

# THE WARSAW INSTITUTE REVIEW

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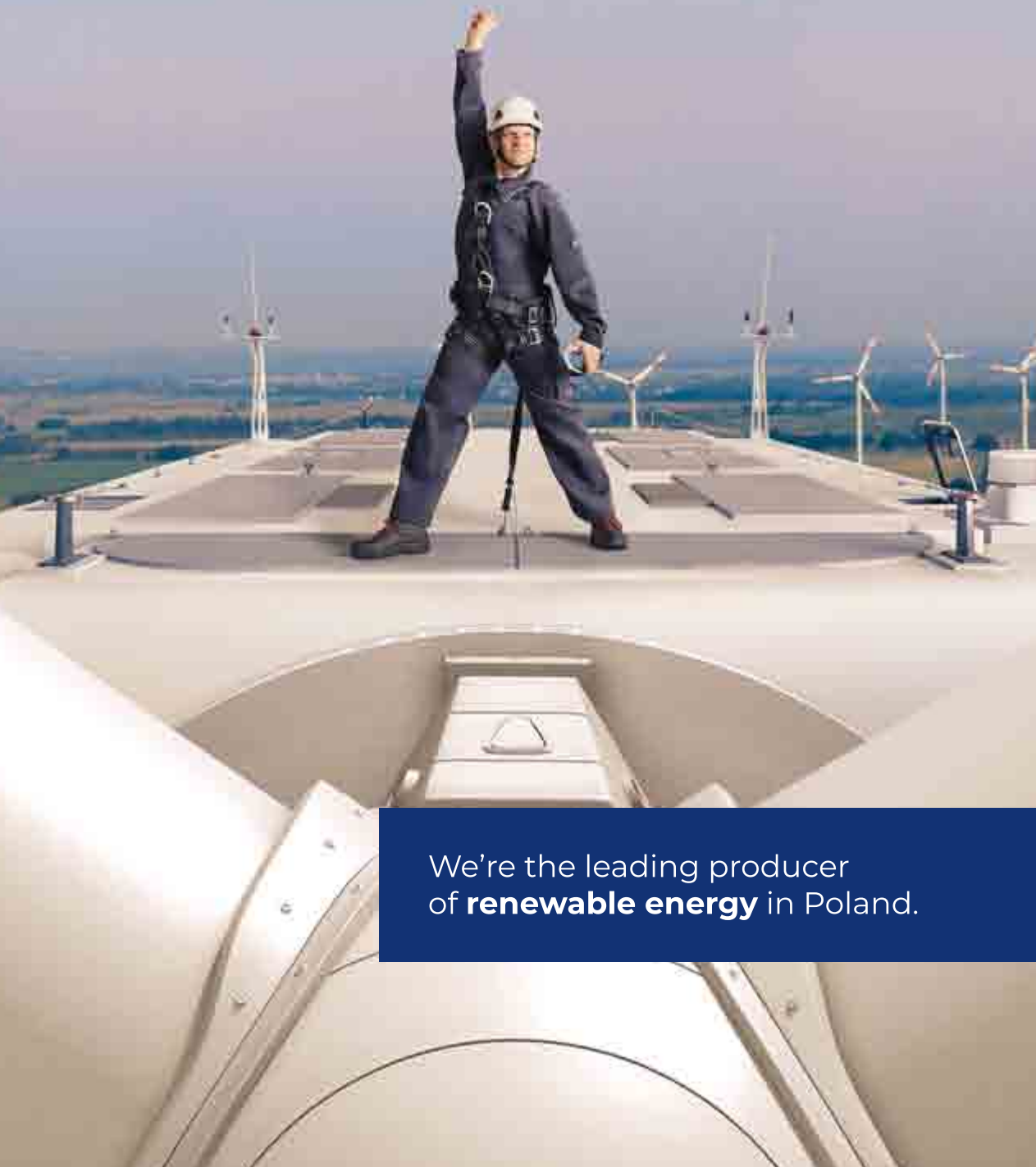
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## Dear Readers,



Who are we, as people of the broadly understood West, in today's times? What values are really important to us, and most pertinently, in what direction is the entirety of Western civilization - a decisive transformation to which many of us grew up in - heading towards in the coming years?

Our affinity to the values of freedom and justice; would it be fair to say at present that it does still enjoy validity? How are we to go about the new inclinations that foreign policy conundrums present to us in the current international order? It would seem that we are currently observing two great hegemony on the global chessboard - China and the United States. The former maintains a communist system, and the latter, the contrary - a full democracy. They strive to outmaneuver each other in advancing new technologies, developing economic competitiveness, and boldly asserting overarching successes, through which they seek to be guarantors of safety of other people in this world. At least such a narrative extends and builds alliances. So, what really determines which are the most potent countries in the world today? What genuinely steers their foreign policies? Who is it we ought to cooperate with?

We look for such answers in the presented articles. The written pieces titled "**Communist China**" and "**Three Seas Gas Initiative**" are noteworthy. In the latter, circumstances of the Three Seas Initiative are analyzed from the perspective of energy policy; an informal group of countries from Central and Eastern Europe whose aim is to increase integration on the North-South vertices, not just on the East-West.

It is becoming evident that such regional alliances of several countries, usually based on shared experiences, cultural and his-

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torical similarity, that today have the potential to avidly increase their impact on the international arena, and to establish dialogue with aforementioned powerful entities on the global geopolitical chessboard.

Regional threads are perfectly interwoven into Polish realities, where a strong Poland is a democratic state, establishing alliances, drawing on the experience of others and forming meaningful input into regional frameworks and international organizations. Remarkable successes of the Polish capital market, as described by **Dr. Marek Dietl**, President of the Warsaw Stock Exchange, attest to such. After economic ruins left by the communist system in Poland, the Polish market after 1989 began undergoing revitalization once more. In 2018, just 27 years after the political transformation, the Polish capital market was qualified to the group of the 25 most developed markets in the world. It is a success of cross-party consensus in Poland, but also of a multitude of pro-democratic initiatives that have been undertaken throughout all this time.

I wish you an enjoyable read!

IZABELA WOJTYCZKA  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
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**PRESIDENT OF THE MANAGEMENT  
BOARD OF THE WARSAW STOCK  
EXCHANGE - MAREK DIEL, WARSAW,  
POLAND, OCTOBER 19, 2017.**

# THE POLISH CAPITAL MARKET ONE YEAR AFTER ITS PROMOTION TO DEVELOPED MARKETS STATUS

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MAREK DIETL, PHD

On September 22, 2018, the FTSE Russell and STOXX index agencies reclassified the Polish capital market to Developed Market Status – a capital market ‘Champions League’. Considering the annual perspective, one could contemplate; was this change significant for domestic market participants? Furthermore, did it result in the increase of interest of foreign capital in the Polish stock exchange?

Initially, institutional investors focused on allocating capital on the local market. International investments started at the end of the 1970s, but they focused on developed markets such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and

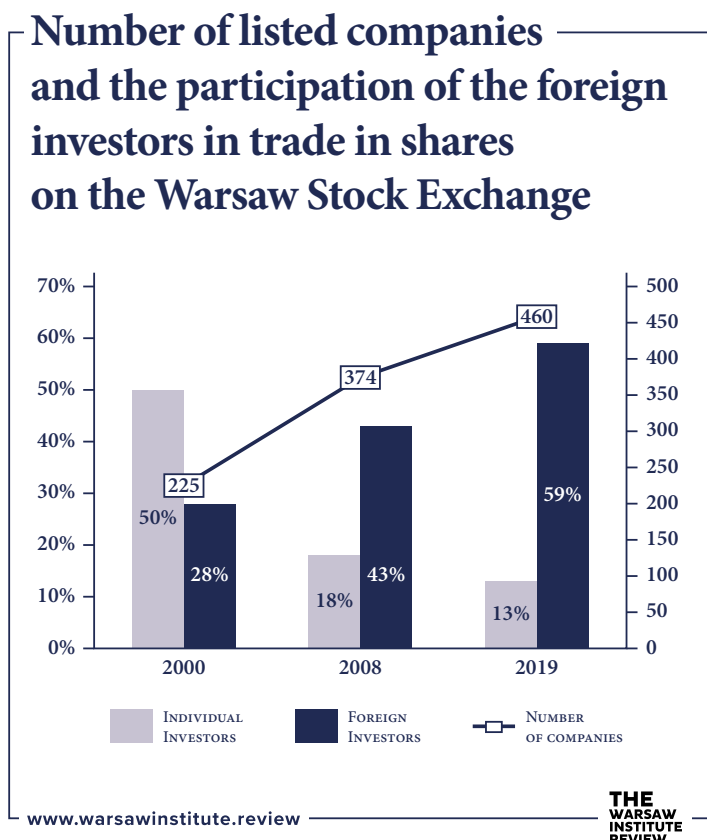
Australia. Pioneering investment attempts in developing markets took place ten years later and involved the countries of Latin America and South-East Asia. It was not until the 1990s that the interest in emerging markets suddenly increased as a result of political and economic changes

in China, the collapse of communism in Central Europe, and political changes in South Africa. These changes increased the role of developing markets on the map of global capital investments. It is currently estimated that the capitalization of all public companies amounts to USD 87 trillion – with 20% of this amount going to developing markets, which less than 30 years ago accounted for only 1% of the value of global markets. However, it is the developed markets that are of fundamental significance for institutional entities building their investment strategies.

The promotion of the Polish capital market to the group of developed markets by FTSE-Russell and STOXX is a spectacular event both on a local and regional level. It is pertinent to underline that 30 years ago, critical political changes were initiated in Poland – like in most countries of the Central European region. They resulted

in a transformation of the model of communist economies – from centrally controlled to a market economy system, with stock exchanges becoming its essential element.

As a result of political changes, the Polish government decided to re-establish the Warsaw Stock Exchange (WSE) at the end of 1990. Its first session took place on April 16, 1991 – stocks of five companies privatized by the State Treasury were then listed. In the early years of its activity, the WSE was dominated by mass privatizations of formerly state-owned enterprises. Both domestic individual and foreign investors actively participated in this process. As a result, the database of local investors reached over 1.5 million investment accounts, and the participation of individual investors in trading in shares in Poland at the end of the 1990s amounted to 50%. In 2004, after Poland's







WARSAW STOCK EXCHANGE IN WARSAW, POLAND, FEBRUARY 12, 2019.

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accession to the European Union, the capital market in Poland became a place where private companies can obtain funds for development and investment. This could be achieved thanks to the launch of an alternative market for small and innovative companies. As a result of this, the WSE was ranked among the European leaders in terms of the number of Stock Exchange debuts and the value of capital raised. This success was also reflected in the increase in the participation of foreign investors in trade in shares on the WSE. In the first half of 2019, it amounted to 59%.

