

GEOPOLITICS AND EURASIA

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ABSTRACT

The convergence and divergence among Europe, Asia and Africa about the Mediterranean as a geopolitical center, and the end of the cold war, are shaping a new continental security zone: Eurasia. Currently, this scene of conflict is witnessing wars with different features and characteristics, such as ethnicity and religion; interstate or global security concerns -as is the case of Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan; and border conflict as was the case between Georgia and Russia for the independence of South Ossetia. Control of this area means global domination of population and provision of energy during this century.

Key words: Geopolitics, Europe, Asia, international conflict.

RESUMEN

La convergencia y la divergencia entre Europa, Asia y África sobre el Mediterráneo como centro geopolítico, y el fin de la guerra fría, están dando forma a una nueva zona de seguridad continental: Eurasia. En la actualidad, este escenario de conflicto es testigo de guerras con características diferentes, tales como el origen étnico y la religión; Preocupaciones de seguridad interestatales o mundiales como es el caso de Irak, Irán y Afganistán; y el conflicto fronterizo como fue el caso entre Georgia y Rusia y la independencia de Osetia del Sur. El control de esta área significa dominación de la población mundial y el suministro de energía durante este siglo.

Palabras clave: Geopolítica, Europa, Asia, el conflicto internacional.

RESUMO

A convergência e divergência entre a Europa, Ásia e África sobre o Mediterrâneo como um centro geopolítico, eo fim da guerra fria, estão moldando uma nova zona de segurança continental: Eurásia.

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Atualmente, este cenário de conflito está a assistir a guerras com diferentes características, tais como etnia e religião; interestadual Preocupações ou segurança global, como Iraque, Irã e Afeganistão, e do conflito fronteiriço, como foi o caso entre a Geórgia ea Rússia, a independência da Ossétia do Sul. O controle dessa área significa a dominação da população mundial e fornecimento de energia durante este século.

Palavras-chave: Geopolítica, Europa, Ásia, Conflitos Internacionais.

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THE COLD WAR TWILIGHT AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

In the introduction of Paul Kennedy's *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, he states that in the nineties the discussion on how international actors could behave in geopolitics was retaken, as a result of the Cold War twilight. A *unipolar* world and a single *hegemony* were assumed without questions. Without world crisis on course, all the problems came from the periphery, never the center.

Therefore, the debate in this book is focused in the transnational forces, the environment issues, the growth population, environmental degradation and the effects in the economic growth, as well as the increase in international trade, but above all the spectacular technology advances (in other works this sum of new phenomena was called *globalization*); it was no longer necessary to think in a new multipolar world, in the possible changes or studying the new nature of the social economic or political forces.

To the United States preeminence, the orientation was that a strategist of this country (Brzezinski, 2005:11) took an historic decision, this country will try, by all means, to dominate the world or to lead it? In essence, this power was linked to global security problems, although it was recorded that Americans felt unsecure despite being the generators of interdependence, where ideas of cooperation and

competition could maintain a status of the single hegemonic power to this country.

The central argument of this author, about the role of the United States in the world, is simple: the American power, while it can assert its sovereignty as a dominant nation is, today, guarantee in last instance of the global security.

In contradiction, parallel the American society stimulates social tendencies of global reach, thinning the national and traditional sovereignty.

Coupled, power and American social dynamics may encourage the gradual emergence of a global economy of shared interests. Misused and confronted each other, could drive the world upon the chaos and submerge the United States in a situation of continuing siege, as the author explains.

From a Superpower perspective, Brzezinski points out that the new behave of international actors have limitations:

- Europe may be competitive in an economic level, however, it will be a long time before the Europeans get a unity degree that allows them compete in a political level;
- Japan was for a time thought it will be the next "super-state", but it is already out of this career,

and the most probably thing is that China, besides its economic progress, still remains relatively poor, at least during a couple generations (in the meantime, it might have to face serious political difficulties);

- Russia does not even compete anymore. All its possible competitors were eliminated.

