



CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE NEW GEOPOLITICAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

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Abstract: *THE GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IS UNDERGOING PROFOUND CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE, CAUSED BY THE SO-CALLED „SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION” INITIATED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON FEBRUARY 24, 2022. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE DAMAGE TO NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OR POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC INTERESTS HAS LED SWEDEN AND FINLAND, RESPECTIVELY UKRAINE, GEORGIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA TO INITIATE ACCESSION TO NATO OR THE EUROPEAN UNION - WHICH CAN SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE THE GEOPOLITICAL ARCHITECTURE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT - SERIOUSLY IRRITATING THE PRIDE OF THE KREMLIN AUTHORITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ADOPTION BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION HAS LED TO A NEW DIMENSION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BRICS STATES, WHICH IS LIKELY TO REAFFIRM ITS ECONOMIC AND GEOPOLITICAL ROLE AND TO COUNTERBALANCE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, OF STATES THAT CRITICIZED THE INVASION OF UKRAINE.*

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN UKRAINE AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE AND STABILITY ON THE BORDER OF NATO AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ARE MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE CHANCELLORS OF MAJOR STATE ACTORS AT REGIONAL OR GLOBAL LEVEL, AT THE TIME OF WRITING (12.06.2022) AN EFFECTIVE AND PRAGMATIC SOLUTION IS STILL FAR FROM BEING IDENTIFIED.

Keywords: *SECURITY, INVASION, CONFLICT, SANCTIONS, ACCESSION, UKRAINE, RUSSIAN FEDERATION*

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the third Christian millennium brought before all humanity the danger of the reappearance of classical security threats - in which military confrontations seem to re-empower their role for centuries in shaping geopolitical architecture - themselves generating new threats, the food crisis - which is so hotly talked about today - the economic crisis - which has affected the well-being and social comfort of the citizens of the entire planet and has shown how powerless all mankind is in managing it - and, last but not least, some unconventional risks and threats with political, internal or external causation, being the most eloquent examples.

The economic impact that humanity (will) perceive is expected to be particularly worrying, and the armed conflict in Ukraine is creating various increasingly bleak scenarios. Some analyses, carried out between January 22 and March 24, 2022, on stock market yields in about 100 countries around the world, show a causal relationship between the war in Ukraine and their declining rates (Boungou & Yatié, 2022), while others point to significant shocks to the commodity market as a result of the obstruction of supply chains - the states close to the Russian Federation, such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary and Poland, are severely affected (Mardones, 2022) -, and the possibility of a structural segmentation will result in the creation of economically isolated blocks (Markus, 2022)

In addition to the economic impact, the war raises serious questions about the dynamics of globalization (Mărcău, Peptan et. al., 2022), considering that it can lead in a reasonable temporary horizon to a deglobalization of economic connections, due to restrictions imposed on the Russian Federation (Lichterman, 2022). The war in Ukraine has shown more than ever that major economic interdependencies between states, especially in crisis situations, can pose serious vulnerabilities to national security. In this context, the problem of reconfiguring the geopolitical architecture of the world that we want to analyze can be raised. This study aims to present a brief but comprehensive x-ray of security issues with an impact on the configuration of geopolitical architecture at the international level, generated by the danger of the recurrence of classical security threats - in this case the conflict in Ukraine - indicating the causes, manifestations, evolutions, consequences and some the effective ways to counter them.

The research hypothesis starts from the premise that the „special military operation” launched by the Russian Federation in Ukraine is an important vector that will underlie the geopolitical reconfiguration of the world, and the proposed goal is to demonstrate that the effect of a major war involving a superpowered state can lead to the reconfiguration of the global map of powerful states, as a result of the course and outcome of the war.

The bibliography available at this time is limited given that only 100 days have passed since the outbreak of the conflict, and its possible negative effects are being analyzed. However, I used the open source information found in the public space at this time.

The research methodology is based on multidisciplinary, considering the complexity of the study and the multitude of research fields we approach: intelligence, security studies, economic studies, political studies, etc. Our desire was to present objectively the aftermath of the war in Ukraine, using *descriptive analysis*. Establishing the *cause-and-effect* relationship (causality method) in the study of the effects of the conflict in Ukraine allowed us to develop a realistic and credible picture for a possible reconfiguration of the geopolitical and geostrategic architectures known up to date, trying to formulate an answer to the question: why is such a reconfiguration necessary?



