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SECURITY ISSUES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: A POLITICAL ASPECT

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This article raises the security issues in Central and Eastern Europe, which influences all European security. Although there have been a lot of changes in the region for the last twenty years, the countries of this region are in the radar screen of geopolitics. In the article it is also described the roles of the EU and NATO, which are of vital importance for the transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The article raises the issues of a unipolar system as well as a multi-polar one. It is noted that the distribution of power in the international system is no longer a unipolar one.

Key words: CEE states, security, a unipolar system, a multipolar system, PpP programme, NATO, East enlargement.

The global system of international relations faces a permanent resistance to challenges that could affect the security and stability. It has been marked the crisis of the unipolar system in the early 21st century, which resulted in the crisis of international law, financial system, etc.

The increased threats to international stability will lead to the formation of a new global system, which will also influence the transformation of international relations at the regional level. The democratic changes in the region are not irreversible, the societies are characterized by instability, political confrontation, polarized forms of democracy. The region is very close to the centers of many ethnic conflicts, particularly in the Balkans and in the Caucasus, the dissemination of which can destabilize the situation in the neighboring countries. The problems of unrecognized states, regional separatism and ethnic conflicts threaten not only the security of neighboring countries, but the entire international community. The CEE region was the epicenter of two major world wars in the 20th century.

Among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which are particularly vulnerable to global changes, one should take into consideration the Ukraine, which is in a geostrategic competition between Russia, the USA and the EU.

Since the late 1980s, the international system is undergoing fundamental transformations, which can be compared with the results of world wars. The victory of the West in the “cold” war has resulted in a unipolar dominance for a certain period of time. This process caused a significant narrowing of Russia’s sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe, the interdependence of the countries of the above mentioned region, the eastward enlargement of the EU and NATO. Nowadays, however, there are reasonable grounds to state the possibility of evolution of the

international system towards multi-polarity. Some states would like to increase their participation in the global problems solution. Due to changes in global balance of power, there was an urgent need to reform the UN, especially the Security Council.

Because of great interdependence increase and due to mutual effects of states, the globalization process changes the priorities in international relations. Instead of military force criteria, the financial and economic resources, informational and intellectual resources, as well as natural resources, become of utmost significance. The crisis of international law is affected significantly by aggravation of contradictions between the states. Due to these changes, it is possible the increase of contradictions between the principles of self-determination and inviolability of borders. Epochal geopolitical changes led to an increase in the number of states in the 20th century. Such tendency will result in increase in ethnic and border conflicts. Multi-international states will face separatist movements and secessionist conflicts. In many cases regional separatism will be combined with usage of terrorist tactic.

A relatively late acquisition of sovereignty by nations living in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as minority problems, caused the discrepancies between the state and ethnic borders. The problem in the Balkans and the Caucasus region was the most acute one, but there are “frozen” conflicts in other countries, which due to certain circumstances, can be inspired from outside or renewed.

B. Koppiters considers the process of Europeanization to be an important factor to solve the problem of ethnic conflicts; this process is defined as a perspective of joining the united Europe in case of international problems solution. “Europeanization in the area of secessionist conflicts is defined as a process, which is activated and encouraged by European institutions, primarily the European Union, by linking the final outcome of the conflict to a certain degree of integration of the parties involved into European structures¹”.

The Helsinki Final Act on the inviolability of European postwar borders signed in August 1975, has ensured the stability of international relations for several decades and has eliminated the threat to revenge. As a result, it was created the OSCE, which has a number of peculiarities. Uniting most of nuclear power states, the organization is deprived of instruments to implement its comprehensive solutions strategies.

The process of proclamation and recognition of independence of Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia has created a dangerous precedent in international law (Transnistria, Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Chechnya, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria), small minorities and ethnic regions, which can make demands for the obtaining of sovereignty. In addition, the emergence of unrecognized states with poorly controlled borders and governments can create buffer zones that can be used for international terrorism, illicit trafficking in arms, drugs, etc.

¹ *Европеизация и разрешение конфликтов. Конкретные исследования европейской периферии* (Москва: Весь мир, 2005).

In case of Ukraine, the danger increases because of society polarization, occupation of Crimea by Russia and war of separatists, as well as by Russian troops in Donbass.

The transformation of the global international system can have detrimental effects on the security of Central and Eastern Europe, especially on countries that are not included to collective security system. Ethnic conflicts, separatism and state border changes are very dangerous phenomena for such countries, as CEE states have a number of potential conflict zones, the explosion of violence in which can be disseminated to other regions.

The security in Central and Eastern Europe is an integral part of all European security system. In spite of changes, which have taken place for the last 24 years in the region, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are constantly being in a whirlwind of geopolitical predictions. Such situation, perhaps, may surprise the residents of Western Europe; from a western point of view, the “cold war” meant the end of the communist regime and the strategic rivalry between two blocs, that is, between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. However, from the perspective of Eastern Europe, even though it meant the end of the communist regime, it did not mean, at the same time, the complete end of neo-imperialistic ambitions of Russia.