It was already questioned and pointed that the United States managed constructively its long-term relations with the Islamic world and its 1.200 million of men and women, in which there is a growing perception that the United States is a bitterly hostile power.

For eight years, after the 11-9 tragic events, prevailed throughout this set of imperial ideas, but this optic placed the great power in a crossroads: global solidarity, transmogrified progressively in American isolation.

A few months to change internally because of the elections, it came the worst crisis since 1929, when the Welfare State again “helps” and avoids a major collapse of the world economy in a global crisis recession. Can we say that this is the moment of ruptures or transitions, and for new international actors?

GEOPOLITICS OR HEGEMONY

Since the ranking of type of power for Brzezinski, based in the cumulative sum of its economic strength, their budgets and military, their populations since 1800, the first five measured positions in sequential intervals of twenty years, has been shared only with seven States: United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, Japan and China (2005:21), in 1960 the leadership had passed to the United States and Russia (USSR), with Japan, China and the United Kingdom far behind; in 2000, the United States is the only one on top, followed far behind by China, Germany, Japan and Russia

The author judges that, not even a coalition of these countries, highly unlikely given their historical conflicts and territorial claims, would have faced cohesion, strength and energy needed to move United States from its pedestal and maintain global stability at the same time.

The new economic centers and the new powers, therefore, are missing in this hegemonic center optic. The weight that were assumed by China, according to its population size impoverished in the eighties, its GDP volume, were not in line to become an international player in geopolitical changes in this new century.

In the other hand, from Wallenstein’s perspective (2005), there is a possibility of articulating an Asian core, capable of working as a hegemonic center, and notes that it depends largely in Japan’s and China’s capacity to develop joint strategies, in economic complementarities as well as reaching strategic and stable political agreements.

In this sense, Wallerstein suggest an analogy with the situation that Germany, France and other big European countries, capitalism was founded in the postwar that were forced to develop an ambitious program of political and economic convergence.

The Japanese recovery has much to do with the economic expansion of China and India, which signifies in fact the construction of a giant market to which direct investments and exports. A good indicator of this is that China replaced the United States as the main economic partner of Japan.

The XXI century capitalism will have a more dynamic core in Asia. Together with the export growth – China has become in the third world export after the United States and Germany – the expansion of the industrial production, the sustained growth of income and the conformation of Chinese capital that occupies spaces and products lines of an intermediate technology products in growing segments

of the global economy its being from a regional strategy in search of international scenarios.

In essence, China started in the international circuits as an emerging economy, as well as Mexico. Unlike South Korea or Brazil, there has been distance of strategic sectors. It could combine the five-year planning with the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) opening, as administrator of the first export platforms, but not to depend on all of its external sector economy and preserve the State enterprises, without temptation to privatize as was performed in Mexico, arguing they are a burden and inefficient with respect to multinational companies or the private sector. The growth was given mainly in the manufacturing, but the first modernization should be from the agricultural sector (Netzahualcoyotzi, & Furlong, 2006)

THE DILEMMAS OF NATIONAL INSECURITY

However, without getting to that apocalyptic situation, safely it will be an expansion of the possible scenarios as consequences of international tensions or Manichean passions, among them includes: (Brzezinski, 2005:31)

1. A strategic central war and enormously destructive (still feasible at this moment, even though improbable) between the United States and Russia and, probably in about twenty years or less, between the United States and China, as well between China and Russia;
2. Major regional wars fought with highly lethal weapons, such as between India and Pakistan, and between Israel and Iran;
3. Fragmenting ethnic wars, particularly within multi-ethnic States such as Indonesia and India;
4. "National Liberation" Movements of the oppressed, against existing or perceived racial domination that can take many forms and that may

occur, for example, between Indians peasants in Latin America, the Chechens in Russia or the Palestinians against Israel;

5. Suddenly attacks of countries theoretically weak that have made to build weapons of mass destruction and get launching systems more or less precise, or transports to be utilized against their neighbors or, anonymously, against the United States;
6. Terrorists attacks increasingly lethal, of clandestine groups against targets especially hated by them, repeating 11-9, but escalate until extend finally to the use of weapons of mass destruction;
7. Crippling Cyber-attacks committed anonymously by States, terrorist organizations or even anarchists individuals, against the operative infrastructure of advance societies, anchoring them to the case.

