

GEO-STRATEGIC PREMISES FOR CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS

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This article presents the authors' views on the specific impact of geopolitical and geo-strategic factors, conditions and tendencies of the contemporary security environment. Moreover, it examines how geopolitical concepts and geo-strategic actions reflect on international relationships after the Cold War. The authors imply the idea that by developing a new strategy, the so called Selective Opposition strategy, many contradictions, frictions and conflicts could be decreased. Of course, the way of thinking needs to be changed in order to raise the hopes for a more peaceful world.

Key words: geopolitics, geo-strategy, contradictions, threats, dangers, conflicts, international order, Great spaces, superpowers, geopolitical areas of influence, collective security, Selective Opposition strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of the evolution of human society history in a global framework indicates economic and ideological reasons for different conflicts and wars. In the new geopolitical theories, there are two additional causes which explain the aforementioned phenomena. The first one is related to language, history, religious institutions and subjective self-identification of nations. The second one concerns environmental protection and harmony, which underpin the existence of the whole humanity.

In many cases economic arguments underpinning territorial expansion, market and regional takeover because of resource richness, considerable communication importance, or the struggle for getting ahead in hi-technologies development, etc. have led to wars.

To achieve such aims, a lot of money has been spent on building armies, especially massive ones, and states have maintained intelligence and diplomatic activities on a large scale. The economic contradictions have led to world allocation of huge economic

areas, creating many regional economic units. As a result, powerful military alliances in different parts of the world have been formed.

Scientific concepts consider the major laws of mankind evolution in close interaction with the surrounding environment. They recognize the degree of economic improvement (in regional and global aspects) and assets of the information revolution and also the history, culture, language, religious and specific features of the nations in a certain region or in the world.

The uneven economic development of the nations or economic alliances in different world regions has a strong influence on peoples' morale. Therefore it is impossible or very difficult for one person, even for one super power, to create a common ideology for a new international order. History clearly shows that every ideology, even though progressive for a certain period of the development of human society, becomes unrealistic and eventually collapses if it is not connected with the objective laws of the development of human society.

After the Cold War and under contemporary conditions the international

policy goes outside Western countries (West Europe and USA) and creates new contradictions – between them and non-Western countries or among non-Western countries. Under these conditions, international relationships logically have to be built on multi-polar foundations. There are three poles of power – the first one is USA and Canada; second is West Europe, and the third one is East Asia (primarily Japan and nowadays China). It is easy to see that China is on the right track to becoming a pole of power or, according to some, China is already a global center of power. In the near future, Russia will also play an attractive role in the global economy. This country has always played a considerable role in international relations, it can be considered a pole of power even though with some reserves.

As much as geopolitics is based on the objectivity of geography and the relatively subjective character of international politics, the purpose of the current paper is to reveal the main approaches to managing the geopolitical conditions in order to resolve the conflicts causing contradictions while still being /before they have developed.

To this end, the authors aim at achieving the following:

- to reveal the main factors influencing the formulation of geo-strategic concepts.
- to define a number of important aspects of the international policy of great powers, mainly subjective in character, which lead to contradictions irresolvable through peaceful means.
- to establish a basis for comparison and analysis of the geostrategic factors of the eruption of war.

The topic is quite broad and we do not claim that the paper is all-encompassing. It may aid a possible future research in one of the most important spheres for mankind – geopolitics.

2. GEOPOLITICAL CHAOS – THE LEGACY AFTER THE COLD WAR, OR AN OUTLINE OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER

There are many different geopolitical theories for the political structure and human development on the Globe. They

more or less report on running processes and existing basic contradictions within the development of the human society.

Contemporary concepts continuously adjust to the newest historical conditions. A major ideological formula of the countries for future development of the humanity is in transition from a plural to universal society. This theory is based on the understanding that after the Cold War, many new threats to the highly-organized areas arise from different directions, and not only from neighbors – not so well-organized areas, but also from very far. The existing demographic imbalance causes phenomena such as drugs and weapons smuggling, ecological catastrophes, etc. To cope with these threats, many countries follow the idea of establishing a universal political control through creating a real global political authority.

Actually, the idea of establishing a new international order originated after the end of WWII in the shape of a universal political control. It was changed several times depending on the very fast economic development of many countries which also wanted to participate in the global political decision making process with correspondence to their economic power. Nowadays, four geopolitical areas of influence which lead to the establishment of a new international order: economics, geo-strategy, ethnical dispersion and religion can be distinguished.

