides the framework for detailed planning, resulting in enforceable plans and orders.

This whole approach is conditioned by a certain level of critical thinking and creative thinking. That is why we considered it appropriate to complete the original design-centered planning scheme, by introducing the two concepts, these being true moderating variables of the results of the planning process.

Critical thinking is a reflective thinking generated by the need to react to environmental factors, in order to establish their veracity and optimal ways of response, while clarifying the objectives. Along with emotional intelligence, it also helps commanders and planning staff minimize bias and avoid mistakes. Complementarily, creative thinking generates new ideas, which are combined with old ones to obtain innovative solutions. However, there is a need for an optimal emotional climate, a certain level of acceptance of change and more flexible perspectives, which is a challenge for the military organization.

Therefore, we introduced the two concepts because, in our opinion, they represent tools, not necessarily new, but useful for identifying ways to respond to the specific of the environment characterized by VUCA¹³.

According to the concepts already presented, integrated planning ensures the synergistic action of conceptual and detailed planning. Conceptual planning allows the definition of the operational environment and related problems, which creates the favorable framework for the development of those operational approaches that lead to the solution of these problems. Thus, conceptual planning generates the commander's intention and allows the planning staff to understand the situation from a comprehensive perspective, providing a theoretical bridge to detailed planning, which then allows decision makers to think, evaluate and act in a more slightly volatile, uncertain and ambiguous, but just as complex framework, all these aspects being very well illustrated in Figure no. 3.

¹³ J. Kraaijenbrink, "What Does VUCA Really Mean?", *Forbes*, URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeroenkraaijenbrink/2018/12/19/what-does-vuca-really-mean/#4e83e29217d6>, accessed on 05.07.2020.

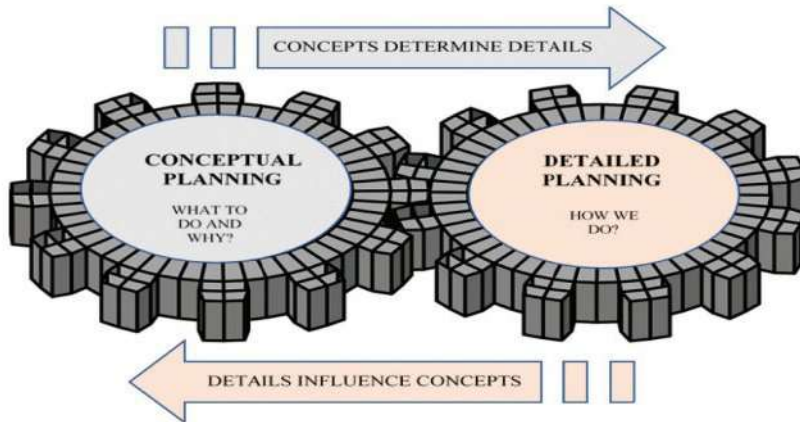


Figure no. 3: Integrated planning¹⁴

As shown in Figure no. 3, conceptual planning provides the objectives, materialized in the set of capabilities needed to be developed, as well as a broad approach to achieve them, while detailed planning elaborates the implementation details based on the objectives already set in the framework defence planning by identifying strategies implemented in capacity development programs and initiatives.

Thus, this integration of conceptual and detailed planning provides military leaders with the ability to anticipate and understand threats, to determine what to do and how to act, and to provide optimal response solutions.

In conclusion, in this approach, integrated planning is a more rational planning model, in terms of its conceptual components, as well as its detailed appearance, a model that ensures efficiency and effectiveness, through the synergistic action of all levels of the military organization.

Conclusions

In order to obtain and maintain the assumed capabilities, the optimal development of the Program on the transformation, development and endowment of the Romanian Armed Forces until 2026 and in the future, becomes paramount. This program provides the framework for the development of the necessary capabilities to be able to respond to current risks and threats, by strengthening a modern, equipped, deployable and interoperable force structure with a flexible, efficient and effective command and control system.

In order to achieve these goals, we consider it very important to focus attention

¹⁴ Translation and completion of *ADP 5-0 The Operations Process*, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, July 2019, pp. 2-16, URL: https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN20305_ADP%205-0%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf, accessed on 20.11.2020.



on the lines of capacity development, in the sense of their efficient integration, in the conditions of ensuring the concordance between the proposed objectives and the appropriate allocation of resources.

Another approach to integrated defence planning could be the integration of conceptual operational planning with detailed, a model that ensures efficiency and effectiveness, through the synergistic action of all levels of the military organization.

However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on the level of foresight, critical and creative thinking and the integration of types of operational planning, in scenarios appropriate to the future. Therefore, the development of the human component of combat power, with an emphasis on both professional training and personal development remains an important challenge in the coming period.

We can therefore emphasize that it is necessary to find the optimal ways to bring abstractions close to concrete by increasing the ability to predict, in order to adapt capabilities to threats and optimally integrate conceptual planning and detailed operational planning into the defence planning process, but without ignoring the resources issue.

In conclusion, the general objective of defence integrated planning is to optimize the process of allocating and using resources for the military forces in order to obtain and maintain the capabilities needed to meet Romania's commitments to NATO and the EU, thus becoming an important element in increasing the level of effectiveness.

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THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. CASE STUDY: THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN (1979-1989)

*Daniel-Mihai DUȚU**
*Teodor BADIU***

This paper aims to present the role of intelligence services in the American foreign policy using as a case study the Afghan conflict from 1979-1989. Thus, this paper underlines the actions (or inactions) of the American intelligence services, highlighting their limitations from this period. It is important to describe the context that contributed to the start of the soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the two perspectives (American and Soviet) over the conflict. In this regard, we considered necessary an analysis on the Soviet point of view regarding the conflict and, most importantly, concerning the American involvement, having in mind the purpose of objectiveness while presenting the context and events. Using the relevant documents, testimonies and statements of former CIA officials from that period, the paper underlines the way foreign policy decisions were taken by the Administrations from Washington, during the Soviet-Afghan war, and how American intelligence services influenced the foreign policy decision-making process and the evolution of the conflict.

Keywords: *intelligence services; USA foreign policy; conflict; covert operations; insurgency forces.*

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Introduction

Nowadays, there is a tendency to consider the international arena as less stable and more volatile compared to the period of the Cold War. But even in the context of bipolarity and the balance of power between the communist East and the democratic West, there were critical moments that had the potential to destroy the architecture of international security, with the prospect of throwing all nations into chaos and destruction.

In this regard, it is relevant to discuss the situation of the Afghanistan War (1979-1989) as a significant and surprising event developed in the Cold War period. The event marks an atypical moment in history, especially in the context in which the Soviet Union invades an allied state with whom it has a strong tradition of bilateral relations, unintentionally favouring the political and subversive involvement of the United States in the Middle East. What seemed then to the United States as an opportunity to create a force of anti-Soviet insurgency, has transformed over time into an atypical non-state opponent that they will face later, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The methodology used in this paper consists of methods of qualitative research and analysis, through a desk-based research, the historical context, causes and factors that led to developments and escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan. For this, relevant works of specialists in the field of international relations and American foreign policy were used, as well as documents and reports declassified by the USA and the Russian Federation. The paper also presents some testimonies of prominent historical figures during the conflict, opinions that were gathered by Tim Weiner in the paper “CIA. A Secret History”, by analysing some official documents, verbal reports of American officers and officials, and also by attending interviews with CIA officers and veterans. These statements are intended to validate the hypotheses of this paper and to bring a unique perspective, from within, on the events and the way in which the CIA is involved in American foreign policy. Given the topic of the paper, the methods of quantitative research were used in a limited way, being used only in the analysis of financial and military aid provided by the US to the mujahideen.

1. The Political and Historical Context of Afghanistan

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a surprising act both for the Eastern block and the West, especially if we take into account the bilateral relation between Afghanistan and the USSR that they had managed to build over time. Thus, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union were the first states to recognize each other's existence, providing economic assistance, military security and agriculture assistance



to each other with regularity.¹ Relations became even closer after the success of the coup in Afghanistan, organized in April 1978 by the Democratic People's Party, where the party, led by Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, managed to establish a Marxist-Leninist leadership. In December 1978, a delegation led by Nur Mohammed Taraki and consisting of members of the political party and state apparatus came to Moscow for direct meetings with the Soviet counterparts to clarify the development trend of relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union and sharing views on international politics.² The delegation's visit had a positive effect on Kremlin counterparts, and Brezhnev "(...) pointed out that the relations between the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan were assuming a completely different nature. These relations are now based on class belonging; they are imbued with the spirit of friendship and revolutionary solidarity."³ In essence, the meeting and discussions led to the signing of an agreement/treaty of friendship and cooperation between the two states. The premises of the new Afghan leadership seemed promising for the Soviets, but for Westerners, and especially USA, USSR seemed to win in the Middle East.

In spite of the Soviet intelligence services' presence in Kabul for two decades before the outbreak of the revolution that would lead to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, KGB and Yuri Andropov (head of the Soviet intelligence services) did not anticipate the anticommunist revolt that would arise. Moreover, neither the Soviets, nor the Americans have paid enough attention to the Iranian Revolution and the ideology of Islamist that would propagate the Middle East⁴ (for Americans, "the idea that religion was to prove itself as a compelling political force was unacceptable in the late twentieth century"⁵; although CIA was perceived in Iran as "a great omnipotent power with a great force over their lives"⁶, the CIA office in Iran had, in fact, only four people, all newly arrived in Iran, with no relevant experience and knowledge of the local language and customs). Thus, when the new communist leadership in Kabul introduced women's education, confiscated land owned by tribal elders, legislated freedom of choice in marriages, and proclaimed

¹ ***, "U.S.S.R. and Afghanistan sign «friendship treaty»", in *History*, URL: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ussr-and-afghanistan-sign-friendship-treaty>, republished on 02.12.2019, accessed on 03.02.2021.

