

THE TURCOPHONE AREA: A NEW INTERMEDIARY SPACE?

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to outline the importance of capitalizing the geo-strategic potential of the turcophone space by the euro-atlantic democracy in the purpose of controlling the Heartland area. This way, a decisive advantage would occur over the absolutist regimes from the Eurasian area; the process of euro-atlantic democratic globalization would accelerate, process which, reaching this historic moment, could become irreversible. The intervention of N.A.T.O and the E.U would be justified for reasons of own national security, concerning the issue of maintaining order within the Heartland area. This happens because, on the background of the U.S.S.R.'s dismembering, the pivot area has re-become a general factor of instability (terrorism, organized crime under different forms, etc.). Applying this strategic ample project is a difficult to accomplish task at this moment. The turcophone space is, for the time being, only a concept in theory and the edification of a territorial turcophone mega construction faces obstacles which seem to be impossible to overcome.

Key words: Heartland, Rimland, European Union, N.A.T.O., Russian Federation, Republic of China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Euro-Atlantic democracy, Eurasian absolutism

THE TURCOPHONE AREA BETWEEN GEO-REALITY AND GEO-FICTION

Although the existence of the turcophone area is manifested merely through a theoretic plan, setting its geographic coordinates presents a series of difficulties. The inconveniences are related to the absence of a renown entity of such name, but also to the impossibility of setting and highlighting a natural region (or that of a regional ensemble) which might correspond to it in an accurate manner. However, the turcophone area could be defined, in a cultural sense, by underlining an territory in which the populations of Turkic language represent the majority, regardless of the fact that, from a politico-administrative point of view, they benefit or not from a territorial autonomy¹. This unity, based on linguistic connections is not sufficiently consistent, taking into consideration the fact that from the common root have spread many distinct branches among which the following three are the main ones: *Oghuz*, *Kypchak*, and *Uyghur*.

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¹ For details regarding the territorial dispersion of the Turkish ethno-linguistic group, please see Figures number 2 and 3. In the support of this area's cultural unity the dominant religion, that is Islam, could be taken into account as well

(Sala, 1981; Johanson, 1988; Tamisier, 1998). The solidity of the ethno-linguistic unity is affected also by means of extreme diversified racial issues, varying from anthropologically pure mongoloid types to those predominantly Europoid² (Cavalli-Sforza, 1998; Olson, 1994). Moreover, although in high proportion, the Turcophone peoples assume a Muslim religion, Sunnite though; there are numerous communities which have opted not only for other confessions, but for different variants of Shi'ism and even for other religions: Orthodox Christianity and Buddhism³.

This racial structure, extremely complex from an ethno-linguistic and cultural point of view is, in fact, the consequence of the huge wave of Turkish-Mongolic migration, which has mingled with the continental Eurasian mass (approximately between the years 375-1241), but it is also the consequence of the population fluxes and refluxes which have succeeded (8th and 9th centuries), the result of the inter-assimilation with populations from other ethno-linguistic groups (especially Iranian groups but also Mongolic and Caucasian ones) and recently, it is the result of the immigration from socio-professional reasons in Western Europe (after the 1950s). The dispersion of the Turkish-speaking populations has taken place on a very vast territory, this being an indisputable advantage from the perspective of occupying areas of strategic importance. Migration within immense distances has generated territorial discontinuity between Turkish-speaking communities; fact which represents a major vulnerability, because this does not allow the capitalization of their strategic potential as a unitary ensemble. Moreover, while taking advantage of this reality, in the past, states such as Russia, Iran or China, were interested in obstructing the coagulation of a unitary turcophone nucleus by means of imposing artificial identities to different communities. This process of denationalization or dividing was accentuated mainly by the Soviets, by means of an arbitrary administrative-territorial organizing process of the turcophone area in the Caucasian region and in Central Asia, this representing a conflict-generating factor (Grenoble, 2003; Kalika, 2006). The tensions formed between the states, whose dynamics tends to aggravate, could be eliminated by the edification of a turcophone mega-construction by applying the E.U model.