At present, the Warsaw Stock Exchange is a venue for trading in over three thousand different financial instruments – shares, bonds, structured products, ETFs, and derivatives. Domestic and foreign investors have access to modern technological infrastructure, and the market is regulated following European standards, which allows for flexible access for investors and domestic and foreign companies.

The development of the WSE has been recognized by international organizations providing services associated with stock market indices and indicators. One of the areas of their activity is classifying individual markets. Most

markets are assigned to one of the three main groups: Frontier, Emerging, and Developed. Classification of a given market to a specific group is vital for the construction of various index portfolios. The latter is subsequently replicated by passive investment funds – which precisely replicate the index portfolio, as opposed to active funds – where the structure of the portfolio depends on the decision of the person managing the fund. Indices and, therefore, funds of developed markets, attract the most considerable attention of investors; which are characterized by the highest value of accumulated assets, and each change in such indicators entails a significant capital inflow – in the case of adding a company to such an index – or outflow of capital in the case of removing a company from such an index. That is why it is so important to belong to the highest possible group of countries. The process of classifying markets varies from one organization to another but is usually based on three essential criteria. Firstly, the economic situation of the country is assessed – this evaluation is generally based on the unemployment rate, inflation, and the value of GDP per capita. Secondly, the next criterion considered is the level of market development. In this



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**PRESIDENT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE WARSAW STOCK EXCHANGE – MAREK DIETL, WARSAW, POLAND, AUGUST 1, 2018.**

case, the number of companies in public trading, their capitalization, and the liquidity of trading are analyzed. Thirdly, the final area subject to monitoring is the issue of market regulation. The better the market is regulated and subject to specific procedures, and the more equal its treatment of domestic and foreign capital, the higher it is rated.

The current rules for the classification of markets by FTSE-Russell were introduced in 2003, defining the following categories:

Frontier, Secondary Emerging, Advanced Emerging, and Developed. According to this categorization, the Polish capital market was initially included in the Secondary Emerging group. In 2008, FTSE Russell moved Poland and Hungary from Secondary Emerging to Advanced Emerging. The qualification of Poland to the Developed group by FTSE-Russell took place ten years after the last changes.

The success of the Polish capital market, especially when compared to other

### The market share of selected companies in the FTSE Russell index wallet

	AUSTRIA	POLAND	CZECH REPUBLIC	HUNGARY
FTSE COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION	DEVELOPED	DEVELOPED	ADVANCED EMERGING	ADVANCED EMERGING
NUMBER OF COMPANIES IN INDEX	28	38	6	5
CAPITALIZATION IN INDEX (USD M)	61 694	70 965	10 532	19 671
PART IN FTSE GEIS INDEX	0,120%	0,138%	0,020%	0,038%
PART IN FTSE EMERGING INDEX	-	-	0,196%	0,367%
PART IN FTSE DEVELOPED INDEX	0,134%	0,154%	-	-

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## THE POLISH CAPITAL MARKET ONE YEAR AFTER ITS PROMOTION TO DEVELOPED MARKETS STATUS

stock exchanges in Central Europe, is a result of organic growth. If we assume that the measure of this is the number of financial instruments, the number of participants, the technological offer, and the size of capital flow, it can be said that the capital market in Poland is subject to continuous development. This is not often the case in developed markets with their well-established growth, or most emerging markets, where the number of listed companies or the activity of investors has remained unchanged for many years. At present, Poland is the only country that started the political changes in Central Europe those thirty years ago and is among the prestigious group of developed markets.

Changes in the classification from Emerging to Developed are relatively rare. In the case of the FTSE-Russell rating, this has so far taken place four times. In 2001, the Greek capital market was promoted to the Developed markets, but in 2016 it was downgraded to the Advanced Emerging Group. In 2008, Israel was recognized as the Developed market. A year later, South Korea was also included in this group. The most recent country to be qualified for the Developed markets was Poland.

Currently, according to FTSE-Russell, there are 24 countries in the Developed group of markets, 11 in Advanced Emerging, 12 in Secondary Emerging, and 29 in Frontier markets.

The reclassification of the Israeli and South Korean capital markets 10 and 11 years ago is an opportunity to assess how these changes have affected their development. While on the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange in the last 10 years the number of listed companies decreased from 642 to 448, the market value of currently listed companies, despite the fact that there are nearly 200 fewer of them than in 2008, is by 77% higher than at the time of its qualification to Developed. This is an essential benefit for investors who place their capital in Israeli companies. On the other hand, the key indicators of the Korea Exchange are consistently increasing. The number of companies from the Developed group grew from 1778 to 2186, and their market value is 70% higher than ten years ago, and currently amounts to USD 1.4 trillion. It is worth noting that a significant contribution to this growth is the increase in the capitalization of Samsung, a tech giant currently valued at USD 326 billion.

### Selected market benchmarks for Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange and the Korea Exchange Stock

YEAR	TEL-AVIV STOCK EXCHANGE			KOREA EXCHANGE		
	2000	2008	2018	2000	2009	2019
NUMBER OF COMPANIES	665	642	448	1242	1778	2186
CAPITALIZATION (USD M)	66 700	106 700	188 900	170 736	834 560	1 413 225
TURNOVER FOR A SESSION	115	547	391	3 059	6 740	9 824

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Key indicators for the Israeli and Korean stock exchanges show that the change of market classification may be an important, but not the only stimulus for the perception of this market by international investors. It may cause an increase in the value of companies as a result of the lowering of the risk assessment, but it may also lead to the global expansion of the largest companies listed on the markets that have been recognized as Developed. An excellent example of this is the Korean Samsung. In the case of Poland, the game producer CD Projekt, whose activity has long ago crossed the borders of the local market, has a good chance of being awarded this status. Its new projects and global ambitions are evidence of this. Investors also noticed it, and CD Projekt can now be considered the first Polish unicorn – a company with a market value exceeding USD 1 billion.

However, the different development of the Israeli and South Korean stock exchanges shows that a mere reclassification of the market to Developed is not a sufficient condition for international capital to raise its rating. This must also be followed by the operation of the stock exchange as it is a place that guarantees raising capital in the primary market, supplies advanced technology for the functioning of the secondary market, but also ensures a safe regulatory environment that does not restrict this market. Such criteria are currently met by the WSE, which has an extensive database of issuers and investors and a trading system compatible with Western European markets. This process may gain new dynamics in the future by implementing current strategic activities, such as the project of building a new financial instruments trading platform, acquisition of new issuers, or providing

tools supporting investments based on artificial intelligence methods.

At the end of 2018, resources managed by active funds amounted to USD 6 trillion, and by passive funds – USD 5.5 trillion. However, according to Bloomberg news agency estimates, already in 2020, the resources collected by passive funds will reach the level of USD 7 trillion and will exceed the resources managed by active funds. The vast majority of funds build their investment portfolios based on indicators provided by the four largest organizations calculating indices: MSCI, FTSE-Russell, SP Dow Jones, and STOXX. It is expected that in the future, the increase in passive investments will, to the greatest extent, result in increased interest in developed markets. This process can be intensified by actions such as attracting the largest and most dynamic companies to the public market and encouraging companies already listed on the stock exchange to apply good practices, implementing the ESG strategy, or building reliable institutional support. Such initiatives are also being taken by the WSE, which for many years has been the European leader in terms of the IPOs number. The WSE has been applying corporate governance rules for over 15 years, and recently an ESG company index has been launched in cooperation with a recognized scoring agency. Precisely ten years passed between the reclassification of the Polish capital market by FTSE Russell from Advanced Emerging to Developed. This was a period that allowed for a full assessment of the market evolution. Examples from other countries show, however, that the benefits of qualifying for Developed should materialize much sooner.

**Marek Dietl** ■  
November 2019

# ON DEMOCRACY IN POLAND

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TOMASZ GRZEGORZ GROSSE, PROFESSOR

This autumn's parliamentary election in Poland was, above all, a success of democracy. Evidence of this success can be seen in the mobilization of the electorate, the high turnout, as well as the fact that voters feel that government decision-makers listen to them and that their vote can influence the course of national events.

## **THE VICTORY OF THE CONSERVATIVES**

Elections to the Sejm and the Senate of Poland in 2019 brought victory to Law and Justice (PiS), a leading party in the United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica)<sup>1</sup>. The ruling coalition won most of the seats in the lower house of Parliament, the Sejm, with 235 out of 460 seats. Opposition groups have reached a majority in the Senate, with 52 out of 100 seats, including non-attached

politicians. However, it is the Sejm that has, in the Polish system, a decisive role in adopting legislation and forming the government – this time again with the majority of the United Right<sup>2</sup>.

The Civic Coalition (Koalicja Obywatelska) is the second political power in terms of the number of seats received, with 134. Its core is the liberal Civic

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<sup>1</sup> The United Right is formed between Law and Justice, United Poland, and the Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the National Electoral Commission (PKW): [https://pkw.gov.pl/853\\_Wybory\\_do\\_Sejmu\\_i\\_Senatu\\_w\\_2019\\_r](https://pkw.gov.pl/853_Wybory_do_Sejmu_i_Senatu_w_2019_r) [accessed 27.10.2019].



**POLISH PRIME MINISTER MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI DURING THE LAW AND JUSTICE (PIS) POLITICAL CONVENTION IN THE GLOBUS HALL IN LUBLIN, POLAND, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019.**

© WOJTEK JARGILO (PAP)

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## The conflict over judicial reform remained political, and was left to be judged by the voters themselves.

Platform (Platforma Obywatelska)<sup>3</sup>. Apart from this party, three other opposition groups were elected: The Left (Lewica) with 49 seats, the Polish People's Party (PSL) joined with Kukiz'15 with 30 seats, and the extreme right-wing and anti-European Confederation (Konfederacja) with 11 seats.

Some opponents of the previous Polish government accused it of posing a danger to democracy. The accusations were mainly based on three arguments. The first was that the reform of the judiciary

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<sup>3</sup> The Civic Coalition is composed of Civic Platform, Modern, The Greens, Polish Initiative, Silesian Regional Party, Social Democracy of Poland, and Freedom and Equality.

violates the Polish Constitution. However, the members of the opposition did not raise their objections to the Constitutional Tribunal – the only institution in the Polish legal system that could resolve the dispute between politicians concerning issues of this type. Therefore, the conflict over judicial reform remained political, and was left to be judged by the voters themselves. Secondly, some members of the opposition accused the government of rejecting liberal values.