² ***, "Information about the visit of the Afghan party and state delegation, headed by prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan Nur Mohamed Tarakhi to the USSR", *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, Digital Archive. International History Declassified, URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112458>, accessed on 03.02.2021.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*, Penguin Books, 2005, pp. 36-37.

⁵ Tim Weiner, *CIA. O istorie secretă*, transl. Raluca Pușdercă, Litera Publishing, Bucharest, 2019, p. 507.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 508.



universal education according to Marxist dogma, radical Islamist groups opposed these measures.⁷

In short time, the situation began to deteriorate as a consequence of the outbreak of violent riots in mid-March 1979, in Herat –village near the border with Iran –, resulting in the death of 5.000 people, including 50 Soviet advisers along with their families.⁸ From the discussion of the March 18, 1979, between the Soviet Prime Minister, Alexei Kosygin, and the Prime Minister Nur Mohammed Taraki, it appears that the forces of insurgency had managed to obtain large quantities of weapons and hold control of military warehouses (“Taraki: All ammunition and depots are in their hands”). Moreover, the Afghan leader noted that “there is no active support on the part of the population. It is almost wholly under the influence of Shiite slogans (...)”¹⁰. For the Soviet prime minister, the situation in Afghanistan was “a complex political and international issue”¹¹. Over the months, the internal situation in Afghanistan deteriorated so much that the Afghan leaders began to fight among themselves; Taraki tried to assassinate Hafizullah Amin, without success, and was arrested and executed at Amin’s order. This is significant because Taraki’s execution upset Brezhnev (with whom he had a close friendship), and, at strategic level, the Soviet intelligence services were beginning to express concerns about the possibility that Amin, who had studied in the USA, work with CIA and to refuse any Soviet aid or intervention, instead requesting assistance from the USA, which could have set up control and intelligence centers right on the border of the USSR.¹² In the light of these events and prospects, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan became a certainty and a necessity.

2. The Afghan Revolution and the First Measures Taken by the Americans

The decision of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was not very popular among the Politburo in Moscow, many Soviet statesman learning information about the military campaign from the press. However, the USSR could not afford not to interfere in Afghanistan, mainly due to the fact that about 40 million Muslims lived in the Soviet republics of Central Asia, and the loss of Afghanistan would have set a

⁷ Steve Coll, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Războiul Rece*, transl. Diana Pușcașu Țuțuianu, RAO Publishing, Bucharest, 2009, p. 268.

⁹ ***, “Telephone conversation between Soviet premier Alexei N. Kosygin and Afghan premier Nur Mohammed Taraki”, *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, Digital Archive. International History Declassified URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113141>, accessed on 03.02.2021.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Steve Coll, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹² John Lewis Gaddis, *op.cit.*, p. 269.



dangerous precedent (Yuri Andropov said on March 17, 1979, that “we cannot lose Afghanistan”¹³).

President Carter was informed, by the CIA, in early March 1979, of the situation in Afghanistan, and the CIA’s proposal was to launch an anti-Soviet propaganda campaign to support the efforts of the Afghan rebels (an action that the USSR imputed to the Americans anyway), which Carter disagreed with. The chief analyst on Soviet affairs told the CIA director at that time, Admiral Turner, that a possible disintegration of the Afghan regime could force the USSR to militarily intervene in Afghanistan.¹⁴

The Agency was suffering from congressional hearings that drew attention to the covert interventions in Cuba and Latin America, and the new internal procedures transferred the control of covert operations to the President and Congress; moreover, CIA’s clandestine service budget had been reduced. Despite this, the CIA was able to establish informal channels of communication with Islamabad and obtain a promise to support Afghan rebels in Pakistan, but only if the USA protected Pakistan in the event of a Soviet attack.¹⁵ At the meeting of the Special Coordinating Committee on March 30, 1979, it was stated that the Carter Administration wanted “to reverse the current Soviet trend and presence in Afghanistan, to demonstrate to the Pakistanis our interest and concern about Soviet involvement, and to demonstrate to the Pakistanis, Saudis, and to others our resolve to stop extension of Soviet influence in the Third World.”¹⁶

However, no decision has been taken in this regard. The escalation of the conflict between Afghan rebels and Soviet troops led to the intervention of Soviet air forces in Bagram, which led President Carter to authorize, in July 1979, the use of just over 500,000 dollars for propaganda and psychological actions in Afghanistan, as well as for the provision of radio equipment, medical supplies and cash to the Afghan rebels, but transported in such a way that the American aid would not be obvious.¹⁷

The kidnapping of the American Ambassador in Kabul, Adolph Dubs, by the Afghan rebels (supported by Pakistan in the fight against the pro-Soviet Kabul), and then his murder during the Afghan police intervention on the hotel where he was detained, raised real concerns and discussions in Washington about a possible US intervention in the area. However, President Carter was not informed by the CIA of the impending invasion of Afghanistan because “the Agency had a fairly accurate idea of Soviet capabilities, but did not understand any of the Russians’

¹³ Tim Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

¹⁴ Steve Coll, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.



intentions”¹⁸, and the classified report sent to the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department on March 23, 1979 by the *National Intelligence Daily* stated that the Soviets would not want “the introduction of a large number of ground forces into Afghanistan”¹⁹ (however, 30,000 Soviet troops were on the Afghan border that week). CIA’s intelligence sources in Afghanistan were few, which explains the Agency’s inability to predict the 1978 coup, but also the Soviet invasion of 1979 (a memorandum sent by the CIA to Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser, in September 1979, states the fact that the CIA did not actually know what the Soviets were doing in Afghanistan²⁰).

Although the Soviets continued to send troops to Afghanistan, CIA informed the president that there is no intensification of Soviet intervention, and after an effort of interception and analysis of information, experts of the Agency “have come to a unanimous conclusion that Moscow would not invade Afghanistan”²¹. Although Soviet troops continued to enter Afghanistan until December 1979, the CIA considered these actions only to defend the Soviet air base at Bagram.

At the meeting of the Special Coordination Committee (composed of the President’s most experienced advisers, including Zbigniew Brzezinski) in December 1979, it has been discussed the presence of 5,300 Soviet troops at the Bagram Air Base and the fact that the CIA did not consider this presence an attack preparation, but there was no discussion of a Soviet invasion. Moreover, CIA analysts stated (on December 19, 1979) that “the pace of the deployment of Soviet troops does not suggest ... the eventuality of an emergency”²², so they did not foresee a possible attack by the USSR. However, three days later, there were news in Washington that the invasion of Afghanistan was underway, forcing President Carter to sign a covert order to allow the CIA to arm the Afghan forces.²³

3. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the American Response

In a memorandum dated December 26, 1979, addressed to the President of the United States²⁴, Zbigniew Brzezinski indicated potential strategic landmarks which could fundament the Soviet action: pressuring Pakistan and Iran in the idea of having access to the Indian Ocean to increase their sphere of influence and the proximity of the Soviet presence to Persian Gulf and Oman Gulf. Based on this

¹⁸ Tim Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 502.

²⁰ Steve Coll, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

²¹ Tim WEINER, p. 503.

²² *Ibidem*, pp. 503-504.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 504.

²⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Reflections on Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan”, *The White House*, Memorandum, Washington, December 26, 1979, p. 1.



document, he recommended that the USA changes its policy towards Pakistan by providing political support, especially in the context of Pakistani aid to insurgent forces in Afghanistan; to provide financial and technical-military assistance (sending instructors and weapons) to the insurgency forces; to encourage China to support insurgent forces in Afghanistan; warning the Soviets about the effects that their actions on Afghanistan could affect the SALT agreement and use of information operations and covert actions to help the insurgency forces (operations exploiting the Muslim element as ideological factor against Marxism-Leninism).²⁵ In another memorandum, Brzezinski stated that “our ultimate goal is the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Even if this is not attainable, we should make Soviet involvement as costly as possible.”²⁶

As previously mentioned, following the briefings received from the CIA on the situation in Afghanistan, the Carter Administration authorized, initially, the engagement in covered activities by the CIA. However, these actions had a pretty shy start, as they were limited to providing non-lethal support to Mujahideen insurgents, consisting of psychological operations and propaganda, without providing weapons.²⁷ However, in order to make the intervention against the Soviets successful, it needed the coagulation of neighbouring states in a joint effort, which pushed Carter to try to repair USA-Pakistan relations, which resulted in a modest collaboration between the CIA and ISI (Pakistan Intelligence Service).²⁸ USA foreign policy actions were not limited to this, having impact also on Soviet Union by cancelling all scheduled visits and imposing economic sanctions, which resulted in the cessation of grain exports to the Soviet Union, the cancellation of fishing rights, setting restrictions in negotiations in the fields of culture, trade, exchange of goods, etc. In the framework of altering bilateral relations, the Carter Administration decided to authorize a new set of CIA-led covert measures, this time including the indirect transfer of weapons to the Mujahideen, mediated by the Pakistani government.²⁹ In terms of funding, the effort was to be co-financed by the US and Saudi Arabia; by 1980, \$30 million had already been allocated, and a year later the amount reached \$50 million, with insurgent funding also mediated by Pakistan³⁰ (which, in turn, would gather, arm and form the most radical insurgent fighting groups).³¹ It should be appreciated

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²⁶ Steve Coll, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²⁷ Bruce Riedel, *What We Won. America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979–89*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2014, p. 99.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 99-100.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

³⁰ Diego Cordovez, Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan. The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, p. 53.