Although, both Bush (father) and Clinton, underestimated the intensity of the global agitation shock wave underlying the protracted conflict with the Soviet Union had disappeared.

This agitation – resulting from national and religious conflicts, intensified by the growing social impatience generated by various forms of inequality or oppression – had been built over many years until it was openly expressed, after the end of Cold War. Hopeful visions of a new world order or beneficial cooperation on a global scale finally died, definitely and violently, the 11-9.

Within one year from that date, the next American president, George W. Bush had articulated a much less rosy future. He also had found a new and definitely concept of United States foreign policy: the global hegemony in war against terrorism.

The ideas about a cooperative world order give its place to the caused concern of "global terrorism".

The globalization headed of the United States, also give its place to new “willing coalitions” and to the “whom is not with us, is against us” as a new line to follow in the global arena.

The programmatic declaration of the CSN expressed its determination to maintain U.S. military superiority, above any other power as their claim of strategic right o anticipation to treats by military action.

But even President Bush himself, less enthusiastic with multilateralism and less optimistic about the global situation than his predecessors in office, he had to admit that the American power is now exercised in the context of an emerging global community.

Thereby, even though there was major emphasis into global treats facing by the United States, it also recognizes the fundamental reality of world interdependence. Where is it going to establish equilibrium between sovereign hegemony and the emerging global community? This continues being the U.S. dilemma in the globalization era and regional military projection divided into five strategic operating areas (Mesa, 2004):

1. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM). North America
2. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM): South America
3. Pacific Command (USPACOM): Asia and Oceania
4. European Command (USEUCOM): Europe and Africa
5. Central Command (USCENTCOM): Northeast the Horn of Africa, Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

Which is the strategic meaning of Central Asia?

From a political or historical-cultural perspective to another geographic, Central Asia became in the arid heart of Eurasian, the most extensive zone in the world, where rivers do not end at sea, but lost in the desert or flow into lakes terminals (Aral “sea”, Caspian “sea”, Balkash Lake or Lop Nor).

Also several researches considerate Central Asia in a wider sense and include the rest of Afghanistan, north Pakistan and India, Tibet, Mongolia, autonomous Turkic republics of the Russian Federation (including Tatarstan) and Azerbaijan (Roy, 1977).

STRATEGIC AND ENERGETIC INTERESTS: IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

There was a generalized concept and with the new Obama’s administration of getting out of Iraq: militarily defend its strategy to guarantee the superpower idea, but politically is a defeat before this Islamic world, which still think in the United States hostile to its community that never had treat American people.

The U.S. strategic shift to a new flow of recourses, 30.000 additional soldiers and a tactics change will impose to the other partners of the ISAF (OTAN’s International Security Assistance Force) a similar response or, at least, one that fits and do not contradict Obama’s will to correct mistakes of the previous administration and the shortcomings of the previous years.

By the other hand, the Spanish presidency’s position in the European Union faced big challenges in its relation with its south neighbors. They noted that the forecast of this year unfinished political and economic transitions are mixed – in several cases not even started – with regional conflicts of extreme difficulty, highlights include: the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Iran (Dúplá, 2010).

The new American administration had made Afghanistan its international priority. This war is, besides, the great risk for foreign politics that must be faced by democrats if Obama wants to be reelected. Vietnam's fantasy and the failure of the democratic political agenda of Lyndon B. Johnson because of a distant war-ending, stands in a treating way over the present American president and over the public debate in the United States the next years.

2010, Robles says, will be the year zero for the international coalition, in which the stability of all region and not only Afghanistan could be jeopardized, along with the NATO's credibility and U.S. leadership itself.

