

EURO-ATLANTIC DEMOCRACY CONFRONTING A STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

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Abstract: The purpose of this article aims to highlight the role that north-south axis, composed by the Arctic Ocean and the turcophone space, could play in achieving an efficient frame of the Heartland area. Achieving such an initiative would dramatically change the strategic vision and would tilt the balance of power on the Euro-Atlantic democracy side, making an enormous pressure on Russia, Republic of China and Islamic Republic of Iran. But that potential success is conditioned both by the prospect of opening an Arctic circumterrestrial route, to link Western Europe to the Far East by sea, and the forming of a turcophone union, with the EU and NATO support, to create a cohesive regional structure from Eastern Europe to Central Asia.

Key words: Heartland, Rimland, Ringwater, the new Rimland, Arctic Ocean, the turcophone space

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THE STRATEGIC PROTECTION OF THE HEARTLAND AREA

The Heartland (pivot area) is mostly identified with Russia itself and with the space this country claimed covering within its sphere of influence, as a USSR successor. Thus, the Moscow authorities intend preserving the status quo concerning the Heartland area, aiming in one such strategic context, to protect the pivotal area. For nearly two centuries, between the wars against Louis XIV of Bourbon and the First World War (1713-1918), London surrounded Eurasia southern coast by a series of colonies from the eastern Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific coast, having India as a pivot, which allowed it to control the Rimland area¹.

¹ This chain of colonies was formed in Gibraltar (1713), Malta (1814), Cyprus (1878), Egypt (1882), India (1858), Burma (1886), Singapore (1826), Hong Kong (1898) and others. England also

After the World War II until now, Great Britain has succeeded in this policy, by the U.S.A., that control the shores of the Eurasian continental mass, not through a series of colonies, but through a chain of military bases. But the Rimland area dominance was not a sufficient condition to achieve supremacy over the entire globe. Controlling the Heartland area enabled Russia, whether it was in competition with England, during the imperial period, or with the U.S.A., during the Soviet period, to act as a political-military force, and, currently, despite its internal vulnerabilities, to aspire maintaining the ranking of world power.

a. **Natural protection.** In achieving its policy, Moscow has to take into account the peculiarities of the relief of its controlled territory. From west to east, stands five physical-geographical regions with a great strategic potential, East European Plain, the Ural Mountains, West Siberian Plain, the Central Siberian Plateau and the mountain chain of Eastern Siberia, while in the north-south axis are highlighted the Caucasus Mountains². These geological formations are integrated into a larger Eurasian natural whole, providing the Russia's control over the Heartland area. Basically there are three natural physical barriers and a climatic one, which, throughout history, have not allowed maritime powers to launch military offensives in the continental mass to capture the pivotal area, despite dominating the southern coast of Eurasia³.

In the north, Moscow can count on the protection provided by the Arctic Ocean, in the south, on the mountain chain stretching from the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean coast (Taurus line, Caucasus, Zagros, Pamir, Himalaya Tianshan, Altai) doubled by the deserts located in the north side (Karakum, Taklamakan, Gobi) and to the east, counting on the mountain formations located along the Pacific coast with branches within the continental mass (Kolyma line, Chersky, Verhoyansk, Dzhugdzhur, Stanovoi, Iablonovyi). The Heartland area additionally benefits of an important protection in terms of climate that has made a decisive mark in the failure of major military incursions, as happened both in Napoleon I Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler's cases. The effectiveness of these natural barriers is due to different levels so that, for example, in the south, although the orographic knot. Pamir with adjacent mountains chains (Including the Karakorum-Himalaya) acts as an impenetrable barrier. It contains a penetration shaft with a vital strategic potential in the Rimland area to Heartland area access. Breakthrough result of Pamir massifs by the western tributaries of the Indus, the Khyber lane opened by the Kabul river, has been used since ancient times during the military campaigns of Darius I and Alexander Macedon and in the Middle Ages, by Mahmud of Ghazni, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and Babur I. In the modern and contemporary era, the Khyber lane became a crucial challenge for the world supremacy in the Anglo-Russian confrontation, followed by the Soviet-

managed to implement its plan of controlling the Rimland, due to its maritime policy, which was based especially, on the control of some natural and artificial straits, located on the south of the Eurasian continental mass; for details of London's maritime policy concerning the need of controlling those straits, see: Sophie Chautard, *L'indispensable de la géopolitique*, vol. 570 from *Principes (Levallois-Perret)*, Collection Principes, Studyrama, 2006, p. 221-222.

² Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph L. Noguee, *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*, M.E. Sharpe, 2005, p. 18.

³ For details concerning MacKinder's theory on Heartland, see: Silviu Neguț, *Geopolitica*, Editura Meteor Press, București, 2008, p. 36-37.

American one⁴. Also, to the east, although rivers crossing Siberia, could be important inland waterways (Lena, Indighirka, Kolyma), are routed to the Arctic Ocean, however, there is a vulnerable point, represented by the flow of the Amour river, which opens the access from the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan to Central Siberia (Lake Baikal)⁵.

b. Human protection. In the East European Plain, where because of the steppe is vulnerable to military invasions, Moscow bases its defense policy, primarily on the protection ensured by the ethnic Russian core. Currently, the human barrier is stretching from Kuban steppes, following the borders of Ukraine, Belarus and Baltic countries up to the Karelian peninsula. In the space between the mouths of the Don and Volga, with a special strategic value in the Ponto-Caspian isthmus, because of its location on the main route of penetration from Europe to Central Asia⁶, Moscow was concerned in populating this area with a loyal human mass, despite its ethnic diversity, Cossacks (Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars etc.). From human barrier that protects the western Heartland area, emerges an important branch to Central Asia which continues up to the Pacific coast. This branch was the axis of penetration of the Russians in Siberia, being carried out through the Caspian gate of the Ural Mountains and the mouth of the Volga River (the XVI century). Thus, Russia has managed to gain control of a strategic corridor, which, on the one hand, currently allowing Moscow to exercise its influence in some states with ambitions of regional powers (such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and also, of the important countries in managing relations with China (Kazakhstan and Mongolia), and secondly, access to the Pacific Ocean. But the extreme segment of the penetration axis is very vulnerable, taking into account the distance from the Russian ethnic core, its relatively recent populating in balance with the rest of the human corridor and also the Chinese demographic pressure factor in the Amur banks⁷. On the basis of the Soviet identity dissolution, the human barrier designed by the Moscow authorities declined gradually, due, mainly, of recognizing the existence of Ukrainian and Belarusian nations. At this setback, also contributed the return from the former republics of the USSR of a significant part of their minorities, even if, indirectly, it adjusted the demographic process in Russia, which was in a pronounced decline. Populating by ethnic Russians, both during tsarism and the Soviets was done by the Moscow authorities with a clear strategic purpose, usually targeting the adjacent areas of particular importance, such as Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Kazakhstan. This is one of the reasons explaining the present difficulty to remove the sphere of Russian influence in the Soviet successor countries, despite their declaration of independence⁸. However,

⁴ For details concerning the English intervention in Afghanistan, see: Paddy Docherty, *The Khyber Pass: A History of Empire and Invasion*, Union Square Press, 2008, p. 189-216; and for details regarding Soviet invasion, see: Jacques Levesque, Gilles Labelle, *L'URSS en Afghanistan: de l'invasion au retrait, Vol. 57 (1979-1989), La memoire du siecle*, Editions Complexe, 1990, *passim*.

⁵ For details concerning the Amur River, see: James R. Penn, *Rivers of the world: a social, geographical, and environmental sourcebook*, ABC-CLIO, 2001, p. 11-13.

⁶ For details on the history of the Cossacks, located on the Don and their relations with Russia, see: Shane O'Rourke, *Warriors and peasants: the Don Cossacks in late imperial Russia*, St. Antony's-Macmilan series, Palgrave Macmilan, 2000, *passim*.

⁷ Jacques Attali, *Scurtă istorie a viitorului*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2007, p. 108.

⁸ Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics of the world system Regional geographies for a new era*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, p. 186.