³¹ Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy. The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-89*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, p. 114.



that although the actions of the Carter Administration in the context of the Afghan war were fast and without a solid foundation of intelligence – given the speed of deterioration of the relationship between Soviets and Afghans – the Americans managed to establish a network of covered operations consisted of CIA, ISI, GID (Jordanian intelligence service) and MI6, with the general purpose of supporting the Mujahideen in their anti-Soviet Afghan war.

With the arrival of Reagan Administration at the White House, the USA foreign policy regarding the Afghanistan issue continued, on one hand, for reasons of national interest and trying to stop a possible extension of the Soviet campaign to Pakistan and Iran, and, on the other hand, as a commitment to Reagan's anti-communist attitude. During this period, the CIA acted cautiously; all risks were borne by ISI, and the CIA only financed the operations. Therefore, the Pakistanis had full access to the Mujahideen, and control over the evolution of the conflict; the Mujahideen were trained only by Pakistani forces, and the CIA could only train ISI troops in the use of new equipment while the ISI troops pass those skills to the Afghan fighters.³² Robert Gates will state that “the CIA could put some pressure, but it was President Muhammad Zia ul Haq and ISI who decided.”³³ At Washington, especially in the first half of the 1980's, was decided that, in foreign policy, the approach concerning the war not to be overt, but to allow the USA adopt, when the situation requires, a narrative of “plausible denial” to avoid a possible retaliation from the Soviets. The weaponry that have to be delivered to Mujahideen could not be USA weaponry, so the Americans opted for diversification of weapons supplies consisting of European anti-aircraft batteries, Swiss Oerlikon anti-aircraft cannons, British Blowpipe portable missiles, Chinese missiles and weapons with Soviet patent (including Dashika 12.7 mm field machine guns), Soviet assault weapons (Kalashnikov AK-47, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank grenades) consisting of captures and model purchases made in Egypt, also with Soviet patent.³⁴ It should be noted that Egypt does not have the resources and technology to replicate armaments exactly according to the Soviet patent, so that CIA gave Egyptians technical support and funding in order to support the flow of weapons to the Mujahideen and to maintain their cover. However, while tactically such a diversity of weapons was not effectively helping the anti-Soviet insurgency fight, at the political level it marked the synchronization of visions between the Reagan Administration and the Head of CIA, William Joseph Casey (Reagan's former chief of campaign and former director of espionage at OSS in London), by implementing, at the tactical level, the USA foreign policy where the goal was not just to “transform Afghanistan into a

³² Bruce Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³³ *Ibidem.*

³⁴ Rodric Braithwaite, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69, 155, 158-159.



Soviet Vietnam”, but the total defeat of the Soviet Union was intended.³⁵

Under the pressures of Congress and the Republicans, the Reagan Administration signs Decision No.166 on National Security (March 1985), authorizing the initiation of actions and activities that would lead “by all possible means” to the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan.³⁶ Through this directive, USA foreign policy shifts from prudence and reserved actions to overt and direct actions, making its goal and participation in the conflict more visible. In the Afghan theater of operations, the CIA redefines and expands its military training and education programs to a core of 150,000 Mujahideen –gathered and brought by ISI – who are initiated into guerrilla warfare tactics. Regarding the weaponry, the insurgents received light American weapons (at the time being higher quality than the original or copied Soviet variants), the most representative being the Stinger ground-to-air launcher which later provided them with a significant advantage against Soviet MI-24 assault helicopters.³⁷ The expansion of CIA programs proved effective, especially after the Mujahideen were armed with Stinger launchers, as the Soviets began to suffer more and more material and human losses. According to an analysis of the US Army, from the time of equipping insurgents with Stinger launchers until the end of the conflict, the Mujahideen were able to strike down 279 of Soviet aircrafts and helicopters.³⁸

The sudden increase of the combat effectiveness of Afghans insurgents after 1985 was not ignored by the leadership in Moscow, because, in addition to the usual forces and the GRU, KGB and MVD (forces of Ministry of Interior), a special task force that belonged to the GRU and was composed of soldiers better prepared, better equipped and skilled in guerilla warfare was sent to the Afghan operations theatre (asymmetrical warfare). While the KGB and MVD were involved in infiltrating among the Mujahideen, gathering information and capturing US military advisers, the purpose of the GRU task force was to stop, as far as possible, the transfer of weapons from the CIA and ISI to the Mujahideen, and to ambush insurgent groups.³⁹ However, only in March 1988, GRU sent to Moscow a memorandum regarding the aid offered by the USA to Mujahedin. The document mentioned CIA’s actions to equip “counterrevolutionary” troops with Stinger launchers – 600 in 1987 – and the training of rebels, with weapons transferred through the port of Karachi, and from there being distributed by subunits of the Pakistani armed forces and special services. The document also mentioned an intensification of arms shipments from the United States, since 1988, and distributed through the ports and airports of Saudi

³⁵ Bruce Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³⁶ Diego Cordovez, Selig S. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

³⁷ Martin Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan. Studies in Asymmetric Warfare*, Routledge, New York, 2005, pp .115-116.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

³⁹ Rodric Braithwaite, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.



Arabia, Oman and other neighbouring states, the weapons supply actions being corroborated with a wide offensive information activity focused on psychological operations and transmitted subversively through more than 50 radio stations run by the CIA and the United States Information Agency (USIA).⁴⁰

The passage of time and the increasingly unpleasant results that the Red Army had on the ground, in conjunction with the public's sense of aversion to the occupying troops and the efforts of the Arab and American intelligence services to support the insurgents, lead to the Moscow leadership's decision to end the military campaign in Afghanistan. Between May 15, 1988, and February 15, 1989, the last Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan; the war left behind an apparent victory of the United States and its allies, a radical religious faction that would express an anti-imperialist and anti-Western feeling, and a country which had to recover economically, politically and socially from the long confrontation, but which has not been able to benefit from post-conflict reconstruction.

Regarding the way in which the actions (or inactions) of the intelligence services had influenced the American foreign policy during the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, it should be noted that, between 1981 and 1982, three individuals succeeded in running the CIA clandestine service, the last of which was Robert Gates. In 1982, he stated that "the CIA is slowly turning into the Department of Agriculture" and "was in an advanced stage of bureaucratic atherosclerosis."⁴¹ Also, there were only mediocre and poorly trained officials in the CIA, which was the main reason for "the decline in the quality of intelligence gathering and analysis of the last fifteen years" (including the failure of the invasion of Afghanistan) and the reason why the CIA had missed almost every major USSR event and its involvement in Third World states.⁴² Moreover, the findings of CIA analysts were rewritten to fit the vision of the Director of Central Intelligence Services, William J. Casey.⁴³

Conclusions

The war in Afghanistan is one of the major events of the Cold War period, but this is not necessarily due to its magnitude. Compared to other regional wars, such as the Korean Peninsula or Vietnam, it does not have very different combat characteristics, but the management of the conflict of which the actors involved

⁴⁰ ***, "Soviet Military Intelligence (GRU) memorandum, 'About us aid to the counterrevolutionaries' (Excerpt)", *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, Digital Archive. International History Declassified, URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117276>, accessed on 03.02.2021.

⁴¹ Tim Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 518.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 518.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 518.



was atypical. The military intervention of Soviet troops against one of its allies highlighted the lack of imagination in providing, in the framework of Afghanistan's internal effervescence, a complex and dynamic solution to prevent the internal destabilization of the Afghan state and, subsequently, the disastrous outcome of the intervention.

On the other hand, in the context of countering Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, USA foreign policy has been negligent and not based on sufficient information and analysis. In this sense, American statesmen were forced to make hasty decisions with geopolitical relevance, relying more on their own experience, intuition and on the opinions of specialists. The absence of a consistent information gathering activity, but also a lack of full understanding of cultural differences, forced the USA to spend substantial sums that did not lead, apart from the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, to significant geopolitical or geostrategic gains. This episode highlighted the dysfunctions of the American intelligence services that delivered insufficient and sometimes incorrect information to the decision-makers regarding the Soviet intentions, the regional particularities, and the perspectives of the evolution of the conflict. The Soviet intelligence services were not very effective either, and their approach was based on an extreme use of force. In this regard, neither the KGB nor the CIA were able to gain any significant advantage, both services working more with estimates and less with concrete information gathered from the field.

The absence of a tactical and strategic plan based on the particularities of reality in the theater of operations has determined, conjecturally, the emergence of an insurgency force that is gradually radicalized, being armed by the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and which, regarding its own religious ideology, perceived the world in Hobbesian terms. Thus, the brutal policy of the Soviet Union on Afghanistan, the American desire to defeat the Soviet troops by any means, and the inefficient use of intelligence contributed to the popularization of radical Islam and, ultimately, to the emergence of global terrorism.

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THE POLITICAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE 1989 GDR REFUGEES PASSING THROUGH HUNGARY

*Stelian TAMPU**

Raising awareness on the political-historical background of the popular movements of the 20th century is very important because behind the stories there were often ill-considered political decisions. It is interesting to see how the last century leaders of the great powers represented their self-interests, and what political games they had developed to achieve their political goals.

The interests of nations living in countries were often not interesting to take into consideration. The Soviet Union was not a nation-state, but neither was the United States of America, while at that time most of the European states were nation-states, and along this were nations that sought to assert their national interests, by force when necessary. However, the post-World War II political settlements did not serve the interests of the German nation, but divided its population and turned them against one other. This is why the movement of German citizens within Germany has occurred.

Keywords: *emigration; migration; dictators; Cold War; regime change.*

Introduction

The aim of the current study is to revive one of the refugee waves in the twentieth century that took place within Germany, which was “divided into two states” (Federal Republic of Germany – FRG and German Democratic Republic – GDR). Between 1945 and 1990, the refugees had tried to migrate from East

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Germany to West Germany. On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall collapsed, the first brick of which, according to Helmut Kohl, was demolished by the Hungarians. Personally, I would like to clarify the facts behind this viewpoint. The Hungarian State and the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service had also played a major role in this process.