It should be noted, that there has always been a common thought that terrorists did not threaten Eastern Europe to such an extent, as they did it in case of Western Europe. There was a certain difference between Central and Western Europe in terms of security. If we take into account the terrorist threat in Spain, the UK, Italy and Germany – this is the case. On the other hand, however, it means that Eastern Europeans are in a rather difficult situation. If one considers the debates in NATO, it should be noted, that the terrorist threat was a key issue.

We can conclude that we are witnessing some transformation of NATO’s role in Central and Eastern Europe. Nowadays NATO is waging a political war against terrorism, is conducting peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and elsewhere. In other words, we talk about NATO on a global scale. Having in mind the European security, one should state that the role of NATO is shifting, the role of the European Union is constantly increasing. Although the EU is an organization, which is weak enough in terms of military capabilities, it has great political and economic potential.

The European Union is capable to make the decisions in the military sphere, which can be adapted to the needs of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In addition, there exists a certain geostrategic competition in respect of historical processes in the future, it is especially important in Eastern Europe. There is a competition between two possible scenarios here. There are two models. One of them can be described as a pro-European model, for another one it is difficult to find an appropriate name. It can be defined as the post-Soviet or the Soviet model of the situation development.

Obviously, all countries of Central and Eastern Europe (that is, all post-communist countries) had to make radical transformation over the last decade. First, they have experienced political transformations. The second kind of changes – the economy transformation: from a socialist economy, with central planning - to a market economy.

The third kind of reforms tended to formation and historical rooting of national self-identity. Most post-communist countries had to define the attitudes towards its historical traditions.

In addition, one should mention another kind of transformation – a geopolitical one. The changes consisted in transition of the countries of region from focusing on the Soviet Union, the Eurasian region and the dominance of the Russian language to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is run by the United States. Thus, there was a need to change the mentality: the problem of learning English, the problem of managing personnel change, who were involved in the system of communist bureaucracy. It seems that the Baltic countries, the Visegrad Group countries as well as the countries of South-Eastern Europe have succeeded in transformations; other countries, such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Croatia are halfway. The transformations have not been finished yet in these countries; it takes the above countries about 10-15 years to get some obvious results and make specific transformations.

The states of the former socialist bloc, which joined the EU, do not face nowadays any serious increasing security challenges. Perhaps, the problems exist, but they are considered as those of secondary importance in comparison to the threats, which the European Union and NATO generally face. The threats to these countries can't be compared with those ones of other countries, though they look very similar.

The external threats and external risks include the following issues: the issue of Russia, the issue of China, and finally, the issue of Islam or rather the issue of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist groups. Thus, Russia is the potential threat of paramount importance. It is a traditional threat to some Central European countries, such as Poland, Eastern Europe and Ukraine. There has always been a rivalry between Russia and Poland, but we must hope that Russia will not make problems for Poles in the nearest future.

Russia is not a powerful country. If the economy of the country developed in a proper way, the power of the state would be strengthened. Otherwise, Russia will not join the European leaders and its position will be unsustainable. The GDP in Russia nowadays is lower, than that in Brazil, so there is no reason to consider it richer than Brazil. There is a tendency that the power of a state depends on two factors. One of them is traditionally connected with economic situation and another one - with availability of nuclear weapons. It is obvious, that Russia with vulnerable economy can't maintain its nuclear arsenal for a long time. Furthermore, in this context, it keeps losing the United States out and in 20–25 years Russia will have no more than 500–600 nuclear warheads; due to this situation Russia will be potentially put on the same stage with other nuclear countries.

The last question under discussion is oil fields and other raw materials in Russia. The Europeans somehow exaggerate the issue of oil and raw materials in Russia. Europe depends on Russia, and it, in turn, depends on the proceeds received due to oil sale. Almost 70% of Russian oil is exported to the states in Eastern and Central

Europe, thus, economic growth in Russia is very dependent on the income that the country receives from oil sales. Therefore, Russia will not be able to put pressure to supply power resources.

Despite all the problems, shortcomings and extremely difficult political situation, the Ukraine is moving increasingly towards a united Europe; such countries as Poland, Baltic countries and Scandinavian ones, as well as other countries are ready to assist the Ukraine in becoming a member of the European Union.