the Russian-speaking population of refugees limited to a large extent the Moscow support in a coherent political identity in post-Soviet territory. Despite this unfavorable context, the human barrier, composed by the core of its population located in the European steppes, continues to provide a sufficient protection for Russia to stop an incursion from the west. Also, to protect its ethnic core, Moscow was extremely concerned in redefining its national adjacent territory, by dividing, in particular, the population without a Slavic origin. The imperial footprint, which marked the evolution of the Russian state during the past centuries, has provided many opportunities for reshaping the ethnic adjacent territory, both in Eastern Europe, but especially, in the Caucasus and Central Asia. For example, at the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus, it is highlighted the Russian attempt to artificially divide the Romanian nation, by inventing the Moldovan people as an intermediate in the assimilation process of the Romanians in Bessarabia⁹. In the Caucasian and Central Asian areas, Russians promoted a similar policy of forming false ethnicity-based language, aiming at, in fact, the process of assimilation and even Christianization of the turcophone population, as happened to a certain extent, in the Tatars case. In parallel, during the XIX-XX centuries, has imposed the use of languages of turcophone own communities, which were even codified and legalized as the national education languages. Instead, they deliberately removed the literary languages of communication between different communities, as happened at the time of Tsar Alexander II, to ban Tatar in Kazakhstan, or the time of I.V. Stalin, with the Azerbaijan language in the moslem Caucasus, especially in Dagestan¹⁰.

THE STRATEGIC POTENTIAL OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN AXIS-TURCOPHONE SPACE

Due to the immensity of the occupied territory, a strategic fit of the Heartland and the Russian space, on the west-east axis remains difficult in achieving, given the history existing examples, consisting in military incursions, involving failure of Charles XII of Pfalz Zweibrücken (1709), Napoleon I Bonaparte (1812) and Adolf Hitler (1941-1943). The penetration of Swedish, French and German armies into Russian territory depth, showed the numerical insufficiency of the invaders and also the limited human resources available even in the European empires case, which were at the height of their military power to conquer the Heartland. But a strategic fit on the west-east axis can be achieved in the context where a Western attack would be supported by a similar invasion from the Far East. Moreover, the success of Great Britain and France, who supported Turkey against Russia in the Crimean War (1853-1856), was possible in some degree, through such appointments. From a geo-strategic point of view, a particularly important role in defeating the Tsar Nicholas I played the fact that in this war, with a maritime character, Russia was forced sending a part of the fleet in Siberia to prevent an Anglo-French naval invasion on the Amur mainstream coming from the Pacific Ocean¹¹. If in the case of Charles XII and Napoleon I, such a strategic perspective was not taken into account, as it regards Adolf Hitler, he was unable to draw on Japanese ally in the conflict against I.V. Stalin.

⁹ For details on Moldovanism see: Ruxandra Ivan, *Direcții principale în studiul relațiilor internaționale în România*, Institutul European, Iași, p. 270.

¹⁰ Olivier Roy, *Noua Asie Centrală sau fabricarea națiunilor*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 95-98.

¹¹ Russia sent a flotilla on the Amur river, in order to reject any naval English-French offensive from the Pacific Ocean, for details see: Guy Arnold, *World strategic highways*, Taylor & Francis, 2000, p. 198.

Moreover, the decision taken in Tokyo to observe neutrality treaty with the Soviets (1941) allowed Moscow to reorganize the defensive on the western front against the German offensive, being also supplied by the U.S.A. through the Vladivostok port in the east, connected to the Trans-Siberian Railway¹².

Currently, a simultaneous offensive initiative on the west-east direction could be affected by Russia's attempt to reinforce its position in the East through an alliance with Beijing, when Moscow has succeeded in some extent, to achieve at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Having a vast imperial experience, China designs its strategies on a very long-term, so that the alliance with Russia, in the SCO seems, however, circumstantial. Beijing aims to provide Moscow's stability to the east that allowed it concentrating its forces to stop the Euro-Atlantic enlargement process towards the pivotal area. Rather, China is currently concerned, in maintaining the status quo in the Heartland area, while retaining the initiative as, on the basis of a consolidation of its position on the world scene, claiming it despite Russia. Moreover, if Beijing in competition with the USA globally, would fail to prevent the expansion of Euro-Atlantic sphere of influence over the Heartland area, than Chinese claims of global supremacy would become groundless.

Although Russian-Chinese relations appear to be based on common interests, in depth, they recorded many tensioned moments. This conflicting state have historical origins generated by the Russian expansion eastward, which was done, especially in China's detrimental, culminating with the St. Petersburg initiative of imposing the Argun (1858) and Beijing (1860) Treaties¹³. It is only a historical argument, because, in reality, constrained by demographic pressure and energy needs, China is likely to consider the prospect of future territorial conquests at the expense of Russia¹⁴. Moreover, at present, especially from economic reasons, there is an enlargement process of the Han ethnic factor in Eastern Siberia, due to massive depopulation of the region, so that Beijing might be tempted to regain its sphere of influence on former natural resource-rich provinces. Distrust between Russia and China is mutual, materializing by a series of strategies adopted by each power against the other. The fact that Beijing prefers to purchase Russian military technology for achieving the balance of power in the Pacific Ocean against the United States, which support Taiwan independence, threatening the developed regions of the Chinese coastal¹⁵, should not be considered as a strong point of relations with Moscow. On the one hand, Russia is in a tight partnership with India, China's rival, including expanded nuclear cooperation plan¹⁶, and has imposed to Beijing a series of restrictions concerning the supply of military weapons¹⁷. Moscow co-opted China

¹² G. Patrick March, *Eastern destiny: Russia in Asia and the North Pacific*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996, p. 222-223.