Baring in mind the challenges which the unification of the reference core imply, the geopolitical basis necessary in order to assure the implementation of such an ambitious project is limited to the six Turkish-speaking independent state formations: Turkey, Azerbadjan, Kazahstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Of course, ideologically speaking, Panturkism expressed under ethno-linguistic form, represents the instrument with the aid of which such a grandiose Eurasian project could be accomplished. A special role in this case can be played by Ankara, which, with the dismembering the U.S.S.R. has been pursuing the goal of extending its sphere of influence in the former ex-soviet republics, promoting a cultural common politics. A strictly cultural program, however, turns out inefficient as long as it is not based on a realistic politico-economic vision, necessary to an institutional construction on which to erect, in perspective, a

² For details concerning the chronology of the ethno genesis of the peoples forming this ethno-linguistic ensemble and for information regarding racial differences, see Figure number 1 (all these materials are original)

³ The Azeris, Qashqai and Sarts have adhered to Shi'ism, while the Gagaouz, the Tchouvash and part of the Yakut or the Tatar peoples have chosen Orthodox Christianity while the Touvans and other populations from the Altai Mountains area have adhered to Buddhism

regionally viable mega structure. This inefficiency coming from Ankara is measured in balance with the concentrated efforts carried out by powers hostile to an eventual Panturkic union which, by all means, have materialized by the forming of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (S.C.O). Not randomly, on the one hand, within S.C.O. can be found members or observers such as Russia, China and Iran, that is countries on whose territory live Turkish-speaking minorities, and on the other hand, these powers have managed to co-opt within the central-Asian turcophone organizations. However, S.C.O. does not concern only the obstructing the attempt of extending Turkey and Central Asia's sphere of influence, but, above all, the U.S's, which, under the protection of N.A.T.O., could capitalize the geo-strategic potential for the turcophone area against Russia, China and Iran's interests (Ortolland, 2007; Bobo Lo, 2008).

The act of conceiving a Turkish-American strategy, based on the convergence of interests, could be facilitated not only by the fact that Ankara represents, within N.A.T.O., one of Washington's most important allies, but also by the lay character of the Turk state. Of course, an eventual strategic measure achieved among and between Turkey and The United States, under the initiative of N.A.T.O., for conquering the Heartland area would imply the surpassing of many immense difficulties determined not only by the opposition of certain powers, but also by a series of factors which circumscribe either to the geographic realities (territorial discontinuities, extreme enclavement of some of the turcophone states), as well as certain aspects belonging to the tactic area (N.A.T.O., military power, should, first of all, activate within the continental mass).

This does not mean that there are no solutions but the applicability of these is conditioned by Ankara's awareness of the importance of the mission it has and its awareness in assuming great risks. Turkey will relate to a project whose historic past has never been consented not even in the times of the ephemeral Mongol Empire, project which not even the future could validate in the absence of a courageous initiative. Turkey's capacity of conceiving and promoting a discourse which could obtain the support of different ethno-linguistic and religious minorities among the turcophone states therefore becomes vital⁴. It also represents an imperative, the real democratization of Turkey, in order for this political system to be exported to the Caucasian area and Central Asia, representing the ideological basis of an Panturkic Union. It depends on Ankara to accept a strictly Asian means (a sort of coming back to the roots), giving up the politics of European integration, which, by all means, has not achieved anything but tension in the relations which certain states, members of the E.U., such as Greece and Cyprus. Paradoxically, although aspiring to the E.U, by its conflictual relations with Athens and Nicosia or even by its indirect implication between Bosnia and Kosovo, Ankara has complicated the process of integration in the Balkan Peninsula. And of these results has taken advantage especially Russia, preoccupied with stopping the process of Euro-Atlantic integration in the proximity of its frontiers, including by means of maintaining any source of conflict susceptible to affect the continent. Moreover, it is possible that this hypothesis could have already been verified in the context of Moscow's implication in the civil wars which took place in Yugoslavia (1991-1999), after the model of interference used in the civil war in Spain (1936-1939). The

⁴ In the territory of the turcophone states live an important non-turkic communities (Kurds in Turkey, Russians in Kazahstan, Tajiks in Uzbekistan, Armenians in Azerbaijan, etc.)