Nevertheless, democracy is based not only on liberalism but also on other values (conservative, left-wing, among others), and voters should decide themselves which of them are relevant to current politics. It should be added that the government did not restrict the freedom of this election in any way (e.g., to local authorities, or any parliament – national or European). Thirdly, the opposition alleged that the government had gained a dominant influence over the public media. However, freedom and diversification of the media are crucial for the quality of democracy, and not government's control over public media. Freedom of the media has been

preserved, and the media sources are remarkably diverse – a large part of private media, including national, regional, and local ones, clearly favor the opposition.

#### **WHERE DID THE SUCCESS OF LAW AND JUSTICE COME FROM?**

The success of Law and Justice does not only consist in the fact that this party won a second term after four years in power, but also that it was achieved despite the aggressive attacks of some opposition members. Furthermore, the conservative government in Poland has also been criticized by the largest media in the Western world, mainly in Western Europe. Despite these unfavorable circumstances, Polish conservatives won the elections. Why is that?

The first reason is that the ruling party tried to meet the needs of their own voters and keep its electoral promises, both in domestic and foreign policy. Since the majority of the society does not want to adopt the common currency, it was problematic to give in to pressure from, among others, German politicians, who repeatedly encouraged Poles to join the monetary union. The same was true for non-European immigration – approximately 70% of the Polish population is against it<sup>4</sup>. Not many less Polish citizens (66%) have a negative opinion about Muslims and oppose their settlement in the country<sup>5</sup>. Based on democratic governance, it is evident that the voters decide on migration policy – including such questions as how to manage illegal immigrants and illegal border crossings.

The majority of Poles are also in favor of conservative values in social life. When

<sup>4</sup> Attitude of Poles and Czechs to Reception of Refugees, CBOS, No. 87/2018.

<sup>5</sup> European Public Opinion Three Decades After the Fall of Communism, Pew Research Center, Washington, DC, October 15, 2019.

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Freedom of the media has been preserved, and the media sources are remarkably diverse – a large part of private media, including national, regional, and local ones, clearly favor the opposition.

left-wing and liberal activists on the one hand trying to increase the rights of sexual minorities, and on the other hand launched an attack on these conservative values, insulting the majority of Poles who think about these matters in a conservative way (e.g. profaning religious symbols). As such, the government defended the *status quo* and the legal decisions adopted in the Polish Constitution. It has, therefore, gained the support of many voters who do not want changes in this area.

The government of Law and Justice is conservative in worldview matters and left-wing in social ones. Therefore, it launched an unprecedented package of redistribution of income to the economically weakest groups while at the same time supporting families, especially those with many children (for instance, the “500+ Family” package). In this way, it tried to reduce the income inequalities that have been growing in Poland since the political transformation and European integration. Thanks to redistribution packages, the effects of political changes in Poland and EU membership can bring more sustainable benefits to society. It is not without significance that the government has maintained a high rate of

economic growth throughout its previous term of office, which has allowed the financing of social spending to be secured.

To sum up, it can be said that the victory of PiS is based on three main pillars. First of all, the relatively high credibility among voters, which translated into the desire to keep the promises and to respect the opinions of Poles. This seems to be one of the critical elements of any healthy democracy. Secondly, the mistakes of the opposition, which instead of focusing on holding the government accountable for its successive difficult reforms, decided to move the campaign to ideological grounds. However, it was when it turned out that the majority of voters support the government's conservative approach rather than the radical social changes preferred by some part of the opposition. It should also be added that, according to experts, the opposition had poor leadership and a failed campaign. It was characterized by many contradictions and program inconsistencies, perhaps beyond one common postulate – to remove Law and Justice from power. Thirdly, the success of the ruling party results from the launch of redistribution programs. The government has made a number of changes in areas that have so far been neglected by its predecessors, ranging from more effective redistribution packages to judicial reform. In both cases, the majority of voters supported the changes introduced, even if they were criticized by the opposition as populist (e.g., the “Family 500+” package) or unconstitutional (court reform).

### **SUCCESS OF DEMOCRACY**

The parliamentary elections of 2019 are a success for Polish democracy, mainly because voter turnout has reached one of the most significant numbers since the transformation (the electorate was more active only during the first parliamentary elections in 1989 and in the presidential elections in 1995). In autumn 2019, nearly

## Democracy works in Poland on a daily basis.

62 percent of eligible voters voted – over 10 percent more than in 2015. Given the high turnout and the fact that opposition parties took control of the Senate, we should not be saying that the situation in Poland is a democratic crisis. These elections prove that the opposition may limit the power of the dominant formation, which is impossible in the case of authoritarian regimes. Moreover, both sides of the dispute, i.e., both government and opposition parties, managed to mobilize their voters by significantly increasing the turnout.

The excellent condition of Polish democracy is also evidenced by other things, especially in comparison with the situation in the other EU Member States. For example, in a recent study by the Pew Research Center, Poles are more satisfied with the functioning of multi-party democracy than citizens of any other Central European country. Satisfaction with this system is expressed by as much as 85% of respondents<sup>6</sup> (which is even better than the satisfaction with EU membership, according to the same survey<sup>7</sup>). A majority of respondents (66%) approve the way democracy works in Poland on a daily basis. This is an outstanding result compared to a large number of other EU countries, including France, Spain, Italy, Greece, and the United Kingdom, where the majority of respondents to the survey were critical of the functioning of democracy in their

<sup>6</sup> European Public Opinion Three Decades After the Fall of Communism, *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.





**VOTING IN POLISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.  
SOPOT, POLAND, OCTOBER 13, 2019.**

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countries<sup>8</sup>. It is also worth noting that in comparison with the survey conducted in 2009, namely, during the rule of the Civic Platform, the percentage of people satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Poland increased by 13%. Moreover, 65% of respondents believe that things in Poland are going in the right direction. This is much more than in many Western European countries, where pessimistic assessments prevail (e.g., in France, 65% of the population think that things are going in the wrong direction, in Italy, 72% have such an opinion, and in Greece, as much as 82% of the population<sup>9</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

Polish voters are also more convinced than in many other EU Member States that their electoral vote has some meaning. This is the opinion of 71% of respondents, more than, for instance, in France or Germany. In comparison with the beginning of the transformation in Poland, the voters' sense of agency increased by 30%. In comparison with the period of the Civic Platform's government, the voters' sense of agency increased by as much as 24%<sup>10</sup>. It is difficult not to attribute this improvement in the surveys in large part to the greater credibility of the Law and Justice government among voters resulting from the fulfillment of promises made

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 51.



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**PRIME MINISTER MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI, FORMER MINISTER OF FAMILY, LABOR, AND SOCIAL POLICY ELŻBIETA RAFALSKA (NOW MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT) AND FORMER GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN JOANNA KOPCIŃSKA (NOW MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT) DURING A MEETING WITH THE INHABITANTS OF THE RADYMNO MUNICIPALITY, SUMMARIZING THE TWO-YEAR GOVERNMENT PROGRAM "FAMILY 500 PLUS", SKOŁOSZÓW, PODKARPACKIE PROVINCE, MARCH 21, 2018.**

during the campaign. The fact that the mentioned results are a great success of Polish democracy is also confirmed by the phenomenon of the European crisis of voters' sense of influence on the course of public affairs – in France, for example, this sense of influence has decreased by 10% in the last 30 years.

Most Poles also believe that their country acts in the interest of all citizens, not just the elite. Compared to the period of the Civic Platform government, there was a 16% increase in positive opinions on this issue<sup>11</sup>. This may be a result of the expansion of redistribution packages undertaken by the Law and Justice government. However, the satisfaction of citizens not only allows for the continuation of the political mandate obtained from voters but also increases their satisfaction and faith in democracy. Trust in one's own state as acting for the benefit of the whole society is higher in Poland than in Germany or France, for example.

Satisfaction with democracy translates into a sense of satisfaction with European

integration in Polish society. It is significantly higher among Poles than in many Western European countries, e.g., France, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom<sup>12</sup>. Where does such enthusiasm of Poles for integration come from? It seems that this is mainly due to the quality of functioning of national democracy. Voters generally receive what they expect from the government, and, at the same time, the government protects them from the adverse effects of EU integration. The majority of Poles believe that such negative points include illegal immigration from outside Europe and participation in the monetary union. To a large extent, thanks to the attitude of their own government, Polish voters do not feel the negative effects of the migration crisis and the eurozone to the extent that some of the member states do. Thus, they are much more pro-European than, for example, Italians, Greeks, or French.

Satisfaction with the governing of Law and Justice, national democracy, the functioning of the state, and even with

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> Standard Eurobarometer 91, Spring 2019, Public opinion in the European Union, European Commission, 2019, p. 6.

European integration, may result from the good economic situation in Poland. Throughout the previous term, high (as far as Europe is concerned) economic growth – above 5% of GDP in 2018, and low unemployment – below 4% in 2018 – have been maintained<sup>13</sup>. It can also be said that dissatisfaction with one's own governments and the functioning of democracy in some countries of Southern Europe is due to the crisis in the eurozone – which is difficult for the local societies. Although the good economic situation in Poland depends to no small extent on external factors, including the inflow of EU funds and economic symbiosis with Germany, it should be noted that this is also a result of the activities of the government. It skillfully used the inflow of EU funds to Poland, attracted foreign investments, and stimulated internal demand through social programs. Moreover, it did not join the eurozone, which favored the competitiveness of the Polish economy – mainly based on low production costs.

### CONCLUSIONS

The results of parliamentary elections in Poland are, first and foremost, the success of democracy and less a victory for one party or another. This success is based primarily on the fact that voters feel that government decision-makers listen to them and that their participation in elections can change the course of events.

Elections in Poland are held systematically and on time. The opposition participates freely in elections and in some cases, takes power (e.g., recently in local government elections or in the case of the Senate in parliamentary elections). The opposition has full freedom of political action, including the right of assembly and public expression. There are no violent street protests in Poland, such as in France, or

It is difficult to agree with the accusations that the conservative rule threatens Polish democracy. It is quite the opposite. Taking into account the condition of Polish democracy has improved in recent years and is clearly better than in many EU countries.

political prisoners or politicians sought by European Arrest Warrants, like in Spain. In Poland, there is full freedom of expression of political opinions in the media, including the Internet. At the same time, a large part of the media is clearly sympathetic to the opposition. The discussion about the future of the country is emotional in Poland, but it is not restricted by the government in any way, and only has to be held in accordance with the rules of the Polish Constitution.

Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the accusations that the conservative rule threatens Polish democracy. It is quite the opposite. Taking into account the satisfaction of voters from this country and its multi-party political system – the condition of Polish democracy has improved in recent years and is clearly better than in many EU countries.

<sup>13</sup> OECD Economic Outlook, OECD, Paris 2019, pp. 194-195.

# ARE CZECHS RUSSOPHILES?

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PIOTR BAJDA, PROFESSOR

In the public domain, Czechs are considered one of the more pro-Russian nations in Europe. Upon closer inspection, however, this portrait is not so black and white.