¹³ Through the treaties of Aigun and Beijing, the Russo-Chinese border was set on the Amur river and the Ussuri river; for details see: S. C. M. Paine, *Imperial rivals: China, Russia, and their disputed frontier*, M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 49-107.

¹⁴ Jaques Attali, *Scurtă istorie a viitorului*, Polirom. Iași,, p. 193.

¹⁵ Stephane Marchand, *Când China va învinge*, Pro Editură și Tipografie, 2008, p. 123-126.

¹⁶ For details on nuclear cooperation between Russia and India see: Jerome M. Conley, *Indo-Russian military and nuclear cooperation: lessons and options for U.S. policy in South Asia*, Lexington Books, 2001, *passim*.

¹⁷ Anne de Tinguy, Isabelle Facon, *Deschiderea către Asia și lumea arabo-musulmană. Rusia părăsește oare Occidentul?*, în *Moscova și lumea. Ambiția grandorii: o iluzie?*, coordonator Anne de Tinguy Editura Minerva, București, 2008, p. 261.

in SCO to channel and control its economic and political energy in Central Asia and, in parallel, has promoted a series of multilateral initiatives, which excluded Beijing (Eurasian Economic Community and Collective Security Treaty Organization)¹⁸. Furthermore, although appeals to Russian military technology, in order to assure the independence of its dynamic economy on Moscow, China isn't supplying oil from Siberia and the Caspian Sea, but in the Middle East, and, lately, in Africa¹⁹. In parallel, becomes evident the Beijing's tendency to turn the SCO into a structure-based on the development (loans, trade-investment)²⁰ in the detriment of military cooperation, as Russia wants. China's intention to emphasize the economic factor for the recovery of the sphere of influence in Central Asia removed the immediate prospect of a military confrontation with Russia. But Beijing relies most probably on demographic and economic element, which Moscow itself needs to maintain order in the devastated and underdeveloped regions of the Far East. Also currently, the unarmed neutrality principle, established in the Constitution of Japan (1945)²¹ constitutes an obstacle to transforming this country into a powerful military-political factor enabling the country to achieve a strategic framing of heartland area from the Pacific Ocean. However, the fact that the Soviet not complied with the neutrality pact, followed by the invasion of Japan and especially, the annexation of the Kuril Islands (1945)²² could represent, in Tokyo, the sufficient reasons, to agree allying in the future against Moscow. Such a hypothesis assumes that Japan rearmament, the process being conditioned by its ability to transform the civil technological infrastructure into military potential. Developments on this direction of Japanese policy might encounter resistance not only domestically, because of the legal constraints assumed but especially, externally where certain powers, whose positions were threatened, would certainly oppose a Japanese assertions on the world stage. Arming Japan would be also a pretext for a series of state actors from among Eurasian absolutism, such as China, North Korea, Iran and even Russia, to develop its military capability, including nuclear terms. Even if this remilitarization of Japan occurs or not, its territory could be used as a basis for launching the operations of Euro-Atlantic democracy, particularly the US, as happened during the Korean War (1950-1953).

Given the many unknown variables in China's strategic equation²³ and difficulties faced by Japan to assert themselves militarily, a strategic fit for the Heartland on the west-east direction seems in this context, impossible. Thus, it requires a rethinking of theories concerning the domination of the pivotal area by taking into account the north-south alternative. It refers to a fundamental

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

¹⁹ Stephane Marchand, *Când China va învinge...*, p. 277-288.

²⁰ Anne de Tinguy, Isabelle Facon, *Deschiderea către Asia și lumea arabo-musulmană. Rusia părăsește oare Occidentul?...*, p. 262.

²¹ for details on neutrality principle, see: Ruth Kirk, *Japan: crossroads of east and west*, Taylor & Francis, 1968, p. 199.