European dream, which could ensure Moscow, Beijing and Teheran's calm sleep, should be replaced/substituted by that of a panturcophone union, turned into a mocking of Russia, China and Iran. It depends, however, on Turkey to understand and convince Azerbaijan of the fact that, Georgia and especially Armenia, as possible members of the E.U., could facilitate, on the one hand, the territorial coherence of the turcophone area which is fragmented in the Caucasian region. On the other hand, the access of north-Atlantic forces to The Black Sea and the Caspian Sea could capitalize the military maritime potential within the interior of the continental mass, by means of rivers. The price for which Turkey has accepted to be part, among Greece, of N.A.T.O. (1952), that being supporting the confrontation against Eurasian totalitarianist regimes, continuing to remain viable even in Cyprus' integration in the European Union, has complicated the relations between these states and has generated the forming of a sensible maritime frontier in the Oriental Mediterranean Sea. (Ilieș, Grama, 2006). In this purpose, however, Ankara must accept, at least in perspective, to become allies with Erevan⁵.

From a strictly military point of view, however, the responsibility for the success of the initiative belongs less to Turkey and more to N.A.T.O., being conditioned by the capacity of the allegiance of exploiting the new ponto-caspian strategic passage which has appeared along with the adhering of Romania and Bulgaria to the north-Atlantic structure (2004). Moreover, in order to use this gate of access to the interior of Eurasia, Bruxelles is obliged to solve the complicated problem of the Caucasian area, and it not only has to take advantage of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, but most of all, to attract Armenia from the Moscow-Erevan-Teheran axis, with a profound anti-Turkish character. The initiative would not be complete without the transformation of the Caspian Sea into a bridge of connections between the turcophone states from Central Asia, that is Heartland, by Turkey, Rimland respectively, through Azerbaijan but also with the aid, probably a conditioned one, provided by Georgia and Armenia.

The final purpose of the forming of the turcophone regional superstructure lies in the gearing of this entity in a strategic mechanism which concerns the controlling, by the Euro-Atlantic forces of the Heartland area, which identifies, presently, with Russia and with the area requested by Moscow to form part of its natural sphere of influence. This way, as a cause of the vastity of the occupied territory, a strategic framing of the pivot area and, implicitly of Russia; on the west-east axis, it remains difficult to accomplish, taking into account the historic antecedents materialized through the military failures scored by Napoleon I Bonaparte (1812) and Adolf Hitler (1941-1943)⁶. In this context, a reconceptualization of territories is imposed, concerning controlling the Heartland area by taking into consideration the North-South alternative. This means a fundamental change of strategic perspective, by creating an axis formed by the Arctic Ocean and the turcophone area⁷. The essential advantage of the

⁵ The relationships between Ankara and Erevan they are tensed because of the dispute concerning the Genocide committed by the Turks against Armenians (1915), while the relationships between Baku and Erevan, the tensions are bounded with the territorial conflict regarding Nagorno Karabakh region, de facto under Armenian control, as a consequence of the war with Azerbaijan (1988-1993).

⁶ To a certain extent, on this line could also be placed the failure scored by Sweden, Carol the XIIth of Pflaz-Zweibrucken (1709).

⁷ Lately, the Frozen Ocean has been affected by the advanced process of global warming, accelerated by the consequences of human intervention, diminishing its capacity of natural barrier of Heartland

recapitalization of this axis' potential would lie in the elimination of two natural barriers on which Russia relies in the protection of the Heartland area. The Arctic Ocean (north) and the mountain chain (south) which starts from the eastern coast of The Mediterranean Sea and goes through that of the Pacific Ocean (Taurus, the Caucasian area, Zagros, Elburz, Pamir, Himalaya, Tianshan, Altai, etc.). In parallel, developing such an initiative would allow avoiding the mountain chain, which protects the Heartland area from the east (Kolyma, Cerski, Verkhoiansk, Djugdjur, Stanovoy, Iablonvyi etc.) and the human barrier from the west (found between Karelia and The Caucasian area), where approximately 85 percent of the Russian Federation's population is concentrated and which has played an essential role in the failure of the French campaign lead by Bonaparte and the German, lead by Hitler (Gray, 1988)⁸. The remaining 15 percent of the Russian population which assures a human barrier in the north of Asia are insufficient to resist a such regional turcophone construction, especially if this area itself contains numerous turcophone communities. Moscow might find itself forced to redistribute its human potential on the north-south axis, but it would however become vulnerable in the west, where, on the account of the diminishing in demographic resistance, the process of Euro-Atlantic integration would easily extend in its sphere of influence (Ukraine especially would be targeted).