In current political and historical science the Central and Eastern Europe concept includes the European countries of the former Soviet bloc: mainly the Central European or Visegrad countries - Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary; the countries of South-Eastern Europe - Bulgaria, the Yugoslav states (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Romania, three Baltic countries, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The desire for integration into European and transatlantic structures unites the countries of the region – that is, a gradual transition to Europe; deprivation of the necessity to compare the above mentioned countries and the traditional members of the European Union, NATO; final identification with the western community. At the same time, the key issue - belonging of CIS countries to the CEE region. Apart from the processes of national and state identification, the issue of participation of these countries in European and Euro-Atlantic structures becomes more urgent; it changes not only a regional, but also a continental balance. Foreign policy of great states is aimed traditionally at CEE, it influences significantly the security situation in the region.

In this regard, most CEE countries have begun an intensive reorientation phase of foreign policy and foreign economic relations towards such organizations as the EU and NATO.

According to many researchers, there are two approaches concerning the European security issues. The first one is aimed at ensuring collective security through NATO bloc, the second approach – the transfer of power to the OSCE and the UN Security Council. Mostly, the adherents of the Alliance support the first point of view, while the official representatives of Russia, a number of CIS countries, many political and social organizations of the West are in favor of the second approach. In June 2008, a President of Russia D. Medvedev proposed the concept of a “new European security architecture”, due to which all the existing security organizations in Europe (NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe, CSTO) should follow the principle of “the inadmissibility of the use of force or threat of force in international relations.”

The Alliance adherents declare their readiness to transform NATO into political organization, then to empower the OSCE and the UN Security Council to consolidate the European security. Under certain conditions, the NATO has become a center of security in Europe. There are various reasons for preserving NATO as a military organization: the increase of the threat of local wars and armed conflicts; the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation and the enhancing of missiles arsenal and missile technology; the possibility of covert revival of powerful military potential of Germany;

the destructive vying of countries for control over energy resources (oil and gas). Because of the threats, which are of a multivariate nature, NATO will provide mechanisms for ensuring the European security.

Meanwhile, there is an alternative – to have a new security system based on the pan-European process (OSCE). All European countries are engaged in it on an equal basis. The newly created states can join the security system. OSCE has an appropriate collective security structure. It is possible to improve the above mechanisms, and if necessary, to create the new ones. This vision of security in the European region gave rise to a potential conflict between the countries, supporting different world views, namely the United States and Russia.

Since 1993, when the CEE states and the West intensified the debate on NATO enlargement to the east, it has been developed a “Partnership for Peace”(PfP) programme, which was a major initiative introduced by the USA. This program, which was officially adopted at the NATO Summit in Brussels in January 1994, was offered to all CSCE participating states. Alliance Heads of State and Governments signed the PfP Framework Document, which outlined the political goals of the program: to ensure transparency in national defense planning and defense budget, to ensure democratic control of armed forces; to maintain the capability and readiness to contribute to peacekeeping operations under the authority of the United Nations and/or the responsibility of the OSCE; to develop cooperative military relations with NATO for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may be subsequently agreed; to develop the forces for a longer period of time that are able to operate better with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance. In addition, each state could develop an individual Partnership Program with NATO. By September 1995, the Alliance has prepared a “Study on NATO Enlargement”, where the basic principles and criteria of the process were set.

On December 10, 1996 it was adopted a decision-making process of NATO enlargement. On July 8, 1997 three candidate states were invited for admission to NATO at a summit in Madrid - Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. After short negotiations, which took place on December 16, 1997, the NATO accession protocols were signed. On March 12, 1999 when the ratification protocols process was concluded, the above mentioned three countries joined the Alliance.

In spring 1997, the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of NATO countries decided to modify “Partnership for Peace” programme as “Enhanced Partnership for Peace Programme.” Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia became NATO members in 2004; Albania and Croatia joined NATO in 2009.

Regarding the CEE countries, in 1995 the policy of the USA found its reflection in the formula of “intensive dialogue” with candidate countries for NATO membership. The debate about NATO enlargement was a lively discussion, which was intertwined with a discussion about the place and role of the USA in the new world ”after the

cold war.” Its characteristic feature was the reactivation of neoizolyatsyonist spirits. The influential factors were military - technical cooperation as well as investments. In 1995 Poland was the first country among the CEE countries, which received assistance within the “Foreign military financing” programme. The restrictions on “special equipment” sale in Poland were eliminated by the executive Decree of President Clinton. The Resolution No.7 adopted by the House of Representatives of US Congress contained a proposal to provide the selected participating countries in “Partnership for Peace” programme with the “excessive defense production capacity.”

A number of US politicians considered the NATO expansion as an unnecessary and a dangerous challenge to Russia, the threat to disarmament and arms control; others considered the expansion as huge financial costs that the United States had to bear; finally, many critics considered the expansion of NATO as the threat to the Alliance itself. However, it can be observed a tendency of strengthening of “European pillar” of NATO in the USA, especially in the military aspect.