The destabilize power of the Taliban model, in its explosive mixture of holy war and insurgent tactics is huge, and it comes stronger and more dangerous than ever. The abandonment of Afghanistan will not just end destroying this country and plunge him into another civil war, but would jeopardize all Central Asia, beginning with Pakistan and India, Robles says.

The changes in European and American opinions, and the logic impatience of ally governments, will put in hard doubt the American leadership and its capacity to maintain the unity of the coalition and to avoid unilateral withdrawals.

The shadow of the neighbor Pakistan, has weighed heavily on Afghan destinations. By the European side there is not a common position and a strategy towards Pakistan. In 2001, this country was an ally and supported the Taliban. Since then, and with the withdrawal of former President Pervez Musharraf (forced by the U.S.), Pakistani politics have been conditioned by the situation in Afghanistan and its relations with Washington, besides the traditional alternation between military dictatorships and weak civilian governments and persistent strategic ambiguity.

Another element that has changed American international politics was the unprecedented process of its preeminence in the economic world, facing

political defeat in Iraq, began to collapse parallels from the power hegemonic center, which generates the world recession from the finance sphere.

THE SECURITY DILEMMA INTERRUPTED: GEORGIA – UKRAINE

The Russian invasion to Georgia has not changed the power equilibrium in Eurasia. It simply announced that the balance of power was already changed. The United States has been absorbed by its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and by a possible conflict with Iran and a destabilizing situation in Pakistan. The U.S. do not have ground strategic troops in reserve and it is not in situation of intervene in the conflict above the Russian periphery. This has provided an opportunity to reassert Russian influence in the former Soviet sphere. Moscow has anything to worry about by the possible American or European answer; therefore, the balance of power had already been amended and was only a matter of the Russian to decide when to do this public. The made it the 8th of August. (Friedman, 2008).

RUSSIA VS. WEST

The United States is the closest ally to Georgia. ¿But, what happen with the Orange Revolution in Ukraine? From American and European point of view, the revolution represented a triumph of democracy and western influence. From the Russian point of view, as Moscow makes it clear, it was an intrusion in Ukraine internal affairs, made it by the CIA, which aimed to bring Ukraine in NATO and in the group of western countries surrounding Russia.

The American presidents, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton had promised to Russians that NATO will not be extended to the former Soviet empire. This promise have already broken in 1998 with the inclusion of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic, and once again with the 1994 extension that includes not only the former Soviet satellites in present Central Europe, but also three Baltic States that have been part of the USSR.

Therefore, with the Orange Revolution effects, the possible entrance of Ukraine into NATO represented a treat to Russian national security. It would, from this point of view, leaving no chance to Russia defends itself and there was a risk to destabilizing the Russian Federation itself. As the United States went so far as to suggest that Georgia will be admitted, further extending NATO to Caucasus, the Russian conclusions was that Washington pretended surround and dismember Russia.

Another less important event was the decision of Europe and the Unites States to support the separation of Kosovo from Serbia. Russians was friendly with Serbia, but the fundamental situation to Russia was if the accepted principle by Europe since World War II was, to avoid conflicts, the national borders will not change. If that principle was violated in Kosovo, it could occur in other frontiers, including those that claimed its independence from Russia. Russians ask in public and in private, not to grant official independence to Kosovo but, instead, to continue enjoying of an extra official autonomy that in practice was the same. Russian positions were ignored.

Following Ukraine experience, the Russians were convinced that the Unites States have formed a plan to surround Russia in a strategic way and fencing completely. Having decide not to respond in Kosovo, decided to respond where they had all circumstances in favor: South Ossetia.

Moscow had two reasons, the least of which was to return what they received in relation to Kosovo. If Kosovo could declare independent under the protection of the West, then South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the two secessionist regions from Georgia, could declare independent under Russian protection. Any American and European objection will confirm duplex. This was important by political internal matters of Russia, but the second reason was much more important.

The Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, one occasion said that the fall of the USSR was a geopolitical disaster. The first observation will be that this point of view don not mean the wish of the return of the Soviet system, but that its disintegration have originated a situation in which the Russian national security seems threatened by western interests and possibly China, upon a territory with big connections in the linguistic and cultural sphere, and with influence in the great zone from the European area, Central Asia and Caucasus.