History

The “division command”¹ for the German State dates back to 1943, when the EAC² (European Advisory Commission), led by Cordell Hull³, stated in October that after defeating Germany, the Allies, besides preserving the country’s economic unity, have the duty to “denazify”, demilitarise, and democratise. The design of its territorial structure was discussed at the 1943 Tehran Conference. Based on the proposals of the meeting leaders, the notion of imperialism was to be deleted from the German minds. Roosevelt had suggested to divide Germany into five parts. After another official meeting taking place in January 1944, interestingly, instead of the idea of disintegration, occupation came to the fore. In September 1944, a protocol was drawn up in London, which stipulated specific boundaries, stating that the eastern part of Germany would be a Soviet occupation zone, the western part an occupation zone of the USA, of Great Britain (and later, of France). The lines of the western borders were agreed upon only at the meeting of the heads of government in Québec. Shortly afterwards, France also applied for membership in the ranks of the Allied Powers and claimed a zone of occupation. After all, the Allied Powers agreed on the following guidelines: Germany, as a threat to peace, must be excluded from the ranks of great powers, its economic hegemony must be abolished, and the nest of Nazi ideology must be deprived of its power. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the great powers agreed on the following four points:

1. Germany was divided into four occupation zones, which meant that the five provinces in the eastern part of the country would be Soviet occupation zones, in which Berlin was located as well, and apparently Berlin was also a common occupation zone, thus creating the GDR in which the westernmost state of the Soviet communist state system could operate.

2. A Berlin-based Audit Committee was set up, to which each major power delegated one member. Moscow will later leave this committee with the intention of making it impossible to function, but the committee will continue its work nonetheless.

¹ A.N: Around 1943, the great powers only discussed the disintegration of the Third Reich, and only in 1944 did they begin to talk about the occupation.

² European Advisory Commission, established at the Moscow Conference on 30 October 1943, seated in London to ensure the settlement of post-war Europe.

³ A.N: Between 1933-1944 he was Secretary of State of the United States of America.



3. The abolition of national-socialism and demilitarization is a principled and moral duty in the often-proclaimed criminal promises of the great power leaders of the age.

4. Determining reparations in proportion to destruction. At the time, they were still talking about 20 billion dollars, 50% of which would have been given to the Soviets, the other 50% would have been shared by the US, France and Britain. Three forms of recovery were already assessed at this time: the first from national wealth, the second from the annual transport of goods and current production, and the third from the use of German labour.

Even after Hitler's suicide, the great powers only wanted an unconditional full capitulation. The capitulation took place on May 7, 1945, at 2:41 A.M., at Reims, Eisenhower headquarters, where the signatory was Alfred Jodl. The Soviets insisted that they sign the capitulation document separately, that is, to lay down their arms separately in front of them, this was a sign of significance. Thus, on May 8, the capitulation was signed in Berlin-Karlshorst, where the signatories were Keitel, Friedeburg and Sumpff. The capitulation took effect on May 9, and then, on September 2, Japan was forced to its knees, as a result of which the world-political triangle: Berlin-Rome-Tokyo was defeated.

World War II, which ended with 55 million dead, and bled everyone who took part in it. Not even the joy of the victorious great powers could be cloudless, and even if they had celebrated themselves as victorious, the joy of victory was bitter for all.

1. The Division of Germany after the Second World War

The period between 1943 and 1949 reveals the most questionable moments of world history. The forced trajectory of the formation of a "coalition" against Hitler's aspirations for world domination amazed the world as well. The US, which calls itself the most democratic nation, had to sit at a conference table with a country that had executed its sacred ruler and his family a few years earlier, sought legitimacy for its new system of power by dictatorial means and swept the misery of large masses under the carpet⁴. The Soviet Union, shaped by Lenin's worldview, arrived on the brink of the Second World War, not hoping to face one of the hungriest dictators in Europe at the time. The constitutional kingdom of the British Isles, known as the United Kingdom in Europe; this formation of power also called itself a democratic state formation. It had a king who had no longer ruler power, but it had a Prime Minister who, as head of government, was practically entirely in control of his country. He also had to sit at a table with the leader of the Soviet Union, Stalin.

⁴ A.N: The Tsarist family was executed in 16.07.1918, on Lenin's instructions. In: *History of Soviet Union*.



Two democracies (the US and the UK) and a federation blessed with dictatorial aspirations for great power (Soviet Union) form a coalition that seemed appropriate to stop Hitler. France, which was at that time fully occupied by Hitler, joined this triple coalition later⁵. The first meeting of the countries' foreign ministers took place in Moscow, where the London-based AEC⁶ organization was set up. Churchill's reservations and concerns, Roosevelt's occasional naiveté reinforced Stalin in keeping only the interests of himself and his empire in mind in this situation. He wanted to expand his empire, pushing the Soviet Union empire as far to the West as possible, while England sought to maintain the continental geopolitical balance. The same did the US, after the disappearance of a German state with a strong economy would have created a significant power vacuum. The Tehran conference, the Yalta conference and then the Potsdam conference were all meetings where the great powers leaders played serious "chess games" with everyone, striving to move their pieces on the chessboard to reach the best possible solution. Their German policy was also very different and we can already trace this from the size of the army that occupies the acquired territory. All the ideas of the Western powers were aimed at democratizing the German state and maintaining – even strengthening – its economy. The Soviet Union wanted to make up for its own losses at all costs, and it did everything it could for the sake of it⁷. The Western powers aspired to allow German citizens to lead their own lives, while Stalin wanted to keep everything under control and refused to make any compromise on his political system. All these directives will largely determine the fate of European peoples, as it was also determined by the peace treaties and demarcations of the First World War (Treaty of Versailles - 28.06.1918, Treaty of Trianon - 04.06.1920). The redrawing of the borders of Central Europe back and forth resulted in very serious migrations. Perhaps we can also state that it also was the cause of the outbreak of the Second World War. But the great power agreements of 1945-1949 did not bring any relief either. The division of Germany into two parts represents the beginning of very serious migrations from east to West, which will not stop until 1989. But not only did the German citizens migrated to the West from the Eastern part of the Germany, but some German nationals trapped in the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe had also migrated to the Western part of the German state.

The formation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and its fate were well established.⁸ The three occupying powers were not as greedy as their Eastern counterpart. The democratic but controlled measures did not bring the FRG to the fate of the eastern part of the country. The Marshall Plan, the Adenauer era are all

⁵ ***, United Nation 01-02.01.1942 (U.S, U.K, Soviet Union), later added France.

⁶ European Advisory Commission – October, 1943.

⁷ István Németh, *History of Germany*, Aula Publishing House, 2004, pp. 315-365.

⁸ Norman Davis, *Europe: A History*, Budapest, Osiris, p. 200.



fortunate historical moments in the history of West Germany that also benefited the bloodstream of the world economy, not just the German people⁹. The eastern part of the country, whose name was GDR from 1949, unfortunately did not have such luck. The integration efforts of the West German state brought the expected results very soon. They were able to reconcile with France, and the US defence guaranteed helping the country regain its freedom of action. The FDR's accession to other European alliances established after the Second World War had such great impact on state formation that it was no accident that the Adenauer era was called an economic miracle. Fewer and fewer factories were dismantled and restitutions began to be curtailed.

As for the *Berlin situation*, after 1945, the city could not be attributed to any of the occupation zones. The victorious great powers agreed that Berlin would come under joint administration, in which the occupying powers had the same rights. Here was the Allied Control Council (persons delegated by the victorious states that were the following: the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the USA and France). All the powers insisted on Berlin because it formed the legal basis for their being there, even though Stalin wanted to abolish it¹⁰. Although Moscow did everything it could to bring all of Berlin under its control, the election showed that the population was more attracted to the direction of the Western occupiers¹¹. Stalin instructed, "it has to seem democratic, but we must control everything." In March, 1948 the Soviet Union withdrew from the Allied Control Council, so instead of the four-power occupation of Berlin, 3 or 1 power(s) shared the city, respectively. The Soviet Union remained in the eastern sector of the city, while the Western states dominated the western sector, and although they all voiced the possible unifying role of Berlin, the Allied Control Council decided to relocate the capital of the FRG to Bonn. In the eastern sector of Berlin, the capital of the GDR was established. We know that both state formations claimed the capital, but unlike the FRG, the Soviet Union fully integrated the eastern part of Berlin into the GDR and declared: "Berlin is located in the Soviet occupation zone and is also economically part of the Soviet occupation zone."¹² The two spheres of power protected their own interests, the Westerners insisted on West Berlin by invoking their rights enshrined in the treaties, while the Soviet sphere did everything it could to discourage Western states from staying in the city. Obviously, Stalin wanted to make the Eastern sector a model city for Soviet socialism; as a result of which many people migrated to the western sectors, so it

⁹ A.N.: *Marshall Plan*: From 1948, \$ 14 billion was distributed to European states. For example: U.K received 25%, France 22%, Italy 11%, Austria 5%, West Germany 10%, etc.; *Konrad Adenauer*: 1949-1966. The first Chancellor of West Germany after Second World War. This period is called an economic miracle.