THE RETURN OF MILITARY CONFLICTS, A VECTOR FOR THE CONFIGURATION OF THE NEW GEOPOLITICAL ARCHITECTURE

Even if it seemed almost inconceivable that at the beginning of the third millennium - when the entire civilized world claimed the need to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens (Grossi & Vakulenko, 2022) and the preservation of the integrity, sovereignty and independence of each state entity - the resurgence of military conflicts that could lead to an exacerbation of political, military, social and economic insecurity in certain parts of the world, the occupation by the Russian Federation of the Crimean peninsula and the Donbas region of Ukraine in 2014, as well as „Special military operation” under the pretext of „demilitarizing” and „denazifying” Ukraine, launched in February 2022 - undermining Europe’s security architecture violating the provisions of the Helsinki final act, the Paris Charter and the Budapest Memorandum - showed that the reinstatement of spheres of influence and territorial claims have become current behavior of some of the great powers of the world, generating risks and uncertainty, both for the neighboring states (Polyakova, 2021) and for the whole world (Miron, 2022).

Although quite ambiguous and indefinite even by the invading state, the terms „demilitarization” and „denazification” of Ukraine, as well as the actions taken to achieve them, have created lively topics for discussion at the international level, most of whom believe that „Denazification” would mean the de-Westernization of Ukraine, and „demilitarization” would be synonymous with the fact that „Ukraine will have only one security and defense partner in the future”, namely the Russian Federation. (Vișniec, 2022)

As early as 2008, when the NATO Summit in Bucharest expressed the promise of the future admission of Ukraine and Georgia to the alliance, the authorities of the Russian Federation imperatively requested the withdrawal of the promise, considering inadmissible a future enlargement of NATO and Ukraine's transition to the Western sphere of influence, such a decision being similar to affecting the security interests of the Russian Federation.

The invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation has determined the solidarity of most states in the world or international institutions towards Ukraine, eloquent being the sanctions adopted against the Russian Federation, likely to isolate it internationally and to substantially affect its political, economic and military potential. (President Von der Leyen's press release on the fifth round of sanctions against Russia, 2022)

On the other hand, the unity and action coherence of most democratic states around the world, as well as NATO’s firm stance subsumed to security concerns in the context of the Russian Federation’s military aggression in Ukraine, has led states such as Sweden and Finland to submit applications for alliance membership (Drăghicescu, 2022), an approach that at least declaratively irritates the pride of the Kremlin leaders, who consider themselves threatened by NATO enlargement to the borders of the Russian Federation. US President Joe Biden’s statements that the two countries meet „all the criteria” to join NATO „as soon as possible” (G.D., 2022) generated prompt reactions from President Vladimir Putin, who believes that „the deployment of military infrastructures on the territories of these countries will obviously prompt a response from Russia”. (Manic, 2022) Turkey’s position on the approach of the two states, which has made its agreement on that approach conditional on the fulfilment of requests aimed at concrete actions by the two countries against terrorist entities on their territory, is also not unimportant. (Jordan, 2022)

We are therefore witnessing institutional steps that can redraw the security architecture at the global level, it being known that NATO is currently the only international institution capable of ensuring the military defence of member states, in accordance with the provisions of art. 5 of the Alliance Treaty.



On the other hand, in the context of the „special military operation” undertaken by the Russian Federation in Ukraine (Coleman, 2022), the steps taken by countries such as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia to join the European Union should also be highlighted, citing the need for reporting and sharing political, economic, cultural and social values common to the European space. As regards, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for the adoption of an emergency procedure - by signing the application for membership on February 28 - immediately after Ukraine was militarily attacked by the Russian Federation. In March 2022, the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu - claiming the need to ensure „a safer, better life for future generations” (Călugăreanu, 2022) - in the context of the crisis in Ukraine and the possibility of new outbreaks in the region Transnistria, has called for the initiation of procedures for Moldova’s accession to the European Union. Invoking the fact that for Georgia „a future in Europe is the only option” and is the „strategic goal”, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili signed, in early March 2022, the request to start the special procedure for recognizing Georgia as a candidate for accession to the European Union. (Lupuțu, 2022)

Although the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated that „in order to be admitted to the Union, Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova must first meet the criteria of political stability, observe the rule of law and economic performance” (Riegert, 2022), the steps taken by the countries mentioned are likely to reaffirm the importance of the European Union - seen as an economic and political union, currently formed by 27 states - especially today, in the context of the continental manifestation of some complex security issues- some of which originated in the conflict in Ukraine - which the old continent has not faced since the end of World War II. Such perspectives are motivated by the Union’s „Foreign Affairs and Security Policy” policies, which enable it to act in a uniform and coherent manner to enable „Member States to meet the challenges they cannot solve on their own”, thus ensuring the security of their citizens. (European Union. What is it and what does it do ?, 2022)

The efforts of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia are likely to reconfigure European architecture in the economic, political and even military fields, given the importance of the countries mentioned both from a geostrategic point of view - on the border of democratic Europe with the Russian Federation - and due to the agricultural potential of Ukraine, in the context of the food crisis that the entire world is facing.

