

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

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***Abstract:** In the article the author briefly presents some of the most important political, economic and military concerns from post-Soviet Russia, as consequence of some major events taking place in the late years of the 20th century and first years of the 21st century emphasizing some main aspects of „National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020”.*

Concomitantly, the principles promoted and supported in global and regional concerns by the current Russian leaders are brought into attention focusing on certain unprovoked aggression, manifested against their neighbours in the „close vicinity”.

***Keywords:** the Russian Federation, Security Strategy, close vicinity, Zapad-2017.*

The political, economic, military and cultural **evolution** of the Russian Federation following the collapse of the Soviet Union was and will always be in the attention of political-military specialists around the world and, especially, the ones from the US and European states, members or non-members of European Union and/or NATO. Equally, the global public opinion and particularly the citizens in the countries considered by Russian leadership as their ‘close vicinity’ were, are and will be worried by the aggressive behaviour of Kremlin, peculiarly manifested along the third round of Vladimir Vladimirovici Putin presidency.

After the implosion produced following the events triggered by the **Fall of the Berlin Wall** (November 9, 1989) and particularly by the internal situation increasingly intricate in-between ’90-’93 years, from the former

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Soviet Union, in some cases with many human victims, fourteen states were formed that declared their independence, amounting to 130 million inhabitants, of which 24.12 million Russians ethnic accounting for about 18.5% of these populations¹.

Even though **Russia** continues to be, despite the losses suffered, a huge country covering ten time zones, from the Kaliningrad enclave located to the Baltic Sea to the Sakhalin islands to East; it is a land full of large unpopulated spaces that has a huge potential and a population of over 143 million people, of which 15 million are Muslims.

The main political leaders of the current world, as well as specialists grouped in different think-tanks associated to relevant political-military groups, agree that '*Russia² continues to be a power with enormous military resources, including more than 10,000 different nuclear weapons that are in recent years in an accelerated process of modernization; it is also an energetic giant with oil reserves which, in the current exploitation rhythm, can last over 30 years, and natural gas reaching for more than 180 years*'.

Analysts strongly recommend that we not forget either the old Russian ambiguity of historical, cultural and geopolitical nature regarding the image of Europe and Asia, or the new oscillation between the weak elements of democracy and, inevitably, the strong ones of autocracy exercised by an all-powerful supreme chief and his team of so-called 'siloviki'.

Studying closely these aspects, including from Russian/Soviet sources (Russian authors, historians, as well as memoirs of politicians and Soviet marshals and generals), clearly shows a pattern of behaviour of the Eastern Empire towards its neighbours and the world, namely: maintaining constant pressure and threat with the use of its enormous military forces, which in some areas exceeds the capabilities of the US and those of China.

At this point (especially after the invasion of Georgia and the attack of Ukraine - followed by the annexation of Crimea), the world can rightly ask whether Russia is part of an emerging multi-polar balance or if it strives hard to have a say and first of all, a veto right over all the problems that appear on the globe, especially in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle

¹ Michael Stürmer, *Putin și noua Rusie*, Editura Litera Internațional, București, 2009.

² Ibidem.

East and Central and South-East Asia (see the direct involvement by multiple means, including military, in North Korea, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Eastern Ukraine and the entire Black Sea area).

There are also other elements to be taken into account:

• **Can Russia be persuaded** to support besides its manifest interests, those *pax-americana* elements that continue to be the key components of globalization, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?

• **Will Russia support** what has remained of the world order after the disappearance (it seems for a short time) of the Cold War and the global nuclear and bipolar system?

• **Will the revolutionary power** (communist and adept of the export of revolution in all the world's states, ultimately leading to the creation of the World Soviet Socialist Republic, as Lenin and later Trotsky and Stalin explained) **become** the stabilizer of the current form of global and post-industrial organization?

Russia had, and obviously still has, the potential to go in one direction or the other, to be a stability or turbulent force. Since 2014, there have been increasingly clear signs that Russia, under the current leadership of the Kremlin, is steadily and fast moving towards the latter, aggressive in all directions, using for this purpose the political, economic, diplomatic, propaganda and military potential.

The choice of confrontation instead of collaboration is also explained by the lack of cohesion of the West, the constant stuttering in the assertion of political goals and the historical "affinity" of some EU and NATO states towards the great neighbour. The **Kremlin power** uses all visible and hidden means to undermine the unity of the **West** by policies tailored in each case, including the brutal use of the "**energy-weapon**".

Political-military analysts in the West, as well as new East European democracies, consider that it would be really fatal for today's Europe to be trapped between a resurgent and aggressive Russia and a *pax americana* in decline, and for the Atlantic Alliance it would constitute an immense drawback.

Let us hope that it is not too late for conciliation between the forces, in accordance with the accepted principles of international law and the borders of states, enshrined in the treaties.