²² for details on the history of the Soviet annexation of the Kuril Islands and the Russo-Japanese dispute relating to these areas, see: Thomas J. Schoenbaum, *Peace in Northeast Asia: resolving Japan's territorial and maritime disputes with China, Korea and the Russian Federation*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008, p. 117-127.

²³ Moreover, the policy to be adopted towards China is a subject on which political and intellectual elite of Russia failed to achieve consensus, for details see: Anne de Tinguy, Isabelle Facon, *Deschiderea către Asia și lumea arabo-musulmană. Rusia părăsește oare Occidentul?...*, p. 262.

change in the strategic perspective, creating an axis formed by the Arctic Ocean and the turcophone space. The primary advantage of the ability to exploit the axis potential would be the elimination of two of the natural barriers that Russia is based in terms of defense: the Arctic Ocean (north) and the mountain chain (south) which extends on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea to that of the Pacific Ocean. In parallel, the development of such a strategy avoids both mountain formations along the Pacific Ocean, which protect the Heartland from the East, and the human barrier in the West, between Karelia and the Caucasus.

a. **The Arctic Ocean.** To materialize such an initiative, NATO should reconsider theories regarding the strategic decision on military relations with Russia in the Arctic area. Indeed, the stage of technological development and trends on this direction imposes an update on the thesis, with its emphasis on the air power superiority, detrimental to marine and terrestrial thesis²⁴. Air dominance zone is overlapping both in Russia and NATO's case, especially USA, on the north polar area. However, it isn't required the absolutization of the air power, especially, in detrimental of the naval power, given the prospects that, during the XXI century, it would allow the assertion of the naval power in the Arctic Ocean, as a decisive factor in its control. Such an opportunity should be considered as important as the natural protection barrier of the Heartland, provided by the Arctic area, tends to diminish its importance. The situation is closely correlated with fact that, in the last period of time, the Arctic Ocean is affected by an advanced process of global warming. According to estimates, if the current rate of pollution remains in decades, is likely to melt the polar ice pack²⁵. It is interesting of establish to what extent this process could be accelerated by the human intervention consequences or the manifestation of a natural factor. But more important is to determine which could be negative consequences on the evolution of humanity due to that process of global warming, especially if it would accelerated by the current uncontrollably technology. If exists a controlled development, the phenomenon would allow increased shipping in the north-east passage (along the north coast of Russia) and also, in the north-west passage (along the north coast of Canada and the USA). Shipping development in the Arctic Ocean and, especially, linking the two passages provide developing of a circumterrestrial Arctic route. It notes the enormous benefits that involve opening the waterway in terms of significantly reducing the circumterrestrial distance²⁶. But the inauguration of the transarctic way, should not be only anticipated as an effect of possible abrupt climate changes, especially because they are unpredictable. In particular, the opening of this waterway depends on the technological progress, supposing the construction of superstructures involving the waterways and even submersibles which are adapted to the specific climate of the Arctic Ocean, on the one hand, and on the other hand, machine-tools capable of exploiting the potential of

²⁴ Theory promoted by Alexander Seversky; for details see: Paul Dobrescu, *Geopolitica*, Editura comunicare.ro, București, 2003, p. 69-70; Saul Bernard Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 23-24.

²⁵ Didier Ortolland, Jean-Pierre Pirat, *Atlas geopolitique des espaces maritimes: frontieres, energie, peche et environnement*, Editions Ophrys, 2007, p. 165.

²⁶ From Rotterdam to Tokyo there are 23 000 km crossing the Panama Canal and 21,000 km in the case of the Suez Canal, but only 15 500 km through the northwest passage and 11 500 km through the north-east passage; *ibidem*, p. 190.