In the economic area, Western countries want to establish liberal-capitalistic market economy. Because of their leading position it means that every society has to have a completely open and free market, and for this reason, it will be impossible for any social-economic system to defend their social and national programs. A totally different matter is how social or national these programs are and if they lead to justice in any particular society. However, in this way market liberalism becomes the main factor in the hands of the World government to manage the contradictions of human society development.

The geo-strategic interests of almost all states are at the top of their foreign

policy agendas especially when it comes to having access to regions rich in resources. But from a security point of view their geo-strategies aim to have as much as possible information in order to provide enough time for security measures.

In the big cities there are not many problems from an ethnical point of view because, usually, they are cosmopolitan in character. During the years and because of the increased possibilities of traveling, mixing between people becomes more and more obvious. A different situation can be observed in the rural regions, where people have clear ethnical affiliations and some political parties use them to gain authority.

Religion is also exploited for building a new international order. It is very difficult to change the ideological picture of the Globe. There are some efforts with successful outcome, but also many with bad results. We need to analyze the roots of conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East, especially the formation of the Islamic state at a deeper level.

The theory about universal political control with the above principles lies in the fundamentals of American policy. This theory is applicable in building the big economic areas and it is necessary to cope with strong contradictions in multinational countries where the national question from a historical perspective is open and there is a struggle on ethnic or religious basis.

When looking at Europe, it is obvious that the security in Europe has a vital role for the global security, it also conduces the creation of economic fundamentals for the establishment of universal political control. The Middle East relates geopolitically to the American interests much more with its rich natural resources territories and unique location and it is close to Europe, Russia, Africa, East and South-West Asia. The efforts of the USA to play a dominant role in this region actually endangers many developing countries which do not have equal access to natural resources and causes many ethnical and religious conflicts. So, the other two geopolitical areas (ethnical and religious) in establishing a new international order are to some extent a

consequence of the leading geo-strategy of different "super powers".

Globally, there is a number of threats, dangers and doubts existing, the major ones being:

- difficulties in the small countries' economic development and change of the political system in the independent countries, such as, for example, the ones that followed the falling apart of the USSR;
- economic instability;
- repressive phenomena appearing in different countries;
- spread of diseases;
- existence of extremist organizations;
- stirring up of aggressive nationalism and the origination of ethnic and religious conflicts;
- terrorism;
- smuggling of drugs;
- environmental pollution;
- fast increase of population in some regions of the world;
- streams of refugees, etc.

Each of the above threats proposes a different international policy and a different view on the future international relations. Opinions on the scale, composition and aims of the future army structure differ as well. The strategies suggest a different approach to regional and ethnic conflicts, intervention on humanitarian grounds, as well as the scale of future alliances and cooperation agreements.

The supporters of the Collective Security line call for collective action as much as possible within international organizations such as the UNO, NATO and the various organizations for regional security. It is presumed that the great powers' motives for cooperation are grounded enough and that the obstacles to such a cooperation are fewer at the moment. This, however, is not the most distinctive characteristic of this strategy. The most important is the concept that peace, in fact, is indivisible.

The Selective Opposition strategy is based on the realistic traditions in international policy and it is focused on the great concentrations of power. As in the case of the Collective Security strategy, the Selective Opposition strategy aims at achieving peace. Primary attention in the Selective Opposition strategy, however, is paid to maintaining peace between

the countries with considerable industrial and military potential, i.e. the great powers. In this regard, countries with the greatest importance are the USA, People's Republic of China, Russia, the richer countries of the European Union and Japan.

3. THE NEW GEO-STRATEGIC DILEMMA: MORE NATIONAL STABILITY, OR HOW TO DECREASE GLOBAL INSTABILITY

From a military point of view, the world even though free from the global fears has not become a calmer and more predictable place. Everyone who can afford it turns large amounts of money into conventional weapons. Japan's defense budget is second only to USA's. China buys \$ 2 billion worth of weapons from Russia and augments its military expenses at a considerable pace. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Israel do not save money on military growth. Even though there is some decrease in dealing in arms, this does not diminish the profits big arm producers make. The USA reaches record numbers in selling arms: according to some data - from 33 billion in 1992, to 70 billion in 2012. In the competitive world of producing and dealing in arms, Obama's administration supports its companies firmly. France, too, controls and runs the profitable business through a special government agency. Russia aims at rehabilitating its lost positions through dumping sales, barter deals (in order to provide itself with necessary goods) and paying off its national debt in arms. On a large scale there is an increase in investments in new armament development and modernizing the existing ones. This stimulates even greater competition reflecting in a negative way on global security.