THE TURCOPHONE AREA – A VECTOR OF HEARTLAND'S DEMOCRATIZATION

The forming of a turcophone regional mega structure, at Ankara's initiative and with the support of N.A.T.O. , would generate a series of tensions within the Eurasian continental mass, given the opposition of the nucleus of powers coagulated around S.C.O. However, this potential conflict would represent only logical continuation of the confrontation between the Euro-Atlantic democracy and the authoritarian regimes within the Eurasian area, transferring the confrontation from the Rimland area that of Heartland⁹. If Ankara's preoccupation with obtaining N.A.T.O.'s support, for the purpose of forming a turcophone state superstructure, circumscribes to the intentions of reaffirmation as a world power, just like it managed to impose itself during the

(phenomenon which has been questioned by certain specialists). According to some estimations, if the actual rhythm of diminishing is maintained, in a matter of a couple of decades, the polar bank faces the risk of melting near the continent area, therefore allowing the development of navigation in the north-east passage (along the Russian coast) and in the north-west channel as well (along the Canadian coasts and the United States'). The intensification of navigation within the Frozen Ocean, and especially, connecting the two passages would insure the forming of an arctic circumterrestrial route, this way substantially reducing distances (from Rotterdam to Tokyo there are 23,000 km to travel by traversing the Panama Chanel and 21,000 through the Suez_Channel, however, only 15,000 km through the north-west passage and 11,500 through the north-eastern one.

⁸ This human barrier comprises the Russian-speaking populations from the ex-soviet republics from Oriental Europe as well, where the community from Ukraine stands out by means of its numeric importance, strategic positioning as well as political influence.

⁹ After the victory won over totalitarianism in the European area of Rimland (Germany, 1945), the euro-atlantic democracy has managed to impose itself, due to an extremely complex confrontation, even against Eurasian totalitarianism, which controlled the Heartland (U.S.S.R.,1991). Along with the extending of the process of adhering to the E.U. and N.A.T.O. engaged by the states from Central and Oriental Europe (1995-2007), the euro-atlantic democracy has managed to quickly advance in Rimland, tending to reach the limits of Heartland, on the grounds of Ukraine and Georgia's intentions of integration in the euro-atlantic community. However, in the Asian area of Rimland, euro-atlantic democracy has not registered significant levels of progress after the defeat of totalitarianism in the region (Japan, 1945), but it has indeed managed to establish a bridge head in Korea (1953)

reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the interest of Euro-Atlantic democracy is more profound. From the perspective of the historic past, the purpose would be that of achieving an alliance with an area which, for centuries, has been hostile to European civilization, including threatening its existence, be the incursions of the Huns, the Mongols and even the Ottomans. Such an initiative would essentially change the vision regarding ratio of forces, because N.A.T.O. would capitalizing the potential of an area whose energies have been channeled in the past against Europe. The perspective would not be extraordinary, as it would again re-tangle the thread of negotiations held by the king of France, Louis the IXth with the Mongols, who were at their peak, for the purpose of making an alliance against the Arabs (1248-1249).

The control over the pivot area by means of a turcophone super state, for the prevention of threats to the E.U. and N.A.T.O, is not justified for the time being only, but it represents an imperative. Along with the dismembering of the Soviet Union, Heartland has re-become a centre which generates instability within the Eurasian continental mass. The Russian Federation, legitimate successor of the U.R.S.S. (1991) refuses to opt for democracy, preferring to choose political totalitarianism, putting to challenge its incapacity of maintaining order in the Heartland. At any time, the Turkish-Mongol hoards can be replaced by, with similar effects, the effects of the demographic explosion from within a space marked by an unfavorable natural environment, especially when facing an human ascending pressure. This scenario has real chances of materializing if the rhythm of demographic growth continues at the parameters established in the present, in parallel with the underdevelopment of the region¹⁰. We must bear in mind the fact that, in explaining the causes of Turkish -Mongol migrations (the IVth - VIIIth centuries), the demographic expansion has been the historical evolution point at which, exceeding itself to the capacity of sustaining certain fragile ecosystems, the tribes moved, mingling with the continental Eurasian mass with the purpose of identifying new sources of sustainability (Camous, 2009). There is a series of natural factors which can at any moment cause an unbalance within the local ecosystems, and implicitly to accelerate the phenomenon of migration, taking into consideration the fact that Central Asia is one of the most vulnerable populate regions, is evolution being marked by many risks (strong earthquakes, massive land slides, extreme meteorological conditions) (Roy,2001).