¹⁰ István Németh, *History of Germany*, *op. cit.*

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 369-414.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 560-574.



was not surprising that in 1961 Khrushchev issued instructions to build the wall by emphasizing the importance of “preventing the outflow of assets.”¹³ Now it was not just a virtual border, but a physical wall dividing the city into two parts. Although treaties regulated and allowed relatives to visit, the crossings were both difficult and rigorous until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

2. The Formation of the GDR and the Escape of Its Citizens

What is a human being? Many philosophers have asked this question, including Karl Jaspers himself, one of the great existentialist thinkers of the 20th century, and as he went on to explain the question, he realized that although human being is unknowable, we still have some basic knowledge. We know they have a body and this is dealt with by the science of physiology, they have a soul and this is what psychology is acquainted with, a societal and social being (*zoon politikon*)¹⁴, and this is sociology’s field of interest, but all of these cannot exhaust the essence of man.¹⁵ It is at this point he realizes that most importantly a human being is also freedom. Without their freedom, they are just distorted beings who can never be fulfilled in the absence of freedom. East German citizens, deprived of their freedom for 40 years, also longed for this fulfilment. In order to regain their freedom, they were able to risk their lives.

Where from? The answer to this question is the GDR. The date of the GDR’s formation was the autumn of 1949, after the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) had been formed in the spring of the same year as a consequence of decisions based on the consensus of the Western Allies, where even an election is held, with Mr. Konrad Adenauer becoming the first chancellor and Theodor Heuss¹⁶ President of the state. In the autumn, the Soviet Union appoints Mr. Otto Grottel as interim Head of government and later on, Mr. Wilhelm Pieck as Head of state. Thus, the alliance that had defeated Hitler suddenly became enemies for one another, and culminated with the decades of Cold War.¹⁷

It is not simple to look back on what happened in Eastern Europe after the Second World War from the perspective of thirty years, to understand, through the mirror of Western societies, why the political situation has evolved in this form. All basic interpretations of the events are a process that requires deep reflection, which

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Since Aristotle, the human being has been a communal being living in polis with *logos* (animal rationale)

¹⁵ A.N.: Karl Jaspers is one of the leading individuals of 20th century existentialism. See: Karl J. Man, translated by Simonivits Istvánné

¹⁶ István Németh, *Germany Divided. In the Shadow of Two World Systems*, in *Rubicon*, no. 5-6 (Europe), 1997, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 6.



is very timely to do after so many years. It is very difficult to understand how a European citizen from the middle of the 20th century was able to work diligently for a happy Europe with that divisive acceptance, while knowing that after the overthrow of Hitler's totalitarian power, they watched almost idly as another inhuman dictator was the lord of life and death within their empire. The Soviet empire, though playing a major role in overthrowing Hitler's rule, was aware that its aims and methods were not much different from the one it had defeated.¹⁸ And this was also known to those who willingly or unwillingly took advantage of its support. Stalin did everything he could to play the role of a "good liberator" in the territories he occupied, and there were people who believed this, but Churchill knew it and saw through Stalin. Stalin needed East Germany like he needed air because he knew that only Berlin and its surroundings could provide him with a legitimate legal basis to be close to the citadel of the Western world.¹⁹ He clung tooth and nail to this area and did his best, despite voicing his opinion at the end of the war that he did not want to divide Germany; his intention to lay his political foundations in the whole country was obvious. This intention was well known to the Westerners as well, no one would have dared to interfere with the agreements reached at the conferences in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. Stalin and his system had a tough foot in the eastern part of the defeated and humiliated Germany; he wanted Berlin almost completely, but his intention did not materialize, since the Western powers tried to keep what they could already save from Stalin's clutches. The citizens of East Germany, along with East Berlin came under a dictatorial communist regime operating in the form of a one-party system, a part of the population perceiving the lurking danger in time and setting off. The relocation did not take much effort until 1949, but people had to leave their past and home behind, so most of them were still waiting. According to researchers, 1.6 million East Germans (FRG) fled towards the west until 1961.²⁰ Border violation was then a serious criminal offense, despite the fact that even the 1949 constitution of the GDR gave citizens the right to move freely, that is, they were free to choose their place of residence. The section on emigration was fully removed from the 1968 constitution. The form of government and its leadership increasingly encouraged those living in the eastern part to move to the FRG, an area ruled by Western powers. After the border closure and the construction of the Berlin Wall, more and more people tried to flee to the West through a third country, very often through Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria. That is why the cooperation of state security agencies of the states belonging to the Soviet bloc worked very well together. The official GDR state security agency

¹⁸ Davis Norman, *Europe: A History, op. cit.*, pp. 995-1012.

¹⁹ Smith, Joseph, *The Cold War 1945-1965*, IKVA, Budapest, 1992.

²⁰ Ádám Masát, *The Role of the Refugee Problem in the Progress of the Regime Change in the GDR. Analysis Based on Historical Diplomatic Data*, Foreign Affairs Review, 2014.



(commonly known as the Stasi) was founded in 1950, which had a quite extensive domestic and foreign network and sought to capture and deport anyone who had committed the crime of “Republikflucht” (escape from the Republic)²¹. The action against emigrants was crucial because it threatened the state’s labour market, since according to the reports of the Stasi since most of doctors, intellectuals and people with technical knowledge left the country, which had a serious impact on projected economic performance, even if the political propaganda of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) wanted to convince people that the declining West was not performing better than their model socialist economy. Family members, relatives, friends and acquaintances living in the western part recounted it differently and at times they were also able to prove it. The leadership of the SED was composed of members of an older generation, and starting reforms was not an option for them because they feared their legitimacy, rightly so. Despite the prohibitions, emigration did not decline; in fact, it became more intense. There are no accurate statistics on the number of refugees who fled in the period between 1961 and 1989. We certainly know that Hungary was a popular destination for East German citizens from the 1960s onwards, but German citizens from the FRG were also glad to come to Hungary to spend their holiday. The area of Lake Balaton was a meeting place for the citizens of the two countries. Eastern Germans were able to obtain all forbidden information here from their compatriots living in the West, no longer being affected by the false propaganda of their homeland. In 1966, the number of holidaymakers in the Lake Balaton area exceeded 100,000, both in terms of Eastern and Western German citizens. According to statistics, about half a million Eastern German tourists arrived in Hungary in 1980, many of whom were already trying to get to the FRG through the western Hungarian border²². Many succeeded, but many were captured and extradited to the Stasi by the Hungarian security agencies²³. A lot of these citizens lost their jobs, even at the risk of isolation, and their family members were likely to face serious retaliation. A higher proportion of attempts to flee to the western part of the country were still in Hungary, but not only did they try to flee towards Austria, also Yugoslavia seemed an easy target, as there was no border barrier. Those people who wished to dissident were able to obtain a passport at the West German consulate in Belgrade, so they could easily get to the FRG²⁴. Storming to the West German consulates proved to be a fashionable method in the 1980s, and the rapid growth in passport applications generated increasing tensions between the

²¹ A.N.: Republikflucht: “desertation from the republic” – was the official termin the GDR (East Germany) used for illegal emigration to West Germany, West Berlin. See URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republikflucht>

²² Ignác Romsics, *The History of Hungary int he 20th century*, Osiris Publishing House, Budapest, 2005.

²³ István Németh, *German question: collection of dokumentis 1945-1990*, Budapest, 1993.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.



two German states.²⁵ Erich Honecker, the GDR President at that time, had refused to make any concessions to ease tensions, stating that they must defend their own sovereignty and the fled, dissident citizens were perpetrators of crime, so they should be deported as soon as possible to receive their punishment in accordance with the law. Many times the family members of the refugees who remained at home were punished for this. The Stasi also blamed the West German media, saying that these press outlets reporting successful escapes as a sensation, and painted the false image that “the Hungarian border guards would not use weapons to stop border violators”.²⁶ Towards the end of the 1980s, escape attempts became more frequent, after which a higher number of people managed to flee and these processes can be attributed to contemporary factors. The last decade of Hungary’s „Goulash Communism”²⁷ started significant softening and loosening processes. A younger group of political leaders from 1987-88-89, such as Miklós Németh, Imre Pozsgay, Gyula Horn, the Opposition Round Table and some others, embarked on the reform efforts required by the current historical era,²⁸ as opposed to Grósz’s perception of the older generation. This young political group is missing from the GDR in 1989. Honecker does not want to hear about any reform, they are very skeptical about the Hungarian events and they say that Hungary wants to leave the Soviet bloc by introducing these measures. They knew that their citizens were constantly fleeing towards the FRG, and this tendency intensified year after year in the 1980s, yet they did not comprehend the essence of the historical moment and were stubbornly clinging to their ideas. The passports of West Germany that were received through the embassies of the various countries in the FRG, and then the multitude of prohibited border crossings, should all have served as a sign to the leaders of the GDR that could have made them change their behaviour. But they did not do so: the mass protests that began in October, nonetheless, resulted in the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.²⁹

3. Where They Were Taken In and Let Them Pass?

*Annus mirabilis*³⁰: in order to understand the arrival of the year of miracles, the most interesting thing is to recount the story of a contemporary, local family living in the western borderland: “The series of the ‘Years of Miracles’ began in 1986. In the autumn of the previous year, the electric fence between Brennborg and

²⁵ Masát, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ Ugron Imre: Interview, 14.01.2020.

²⁸ Ignác Romsics, *Revolution with Negotiation*, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

²⁹ Davis Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 995-1120.

³⁰ Ignác Romsics, *The History of Hungary in the 20th century*, *op. cit.*, Chapter VIII, System Change, p. 537.



Görbehalom was demolished and the entire signalling system was moved over the village, under the New Heremes part of the settlement, so there was free admittance for most of Brennbergbánya. In August of the same year, the first Formula 1 auto racing took place in Mogyoród – the first one of the Soviet bloc countries – and word spread that, given the large crowd of Western tourists arriving at the event, controls at the western border were expected to be looser. It was proven and all this resulted in the arrival of many Transylvanians in the autumn and early winter, whose family members had already left with the Formula 1 “traffic” in the summer, but the border was already closed to them. Well, “let’s help somehow” was the sentence that was articulated by us. We did not want to cause inconvenience to anyone – especially our border guard friends – for whom it would have been very dangerous to be in contact with those who might be helping border trespassers. So we were in great trouble that we wanted to help, but we also had our hands tied. We came up with the idea of leading our university groups to the forests along the “sharp border” and there were always “guest lecturers” among them, for instance Hungarian, Romanian (Transylvania) and German (GDR) speakers, who then somehow “dropped behind” the group, but on the way back they were not missed by anyone. For our part, the trust from the Hungarian Border Patrol was complete; we did not put anyone in an inconvenient situation and we did not overthrow anybody.