natural resources in unfavorable Arctic conditions. Establishment of the circumterrestrial waterway at the North Pole would generate a series of changes in the strategy of some important state actors: in the EU case, could stop the isolation trend on the international scene because the loss of its centrality in the socio-political and economic relations; for US and Canada, which relies on two options to affirm (such as the Atlantic and the Pacific option), it would add the Arctic option; for Russia the abandon of the expansion policy to warm seas, while redirecting its efforts to the Arctic Ocean; for China, the need of understanding with Russia for having the access to the route or extending the sphere of influence to Siberia by force; and for Japan, strengthening ties with the US and Canada to connect to the waterway. Transarctic route will provide the way of natural resources exploitation of the Heartland and also the identifying by the industrial powers of the potential resources in the Arctic Ocean. Competition for control of the waterway, and thus, of the global level, would be limited to a very small number of state actors: United States, Canada, EU (through intermediate Danish-Greenland), Russia, Norway and Iceland. In fact, we claim that it will be a confrontation between NATO and Russia, in which the Euro-Atlantic forces are in a numerical advantage, representing an experienced maritime power, compared to Russia which has proved throughout history a continental power. The courses on the south-north direction of the rivers Obi, Enisei and Lena will be transformed into waterways for the Euro-Atlantic maritime forces to penetrate inside the Heartland. Moscow would be forced to protect a vast territory, being involved in a confrontation in the north and isolated from its potential Eurasian allies, located in southern continental mass. Because of mutual mistrust, Moscow will not ask the support of Beijing, which might be rather interested to take advantage of Russia's vulnerability, to regain influence over some provinces located in Eastern Siberia and also have the access to the transarctic route. We must not omit the fact that NATO would have supremacy over the important territories in ruling the transarctic route, such as Greenland and Alaska, and would share with Russia the control over the unique strait - Bering. On the one hand, Greenland and Alaska would fit Siberia strategically on the west-east axis and the membership of the Aleutian Islands at the USA, limiting the access to the Arctic Ocean from the northern Pacific Ocean, would become essential to control the Bering straits. Furthermore, it must take into account that through the control of many archipelagos (Novaya Zemlya, Franz Joseph, Severnaia Zemlya, Vranghel and New Siberia), Moscow has, however, sufficient methods for exercising its influence on the circumterrestrial Arctic way. Furthermore, the possibility to have huge natural resources that fuel these present technologies, is perceived as a positive reality in Russia. But we claim that in order to face these challenges, Russia should ensure a development process of the transarctic route border regions, not only economically, but also from a demographic point of view. The situation will be extremely difficult because in the reference area there is no a human base supporting such an initiative and Siberia is sparsely populated with the Turanian communities.

From a geo-strategic perspective strictly, the establishment of the transarctic route, and especially the opening passage of the northeast, will assume the forming of a Ringwater around the Heartland and the Rimland, such as an oceanic route, in the eastern hemisphere, to ensure the navigation around Eurasia. In its southern area, the segment of this ocean ring will consist of the

route following navigation through the Gibraltar, Suez and Malacca straits. In addition, opening the north-west passage, connected to the Panama Channel, will allow the establishment in the Western Hemisphere, of an identical ocean ring around the North America. In fact, we see that these two rings ocean (minor Ringwaters) circumscribe a larger circumterrestrial route (major Ringwater) involving the transarctic route and the navigation route through south Africa, south America and south Australia²⁷.

The inauguration of the circumterrestrial Arctic route, in a favourable context, implicitly assumes the appearance of a new Rimland, which will include the western and eastern coasts of the North Pacific Ocean, including the west coast of Canada, USA, Mexico, Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and the east coast of China. In such a case, Heartland diminishes its importance, the new Rimland capturing mainly the influence of the old one, on the Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea direction to the North Atlantic. Thus, the new Rimland will be able to exercise attraction on the south coast of Africa and the South West of South America or through the Panama Channel and will include the Gulf of Mexico and the east coast of North America. Therefore, the Atlantic Ocean will be disjunct, the USA being no longer focused on the Great Lakes area, but on California. This view affects the eurafrasiatics mass, which will diminish its importance, given the fact that in the new political-economic and demographic equation would rather count the hubs connectivity (densely urbanized and populated cores with very complex economy) than the attraction/rejection relations regulating the Heartland / Rimland binomial relations. In such a scenario where Europe risks becoming a peripheral zone compared to the new Rimland and North America will focus on the west coast, EU-USA cooperation could diminish its importance. From a geo-strategic point of view, this perspective could be determined by the disjunction of the North Atlantic Ocean, which currently, operates as a hub between North America and Western Europe. However, the process of globalization of Euro-Atlantic democracy, supported by the EU and NATO, is a strong argument for continuing cooperation between Brussels and Washington. In the context of a new Rimland emergence, democratic values release will occur in reality, in two directions against Eurasian absolutism sphere of influence, thus, the current efforts made through the Ponto-Baltic Isthmus will be complemented by similar actions undertaken through the West Pacific Coast. Highlighting the Pacific Ocean as an important stage that state actors will play their political role is imposed by the economic situation, since in this area runs two thirds of the world trade²⁸. With its strategic location, especially the degree of economic development, Los Angeles seems to become the urban center of civilization able to dominate the new Rimland²⁹. Of course, we argue for achieving supremacy, the Californian metropolis will have to compete with other powerful urban centers, among which stands Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai. But Los Angeles is a powerful competitor because of the politico-military force which

²⁷ If the two minor Ringwaters have developed due to the human intervention through the establishment of the artificial canals, the Suez and the Panama canal, the major Ringwater formed through the exploitation of natural routes.