**I**ndeed, pro-Russian sentiments have a long tradition in Czech lands. One ought to remember that the Czech Kingdom from the sixteenth century was in the hands of the Habsburgs, whose policy of unifying their lands led to the reduction of privileges for the Czech nobility, and above all, the promotion of Catholicism in areas populated by Protestants who still remember the Hussite movement well. It was the events in the Czech lands that were catalysts for the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, which devastated half of Europe. At the beginning of the conflict, a cataclysm befell the Czechs, after which they were not able to recover for many years. In November 1620, not too far off from Prague,

by Bílá Hora (White Mountain), the imperial army broke up the forces of Protestant insurgents, consisting mainly of local nobility. The remnants of the Czech nobility were deprived of most privileges, castles and land property later given to faithful German-speaking families of Habsburgs, Austrian absolutism was introduced, and the process of re-Catholization began. For the Czechs, the defeat at Bílá Hora was and is still a national trauma, as for the Serbs is the defeat on Kosovo Field or for the Hungarians the Battle of Mohács (in effect, the trauma was further reinforced by the Treaty of Trianon of 1920). However, the most significant consequence of the Thirty Years' War was the decline of Czech culture,



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**A WOMAN BUILDS A SYMBOLIC WALL DURING A PROTEST IN FRONT OF THE PRAGUE CASTLE IN PRAGUE. A SYMBOLIC WALL FROM LARGE PAPER BOXES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN AND CZECH PRESIDENT MILOŠ ZEMAN POINTS OUT TO THE DANGERS OF DISINFORMATION AND HYBRID WARFARE. CZECH REPUBLIC, FEBRUARY 24, 2019.**

reduced to niche folklore. The lack of attractiveness of the Czech culture at that time may be evidenced by the history of the emancipation movement of Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, who chose not the Czech culture as their own but the dominant German culture. That is why Franz Kafka, having lived almost all his life in Prague, did not write a single word in Czech in his works.

This fairly long introduction was necessary, however, to understand a little bit more of the Czech point of view. From the perspective of Prague, dominated by the Habsburgs, in the assessment of recent Czech leading figures and intellectuals resisting the increasingly spreading

German culture, every additional potential ally was invaluable. And the Russians have been able to present themselves for years as defenders of the Slovaks, wanting to protect small Slavic nations against Ottoman, Austrian, Hungarian or German oppression. The example of partitioned Poland was not a sufficient warning for the Slavs, and in effect, over time they succumbed to the image created by Russia. That is why the Czechs became one of the most ardent promoters of Pan-Slavism, the idea of subjecting all Slavic nations to the “protection” of the Russian tsarism. Especially the popularity of Alexander I as the conqueror of Napoleon caused the ideas of Pan-Slavists to become part of the Czech political agenda, a topic of discussion of Prague intellectuals and



**AN EXTERIOR VIEW ON THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, MARCH 26, 2018.**

© MARTIN DIVISEK (PAP/EPA)

philosophers. The awakener of the Slovak nation, Ludoít Štúr, also joined this bloc, who wrote in one of his texts rather bluntly that the best scenario for the Slovaks would be to blend in with Russia.

Inclination to favor Russia amongst the Czechs was strengthened by the founder of Czechoslovakia and its first president, T.G. Masaryk, whose anti-Germanism told him to look for all potential allies. In addition, pro-Russian sympathies were strengthened by the origins of the Czechoslovak Legion, the seed of the later national army, which was formed on Russian territory and after numerous vicissitudes, after participating in the Russian Civil War on the side of the Whites, was evacuated to Czechoslovakia. Masaryk's idea of being closer to Russia entailed his actions aimed at including Transcarpathian Rus, inhabited by Ukrainians and Hungarians, who did not have much in common with the Czechs or Slovaks, in the future Czechoslovak state. The twist of the first Czechoslovakian president was that before a new state was formed with the capital in Prague, Russia changed from tsarist to Bolshevik, but the foundations for strong pro-Russian sympathies were laid.

Further historical research, although difficult because it requires access to Russian archives, could shed new light on the question of whether the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 by intervention of the Warsaw Pact forces (and this was the only operation in the history of this alliance) was not intended to spread out the blame onto other nations, so as not to accuse only the Russians of violating international law and suppressing the pro-democracy movement. After all, the Red Army functioned brutally and effectively in Budapest in 1956, but they preferred to involve others in the operation against Czechoslovakia.

An additional factor influencing the Czechs' attitude towards the Russians is the awareness of being a small nation that does not have enough strength to openly oppose larger nations. Such an attitude was grounded in the Czech Republic especially after the experience of the Munich dictate of 1938, which he aptly described in his perhaps most famous essay by Milan Kundera.<sup>1</sup> A characteristic

<sup>1</sup> *The Stolen West or The Tragedy of Central Europe* (Únos západu aneb tragédie střední Evropy) published in „The New York Review of Books” in 1984 r.

feature of small nations is also their far-reaching pragmatism and this one could argue to be one of the more central factors shaping relations between the Czechs and the Russians

For years, the Czech Republic has been a place where Russians visit most often and not just for short tourist getaways. According to official data, over 40,000 citizens of the Russian Federation cite the Czech Republic as their permanent residence. The Czech Republic is the fourth most popular settlement place for the Russians, after the USA, Germany and Latvia. For some of the Russian newcomers, obtaining a right to reside in the Czech Republic is a kind of insurance policy for the private property they have accumulated if they fell to the rulers in Russia. According to other statistics, over 15,000 companies registered in the Czech Republic are owned by Russians, although the capital invested by them is not that impressive, as it does not exceed EUR 400 million. Some Czechs do complain that the influx of Russians is pushing property prices in the main city to sky-high values, but most see nothing wrong in the Rubles invested on the Vltava River. The Czechs will be offering a high standard of living for a long time to the Russians for a relatively small price, so this is the place chosen by the middle class, which cannot afford to live at the same level in London, New York or Berlin. But this hospitality, however, has certain limits and in recent weeks public opinion may have heard of several spectacular actions aimed at the Russians operating on the territory of the Czech Republic.

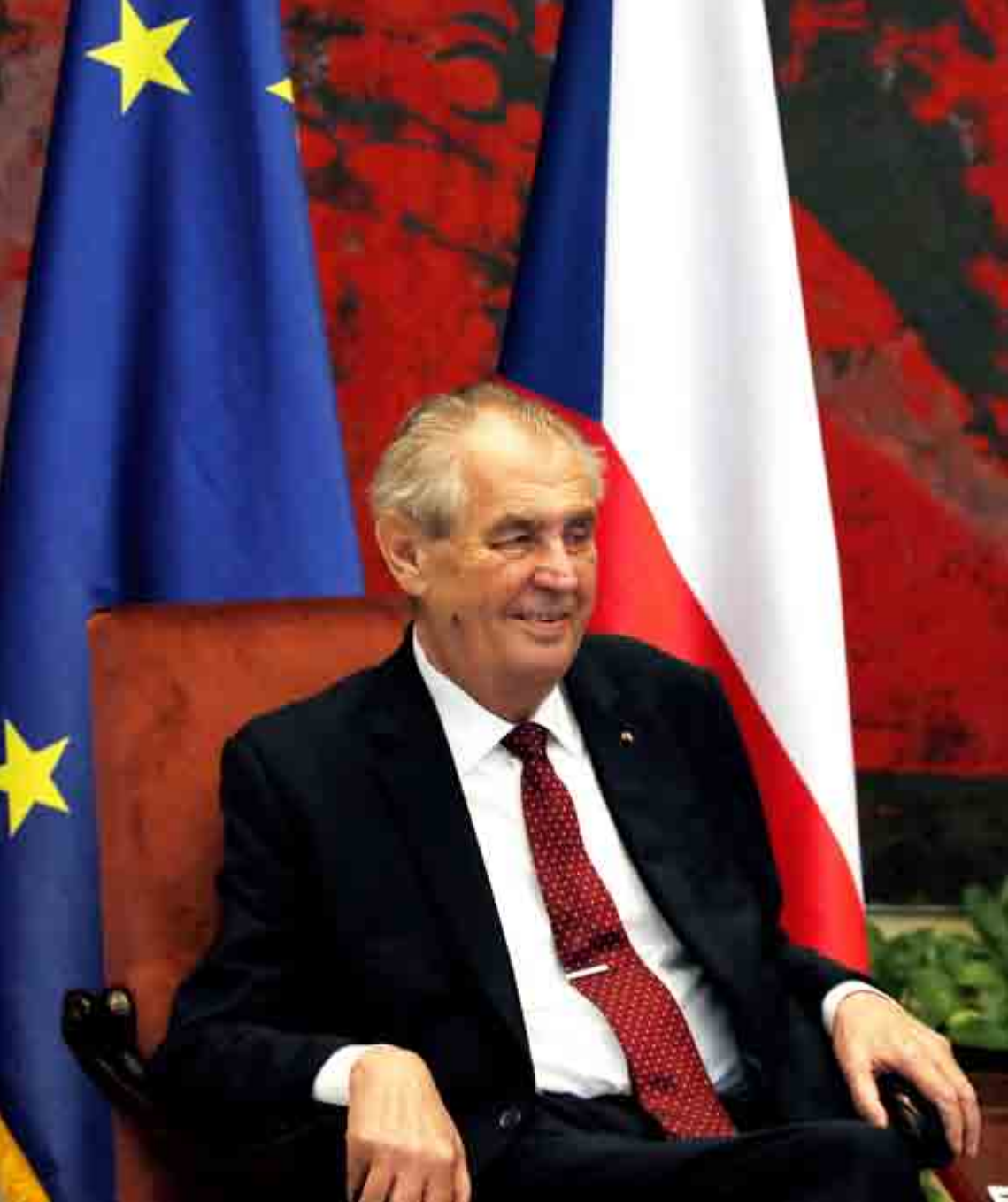
Unlike the Slovaks, who in this case are relatively passive, and Hungarians, who in this case are relatively reluctant, the Czechs, with openness to Russian investments, are sensitive to any attempts to cross the red line and actions that are to the detriment of national security. Firstly, they are aware of the threats, and the

role of Prague as a new center of Russian activities going beyond their territory. Nearly 50 diplomats and 80 technical support staff work at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Prague (in addition, the Russians have a consulate in Ostrava, Brno and Karlovy Vary). This is quite a lot for a country of ten million, definitely more than in Budapest or Bratislava, and only a little less than in Warsaw. A tourist attraction that adds a bit of spiciness is the little-known history of the building of the Russian Embassy in Prague, which is located at *Náměstí Pod kaštiny nr. 1*, which was the seat of the Gestapo during the German occupation.