It happened in 1988: our two-story apartment faced the Main Square (Kohlplatz) next to the church and the children’s aquarium stood in front of one of the windows. It was lit by a small burner that was visible through the window, and it seemed that our apartment was bright to those walking through Kohlplatz at night. Perhaps it was a rainy night in May...

Some people downstairs were knocking on our front door. My wife wakes up; I run down the stairs, open the door... “Ist es schon Österreich? (Is it Austria yet?)” – comes the question from the mouth of a drenched, intellectual-looking man. “Nein! Das ist noch Ungarn, Brennbergbánya, die Grenze liegt ungefähr 400 m von hier. (No! This is still Hungary, Brennbergbánya; the border is about 400 m from here.)” – I answer. A woman screams! Someone collapses. Our night visitors were a doctor couple from Berlin. We had invited them in the apartment, giving them food and water, continuously reassuring them, putting them to sleep. The next day, they were also “guest lecturers” at a field practice made up of forest engineering students... And so it went from week to week, month to month until the spring of 1989.

Then came the real “Year of Miracles”, 1989. In the spring, the electrical signalling system was abolished. They turned the power off and began to dismantle the fence. The latter was done by the border guard in a traditional “Hungarian” way. They scattered! Whoever could get close to it got a pole, a wire... everything went into the vineyards, the fences of the weekend houses, and so on. So by the time the demonstrative political dismantlement took place, there was not even a fence for



the most part; the presented section had to be rebuilt. There was a deed recorded both on photographs and TV, when Gyula Horn, Hungarian foreign minister and Alois Mock, Austrian foreign minister cut the barbed wire fence between Sopron and Klingenberg (Kelénpatak) in a spectacular action to prove the good relations between the two countries.” Dr. László Kárpáti – Dr. Anikó Kárpátiné Ugron (January, 2020)³¹

Hungary was not left out of the events of the world in 1989. In order to comprehend the motivation, behaviour and departure of Eastern German citizens from their homeland, we need to have a look at the Hungarian events of this year, because only in this way can we reach an understanding of mass migration. In Hungarian history, this year entered public consciousness as the ‘Year of Miracles’. Regime had changed (by this concept we mean the political and social transformation that took place at different times and in different forms in the states that came under Soviet control from a one-party dictatorship to a multi-party democracy)³² took place in various forms in the countries of East-Central and Southeast Europe in 1989. That year, the Hungarian society was able to benefit from the lucky historical grace that the transformation was miraculously not accompanied by a single shot, a single human life, unlike in Romania. Thanks to the economic reforms, cultural liberalism, political tolerance and more and more significant embourgeoisement of the Kádár era, Hungary and Poland were at the forefront of change. The exact date of the beginning of the regime change cannot be determined and neither can we link its end to any date. The “*annus mirabilis*” for Hungary was brought about by free elections, the rule of law, democracy, neutrality, the national coat of arms, the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the advent of the division of Europe. In 1988, Kádár utterly handed power over to Károly Grósz, who willingly or unwillingly entrusted Miklós Németh, the young economist, with the duties of prime minister. From the beginning of 1989, the processes that led to the collapse of the party state progressed rapidly. The most important events were the following: the Act on Strikes is passed on March 22, the Hungarian Young Communist League ceases to exist on April 22, the dismantling of the border barrier on the Austro-Hungarian border begins on May 2 (this date plays an important role in the departure of GDR refugees), János Kádár is exempted on May 8, the members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences who have been deprived of their membership are rehabilitated on May 8-9, Miklós Németh reshuffled his government composed of young and dynamic reformers on May 10, the construction of the Nagymaros dam is suspended with immediate effect on May 13, Hungary accedes to the Geneva Convention (convention concerning the status of refugees), the reburial of Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs on June 16,

³¹ A.N.: Dr. László Kárpáti and Dr. Anikó Kárpátiné Ugron moved to the Hungarian-Austrian border in the 1970s with the intention of conducting research.

³² Ignác Romsics, *The History of Hungary in the 20th century*, *op. cit.*, p. 439.



János Kádár died on July 6, a Pan-European Picnic was held at Sopron on August 19, the negotiations of the Opposition Round Table were held with the exclusion of the public from June to September, all GDR citizens were allowed to leave the FRG via Austria, from September 10.

The political elite that came to power (by free elections) in 1990 sought to bring about regime change in all areas of life, such as the economy, culture and foreign policy, if it was peaceful and non-violent in its methods.³³

4. “The Spirit of the Place” – Zugliget

The place and date of the foundation of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta is very interesting. The part of Buda, which is called Zugliget (zug = a place that is difficult-to-reach, out-of-traffic – Interpretive dictionary of the Hungarian language), is now a large part of the 12th district, played a crucial role in agriculture and animal husbandry in the 18th century. This role stretches all the way out to the 20th century.³⁴ A Pauline monastery was also built here in the 14th century, which was razed to the ground by the Turks, and after the expulsion of the Pauline order their manors were sold. Much of this area was bought by a royal prosecutor, József Laszlovszky³⁵ (the family is from northern Hungary) at the end of the 18th century. The Laszlovszky-manor was built in 1822, which is one of the centers of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta today. An increasing number of people picked up on the area in the 19th century; the proliferation of romantic vineyards and summer houses, the beauty of the mountainous landscape even inspired Sándor Petőfi (Between the Mountains, September 8, 1848). It was famous for its hospitality and reception facilities; Lajos Kossuth was also arrested here in 1837, but the wife of Franz Joseph and his two children spent their holidays here as well.³⁶ At the beginning of the 20th century, it was a sparsely populated area, so it was very suitable for hiding, the “zug” cottages – although they were summer houses without all the modern conveniences – from evictions, for instance, the horticultural outbuildings were indeed very good. The Loreto Sisters³⁷ homed in on this area and bought it from Laszlovszky’s last descendant, Flora Hegyessy. The Parish Church of the Holy Family was built in this area between 1913 and 1917 according to the plans of Dezső Hüttl, and then the convent and the boarding school were built between 1920 and 1926, which joined the side of the church. The nuns

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 544-549.

³⁴ Nemessányiné Csepreghy, Éva: *The Parish Church of the Holy Family in Zugliget – study*.

³⁵ József Laszlovszky, Senator of Buda, Judge of the City, County Judge and Mayor. 1737-1818, Oszlány.

³⁶ Nemessányiné, *op. cit.*

³⁷ Jeszenkovits, Teréz, *Pearls of Our Mountains*, The Zugliget Institute of the Loreto Sisters, 2001.



worked here for educational purposes. The church institutions were nationalized from 1948, the convent was also disbanded, and then the building was completely evacuated on June 18, 1950 and the nuns, who were still living here, were interned. According to legends, only four elderly sisters could remain in their cell in the building. Following that, the building of the convent got into the handling of the National Child Protective Service, and the sisters who remained here could continue to work in its laundry and sewing room. The name of the institute was to be Erzsébet Szilágyi Nursery Home, for 180 girls, aged 10-14, and the institution got hold of the orchard. It is part of this garden's history that the orchard maintained by the Loreto Sisters was cultivated for educational purposes in cooperation with the pupils and its crop was used for charitable purposes.³⁸ (A more detailed exploration of the topic will be published in book format). The convent got it back in 1990, where the Jesu Congregation³⁹ Home for the Elderly operates today. The spirit of the place also includes the following organizations founded there: Károly Kiss founded the Caritas Association and the Pauline St. Vincent Association in 1905 (1,500 Catholics live here at this time), The Jesus Heart Association of Women from Zugliget, St. Sanssouci's Youth Congregation, St. Stephen's Male Congregation, Bálint Árvay Nagy's Scout Team, Many Jews are rechristened during the persecution of Jews, Several Actio Catholica groups were established in the 1930s, The Heart Guard of 1944⁴⁰.

The church was transformed into an independent parish church from 1970, although it did not have its own parish building, the local parson lived in the Laszlovszky-manor building. Father Imre Kozma was transferred here to the post of parson as a punishment from 1977. And what is punishment to man is a blessing from God. With the relocation of the Father, a spiritual movement appeared in Zugliget that would have an impact on Europe as well. At the initiative of Father Imre and with the unity of the faithful, the Temple was first put in order, and then the Father began to build souls. The year of 1983 was also decisive for the parish; Roger Schütz, the leader of the Taizé Community visited here.⁴¹ From then on a lot of people, especially the youth, joined the Taizé prayer chain on Friday nights. As a result, a group of mostly young people was formed, who would lay the foundation of a charitable - Christian non-governmental organization founded at the beginning of the regime change's year, called the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. This Christian charity took care of the provision of about 48,600 Eastern German refugees in Hungary, between August 14, 1989 and November 14, 1989.

³⁸ Nemessányiné, *op. cit.*

³⁹ A.N.: The Loreto Sisters changed their name in 2002 and has been known as Congregatio Jesu [The Congregation of Jesus] ever since.

⁴⁰ Nemessányiné, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibidem.*



Conclusions

The year 1989 entered the books of history as the year of border openings. The constantly observed lives of the GDR citizens, previously described, have not come to an ease this year either, and the deceiving political leaders, which at the time had an average age of 67, did not notice the winds of change. The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was established at a time when Europe was in dire need of such an organization. The exact date of the formation: 10 February 1989.