²⁸ Jaques Attali, *Scurtă istorie a viitorului*, Polirom, Iași, p. 92.

²⁹ Los Angeles is considered the ninth nucleus, in a chronological order, which has coalesced around the political and economical democracy, a key factor in the progress of humanity; for details see: *Ibidem*, p. 73-82.

supports it – The United States. Washington dominates currently, the northern of Pacific Ocean through the Hawaiian archipelago control, supported by a series of military bases (American Samoa, Guam etc.).

b. The Turcophone area. For exploiting the geo-strategic potential of the turcophone area it is require analyzing the reference area as a unitary whole. This would involve establishing a six countries turcophone union, namely Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. To be viable, such a state superstructure should be based on the Euro - Atlantic democratic values, supported by EU and NATO. Building this superstructure requires an approach extremely difficult to undertake, a number of difficulties being encountered: strong opposition of some influential states (Russia, China and Iran), ethno-linguistic and religious differences between the turcophone populations, territorial discontinuity (in the Caucasus area), the presence, within the borders, of some minorities that are not of turcophone origin (such as Kurds in Turkey, the Russians in Kazakhstan, the tajiks in Uzbekistan) the extreme closing of some regions or even turcophone countries (such as Yakutia or Azerbaijan), the emergence of competing cores around which could be designed this Union (Turkey, Uzbekistan³⁰ and even Kazakhstan³¹) the existence in Central Asia of non-state entities, including of the turcophone origin, generating instability in Heartland area (organized crime networks and terrorist structures joined the international network of Islamic fundamentalism, to contest the Euro-Atlantic democracy values³²). However, if such an initiative materializes, both the turcophone union and the Euro-Atlantic forces would gain the significant strategic advantages. Through the located position on the Eurasian continental mass, the turcophone area will regain its transit space value, by highlighting the true potential of the Silk Road. The intercontinental connections between existing power centers and those involved in the process of affirmation consist in crossing that space, regardless of possible routes (Beijing, Moscow, New Delhi, Tehran and Brussels). In parallel, it will achieve in founding a coherent and consistent structure on the Eurasian continental mass, through the territorial linking of various strategic points held, especially the allied / partner states of the USA, linking Western Europe - Eastern Europe - Middle East - Central Asia - Far East. The territorial linking of the strategic points will require, however, the development of a energy resources efficient exploitation for the benefit of Euro-Atlantic forces. Strictly reported to the turcophone area, both Kazakh and Uzbek natural gas and Azerbaijani, Turkmen and Kazakh oil will supply the EU and NATO industries, so that the Nabucco project will become very important for the reference area. But the establishment of a turcophone union supported by Brussels will involve not only eliminating the Moscow control exercised over these regions rich in natural deposits. This state superstructure will gradually be interested in extending its influence over the abundant resources territories in southern and eastern Siberia, inhabited by many turcophone communities, which are rather hostile to the central

³⁰ While Turkey is interested in imposing itself as statal core for the entire turcophone space on the Eurasian mass, the Uzbekistan seeks to assert as a regional leader in Central Asia.

³¹ Jaques Attali, *Scurtă istorie a viitorului*, Polirom, Iași, 2007, p. 193.

³² It is known that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is associated with Al-Qaeda in drug trafficking operations for terrorist financing, for details see: Irina Caunic, *Piețele subterane și finanțarea terorismului internațional*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași, 2008, p. 64-66.