This overrepresentation of Russian diplomats for several years to decision-makers and a broader opinion is highlighted by the Czech counterintelligence Security Information Service, or *Bezpečnostní informační služba (BIS)*, in their annual reports publicly available. Articles appearing in the media are increasingly stating that a large proportion of Russian diplomats are suspected of having links with their intelligence services, and Prague itself has overtaken the role of Vienna as the center of espionage in this part of Europe. In its annual reports, BIS does not hide that it considers the measures taken by the Russian Federation and China to be the greatest threat to the security of the Czech Republic (in this order<sup>2</sup>). BIS directly indicates that the Czech Republic is the target of Russian hybrid operations, and Russian secret service officers operate under diplomatic cover to source sources and gain access to strategic classified information.

It should be noted that the Czechs have long been aware of the hybrid war carried out by Russia today against the broadly

<sup>2</sup> The last report from 2017 was published in December 2018, is available here: <https://www.bis.cz/public/site/bis.cz/content/vyrocní-zpravy/en/ar2017en.pdf>



CZECH PRESIDENT MILOŠ ZEMAN. SERBIA, SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

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understood West. At the beginning of 2017, as part of the structure of the Ministry of the Interior, a special unit was established to operate the Counterterrorism Center and Combating Hybrid Threats, or *Centrum Proti terorismu a hybridním hrozbám* (CTHH)<sup>3</sup>, and in August of the same year, the National Office for Cybernetic and Information Security, or *Národní úřad pro*

*kybernetickou a informační bezpečnost* (NÚKIB) responsible for cyber security and protection of classified information. Of course, none of the supporting documents explicitly state that this is a response to threats from the Russian side, but when publishing information about new institutions, the national security audit in the Czech Republic was cited and published at the end of 2015, where specific threats were discussed in greater detail.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mvcr.cz/cthh/clanek/centre-against-terrorism-and-hybrid-threats.aspx>



But not only in reports does BIS fight against Russian actions aimed at Czech security. Prague took advantage of the possibility of firing four Russian diplomats suspected of having contact with special services after attempting to poison Sergei Skripal, thus responding positively to the British call to allies for diplomatic retaliation, which Slovakia, for example, did not choose. And in recent weeks, the media has widely reported on the operation of the Czech services, which resulted in the breakup of a group of Russian hackers operating undercover in two IT companies.

The pro-Russian image of the Czechs is also at odds with the activity of numerous expert centers and various types of associations exposing Kremlin propaganda and channels disseminating them. The most interesting cases include the think tank European Values Center for Security Policy, or *Evropské hodnoty*, which features a launched 'Kremlin Watch' program, showing Russian activity in a public space<sup>4</sup>.

And although the Kremlin propaganda is on its backfoot, the Russians are not among those who easily give up. They still enjoy abundant opportunities to try to impose their narrative. On the one hand, they can count on the understanding approach of President Miloš Zeman. The Russian point of view on many international issues is shared by the majority of deputies representing the Czech communists (*Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy*, KSČM, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia) and the right-wing populist party of Freedom and Direct Democracy (*Svoboda a přímá demokracie*, SPD, Freedom and Direct Democracy), headed by Tomio Okamura, a politician with Japanese-Czech roots. The *sputnik.cz* portal is active in the

media, the website *www.parlamentnilisty.cz* and several others are also included in the pro-Russian media. The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Prague can always count on a group of social activists or scientists from smaller academic centers who can organize events in line with Russian narrative. For example, two years ago, in November 2017, a 'scientific' conference was organized in Prague titled '*Is Russophobia the 21st Century Anti-Semitism?*', which was promoted by, among others, the aforementioned parliamentary portal<sup>5</sup>.

Fortunately, in the Czech ruling elite, one can notice a growing awareness that the Kremlin is not a friend of the EU and NATO. Only setting a border delineating a clear red line can be an effective message that if it is crossed, the aggressor will be met with a firm response. The group of such thinking decision-makers not includes only President Zeman, but his actions that have been limited to punishing BIS head Michał Koudelka by blocking his nomination to General for several years, or words of harsh criticism against the interior minister that decided the opening of the hybrid threat center – CTHH.

So the Czechs will remain sensitive to Russian culture, open to Russian investments and the money flowing behind it, but Russian spies do not and will not have it as easy as we might think at first glance.

**Piotr Bajda** ■  
November 2019

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kremlinwatch.eu/#welcome>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/nazory-a-petice/Rusofobie-antisemitismus-21-stoleti-Pozvanka-na-debatu-s-ceskymi-experty-na-Rusko-509758>

# THE DEMOGRAPHIC FUTURE OF EASTERN EUROPE

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MATEUSZ ŁAKOMY

The demographic outlook for Eastern Europe has a bittersweet taste. The region may suffer considerably from low fertility rates, but it may manage to get around the biggest changes associated with migration.

## **IS DEMOGRAPHY DESTINY?**

Predicting the future is thought to be a domain of magicians and fortune-tellers, who try to read the future through the stars or crystal balls. Modern day fortune-tellers, however, include demographers who use completely different instruments – statistical models and in-depth scientific research on population trends.

Statistical population forecasting is a complex task, but with some analytical effort, it is feasible, and importantly, reliable. It is carried out by many

institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, Eurostat, the national statistical institutes, and various independent scientific centers. Based on assumptions about fertility, migration, and longevity, they issue estimates about the expected evolution of population size.

What helps with forecasting is the acknowledgement that changes in demography occur slowly; when a significant demographic momentum occurs. In 2019, we can say that we already know the number of parents of children

born in 2040 because almost all of them have already been born – which is a fundamental basis for the number of births of that year. As far as the average family size is concerned, it is subject to long-term trends, the results of which are predictable. If no dramatic, almost revolutionary external intervention happens in the form of new stimuli, the predicted number of children born can be statistically modeled.

Although dramatic changes cannot be predicted, it is to be expected that some will happen – the only unknown thing is whether they will stimulate fertility or lead to its decline. Several revolutions happened in the second half of the 20th century, two of which include: the contraceptive revolution after the invention of the contraceptive pill and the revolution in the value system, consisting in the spread of individualism, clearly had a negative impact on the birth rate, leading to significant corrections in earlier predictions.

Demographic projections do not, therefore, have to necessarily be treated as an incontestable forecast. However, they must be treated as a warning signal of what can happen if there is no significant intervention. In this respect, they are a call to action for politicians whose determined action may lead to diametrically different population sizes.

Eastern Europe is a region having its demographic specificity. Its experience of recent decades has been shaped by social and economic transformation after the collapse of the communist system, the related developmental delay, accession to the European Union (for most countries), and the absorption – to a varying extent in individual countries – of Western cultural trends. These factors led to a decline in fertility rates and specific migratory dynamics, which, in almost every country in the region, led to a decline in fertility

rates after the collapse of the communist system.

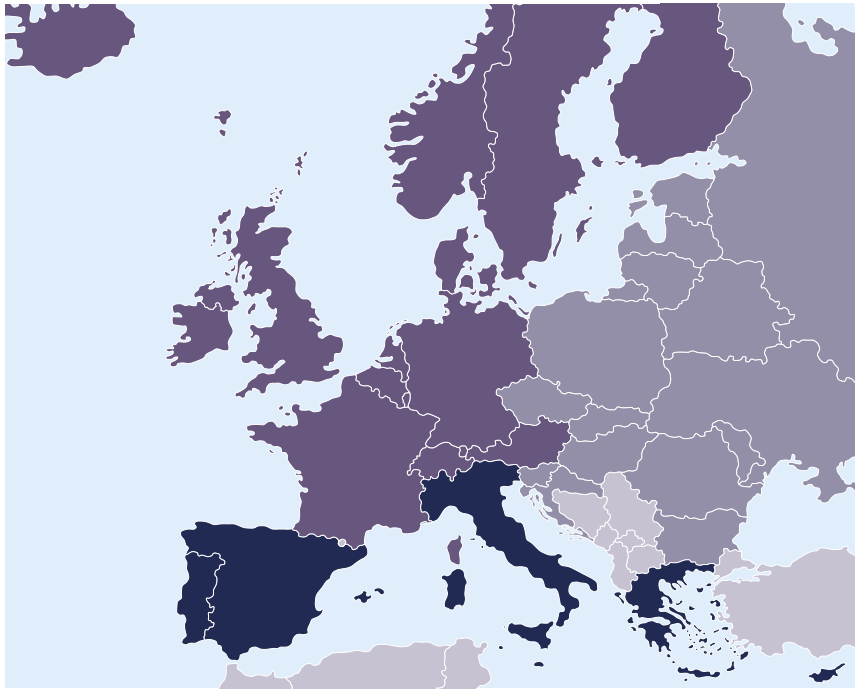
According to demographic projections, there will be a further decline in population size. For the purpose of this article, the United Nations' demographic projections<sup>1</sup> from June 2019 until 2100 were used in two variants: standard, assuming the current demographic indicators will remain unchanged, and probabilistic, resulting from the calculation of differentiated scenarios based on the analysis of overlapping differentiated trends. In both scenarios, the projected population of Eastern Europe will fall by more than 25%, respectively, and by 40%, if nothing changes. These are different trends than in Western Europe, where the probabilistic variant predicts a nearly 4% increase in population size. Trends in Southern Europe show even deeper declines than in Eastern Europe, with a standard variant exceeding 50% of the 2019 population.

Demographers expect all countries in the Eastern European region to be more or less affected by a decline in population. Projections are rather pessimistic for Bulgaria, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Poland, which in the standard (unchanged) variant lose almost 60% of their current population, while in the probabilistic variant almost always above 40%. Slightly better projections are forecast for Romania, Latvia, and Estonia. In this context, slighter, but still deep falls are expected in Hungary, Slovakia and Belarus, and even less dramatic future is predicted for Russia, whose population losses should not significantly exceed 25%. A separate category is a situation in the Czech Republic, which is the only one in the

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition; Internet resource, available at <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/>, accessed: 20.06.2019.