One of the key issues was the deployment of nuclear weapons of NATO on the territory of CEE countries. A serious discussion on the above mentioned topic began in summer in 1995. The Presidents of Poland and the Czech Republic expressed an unequivocal consent.

The beginning of US military action against Iraq on March 20, 2003 marked a new stage in world policy. Iraq has aggravated seriously the relations between the leading countries all over the world.

The most important consequence of the US operation in toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime was split between the leaders of the EU – France and Germany, as well as the USA. In case of Iraq, different points of view of USA, France and Germany on methods of the problem solution affected the most important European security structures – NATO and the EU – and led to a serious crisis in transatlantic relations.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were actually “hostages” in the conflict between Washington on the one hand, and Berlin and Paris - on the other hand. The policy of CEE states, which has started from the adoption of the UN Resolution No. 1441 is determined by the desire to achieve ‘the foreign policy equilibrium’, a kind of “equal closeness” to the USA and EU leaders.

It should be noted, that it is necessary to distinguish such concepts as “Atlanticism” – one of the key strategic principles of foreign policy of CEE countries, and “Americanism.” The first one equates with European and American security interest in Europe and provides common views, goals and willingness to make joint decisions. The second concept means the priority of American perspective to support Washington actions; in any case, from this point of view, the position of the CEE countries that supported Washington in the issue of Iraq is a manifestation of Atlanticism: to prevent a split between the USA and Europe is one of the main strategic challenges, which they face.

The united Europe is being built under the schemes, which are developed by its leading countries, and primarily, such schemes reflect the interests of those countries. Thus, the „United Europe” Constitution draft, prepared by the Commission under the leadership of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and then implemented in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, reflected mainly the viewpoint of Paris and several other political figures of large EU states. The crisis, which hit the euro zone in 2011, mainly such countries as Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, resulted in negotiations on the setting up of “axial” group of countries within the EU, which would be conducive to stability of euro currency. Thus, CEE countries consider the USA as a certain counterbalance to great European countries influence.

The official authorities of CEE countries declare their interest in increasing cooperation with Russia in various fields. This tendency was not weakened after joining such countries as Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia the European Union in May 2004, as well as in case of the accession to the European Union such countries as Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. One could observe a positive dynamics in trade and economic exchange, it was intensified the dialogue on Russia-EU relations, among the key issue was counterterrorism and other global challenges. Russia and Poland signed bilateral agreements on good neighborliness. A special non-standard mechanism of political interaction was set up - a Committee for the Russian-Polish Cooperation Strategy under the leadership of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

However, the role and influence of Russia in Central and Eastern Europe is weakening. The leaders of the state were repeatedly against eastward expansion of NATO, stating that this false solution did not contribute to any international stability nor the formation of a pan-European security.

Despite the fact that the United States revised their plans for placing missile interceptors and radar installations in Poland and the Czech Republic, in 2011 it was signed the agreement on the deployment of these missiles in Romania by 2015. The Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement between the USA and Poland entered into force in September 2011. It is expected that US missile interceptors, belonging to the European Missile Defense (NMD), will be placed in Poland by 2018.

Thus, the possibilities of Russia to strengthen its position in the extended CEE region are still limited. It is caused, on the one hand, by limited capacity of political and economic resources, and on the other hand – the dominant targeting of CEE countries on cooperation development and membership in the Western European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

The key to stability in Central and Eastern Europe is to break the stereotypes of thinking in the bloc terms. This can be achieved through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Poland and Ukraine, the two most important countries in the region, play a leading role in this context.

We can conclude that in recent years NATO contributes to transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, NATO's role dealing with security tasks is changing. It should be taken into consideration the role of the European Union, which is also increasing. Although the military capabilities of the EU are poor, it has a great economic and political potential. The states of the former socialist bloc, which have joined the European Union, do not face serious problems referring to safety increasing. The problems obviously exist, but they are not so significant as threats, which the EU and NATO face.

ПРОБЛЕМИ БЕЗПЕКИ У ЦЕНТРАЛЬНІЙ ТА СХІДНІЙ ЄВРОПІ: ПОЛІТИЧНИЙ АСПЕКТ

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У статті розглянуто питання безпеки країн Центральної та Східної Європи, яка є складовою частиною загальноєвропейської безпеки. Країни цього регіону перебувають постійно у центрі геополітики, незважаючи на зміни, які відбулися в регіоні за останні два десятиліття. Представлено роль Європейського Союзу і НАТО, які мають важливе значення для процесу трансформації країн Центральної та Східної Європи. Крім того, обговорюються питання однополярної та багатополлярної систем міжнародних відносин. У статті розглядається також проблема краху однополярної моделі у сфері міжнародних відносин.

Ключові слова: держави Центральної та Східної Європи, безпека, однополярна система, багатополлярна система, програма “Партнерство заради миру”, НАТО, розширення на Схід.