There are a number of other dangers with an immense potential for destruction. There is no completely effective control against the creation and distribution of weapons for mass destruction. No one can effectively guarantee that such weapons will not become available to

dictators with sick mind, ready to use nuclear weapons for their own purposes. At least 25 countries are on the verge of creating such weapons or are rich enough to afford them.

Drugs are an escalating disaster for mankind. According to some sources, the revenue of the drugs market surpasses the world petrol turnover. Nearly 230 billion drug dollars yearly, after being "laundered", go back into the world finances.

Organized crime and terrorism turn into a paramount problem for many countries. This situation forces their governments to take unprecedented measures in order to fight them – limiting the democratic liberties (wider use of special intelligence means), requiring proofs for the origin of revenues received, waiving the bank secret, etc.

A new great migration of people – driven away by wars, suffering, poverty and desperation – is occurring at the moment. According to the International Red Cross, over 500 million people in the world are refugees. In 2013, more than 1 250 000 people from all over the world fled to West Europe. Such human streams may set ethnic and social bombs capable of destabilizing any large economic space and leading to geostrategic changes, including war.

In politics, it becomes more and more acceptable not to ignore the objective reality. Politologists warn again: it is pointless and dangerous to stimulate the creation of unstable little countries, politically, economically and militarily doomed. This is all the more valid on the Balkans, where borders have been constantly changing and, in practice, there is not even one that has been in place for more than a century. Historically speaking, most of the borders exist from just "yesterday".

All around us politicians, generals and even diplomats talk about military strategies and possible regrouping of powers in the geo-strategic space; however, it turns out that there is an issue more important than security. Stability can be achieved only when the young generation is able to find work and sustain a family, rather than when a multitude of people is hoping to find a better future in violence.

It turns out that while safeguarding ourselves from war we forget analyzing the peace that embodies people's hope for a better future. Examples in this regard can be seen in every single peacekeeping operation with its typical phases: humanitarian, stabilizing and supporting the long-term economic development through stabilizing of the institutions. In general, the international community performs well the first phase which also involves predomination of military participation. The next phases, however, can be described to a large extent as failures camouflaged in the documentation but obvious in the actual economic results. Thus, regardless of military support and risk many people run, peace remains frail and doubtful. That is the reason why in the public space these operations are referred to as wars rather than peacekeeping.

The idea of harmonic development of people, in contrast to the many contradictions and risks, causes interest. This theory is comparatively new and even modern to the Western countries and it appears as a counter balance to the already futureless striving for world domination, hegemony in certain regions or exploitation of the population and resources of a number of poor countries with the purpose of one-sided enrichment.

Nowadays, more and more politicians speak about harmonic development of different social groups, thus ensuring security and protection of the economic development under globalization.

Due to the many differences between civilizations (such as political, economical, cultural and religious) and even the accumulation of hatred resulting from history, this model of resolving conflict type problems would be too difficult and painful. The questions may be answered in not one or even several generations, but in a much longer period of the social and economical development. At the same time, this way of thinking gives rise to hopes for peaceful resolving of the antagonistic contradictions and makes peoples' life more predictable.

4. CONCLUSION

Countries still threaten one another and continue seeking ways to increase their power by all means, including forcible ones, in the geopolitical space. This is possible because of the existing anarchy in international relations. After the end of the Cold war, many scientists and politicians began forming too optimistic ideas of a new world order, intentionally or not carrying out the analysis from the perspective of certain national interests, at the same time, the changes that took place are very few. Only the shape of the Great spaces changed, without affecting much the balance between the Great powers. Now, more than ever, these spaces are being considered as a source of information for the security in all of its aspects.

The not so good fact in this case is that the division lines that once again cause armament race are still in place. The big stakes for gaining advantage in the new world organization made many mistakes with hasty geo-strategic moves such as the problems related to non-diffusion of nuclear weapons, low effectiveness of international institutions, the ecological crisis hanging over us, which intensifies at a pace unseen so far, the growing poverty and misery in the majority of the countries, shameful for the 21st century, and the unprecedented growth of international terrorism. This does not speak of a new peaceful and democratic world order without drawing of long catenaries or axes of threat with their characteristic cross points or points of contact in relation to the demarcation lines of power and sources of information.

That way the geo-strategy plays a more and more important role nowadays, especially its influence over the determination of national interests in two aspects: firstly, to keep a relative balance of national interests between states, correctly recognize global interests as a whole and individual interests of each state respectively, and correctly weigh the advantages and disadvantages to reach consensus, and alleviate and dissolve contradictions.

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