## Total Fertility Rate of European Countries by Region in 2010 and 2016-2017



WESTERN EUROPE
  EASTERN EUROPE
  SOUTHERN EUROPE

MEDIAN 2016-2017	STATE	TOTAL FERTILITY RATE		CHANGE 2010-2017
		2010	2016-2017	
1,62	FRANCE	2,03	1,85	0,18
	IRELAND	2,05	1,78	-0,27
	SWEDEN	1,98	1,78	-0,20
	DENMARK	1,87	1,77	-0,10
	UNITED KINGDOM	1,92	1,76	-0,16
	ICELAND	2,20	1,71	-0,49
	BELGIUM	1,86	1,68	-0,18
	NORWAY	1,95	1,62	-0,33
	LIECHTENSTEIN	1,40	1,61	0,21
	NETHERLANDS	1,79	1,60	-0,19
	GERMANY	1,39	1,59	0,20
	AUSTRIA	1,44	1,53	0,09
	FINLAND	1,87	1,49	-0,39
	SWITZERLAND	1,52	1,48	-0,04
	LUXEMBOURG	1,63	1,41	-0,22
	1,59	LATVIA	1,36	1,74
BEARUS		1,47	1,73	0,27
LITHUANIA		1,50	1,69	0,19
RUSSIA		1,57	1,66	0,09
ROMANIA		1,59	1,64	0,05
CZECH REPUBLIC		1,51	1,63	0,12
ESTONIA		1,72	1,60	-0,12
SLOVENIA		1,57	1,58	0,01
BULGARIA		1,57	1,54	-0,03
HUNGARY		1,25	1,53	0,28
SLOVAKIA		1,43	1,48	0,05
POLAND		1,41	1,45	0,04
1,36	CROATIA	1,55	1,42	-0,13
	UKRAINE	1,43	1,35	-0,08
	GREECE	1,48	1,38	-0,10
	CYPRUS	1,44	1,37	-0,07
	MALTA	1,36	1,37	0,01
	PORTUGAL	1,39	1,36	-0,03
	SPAIN	1,37	1,34	-0,03
	ITALY	1,46	1,34	-0,12

probabilistic variant to have an almost untouched population.

Since demographic projections are, in fact, the art of interpreting trends, the question is what demographic trends the countries of Eastern Europe are subject to. Understanding them will help to understand better what demographic fate awaits the countries of the region in the future.

### **THE END OF THE EAST-WEST DIVIDE?**

Eastern Europe has long been different from Western Europe in terms of fertility. Social and economic changes beginning the decline of the formerly universally high fertility rates began in Western Europe as early as the end of the 18th century. They only reached Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century, and in the first half of the century, they spread slowly and not in all regions, resulting in maintaining significantly higher fertility rates.

By creating a barrier against the diffusion of the effects of the cultural revolution, popularization of many contraceptive methods, and promotion of professional aspirations of women, the period of communism was encouraging the preservation of relatively higher fertility rates – at a time when their levels in the West were nearly at an all-time low. The transformation period after the fall of communism, however, was marked by the opposite trends – the fertility rate of Eastern European countries plummeted, reaching its lowest levels at the beginning of the 21st century, while the fertility rate of many Western countries – with the single exceptions of Southern countries and German-speaking countries – started to rise again.

However, a change occurred in the second decade of the 21st century. The fertility

rate in most Eastern European countries has started to rise, while in many Western European countries, it has fallen slightly again. This has led to the convergence of fertility rates between these regions. However, fertility rates remained low among the countries of the South. As a result, a new demographic divide in Europe between the North and the South is emerging before our very eyes, with the border at the top of the mountain ranges – the Pyrenees, the Alps, and South to the Pindus and the Rhodopes.

### **POORER THAN THEIR PARENTS?**

There is one obvious consequence of the decrease in the fertility rate – demographic aging. This means an increase in the percentage of older people, including those at retirement age, at the expense of younger people – the employed and children. To preserve fiscal sustainability given the pressure to increase pension expenditure, policymakers will be faced with one of three options: reducing the population of pensioners and increasing the number of employees, e.g., by increasing the retirement age or activating the so-far unemployed, reducing pension, or mobilizing additional resources.

For the countries of the European Union, the European Commission has prepared forecasts<sup>2</sup> of the impact of current demographic trends and the maintenance of current rules of social policies on budget expenditures and benefits for pensioners. The influence on the level of pensions in Eastern European countries measured by the so-called replacement rate – the ratio of the first pension of those who retire in a given year over the average wage at retirement – will be differentiated.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2018). The 2018 Ageing Report Economic & Budgetary Projections for the 28 EU Member States (2016-2070), European Economy Institutional Papers, Institutional Paper 079, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Demographic dynamics will not harm retired Bulgarians, Hungarians, Czechs, and Romanians who can even expect some improvement in replacement rates. This is particularly important for Romanians and Bulgarians who are currently starting from low positions. A slight reduction is expected in Slovakia. The countries most at risk include Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Estonia, where replacement rates will fall to less than 1/3, and usually even less than 1/4, of the last salary. Estimates indicate that about 70% of Poles born at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s will receive only a minimum pension<sup>3</sup>. What is particularly worth noting is the scale of the fall in the replacement rate for Poland and Latvia – which will fall by more than half.

However, can we believe scenarios that predict significant decreases in the replacement rate? As the number of retired people in democratic societies increases, their political importance is expected to increase. It will be more than tempting for politicians to win their support by limiting pension falls. The means for this may be to obtain funds by redirecting them from other areas of public expenditure, which would lead to the crowding-out effect. These sources of funding can be, for instance, other significant domains of public spendings – such as national defense, schooling, education, or investment – which would, at the same time, jeopardize security and productivity growth.

The second source of funds for pension expenditure is additional taxation of employees, limiting their disposable income. With growing consumer aspirations, it may increase the impact on the decline in satisfaction with the

standard of living which could stimulate an eventual spiral effect of further reduction in the number of children – in line with the mechanism of the “*low fertility trap*” – if I do not have enough money for myself, why generate another big expense in the form of a child?

### **A NEW FACE OF EASTERN EUROPE?**

Migration is a characteristic sign of our times. It is the most difficult element to forecast in demographic projections due to a high dependence on internal changes in sending countries and immigration policies of host countries. Even determining what the scale of historic migrations is problematic – it is not surprising, therefore, that the most precise answer to the question of what migration will be like in the future is “unknown.”

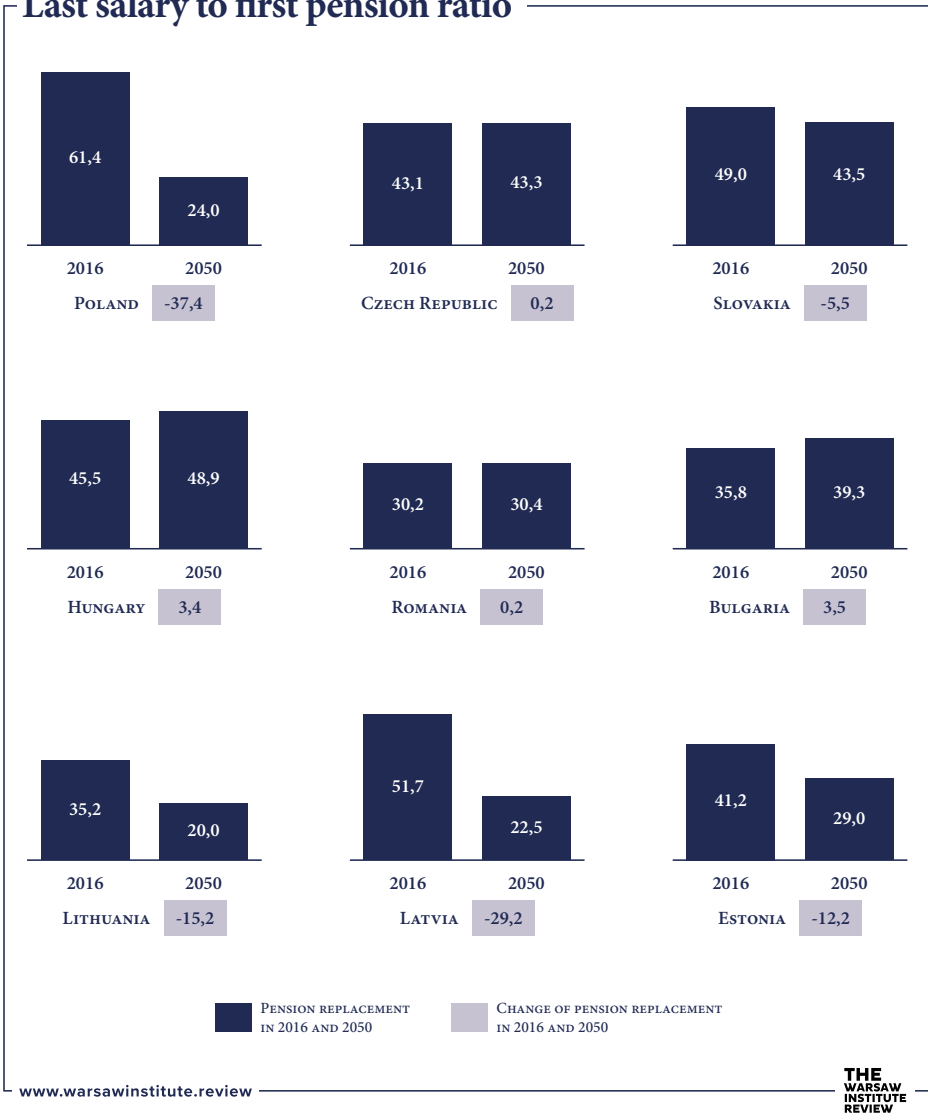
In the future, however, migrations will certainly occur, and for the needs of population projection, some accepted assumptions should be made. The UN bases its projections until the end of the 21st century on historical trends. They present estimates of net migration – the difference between immigration and emigration. According to this calculation, all regions of Europe are to be net immigration regions. The Eastern European region will absorb nearly 8 million migrants within 80 years – a scale comparable to that of Southern Europe, but only 1/6 of what the UN expects for Western Europe.

A closer look at individual countries allows us to conclude that the positive balance of migration in the region is mainly due to Russia and the Czech Republic.

These data, however, may not fully reflect the potential of migration flows because apart from extrapolation of trends, they are based on official register data of individual countries (for instance in Poland, an emigrant is understood as a

<sup>3</sup> Bielecki M., Makarski K., Tyrowicz J., Lowering retirement age. What will be its effects? Internet resource, available at <http://grape.org.pl/policy/obnizanie-wieku>, accessed: 25.06.2019.

Last salary to first pension ratio



person who checked out from the place of residence in Poland, and citizens who have left without such a formality, which includes the vast majority of those who leave are not treated as emigrants), supplemented by estimates of labor migration, undocumented migration, and refugee migration.

The migration lesson from 2015 additionally shows that one-off events may also force a significant revision of projections based on historical trends. The Gallup Institute, therefore, uses a different

approach to estimating the potential of migration, based on aspirational surveys conducted in 152 countries of the world, to discover the Potential Net Migration Index<sup>4</sup>, identified by asking the following question: „How much would the population of any given country change if everyone who wanted to move to another country actually moved.”

<sup>4</sup> Gallup Institute (2018). Potential Net Migration Index, Internet resource, available at: <http://news.gallup.com/migration/interactive.aspx>, accessed: 21.06.2019.