The Knights Hospitaller of Malta was established during the Crusades in the 11th century, named after St. John the Baptist (Johannites), even with the intention of caring for the poor and sick knights and pilgrims. The order appeared in Hungary as early as the 12th century. The order functioned almost smoothly in the country until the middle of the 16th century, but after the country was divided into three parts, it crumbled. It was legally abolished in the early 19th century. They set up their embassy in Budapest in 1925, then in 1928 the Hungarian Association of the Order of Malta was formed again. After 1945, their operation was impossible, they were forced to emigrate, so they did not relocate their headquarters to the Buda Castle until 1996. Their motto was “Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum”, which is also the motto of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, i.e. “Defence of the faith and assistance to the poor”.

The towers of the church in Zugliget meant greater security for many because, as they said, they provided the residents of the camp “not only with food and drink, but also with encouragement and understanding”⁴². Since many people did not dare to leave the Zugliget camp, Dr. Alexander Arno, Ambassador of the FRG, asked Father Imre Kozma, the founding President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in 1989, to allow the embassy to move to the camp. Father Kozma did not give an immediate answer “because I was thinking from a charitable point of view, and this issue was already political,” he nevertheless allowed, so the courtyard of the Zugliget church became the scene of political events at the time. Father Imre also consulted regularly with the Hungarian government, and the Prime Minister Miklós Németh frequently visited in the Zugliget camp, but not only him. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, then Foreign Minister of the FRG, was there, Chancellor of West Germany, in 1989, Mr. Helmut Kohl himself, and some members of the Hungarian government. It could even become a place for diplomatic meetings between the GDR and the FRG for a few moments. GDR diplomats asked Father

⁴² A.N.: The first refugee camp was set up in the courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church in Zugliget. The head of the West German consulate asked Father Imre Kozma, president of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta to set up the camp, and the camp opened its doors on August 14, 1989. The next camp was opened in the building of the pioneering camp in Csillebérc. Interview: Imre Ugron, January 14, 2020.



Imre Kozma why he liked the West Germans more, Father Imre replied that this was not the case, on the contrary, he liked the East Germans more, but they did not understand that at the time. Of course, while life was going on in the camps, some left, others moved in, and those who left the camp hoped to cross the border, some political work was going on in the background. Miklós Németh visited Chancellor Kohl in West Germany to announce his government's wonderful decision to open the borders and allow East German citizens to go west. The date for opening the border was announced on 10 September and already entered into force on the 11th. The crowd in front of the translator in the camp, Csilla von Boeselager, the founding Member of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, burst into joy, some cried in joy, some opened champagne. The Zugliget camp remained open even until November 14. According to Father Imre, 48,600 East German citizens were cared for in the camps of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta.

In its first year, the newly formed Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was facing historical tasks that they did not dare to dream of when the service was established. The tasks were enormous, and although the organization seemed small at the time, we can safely say that these tasks set the path to becoming what the Service means to Hungarian society and the world today. Honecker, being sick at the time, would not have thought that Hungarian society, its government and, through it, one of the youngest but Christian organizations in the country, would leak the GDR's seemingly unsinkable socialist ship. If Imre Kozma and Csilla von Boeselager had traveled to the GDR at this historic moment, they would probably have been arrested, but the Hungarian government had not stolen themselves in their hearts either, because by joining the Geneva Convention, they had practically backed away from bilateral agreements. This made it possible for East German citizens to stay in Hungary with asylum. The GDR, which subsided in early November, very quickly put the tireless members and volunteers of the Charity Service to another humanitarian test, as the Romanian revolution erupted on 17 November. And after that too had subsided, the Southern War broke out, which also set off a great wave of fleeing. Even then, the Charity Service was not idle, while at the national level it took up the fight to improve the fate of the people who drifted to the periphery of the Hungarian population. When I asked Imre Ugron whether the Charity Service and the Order of Malta had fulfilled their "duty" at this historic moment, he replied, "my answer is yes, without question mark"⁴³, and its international echo was so great that it still resonates today in people's ears.

On 19 August 2019, German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Hungary for the 30th anniversary of the Pan-European Picnic to thank the Hungarians for playing a very important role in the reunification of Germany and thus the unification of the whole of Europe.

⁴³ See: Interview with Mr. Imre Ugron, Ambassador of the Hungarian Order of Malta, 14/01/2020



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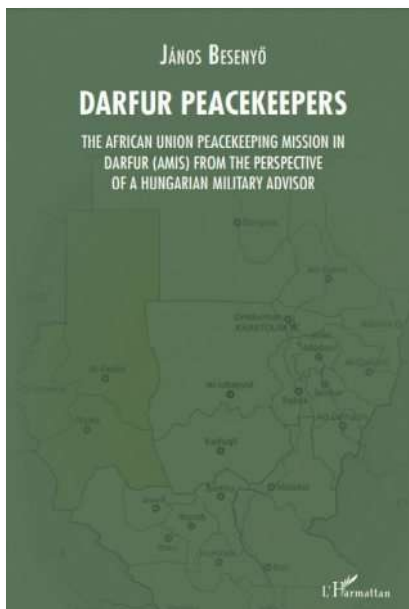


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DARFUR PEACEKEEPERS

*The African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur (AMIS)
from the Perspective of a Hungarian Military Advisor
by János Besenyő*



The book provides a comprehensive historical account of a peace support operation amidst the Darfur crisis and genocide complemented by personal experience. Having served in the region, the author can provide a detailed analysis of events from the perspective of a soldier, as well as a researcher. It is not the first time the author writes about Africa as he was previously involved in the publication of many related works regarding the Central African Republic, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Western Sahara.¹ A variety of sources is used to underpin his viewpoints, including previously unpublished letters, reports, instructions, regulations, but most importantly his written and oral experience in the form of his diary and conversations with former and present peacekeepers of the mission. Despite not having

had previous experience or significant economic, political and strategic interests in the region, Hungary – probably in the hope of foreign policy increments – delegated personnel and provided humanitarian as well as financial assistance to the operation.

Besides the support of humanitarian and civil society organizations, the collaboration of the African Union (AU), European Union (EU) and NATO must

¹ Andrea Balogh, János Besenyő, Péter Misetics, Dávid Vogel, *Közép-afrikai Köztársaság, Országismertető*, Honvéd Vezérkar, Budapest, 2015; János Besenyő, Péter Misetics, *Országismertető – Marokkó és Nyugat-Szahara*, Honvéd, Vezérkar Tudományos Kutatóhely, Budapest, 2017; János Besenyő, *A nyugat-szaharai válság: egy magyar békefenntartó szemével*, Publikon, Pécs, 2012; János Besenyő, *Dárfúr, a lángoló tartomány: Az Afrikai Unió szudáni missziójának története*, Publikon, Pécs, 2016; János Besenyő, Péter Misetics, *Egyiptom: országismertető*, MH Geoinformációs Szolgálat, Budapest, 2014; János Besenyő, Péter Misetics, *Mali: országismertető*, MH Geoinformációs Szolgálat, Budapest, 2013; Álmos Péter Kiss, János Besenyő, István Resperger, *Szomália: országismertető*, Honvéd Vezérkar, Budapest, 2014.



be emphasized, especially in regards with crisis management and the provision of resources. However, the book does not only elaborate on the works of international organizations, but ethnic, political and regional matters are also discussed. While it is primarily about combating and resolving the Darfur crisis in Africa, political uncertainty coupled with the failure of state building and crisis management may spur migration, entailing security-policy challenges for Europe as well.

Darfur Peacekeepers comprises six chapters that follow partly a thematic and partly a chronological order. The first chapter of the book gives a comprehensive picture of the geography and history of Darfur, touching on a variety of subjects, such as climate, economy, ethnicities, religion, infrastructure, vegetation, wildlife and important cities in the country.

The second chapter deals with the causes and outbreak of the Darfur conflict that paved the way for the creation of AMIS I (African Union Mission in Sudan). Despite the fact that religious, ethnical and lifestyle-related reasons could be named as major causes of the conflict, the author is right to point out that the event, which actually sparked it, was the Sudanese government's military strategy against the Darfurian population.² When the rebels protested for not receiving government protection against the attacks of Arab nomadic Janjaweed troops, military strikes and the ethnic cleansing of innocents – belonging to the rebels' ethnic groups – followed. As a consequence of the insurgency tens of thousands were killed and millions were ousted from their homes. Since the conflict had the potential to spread to neighbouring countries, the AU intended to launch a peace operation. However, lacking organizational, logistics and financial resources, they turned to the UN and EU for help and created AMIS I.

The third chapter of the book revolves around the history, structure and operation of AMIS II. Although I feel certain failures and weaknesses are either repeated or overemphasized (including insufficient resources, logistical financial problems, operational capabilities, etc.), the author is correct to conclude that – despite the expansion of personnel and logistical-financial support received by the AU – AMIS II was still underperforming and, thereby, remained unsuccessful.³ Inability of meeting deadlines, inefficient management and challenges related to lack of human resources constituted some of the most significant problems. As a result of organizational and logistical deficiencies, inadequate number of vehicles and equipment and the soldiers' lack of military experience, qualifications and proper English language knowledge, the mission was practically doomed to failure from the beginning. In the meantime, the number of refugees was growing continuously, and while some of them fled to the neighbouring Chad, most of the people remained in Sudanese refugee camps. Since they enjoyed no government protection, refugees were often harassed and terrorized

² Besenyő János, *Darfur Peacekeepers. The African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur (AMIS) from the Perspective of a Hungarian Military Advisor*, L'Harmattan, France, Paris, 2021, pp. 39-40.

³ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 59.



by the country's army units, Janjaweed militias or other insurgent and armed groups.