Similar risks are not caused only by natural factors, but socio-political ones as well, given the fact that the political regimes from within the ex-soviet turcophone states can be subscribed to the register of Eurasian authoritarianism. The process of modernization in The Caucasian area and Central Asia has timidly started along with the process of extending Russian influence in the region (in the XIXth century) and continued during the period of the U.R.S.S. (in the XXth century), in such a manner in which, implicitly, the ex-soviet turcophone states have followed the model of the autocratic regime presently existing in Moscow¹¹. However, authoritarianism is inefficient in measuring and using human and natural resources, this representing a major obstacle standing in the way of a

¹⁰ In this way, we must take into consideration the fact that, after these turcophone states formerly belonging to the U.S.S.R. have adhered to the general process of eroding the demographic vitality within the last 10 years,(phenomenon encountered in the autonomous dominantly turcophone from the Russian Federation).These evolution will be further analyzed in another study.

¹¹ Moreover, imposing this type of regime was possible due to the political traditions specific to Central Asia, before the Russian influence's extending of power.

solid development on which to fundament the construction of the future of these states. From an economic point of view, this defectuous management intervenes at a historical point at which, due to the importance of gas and petrol deposits for the worldwide industry, the turcophone states from the Caucasian area and Central Asia could become viable and influential projects in the region (Pop Irina, 2008). On the grounds of limiting the national interest to that of the leading group, numerous categories of populations (social, ethnic, etc) are excluded from the exertion of power. Inevitably, tending to identify themselves only as a small group, the political regime becomes arbitrary, determining profound states of discontent with the potential of generating not only waves of migration, especially to the prosperous areas of the Euro-Atlantic democracy, but also the appearance of radical, fundamentalist movements. In the turcophone regions from The Caucasian area and Central Asia, although there are may Muslim terrorist organisations¹², these do not adhere to the population level. The causes for which political Islam does not beneficiate of support are of historic nature, this happening mainly due to the fact that this religion has imposed itself late in certain areas belonging to the main space of reference, but also due to the superficiality of the acts of conversion, on the basis of the persistence of certain religions and traditional shamanistic practices (Taru, 2003). We must not omit, however, the influence of the soviet regime which has promoted a long term atheist-like religion, fact which managed to erase any possible fundamentalist religious feeling within a large part of society.

However, in the eventuality of the aggravation of the socio-economic climate from the Caucasian area and Central Asia, the ascension in political terrorism seems to be inevitable within the Heartland. The E.U. and N.A.T.O. should in fact be worried of such a perspective, given the connecting of the terrorist organizations from Central Asia to the international organizations of the Islamic fundamentalism, which questions the valor of Euro-Atlantic democracy. A direct consequence of the economic instability, but with extremely aggravating consequences, is that of the prosperity of traffic organizations, often owned and controlled by terrorist gangs in order to finance their activities. Not only can this dangerous combination of asymmetric threats (terrorism and organized crime) could worry the E.U. and N.A.T.O., but also the implication in dubious biologic experiments¹³ of certain states from the region. The impact of such a reality should be sufficiently strong at the level of European memory, taking into consideration the fact that, for the conquering of Kaffa, the Tatars did not hesitate to infest the Genovese with the bubonic plague which the surviving Italians managed to spread on the whole continent, when returning to the metropolis (1346). But even more dangerous is the fact that, on the basis of the U.S.S.R.'s dismembering, Central Asia has transformed into a market for illicit traffic with nuclear substances, market from which any state or non state actors interested in manufacturing or producing weapons of mass destruction can buy these „goods” (Sengupta, 2005). As long as on the list of countries preoccupied with the development of nuclear intercontinental capacities contains names such as Iran or even North Korea, whose rhetorical politics is marked by

¹² Central Asia activates Uzbekistan's Islamic Movement, renown for its connections with Al-Qaeda, Hizb-ut Tahir, the Islamic Movement of East Turkestan (Xinkiang), which are oppressed by actual political regimes