For the Eastern European countries, the result is clear – all the countries of the region would lose its population. The region is not even attractive enough to attract people from countries with high demographic growth in Africa or West Asia to compensate for the emigration of their own population. Ukraine, Lithuania, and Romania would bear the biggest losses – amounting even to 1/4 of their populations. On the other hand, a relatively mild 5% change would affect Russia and the Czech Republic. Other countries would have to deal with population losses of several percents. In total, the region would lose 34.5 million people.

A different picture is predicted for Western European countries, where, without exception, many more people want to come to than leave. If all these migration ideals were to be realized, the population of Western Europe would grow by 145 million. This is much more than the potential migration losses of Eastern Europe, which shows that the West is a desirable direction of immigration also from non-European countries.

Gallup's research demonstrates the potential for migration in the period when the study was conducted. Over time, however, immigration pressure on Europe may increase. Over the next 80 years, the UN estimates indicate an increase in the African population to 4.28 billion in the probabilistic variant, to an unimaginable 9.9 billion in the standard, but unrealistic scenario.

The African population also wants to emigrate, and the percentage of people willing to migrate is increasing. According to the 2015-17 Gallup study, 33% of the population of sub-Saharan African countries would like to leave their country permanently if they could. This is an

increase from 30% in the 2010-12 study<sup>5</sup>. The number of Africans willing to migrate South of the Sahara amount, therefore, to 350 million. If the percentage of people willing to migrate maintains, by 2050 – within 30 years, the number of potential migrants will at least double and reach between 700 and 800 million. Some of them will stay in their countries, some of the migration will be absorbed by other African countries, but some of them will aim at a rich Europe.

The degree of implementation of these scenarios depends on structural changes within the African population. Education plays a special role here. Estimates suggest that with universal education at its current level, Africa's population will grow to 3.2 billion by 2060, while if universal education were to grow rapidly, the continent's population would only grow to 1.9 billion<sup>6</sup>.

Can possible future migration flows from Africa bypass Eastern Europe? Demographic theory indicates that there will be a „*migration transition*” in Eastern Europe<sup>7</sup> – the existing net emigration countries will become net immigration countries as they develop. In some countries of the region, especially Poland and the Czech Republic, this process has already begun. It is expected that the relative immigration attractiveness of

<sup>5</sup> Esipova, N., Pugliese, A., Ray, J. (2018) More Than 750 Million Worldwide Would Migrate If They Could, Internet resource, available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245255/750-million-worldwide-migrate.aspx>, accessed: 21.06.2019.

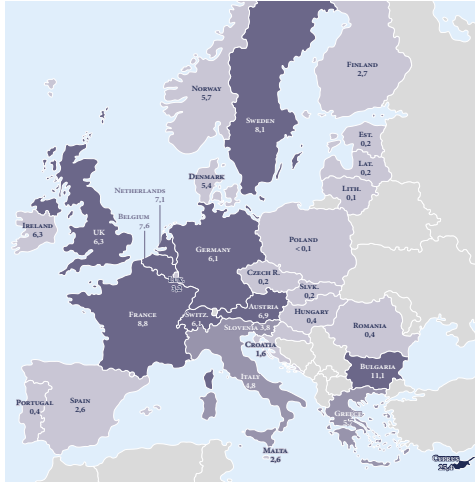
<sup>6</sup> Lutz W. (Ed.), Amran G., Bélanger A., Conte A., Gailey N., Ghio D., Grapsa E., Jensen K., Loichinger E., Marois G., Muttarak R., Potančoková M., Sabourin P., Stonawski M. (2019) Demographic Scenarios for the EU - Migration, Population and Education, EUR 29739 EN, Publications Office, Luxembourg.

<sup>7</sup> De Haas, H. (2010). Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration, *DEMIG, Working Paper* No. 24, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

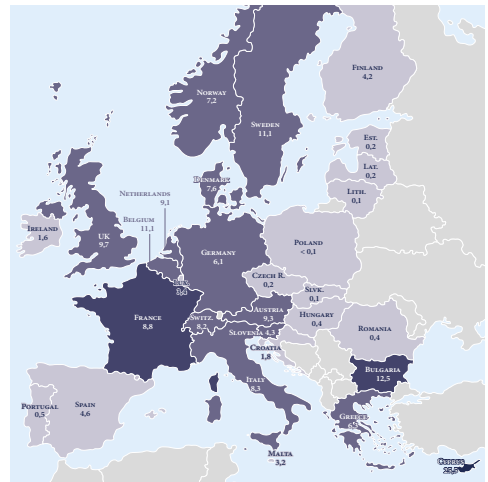


Migration Scenarios in Europe

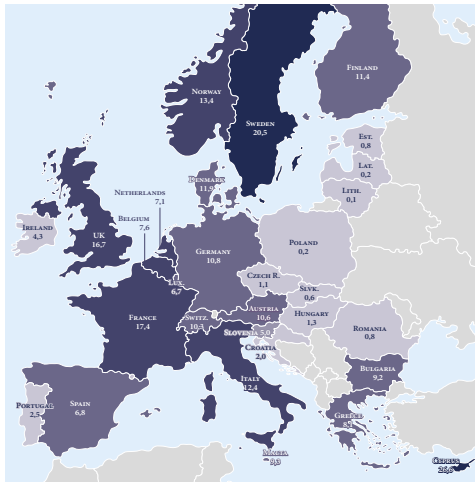
Europe's population in 2016



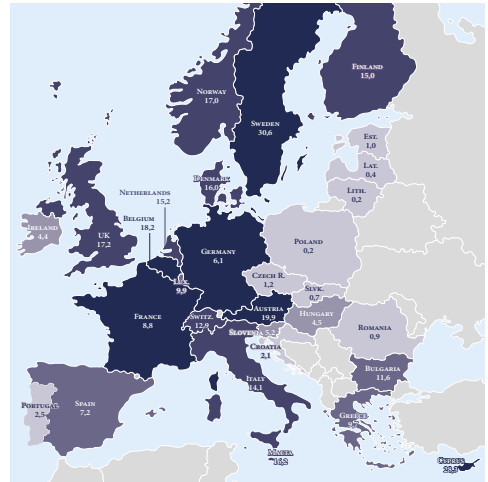
Zero migration scenario



Medium migration scenario



High migration scenario



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the countries of the region for Africans will increase as the region converges to Western European standards of income and standards of living. In such a situation, the net immigration scale may, over time, exceed current estimates.

**EASTERN EUROPE AND MUSLIMS?**

The second question about the future of migration, other than the number of migrants, is also the internal structure of the latter. Migration in 2015 particularly highlighted the issue of how many

potential migrants will be Muslims. The answer to this question requires an assessment of which migration scenarios may be considered<sup>8</sup>. The „*zero migration*” scenario assumes that all migration to Europe will be stopped. In this scenario, however, the percentage of Muslims in Europe will increase because there is currently a relatively higher percentage of potential parents in this religious group, and they have a higher fertility rate. The „*probabilistic migration*” scenario assumes that refugee migrations will be stopped, but „*regular*” migrations – for purposes other than seeking asylum – will continue. Finally, the „*high migration*” scenario assumes that the average migration level from 2014 to 2016 will be maintained.

In contrast to Western European countries, none of the scenarios envisages a significant increase in the percentage of Muslims in Eastern European countries. The countries with the lowest percentage of Muslims at present and not located in the areas of the main migratory routes – Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia – are the most resilient to the increase in the percentage of Muslims. In the probabilistic scenario, the percentage of Muslims in Hungary, Estonia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic is rising. In the event of an unrealistic scenario of high migration, it would be Hungary that would most increase the share of the Muslim population.

These forecasts, however, assuming the application of historical trends, cannot predict unpredictable changes in the migratory pressure in African countries, changes in migration policies

of European countries, and changes in migration attractiveness of Eastern European countries. However, it is unlikely that the future reality for the countries of the region will surpass the estimates for the scenario of high migration.

The demographic crystal ball does not give certain and unambiguous answers as to the future of Eastern Europe. However, it gives us directional answers that allow us to assess the prospect situation. If trends are maintained, we can expect a significant decline in the region’s population and in the living standards of elderly people in a big part of the world. However, the region is unlikely to be a destination for significant numbers of non-European migrants – Muslims in particular.

The method of demographic forecasting, with its hidden trace of uncertainty, can arouse both fear and hope. The future reality may differ a lot from the image drawn by extrapolating trends: social changes or deep political interventions may produce a completely different history. Therefore, we should draw conclusions from the lesson before it was even given to us and make consistent changes to prevent the events which should be interpreted negatively. Political will and determination are, in this case, the key to our future. What is it really going to look like? The cards are, after all, still on the table.

**Mateusz Łakomy** ■  
November 2019

<sup>8</sup> Hackett, C., Stonawski, M., Potančoková, M., Connor, P., Shi, A.F., Kramer, S., Marshall, J. (2019) Projections of Europe’s Growing Muslim Population Under Three Migration Scenarios, *Journal of Religion and Demography*, 6(2019), 87-122.

# COMMUNIST CHINA

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PRZEMYSŁAW GLINKA

In 1991, Poland saw its first fully free elections – since the end of World War II – to the Sejm and the Senate, the lower and upper houses of the Polish parliament. It is no exaggeration to say that for Poland, the first country to oppose the joint aggression by Germany and Soviet Russia that began that war, this was a pivotal moment.

**F**or Poles, the war erupted on September 1, 1939, yet starting from May 8, 1945, when nations across Western Europe celebrated the fall of Hitler's Germany and the triumph over his state's total, leftist and national-socialist ideology, they, along with other Central and Eastern European nations: Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, and Bulgarians, were falling into the ever-tightening grip of the Iron Curtain. In these countries, power was seized by communists, chiefly through violence, rigged elections, and the violation of all democratic standards

and principles, both under control of the Soviet repressive apparatus and, unfortunately, with the idleness of Western States. New authorities could thus impose a new order under the dictation of the Soviet Union, the world's first-ever country with communism as its official state ideology. In consequence, when moving into the era of the Cold War, Central and Eastern European countries found themselves both in Moscow's sphere of influence and in the clutches of the Soviet-imposed communist dictatorship – the state of affairs that endured till the fall of communism in Europe and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991.



**XI JINPING, PAINTED PORTRAIT.**

Of all countries within the post-Soviet zone of influence, Poland was amongst the last to hold a free election, albeit that during both World War II and afterward, Polish society appeared most determined in its unceasing fight for regaining independence. It would seem that Western democracies and Poles, both having in mind their experiences of communism, would unequivocally denounce the movement, labeling it as fundamentally bad, wrong, unruly, and anti-liberty. Just as it will be impossible to welcome any circles, institutions, or organizations, or — last but not least — statehoods that ostentatiously flaunt their attachment to the communist ideology. Unfortunately, following the occurrences of the Cold War era, Soviet Gulags (which cost at least three million lives), Ukraine’s Holodomor (Great Famine; caused by the collectivization policy that contributed greatly to the artificially created famine that killed at least 3.5 million people), all these culminated by the institutional collapse of the Soviet Union, not everyone in the West has drawn adequate conclusions from the consequences of communism.