authorities³³. The perspective of opening the circumterrestrial Arctic route would require an increased interest of the union to have access to this waterway, being also interested in opening a passageway to the Arctic Ocean through the turcophone communities living in Siberia. Eliminating the Russian influence in Central Asia would mean to Russia limiting the opportunities to have an area of strategic recovering in the case of a military invasion. The maneuver proved decisive for Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign and especially in the case of Adolf Hitler, when the Russians were able to retreat to a safe area for restoration of the counter-forces. Furthermore, building a turcophone state superstructure would obstruct the supply channel of southern Moscow, which played a vital role in history by maintaining the Russian control over the Heartland. Thus, the route represented by the Persian Gulf - Iran - Caspian Sea and the Volga mainstream was the principal route used by the Anglo-Americans for supplying the U.S.S.R. during the last world war, for I.V. Stalin to resist the German offensive (1942-1943)³⁴. Worse is that in order to face a possible pressure coming from the Arctic Ocean - turcophone space, Moscow will be forced to redistribute its population in north-south axis. The only source that could fuel this redistribution of the Russian ethnic factor is the immense human barrier lying between the Caucasus and Karelia. Reducing human barrier will help in extending the Euro-Atlantic influence in the Ponto-Baltic isthmus, penetrating deep into the East European Plain. Even if Moscow would be able to make the tremendous effort to redistribute its population, it could prove useless as long as, the turcophone demographic growth is much higher both inside Russia and the states in the proximity of its southern borders. Brussels could also be particularly concerned about the establishment of this union, especially due to the strategic potential of the turcophone space to undermine the bridgeheads established by Russia in Europe: such as Kaliningrad, Transnistria and Crimea³⁵. If Lipka Tatars and karaites in Poland and Lithuania are insufficient to constitute a counterweight in Kaliningrad, and Gagauz region in Republic of Moldova are in an advanced Russification process to change the balance of forces in Transnistria, however, the Crimean Tartar population growth is a reality that can be considered to neutralize the influence of Moscow on the peninsula through a significant Russian-speaking community.

In the case of building the superstructure, a similar pressure would be exerted on Beijing and Tehran, which manage large areas where many turcophone communities live. Thus, through the Uighur community, Ankara and Brussels would also have the access to a military ground option, not only a maritime one against China. This prospect of surrounding is particularly important because it allows the access to mainland China, faced because of the underdevelopment and the ethnic claims (Uighur and Tibetan) with a high socio-economic instability³⁶. Xinjiang, dominated by the turcophone factor, although, it doesn't contain significant resources, however, it play a key role in terms of control the mainland routes linking China with the traditional centers in Asia

³³ For example, yakuts.

³⁴ G. Patrick March, *Eastern destiny: Russia in Asia and the North Pacific*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996, p. 223.

³⁵ In the context of NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe, Russian military bases in these regions form an important security cordon of Moscow; for details see: Adrian Cioroianu, *Geopolitica matrioșkăi: Rusia postsovietică în noua ordine mondială*, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2009, p. 266.

³⁶ Stephane Marchand, *Când China va învinge*, Editura Pro, 2008, p. 247.

(Indo-Gangetic plain, the Iranian plateau, the Central Asian piedmonts, Mongolia, and so on and so forth). In parallel, China could not use efficiently the Xinjiang area - a province which is the ideal platform to support an offensive to Heartland. Regarding Iran, it includes a large Azeri community living in a territory rich in oil, gas and minerals. But its strategic importance lies in the fact that reinforces territorial continuity between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which currently is limited to about one border kilometer along the Arax mainstream. The situation is also complicated by the massive presence of Kurdish ethnic factor, of Iranian origin in eastern Turkey. Therefore, through Iranian Azerbaijan would ensure the territorial consistency of the turcophone union, realizing a close connection between Heartland and Rimland. Should not be overlooked either that this province is an area where continental routes intersect, which connects with the Ponto-Caspian isthmus and the Aralo-Caspian basin to Mesopotamia and Asia Minor.

Using these political-military and economic strategies does not involve, the prospect of war in the classic sense of the term, with the Heartland stake. The new weapons to conquer the pivotal area are rather circumscribed to political and economic advanced systems in human and material resources exploitation, to technological advantage, demographic superiority and holding strategic areas. Should not be overlooked either that NATO was able to defeat the USSR (1991) in a very complex war in which it wasn't forced to shoot any shot against the enemy, while it was based on a higher political (democracy) and economic (capitalism) values system, as well as the technological advantage and the occupation of the strategic positions on the Eurasian continental mass. Moreover, the war no longer bears exclusively in real time and space, but each state must develop strategies to ensure their supremacy in a distant future as the current coordinates. The highlighted scenarios represent not only a projection of each country on its own developments, but also on its current capacity implemented in time, forcing other state actors on the international scene to consider this self-reflection power, in the achievement of their own strategies.

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