CRISIS IN UKRAINE, A NEW IMPROVEMENT OF RUSSIA'S RESTORATION AS IMPERIAL POWER

It is well known that the aspirations of the great powers to gain new territories or to regain lost territories, considered „sacred” land, have been among the causes of the bloodiest wars throughout history.

In the case of the recent „special military operation” carried out in Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the problem becomes much more complex because, on the one hand, we are witnessing an approach, considered legitimate by the Russian Federation, to reconceptualize foreign policy in order to regain the influence it had before the collapse of the former USSR (see Vladimir Putin’s statement that „the collapse of the USSR was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century”), on the other hand, the thesis of the resurgence of deep resentment following the self-determination of Ukrainians - considered „ethnic brothers” - is reactivated, in close correlation with the idea that the sovereignty of Ukraine will only be possible in a partnership with the Russian Federation. (Ene, 2022) It should be mentioned that in several public statements President Vladimir Putin has questioned the statehood of Ukraine, claiming that it owes its existence to the former USSR.

President Vladimir Putin’s recent assertions that the operation in Ukraine represents an action to „take back” territories and „strengthen” them (Marin, 2022) may lead to the idea that we are in fact



witnessing „imperial war of conquest from another time in order to annex Ukrainian territory”, this being only one stage in the broad plan to regain the former „Russian imperial possessions (. ...) in Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Central Asian Nations”. (Ene, 2022) It should be noted, however, that all the actions taken by the Russian Federation so far have targeted countries in the former Soviet Union, such as Georgia and Ukraine - including the annexation of Crimea.

So today we are witnessing a process of „restoring Russia as an imperial power”, in a nostalgic approach to the policy of the former Tsar Peter the Great, but in a key of a „certain sense of historical destiny” (Hodge, 2022) - a matter that raises serious concerns for the international community - despite the assurances of President Vladimir Putin who claimed, even before the start of the Ukrainian operation, that after the disintegration of the former USSR „Russia recognized all new geopolitical realities and (. . .) is working to strengthen cooperation with all countries, independent states that have emerged on post-Soviet territory”. (After saying that much of Ukraine was created by Russia, 2022).

Considered the most significant geopolitical action of the beginning of the 21st century, the invasion of the Russian Federation’s military forces in Ukraine - assimilated to the previously analyzed approaches - provoked an international reaction of massive protest and a global manifestation of solidarity with Ukraine, despite financial losses for many of the world’s states. Beyond this public position, one can hide a much more sinister phenomenon - Russophobia or xenophobia against Russians - which itself generates security issues with a major impact on global stability.

Even in these circumstances, the Russian Federation considers as legitimate the steps to reaffirm its regional and international influence, in the context in which it considers it dangerous for its own internal security to strengthen NATO capabilities in states close to its borders. Such an approach thwarts the intentions of the United States and its Western allies, expressed right after the end of the Cold War, to turn the Russian Federation into a partner that embraces the values of democracy.

BRICS REPOTENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

The unprecedented economic sanctions adopted by the United States and many of the world’s states against the Russian Federation in the context of the „special military operation” in Ukraine have led to a reputed, at least imagologically, role of the BRICS – the economic alliance between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa with the self-declared aim of strengthening global security and stability – trying to redraw the global economic map, given that these countries have the fastest growing emerging economies in the last decade, due to the natural resources owned and the cheap labor determined by their demographic characteristics.

Even since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, China has indirectly blamed the United States for its efforts to gain global military superiority, with Chinese Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun arguing that NATO’s enlargement efforts cannot guarantee the security process in Europe or other parts of the world and cannot be excluded from the causes that led to the crisis in Ukraine (Dumitru, 2022). Moreover, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said that NATO should have been dissolved and „recorded in history” (China: Sanctions Against Russia, 2022).