There are some arguments to consider for a positive evolution in Russia's relations with the rest of the world, namely: **China's strong rise in the Far East**, which is a major challenge; the insurgency of radical Islam from the Middle East and North Africa, with frequent terrorist attacks on the US and European countries; nuclear proliferation in countries with pronounced aggressive potential, such as North Korea, Iran and others. In addition, it is worth mentioning the dramatic climate change, the non-governed countries, the cyber warfare and the organized crime.

All these aspects haunting the world represent the same big problem for Russia, just as they are for the Westerners.

At this point, is suitable to take act briefly of the new vision of the Russian Federation on '**National Security Strategy**'³, document amended and completed many times, the last time in 2016. The latest additions regard the revival of the military force by modernising the nuclear arsenal, the construction of new combat aircrafts and attack helicopters, as well as the quantitative and qualitative increase of mechanized forces and tanks.

Without going into details (those interested could study the mentioned documents) we can notice some more important provisions:

- **It is stated in the document that 'Russian Federation National Security Strategy by 2020'** is an officially recognized system of strategic priorities, goals and measures in the field of internal and external policy that determine the state of national security and the level of safe development of the state, in a lasting perspective;

- **The main difference** as compared to the previous documents (1997 and 2000) consists in the fact that national security is defined as '*a state of protection of the personality, society and state against internal and external dangers, which allows the assessment of the constitutional rights, a worthy living level for citizens, sovereignty, territorial integrity and safe development of the Russian Federation, defence and security of the state*';

- **Five criteria** of evaluation of state security **are determined**;

- **The Strategy** confirms **Russia's intention** to enter, in 2020, the list of the five leading world economies;

³ Document approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, no. 537 of 12 May 2009.

• **The document grants importance to ‘lessons learned’ from past years** in political, economic, financial, military and internal security fields;

• Russian national interests **are asserted** on long term;

• **The main priorities** of Russia’s national security are considered to be: national defence and state and social security. Other priorities are also added to these;

• **The foreign policy** is directed towards the achievement of the established goals and priorities, special priority being given to the development of bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation with the states participating in the Confederation of Independent States (author’s note - some Russian leaders, including President Putin, openly state that they want to restore the Soviet Empire in the shortest possible time!??);

„**The Strategy**” also comprises **negative global trends likely** to influence Russia’s security:

- The probable recurrences of unilateral force approaches in international relations (author’s note. - even the Russians have used forces in Georgia and Ukraine), the contradictions between the **main** participants of world politics;

- The danger of spreading weapons of mass destruction and getting them into the hands of terrorists, as well as improving the forms of illegal activity in the cybernetic and biological fields, in the sphere of high technology;

- High information conflagration (author’s note – in which the Russians have been totally involved against the US, UK, Germany and other countries);

- Threats against the stability of industrial and developing countries;

- The development of nationalist tendencies, xenophobia, separatism and extremism by force, including under the slogans of religious socialism;

- The world’s sensitive demographic situation and the problems of the natural environment (uncontrolled and illegal migration, drugs, trafficking in human beings, other forms of international organized crime);

- Spread of epidemics produced by some unknown viruses (author’s note – Russia is world leader in the production of poisons and viruses as part of the biological warfare);

- The acute shortage of fresh water.

In the mentioned document it is stated that negative global trends are the source of a complex system of threats to Russia's security: in the military sphere, in the sphere of state and social security, in the economic area, in the science, technology and education field, and also in the fields of health, culture and ecology.

Russian Federation, in its elaborated and approved strategy, considers that the following aspects can have a negative influence on the international situation on middle term:

- Iraq and Afghanistan situations;
- Prolonged conflicts in the Near and Middle East;
- Some conflicts in South Asia Africa, and Korean Peninsula;
- The critical situation regarding the preservation of dangerous materials and objects, especially in countries with an unstable political situation;
- Uncontrolled spread by the state of ordinary weapons by the state (author's note – Russia is the world leader in the field);
- The possibility of solving some problems that arise in the concrete struggle for resources with the use of military force, which leads to the destruction of the balance of forces near the borders of its allies (author's note, exactly what Russia did and still does in Crimea, Kaliningrad, Belarus, Caucasus, Syria, etc.);
- The risk of an increasing number of states possessing nuclear weapons (author's note – Russia played and still plays a key-role in this matter in North Korea and Iran);
- The plans to extend NATO's military infrastructure toward Russia's borders and attempts to give them global functions that are in contradiction with international law (author's note – Russia's native belief is that it is threatened from all directions, when, in fact, the countries close to the great colossus take, as far as they can, reasonable and legitimate **defence** measures).

We consider we have sufficient and solid arguments that the careful study of the '**Strategy**' by Romanian politicians, officers and analysts can shape an answer to the question: 'To what extent is Russia irreversibly heading towards the political behaviour of a modern democratic state and how predictable will its actions be on the international arena in the future!?'