The fourth chapter focuses on the creation of AMIS III (or enhanced AMIS II), which primarily intended to increase the safety level in the area of operation by establishing the headquarters and using rapid response forces, armoured vehicles and combat helicopters at the sectoral headquarters.⁴ Despite the fact that the number of camps and staff increased – which affected the humanitarian and security situation positively – the mission struggled with the same problems as its predecessor as well, as there were more recent challenges concerning access to housing, food supply, healthcare and even clean drinking water. What is more, the gradual deterioration of security and bureaucratic obstacles posed by the Sudanese government also foreshadowed the need for change. Since the AU lacked financial, logistical and technical support and the donors grew tired of funding a stagnating operation, discussions have begun about handing over the rather dysfunctional mission to the UN. However preserving the 'African character' of AMIS was also of chief importance,⁵ hence it was decided that – if possible – leading positions will be filled with African soldiers. In the meantime, atrocities had intensified and the rebels proved to be hostile not only to the government and Janjaweed troops, but to peacekeepers as well. With the intent of bringing stability to Darfur/Sudan, UNAMID (African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur) was formed and the UN took full responsibility for the mission starting with January 1st, 2008.

The fifth chapter of the book talks about the support mission of the European Union and I believe its purpose is to connect the previous sections on the history, structure and operation of AMIS to the following one, which concerns the Hungarian experience. It may also have been written with the aim of providing a transition through focusing on the EU at first and putting Hungary in context only after that. It is rightly mentioned that besides the provision of financial, human and material resources, the EU – together with the US and NATO – also took part in the airlift operation. Moreover, the EU sent logistic experts and advisors to Darfur and assisted in the training and equipment of policemen serving in AMIS. At times, however, I feel this section is overly biased (“...The AU was so satisfied with the work of the European advisors”)⁶ and generalizing of Europeans (“...every European soldier tried to carry out quality work for the AMIS”)⁷, which may call the subjectivity of the author into question. The EU itself, though, is judged more harshly for having contributed to the mission's failure by assisting the AU and funding a “bottomless basket”.⁸

⁴ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁵ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁶ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁷ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁸ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 and 178.



The last chapter is entitled ‘Hungarian experience’ and it is the section where – through his diary – we can truly gain insights into the author’s life, duties and challenges while he served as deputy head of Field Support Service. He highlights the fact that although Hungary provided moderate financial (which is in contrast with the previously-mentioned “substantial financial assistance”)⁹ and material support (e.g. high value medical equipment) to the mission and Africans recognized the work of serving officers¹⁰, Hungary’s participation – due to logistical, communication and housing problems, lack of resources and vehicles, water shortages among others – “was not so significant”.¹¹

Despite the author’s criticism (however well-founded and realistic they may be) of Africans, potential partiality towards Europeans/Hungary, as well as a number of grammatical, spelling and punctuation mistakes, it is a readable, scientifically accurate and gap filling book. It is complemented by charts, circular diagrams, tables and maps that all facilitate understanding and I believe it is particularly useful to have a timeline at the end of the book providing an overview of the most important events.¹² It is primarily recommended to those who are interested in the modern history of Darfur/Sudan and would like to explore the nexus of peace support operations in Africa and the joint efforts of the AU, EU and NATO for resolving the conflict. It could also be useful and intriguing for students of higher education in the fields of military science, security policy, African studies as well as international relations.

Despite the UN’s best efforts, the situation in Darfur has not really been stabilized. As a result, additional peace operations in the region are to be expected with the possible involvement of Hungary. Thus, I completely agree with the author’s conclusion that, due to economic, political and security reasons, Africa is and will continue to be a strategically important location and it remains critical “to thoroughly process the experience of the African operations so far and to utilize them not only in the military, but also in different levels of government, economics and other areas”.¹³ This book represents an essential addition to studies related to the experiences of peace operations, and similar works combining scientific research and personal experiences are strongly encouraged.

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⁹ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁰ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-145.

¹¹ Besenyő, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹² Besenyő, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-194.

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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR “EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY”

May 20, 2021

The Centre for Defence Security and Strategic Studies (CDSSS) organized in May, online, the International Seminar on the “*Effects of the pandemic on international security*”.

The scientific event was attended by participants from the Romanian Government, NATO International Staff, the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, experts from NATO centres of excellence, academia and researchers from Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary. Thus, the event’s international scientific character has been fully achieved, which established the major common concern for security at national and regional level, as well as the interest for international and inter-institutional cooperation development at allied level.

The topics discussed at the seminar were specific to security and defence field, with the main issues addressed referring to the effects due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the security environment, the measures effectiveness to limit the pandemic effects implemented at the state level, as well as international institutions and organizations – NATO and the EU. Hereinafter, we present the topics presented and the speakers’ affiliation:

- “*Armed Forces role in implementing measures to mitigate the pandemic effects*” – Lieutenant-Colonel Nikolay PARVANOV, Planning & Projects Section Head, Crisis Management and Disaster Response Centre of Excellence, Bulgaria;
- “*Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Romanian Air Force*” – Lieutenant-Colonel Gabriel GOAGĂ, Romanian Air Force HQ, Ministry of National Defence;
- “*GIES role in COVID-19 pandemic management in Romania*” – Major Adrian TICU, Head of the National Operational Centre, Emergency Management System, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania;
- “*The EU’s policies and strategies for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis*” – Șerban CIOCULESCU, PhD, Researcher, Institute for Political Studies of Defence and Military History, Ministry of National Defence, Romania;
- “*The evolution of the education system. NATO DEEP programme context*” – Danuta PIETRASZKIEWICZ, Deputy Director, NATO HQ, Defence Education

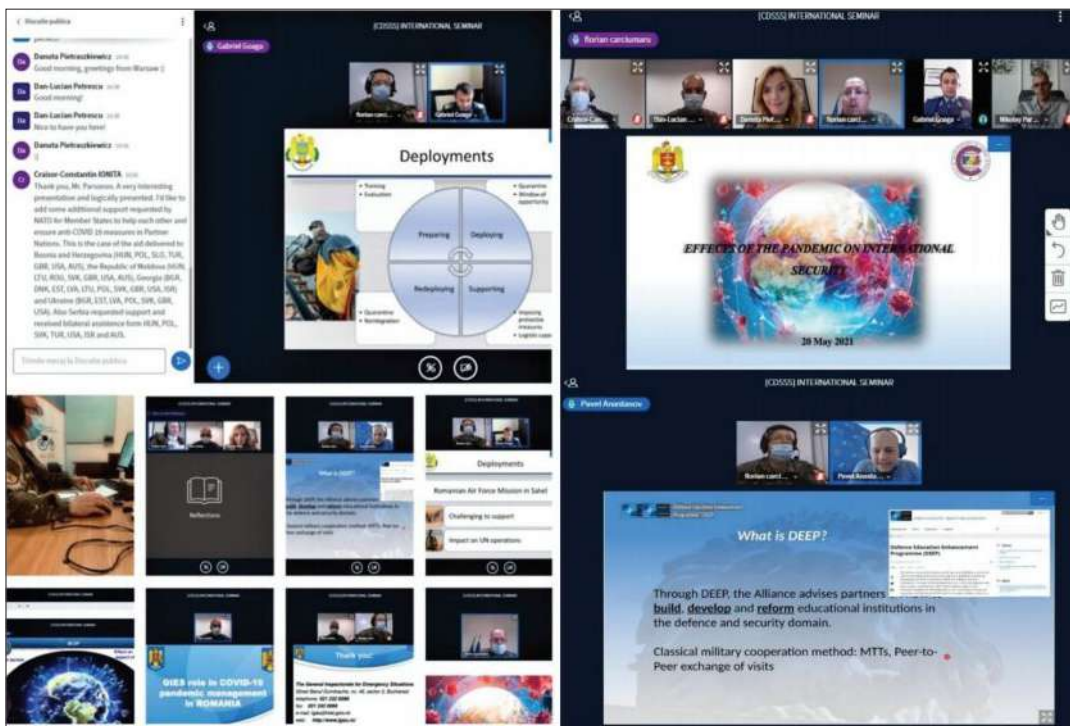


Enhancement Programme (DEEP) e-Academy;

- *“How NATO has adapted its defence capacity building for partners due to the COVID-19 pandemic: The case of the Defence Education Enhancement Programme”* – Pavel ANASTASOV, NATO HQ, International Staff, Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) Coordinator;

- *“Some thoughts on the global impact of COVID-19”* – Colonel László UJHÁZY, PhD, Associate Professor, National University of Public Service (NUPS), Hungary;

- *“COVID-19 crisis management in Hungary - lessons learnt”* – Tamás CSIKI, PhD, Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies, Budapest, Hungary.



Event photo: Effects of the Pandemic on International Security

The scientific event has achieved its main objective of carrying out, in an appropriate scientific framework, an exchange of ideas and experiences in good governance, concerning, on one hand, the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the security environment, and on the other hand, the effectiveness of countermeasures taken at the level of organizations, such as NATO and the EU, but also at the Member States level.

Information on scientific activities organized by CDSSS can be found at the following address: <http://cssas.unap.ro/en/events.htm>



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- ✓ the quality of the scientific content;
- ✓ originality of the paper;
- ✓ novelty character – it should not have been anteriorly published;
- ✓ a relevant bibliography comprising recent and prestigious specialized works, including books;
- ✓ the text must be written in good English (British or American usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these);
- ✓ adequacy to the editorial standards adopted by the journal.

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- ✓ **Article length** may vary between a minimum of 6 pages and a maximum of 12 pages (between 25.000 and 50.000 words), including bibliography and notes, tables and figures, if any.
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- ✓ A relevant abstract, which is not to exceed 150 words (italic characters);
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