In the context in which China did not recognize the annexation of Crimea by Russia, even before the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation claimed that it „observes the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries”, notes that so far it has not publicly condemned the invasion, although in 1994 it endorsed the principles of the Budapest Memorandum, which provided security assurances to Ukraine, citing the role of the UN in negotiating the conflict and stopping the military confrontation. He also abstained from the vote expressed on 03.03.2022, at the UN General Assembly, which approved the resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which



also called for the immediate withdrawal of the military forces of the Russian Federation from Ukraine. (Avramescu, 2022)

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a major global military and economic power with close ties to the Russian Federation, China could have played a much more active role in managing the conflict in Ukraine, but preferred a position of rapprochement with the Russian Federation, expressing a negative vote in the UN General Assembly on April 7, 2022, for the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council. In this context, China reaffirmed its critical position towards the US and the West, being more concerned about the serious impact of the military conflict on its own economy and the danger of losing economic opportunities in the context of political, economic and military repolarization in the world as a result of the tense situation between the two superpowers. (CHINA'S BALANCING ACT ON THE UKRAINE WAR, 2022). Despite the „limitless” partnership invoked by the presidents of the Russian Federation and China and in the context of the severe sanctions coming from the West on the Kremlin regime – which have caught the Chinese authorities (Politi, 2022) –, the trade exchanges between the two countries are cautious, amplifying the concern that „the country's economy could be blocked by the Western powers through sanctions and penalties similar to those imposed on Russia” in the situation of the much-discussed topic of Chinese control over Taiwan. (Standich, 2022)

More than 90 days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, China believes that the abandonment of the two global superpowers, the United States and the Russian Federation, of the divergent positions specific to the former „Cold War” period and the configuration of a balanced security architecture, is the only one able to ensure global stability. However, a rapprochement with the Russian Federation, even in this context of very sour public rhetoric against it, coming from the democratic world, seems to be the preferred option by the Chinese authorities, even if - as stated by US President Joe Biden – „China understands that its economic future is much more closely linked to the West than to Russia”. (Anghel, 2022)

Beyond the demographic potential that gives it the status of a global superpower, with a booming economic sudden increase in the last two decades, India remains an important player in the international geopolitical architecture, which has shown since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine its closeness to the Russian Federation, being interested in maintaining privileged economic relations with it. The consequences of international sanctions on the economy of the Russian Federation have led the Kremlin authorities to refer to countries such as China or India as benchmarks of current and future strategic cooperation in various areas of interest, such as energy or innovative technologies, and to appreciate the reserved position for the condemnation of the invasion and the sanctions imposed by the international community.

While the US has called for condemning the military invasion of Ukraine and imposing economic sanctions on the Russian Federation, the Indian authorities have been more concerned with „balancing” ties with the Russian Federation and the West - allowing it access to energy resources and abstained from voting in the UN General Assembly for the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council, in the context in which the USA and India, together with Japan and Australia, are part of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). Such a view is justified by India in advocating a policy of „peace, dialogue and diplomacy” and the „immediate cessation of violence” (Japan and India call for an end, 2022).

Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, Brazil has expressed – through the voice of President Jair Bolsonaro – its position of neutrality and its readiness to identify a solution to defuse the conflict situation, but refusing to sign the declaration of the member countries of the Organization of American States that „strongly condemns the illegal, unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation”. (Bolsonaro says he wants Brazil, 2022) Note that despite pressure



from the Kremlin regime and economic dependence (especially chemical fertilizers), Brazil - which is a permanent member of the Council of UN Security Council - abstained from voting on April 7, 2022, at the UN General Assembly, for the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council.

Against the backdrop of severe domestic economic problems caused by sanctions imposed by the international community, the Russian Federation has called on Brazil to carry out due diligence on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to prevent the implementation of the sanctions. (Viga & Boadle, 2022) To date, Brazil's position is one of rapprochement and support for the Russian Federation, a predictable position in the context of the abstention from the vote cast on 03.03.2022, at the UN General Assembly, by which the resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine was approved.

Since the beginning of the invasion of the Ukrainian military troops in Ukraine, South Africa has been in a favorable position for the Russian Federation, abstaining from the UN General Assembly vote condemning the aggression, and through the voice of President Cyril Ramaphosa accused NATO of being responsible for the conflict, arguing that „war could have been avoided if NATO had heeded warnings (...) that its expansion to the east would lead to greater instability in the region, not a reduction” despite the fact that the senior official claimed that he „cannot tolerate the use of force and violations of international law”. (Cocks, 2022) On the other hand, Cyril Ramaphosa was also critical regarding the international community's sanctions against the Russian Federation, considering that they are likely to indirectly influence other states, given the globally economic relations of the Federation Russian.