The new tsar of the XXI century did not wanted to reestablish the USSR, but to reestablish the sphere of influence that Russia had in the former Soviet zone. To accomplish this objective, it should fulfill two tasks. The first one, it had to reestablish the Russian army credibility as a combat force, at least in its own region. As a second task, it had to make it clear that the guarantees offered by the West, including been NATO members does not mean anything, in front to the Russian power. It did not wanted to face NATO in a direct way, but it did wanted to face and to defeat a State, which was clearly inside Washington's orbit, with the its support, help and consultation, and to cause the generalized impression to be under American protection. Georgia was the perfect option.

By invading Georgia the way Russia did (effective if not brilliant), Putin reestablished credibility of the Russian army, with a military aiding operation to its counterpart, and also with civilians casualties. This operation revealed an already know secret: while the United States is tight up by the Iraq War and now in Afghanistan, the guarantees of American security are meaningless. This lesson is not directed to Americans, is about something that from the Russian point of view, the Ukrainians must assume and in last April, it was observed with the approval of the *Rada* (Ukrainian Parliament) of the permanency of the Russian fleet in Sebastopol, Crimea in the next years, in charge of the reduction of the

gas rates, so necessary to economy, particularly in the last winters.

Another consequence of the war in Ossetia is a warning to Poland and to the Czech Republic, with larger dimension to the countries in Central Asia and the north Baltic countries. The Czech government signs an agreement with the United States to establish a ballistic missiles facility, and in August, 2008, few days after the beginning of the confrontation in Georgia, the Poland government's announce that it will allow the United States to build an anti-missile facility in Poland. The agreement with Poland was signed in a rush, as a gesture of defiance to the Russians. The Russians respond with treats that, the secretary of State Condoleezza Rice rejected, calling them "bizarre".

The Russians knew that the United States will denounce their attack. It is something that in fact is in favor to the Russians. The more Americans leaders talk, the more is the contrast with its lack of action, and the Russians want to spread the idea of the emptiness of the American guarantees. To the United States, the Middle East is much more important than the Caucasus, and Iran is especially important. Washington wants Moscow to apply sanctions to Teheran. And what is more important, do not want the Russians to sell weapons to Iran, especially the air defense system S-300, of great efficiency. Georgia is a marginal matter to the United States; Iran is a fundamental matter. The Russians are in a situation to put in serious problems to the United States, not only in relation with Iran, but also with the weapons sales to other countries like Syria.

In general, the United States can have other approach: or its strategy is modified and get away of the Middle East to focus in the Caucasus and to press Iran with other countries, or matches in general with Russia in the area, and extending new capabilities of the Russian army with the new Russian military doctrine and the possibility of strategic defense with nuclear vector.

We can point that, since the disintegration of the USSR, the Russians as heirs of Eurasia, have reformulated not only doctrinally its vital space, but Eurasia have to maintain a neutral position of the expeditions troops and to depend of the exports of Russian energy, supported limited action.

Without been a world power, the new Russian policy is rethinking its regional positioning in the north of the Caucasus and the Black Sea, particularly with the permanence of the Russian fleet in the region.

Particularly there is a new frontier and safeguarding of Russian national security, keeping a nuclear status, with a new economy despite the effects of the world finance crisis, which is impacting more in the south of Europe, like Greece.

The war in Georgia, then, is the return of Russia to its condition of great power. This is not casual. It has been gestating since the moment that Putin took power and it is increasing now with new President Medvedev.

These favorable events to Russia, linked to the U.S. war in Iraq, aiming to be extended to Afghanistan, caused more regional imbalance and a major effect with the world economic crisis.

The geopolitical bases of the war are present to Russia: this new country have been an empire for centuries. The new Russia rectifies. The United States have made a shift in its foreign policy, is not longer the hegemonic country after the fall of the Soviet Union and the new international actors search a new international equilibrium: multipolarity.

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