¹³ In Kazakhstan, there are laboratories which have modified the etiologic agent of plague, *Yarsinia Pestis*, this way obtaining bacteria which are resistant to 16 types of antibiotics simultaneously

excessively anti occidental nuances, the E.U. as well as N.A.T.O., are forced to adopt a preventive attitude towards the proliferation of nuclear material in Heartland. Of course, it would be inappropriate that certain segments of organized crime, such as human traffic, traffic with stolen vehicles, as well as the capitalization of counterfeited goods, etc be treated in a superficial manner, especially because they represent means of financing terrorism. But such a vision would turn out false because it would not highlight all the threats to Heartland's stability and, especially because it would not allow the rendering of a complete image of certain mentalities and practices accepted as being sources which tend to enrich the feeling of hostility towards Euro-Atlantic democracy. Corruption, intrinsic to political authoritarianism and manifesting not only on the horizontal of the authorities' structure, but on its vertical as well, is the central pillar of maintaining the activities engaged by terrorist and organized crime associations (Williams, 1997; Caunic, 2008).

On this basis, it is interesting to measure the validity of the hypothesis according to which the Eurasian absolutism maintains, on purpose, the instability within Heartland, in order to channel it towards the Euro-Atlantic area, throughout the export of asymmetric threatenings. These suspicions are fundamented on the basis that Russia is perceived as being a „mob” state, dominated by organized crime mobs, and Iran is seen as the state around which international terrorism has managed to coagulate. However, the option of global affirmation concerning Eurasian absolutism would be, at this point, self destructive. Neither Russia, nor China or even Iran are safe from the specter of chaos in Heartland; on the contrary, the risk they might take are, from a certain point of view, highly accentuated. Throughout the course of history, the incursions „performed” by the Turkish-Mongol hoards have affected mainly, and all on a higher level, the centers of power afferents to these states, and then, on a lower scale, the European civilization (the case of the Mongolic invasion in the XIIth century being edificatory in this particular way). But no matter whether true or false character of the stated hypothesis, the S.C.O. seems incapable to prevent chaos within the pivot area and, implicitly, the threats imposed on it. Although, officially, its target is that of eradicating terrorism, separatism and extremism in Central Asia, in reality, the organization's purpose is the conservation of status-quo. By maintaining political arbitrariness and implicitly the aggravation of social inequities, S.C.O. achieves nothing more than to extend the basis of sustenance, among the turcophone population, the basis of Islamic fundamentalism and manages to favor the development of organized crime.

The democratization of the Heartland area, under Turkey's initiative and with N.A.T.O.'s support, represents the only solution viable for assuring stability within the pivot area, basis on which the vector of regional modernization will no longer be represented by Russia, but the Euro-Atlantic space. The success of democratization in the turcophone area, based on prosperity and liberty, will allow its transformation into a viable alternative to Eurasian absolutism, regardless of its means and form of manifestation against European civilization, Islamic fundamentalism, promoted by Iran within the frame of the Muslim world, Russian autocracy imposed as being a model of governing in Oriental Europe and Central Asia or the totalitarianist communism promoted by China as an ideological weapon in regions belonging to the Far Orient in order to maintain its sphere of influence. The turcophone regional mega construction could represent an extension of the E.U. and N.A.T.O. in Asia, accelerating the process of

globalization of Euro-Atlantic democracy which, reaching this historical peak, could become irreversible. However, the process of democratization in Heartland is conditioned by the intensification of the process of imposing Euro-Atlantic values in Rimland, to be more precise within the ponto-baltic isthmus, in order to prevent a counter offensive of the Eurasian absolutism, especially the Russian autocracy. Democratizing the eastern part of the continent, which implies liberty, therefore an authentic civic spirit, and prosperity, that is the perspective of a solid and durable process of development within society, will transform this region not only into a bastion meant to defend European civilization against any possible Eurasian threat, but also into a bridge head meant for the purpose of launching an attack against the east. Not randomly, Napoleon I Bonaparte's failure in Russia (1812) was caused by the socio-economic underdevelopment of the countries in Oriental Europe, countries who were not able to logistically support the French military campaign towards the interior of the Heartland area carried out by means of an immense specter of operations.

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