A simple x-ray of the position of the BRICS towards the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation shows their abstention from condemning the aggression, some of them (China and South Africa) accusing NATO of generating conflict through the policy of enlargement to the borders of the Russian Federation. On the other hand, the rapprochement between China, India, Brazil and the Russian Federation is also evidenced by the close relations, at the level of high officials in the state, since the beginning of the invasion, eloquent being the information, on May 19, 2022, by the Russian Foreign Minister, Serghei Lavrov, of his counterparts from the BRICS states, regarding the evolution of the „special military campaign” carried out by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. According to a statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry, the BRICS relations will focus on „strengthening collective principles in international affairs, regional conflicts, combating new challenges and threats, and the interaction of BRICS countries in multilateral spaces” (Manic, 2022) which reconfirms the BRICS 'efforts to position itself as a strong player in the new geopolitical architecture.

CONCLUSION

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has confirmed to the whole world the readiness of democratic states to condemn such aggressions in imperative terms, as well as international solidarity with Ukraine - through the political and economic sanctions adopted against the Russian Federation, despite vulnerability of the national economies of the states that have undertaken such an approach - a sovereign and independent country forced to engage in a war to defend the territories occupied by the aggressor, despite the economic losses and human lives recorded, or some opinions expressed by political leaders or diplomats, who comment on the need to cede Ukrainian territories to the Russian Federation in exchange for restoring peace. (Jucan, 2022)

The need to ensure its own national security or the economic and political framework necessary for the optimal functioning of state entities, in the context of the danger posed by the aggressive attitudes of the Russian Federation, have led some states in its vicinity to take steps to be admitted to NATO or the European Union. Thus, it is more than obvious that the global geopolitical architecture will undergo significant changes, creating, on the one hand, safety, stability and security situations for the countries that have resorted to such an approach, and on the other hand generating additional



tensions that could be sources of future conflicts, as the Russian Federation considers these steps as a threat to its own security.

In this context, the reactivation and repowering of the BRICS, an entity made up of some world superpowers in military, demographic and economic terms - such as China, India or the Russian Federation - which have recorded the highest growth rate of emerging economies in the last decade. It should not be overlooked that the Global Regional Economic Partnership (PRCP) concluded at the end of 2020 „is seen as a means of expanding China’s influence regionally, against the background of the global economic crisis (...) and the trade war of China with the USA ”. (The world's largest free trade agreement has been signed in the Asia-Pacific region, 2022)

In other words, from an ideological point of view, it should be noted that, since the period before the military invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and China argued that „their model of government” is preferable to that found in liberal democracies, being more adaptable to the peculiarities of the changing world in which the socio-human dimension acquires special valences. In fact, the two countries expressed their future strategic objectives of „changing the balance of power in the world” through the joint declaration on international relations. (Joint Declaration of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China, 2022).

However, in the context of the polarisation of global society and the reconfiguration of spheres of power, even in the context of the crisis in Ukraine, it is noted the prudent policy of Germany – one of the most important voices at European level – to apply excessive economic sanctions to the Russian Federation, given the significant dependence on certain resources, as well as the constant concerns of France – highlighted by the direct involvement of President Emmanuel Macron in solving the crisis in Ukraine – to lay the foundations for a new security architecture on the European continent from which the Russian Federation must not be excluded but actively involved, given its economic and military potential and economic interconnections with many European states. (Lăzescu, 2022)

The side effects of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation - whether we are referring to the economic crisis (energy or food) - are likely to lead to new centers of global tension and amplify instability in areas already facing such a problem, such as the Middle East, the African continent almost in its entirety, the Indian Subcontinent or large regions of Central and South America.

Ukraine is of vital importance to the Russian Federation, but also very important to US interests on the eastern border of Europe, but a sovereign and stable Ukraine seems a realistic imperative to reduce the risk of conflict between the great powers. (Maitra, 2022)

In the context of the global problematic situations between the camps that tacitly condemn or support the invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, there is the issue of the effectiveness of global diplomacy in crisis management, as well as sanctions, primarily economic, imposed on the aggressor state. Voices say that these sanctions will be the cause of new human security issues - such as the possibility of waves of migration (from poor and undemocratic countries to economically stable ones connected to Western values) - which could affect the parameters of the regional or global security equation and even a reconfiguration of the global power architecture.



1/2022

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