Unfortunately, what happened starting with 2014 brings real worries to the whole world and particularly to the countries which Russians place, since a hundred years ago, in its so-called ‘close vicinity’.

The Russian Federation leaders as well as ordinary Russian citizens complain about the expansion of feelings of Russian-phobia. In our opinion, they do not appear in an unjustified manner but they stem from Russian actions, whatever its name – the Tsarist Empire, the Soviet Union, or now the Russian Federation. These feelings express the fear of the citizens regarding the over armed and extremely aggressive colossus over the last 300 years.

Let us briefly show some quite credible history elements, aspects that prove an incredible continuity in thinking and action of Russian/Soviet leaders starting in 1917 until today, in matters of geopolitics and expansionism.

For example, Russian military historian Mark Solonin⁴, in his books, demolishes the old myths of communist propaganda, such as that of the ‘peaceful, quiet and almost unarmed’ Stalinist Empire.

Thus, the author argues that the aggressive Soviet propaganda at the end of the ’50s inoculated, with the tenacity and precision of a pneumatic hammer, into the consciousness of citizens the following facts:

- **First of all**, we are peaceful people, we have not prepared for war (!?), our government has campaigned for peace all over the world and has endeavoured not to involve the USSR in a war;

- **Secondly**, ‘*History has given us too little time*’, which is why we did not do anything (tanks, guns, planes, not enough weapons), and our army went into war almost disarmed;

- **Thirdly**, Stalin did not allow the army to be particularly ‘*ready for war*’, so German bombs fell on ‘*Soviet airfields sleeping quietly*’.

Other Russian authors (A. Nekrici, Grigorenko, Viktor Suvorov and others)⁵ dismantled, with more or less courage the thesis of non-arming the USSR, as it held combat airplanes, tanks, artillery and troops more than all the countries of the world together.

⁴ Mark Solonin, *Butoiul și cercurile*, Editura Polirom, București, 2012.

⁵ Victor Suvorov, *Spărgătorul de gheață*, Editura Polirom, București, 2010.

Victor Suvorov, *Ziua M*, Editura Polirom, București, 2011.

Victor Suvorov, *Ultima Republică*, Editura Polirom, București, vol 1 – 2010, vol. 2 – 2011.

Thus, in the *'new thinking'* era, Viktor Suvorov in his trilogy (Ice Breaker, M Day, and The Last Republic) demolished brick by brick the fake myth of the *'quiet, peaceful and almost unarmed'* Stalinist Empire.

The books of these military historians should be studied, with the pen in hand, by Romanian politicians and high-ranking military, because the ways of thinking and action of the eastern colossus are clearly detached.

We find in the *'Icebreaker'* incredible details about the USSR's intention, since 1921, to create, by the outbreak of wars, the 'World Socialist Soviet Republic', an act that constituted an open and direct declaration of war to the rest of the world, about the division of Poland between Hitler and Stalin, about the moment when the USSR entered World War II, and about the massive misinformation and *maskirovka*, triggered and directed directly by Stalin, to silence the vigilance of Hitler and the whole world.

We could give just an example from the hundreds offered by the above mentioned authors:

On June 13, 1941, radio Moscow broadcasted a less ordinary TASS communicate, wherein was affirmed that *'Germany unconditionally respects the conditions of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact as well as the Soviet Union, and rumours are a clumsy propaganda, churned by the hostile forces of the USSR and Germany, interested in further expanding the escalation of the war'*. Within a week, Germany attacked the USSR (June 22, 1941), outpacing the attack planned by Stalin on July 6, 1941.

I believe it is necessary to make a parallel, however brief, with the current statements and actions of the Russian Federation on:

- Aggressions against Georgia and Ukraine;
- Destruction of Chechenia and its capital;
- Total involvement in Syria supporting Bashar al Assad, as well as supporting North Korea and Iran policies;
- Proliferation of threats with the use of force against the Baltic States, Poland and Romania;
- Opening of new military bases abroad;
- The unprecedented intensification after 1991 of aviation bombing and nuclear submarine activities in the vicinity of the US, UK, the Nordic countries, etc.

- The deployment of large-scale drills near the western border of the Russian Federation, with more than 100,000 troops, although Russian officials say that there will be no more than 13,000 soldiers (the combined military exercises West - ZAPAD - 2017, September 14-20, 2017)⁶;

- The expulsion or murder of opposition politicians, journalists and defectors in Russian secret services;

- Many other aggressive actions, without being caused by any foreign state.

These aspects presented in the narrow space offered into a journal can be thoroughly and widely analysed by those interested in the current course of things in the world and the security and defence of Romania within NATO. Everything urges maximum vigilance and a thorough preparation to discourage any aggression.



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⁶ <http://adevarul.ro/internațional/rusia/zapad-2017>