Despite a significant dose of resistance, chiefly from the present-day United States — a country that served a preponderant role in World War I and II as well as in the dismantling of Soviet Russia — and some sober-minded observers of political life in Europe, also in its Central and Eastern regions, there is still a great deal of fascination with the People’s Republic of China, a country that has assumed primacy in lighting “*the flame of the world revolution*” of Marxism. It is evident that the perspectives and insights on its geopolitical, economic, and cultural phenomena are dumbfoundingly wide-ranging, and making sense of them is an uphill task, which attests to the lack of understanding of the role aspired by present-day communist China. All the alleged benefits and advantages, both

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What remains unjustified is the fascination with “Chinese success” while completely glossing over that Mao Zedong established the most criminal system ever seen by the civilized world.

stemming from tight cooperation with its country, also economic one that Chinese communists often tend to come down to tightening reliance of said country on China.

Whilst tackling this profound polemic in its entirety here is impractical, it is, however, worthwhile to attempt to provide a brief indication of what communist China, the Communist Party of China, and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army are, and what they have to offer to the world. Furthermore, it is worth answering the questions who we are, as Western people, what values guide our lives, and how we imagine the further existence of Western civilization. In doing so, it is inadvisable to have recourse to certain simplifications or arguments showing that both prior to World War II and afterward, Western democracies maintained relations — both economic and diplomatic — with Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. This should corroborate that, any attempts to coexist with the People’s Republic of China, arrive at some consensus, or maintain and nurture ties, can be considered as being natural and understandable. Even so, what remains unjustified is the fascination with “Chinese success” — which is a far-fetched

statement — while completely glossing over that Mao Zedong established the most criminal system ever seen by the civilized world; the system that claimed more lives (at least 70 million) than Soviet Bolshevism and Nazi national socialism put together. Bearing in mind attempts to retain an academic point of view and remaining attached to values such as freedom, justice or the elementary decency, one could neither accept or at least make an effort to understand that today's communist China has switched its methods and means of accomplishing goals, the latter of which yet remained intact in various official speeches, as was repeatedly pointed out by the subsequent leaders of the state.

Promulgating Marxist and Maoist ideologies, socio-political and economic, utopian, highly centralized doctrine characterized by a mono-party system along with strong economic nationalization and narrowing down civil liberties and freedoms. A Marxist philosophical system that relies on the synthesis of materialism and dialectics. Each subsequent plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China confirms Beijing's urge to follow "*the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics*" under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and to unite closer behind President Xi Jinping while nurturing "*the People's Liberation Army absolute loyalty to the party*." Also, communist party members repeatedly insist on consolidating ideological control and measures to build "socialist values."

The leader of communist China, Xi Jinping, tends to define communism as an outcome of a long process, viewing the ideology as the party's leading ideal that is worth both struggling for and making the highest sacrifices. What gives legitimacy to the authorities are economic successes, both at home and abroad. Besides purely economic tools, the Chinese

party disseminates its doctrine through ideological campaigns and repressions, the latter embracing total surveillance techniques that target China's society, as well as any — often a well-thought-out — activity on the international stage. This refers to both the economy, acting in accordance with the "*through-stomach-to-heart*" principle ("*Pecunia non olet*" — or, as the saying goes, money does not stink), and culture — seen by the incumbent president of communist China as a critical tool for endorsing Marxism and the further build-up of communist ideals — by creating an image of an enlightened or smiled state that voices concerns over order and peaceful prosperity of societies. "*Sustainable and lasting development*" of the whole world, where communism offers both legal and institutional framework, "*ecological civilization*," "*social justice*," the advance of globalism that employs various institutions to push forward an official ideology.

Xi Jinping has emphasized that Mao Zedong — having founded the People's Republic of China — enabled the communist Chinese to "set off on a noble and wonderful journey" while present-day China "*stand at the gate of the world*" and "*no force shall prevent the Chinese nation from moving forward*." President of the People's Republic of China believes that by deploying a way different tactics — based on the apparent capitalization of the economy — socialism is bound to triumph over capitalism, arguing that "*both history and reality tell us that only socialism can save China*." Moreover, "*capitalism is inevitably bound to die out and socialism (dubbed full of vitality) is bound to win*" because "*Marx and Engels' analysis of the basic contradictions in capitalist society is not outdated*." Addressing his fellow comrades at a gathering of China's Communist Party in Beijing, Xi Jinping insisted that "*the Marxism of 21st century China will emanate more mighty, more*



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**CHINESE PARAMILITARY POLICEMEN MARCH OUTSIDE THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE AFTER ATTENDING A CEREMONY HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY IN BEIJING, CHINA, 01 AUGUST 2017.**

*compelling power of truth,*” promising that “*the banner of socialism will always fly high over Chinese soil*” under “*the leadership of the Communist Party of China.*” President of China has continually urged Chinese youngsters to “*devote themselves to work for the Communist Party*” while “*exhibiting gratitude to the party, state, society and nation*” by “*the conscious cultivation and observance of core socialist values.*” As for culture, both the proper ideology and interests of the People’s Republic of China should be sustained throughout the world by the global network of Confucius Institutes, with China’s ambition to expand it to as many as 1,000 branches around the world in an attempt to spread its ideology. Furthermore, in communist China itself, universities have set up Communist Party departments to oversee “*political and ideological work*” with a mission of disseminating socialist ideologies amongst academic teachers and students, while the latter group is subject to “*re-education*” training after spending some time at Western universities.

This may be concluded from a series of Xi’s speeches at party sessions as well as media reports. To sum up, what is worth

emphasizing is that the PRC’s current political system is strongly marked by the Communist Party’s primacy over society and its full control of all spheres of state life. Furthermore, contrarily to what is said, these hold interest in promulgating this way of living throughout the world. Nonetheless, Xi Jinping is more and more inclined to refer to any views that see communist ideology in terms of a merit, while his fellow party members are obliged to study the thoughts of their “*spiritual father,*” and they account for the extent to which they grasped what their “*enlightened and beloved leader*” meant to say. Undoubtedly, what deserves respect is the fact that the president of communist China openly says what goals his country hopes to set while often indicating adequate instruments used for their implementation, both now and in the future.

Nevertheless, what seems incomprehensible is that Western politicians and intellectuals seem not to understand or do not want to grasp this message, often reminding about the urge to nurture democratic values, free market economy, respect for the dignity of life,



**CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING AND DELEGATES STAND DURING THE SINGING OF THE CHINESE NATIONAL ANTHEM AT A CEREMONY HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE IN BEIJING, CHINA, 01 AUGUST 2017.**

cultural values of Christian civilization, personal freedom, and preserving capitalist order. In particular, also by those who seem to stress their perceiving of history and reality through the lens of conservative, national and libertarian beliefs. Worse enough, many do not even bother to hide their fascination with the People's Republic of China, overtly calling for tightening an alliance with communist China (in Poland, there has even emerged an outlandish idea to build Fort Xi, or to deploy China's People's Liberation Army as an alternative to the U.S. military build-up on Polish soil — branded as Fort Trump. The former concept was pushed forward by a Polish politician considering himself

a “conservative” and who was elected to the lower house of the Polish parliament in the country's latest vote) or deepening economic cooperation that serves as a tool for building an eternal, socialist land of happiness.

It is worthwhile to note that rumors saying that China is soon bound to become a leading actor in the global economy are exaggerated and serve as an alibi for countries that seek to forge a deeper alliance with Beijing. Back in the past, Soviet leaders put forward similar theses on the inevitable dominance of their country's economy while the 1980s saw an erroneous belief that Japan could take





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the lead in the global economy. Naturally, communist China has the potential to grow, albeit it faces some grave problems, among which are the progressive increase in the economy's debt burden (to promote China's signature foreign policy project under the moniker of Belt and Road, the People's Republic of China has borrowed billions of dollars on international market and has splashed out \$1 trillion in the project that seeks to make European, African and Asian countries — all where the PRC has its interests — reliant on communist China) or the slump in the country's working-age population, alongside other difficulties that has become apparent recent protests in Hong Kong when millions of people took to the

streets. Despite intensified persecution, the *laogai* “re-education camps” — *de facto* equivalent to German concentration camps or Soviet gulags — and full control over the lives of citizens, the approach of Chinese communists must ultimately give way when confronted with man's natural yearning for freedom.

Should civilized Western people view everything through the prism of money and ideological reveries that brought so much suffering to the world, in the name of maintaining good relations, albeit on shaky foundations and future-orientated, and in fact questionable economic advantages (in 2018, trade between communist China and Poland hit \$33 billion, of which exports from Poland accounted for barely \$2.5 billion). Is it not the duty and responsibility of cultured people to bear witness to the truth and stand against organized evil? The solidarity of the Western world and common sense, do these two not hint to confront — as part of a shared civilizational front — current approaches with the actual state of affairs and firmly resist the cultural and economic offensive of Chinese communism that always boils down to the suffering of millions of people? And ultimately, Western nations — and surely all people that cherish freedom as a value — should unequivocally throw support to the United States as the country that — as mentioned above — had its decisive voice in both world wars (currently, the United States participates in the North Atlantic Alliance, a military bloc serving as a protective umbrella for the West to the greatest possible extent), which left Western countries bruised, albeit victorious in their efforts to counteract any attempts to assert supremacy of Chinese communism.

Added to that are increasingly frequent instances of courtship and cooperation between communist China

and post-Soviet Russia, whose more profound alliance was backed by some Eastern dictatorships — with Iran or communizing countries — which may pose a growing threat to Western civilization in the not-too-distant future. Underestimating this phenomenon may run multiple risks. Although communist China and Putin's Russia differ in many respects and have seen strains in their relations, it is in their best interest to make joint efforts to thwart — or at least to significantly weaken — the superpower position of the United States while running a major risk to this representative of the Western world. With the idleness of other Western nations, or even the approval, either more or less enthusiastic, such a long-lasting alliance could exert a massive influence on the further dynamics of geopolitics and the world economy. Anyone who does not understand this seems to understand little. Just as strong ties between Germany and Russia posed a grave threat — not only historically — to independent Poland, the United States may similarly observe negative tendencies triggered off by a close alliance between communist China and Russia under the rule of a former KGB officer Vladimir Putin. Speaking of the entire Western world, it seems most vulnerable to the communist ideology, viewed as the keynote for what the People's Republic of China is doing, also economically. For Beijing, Western-endorsed urge to protect human rights, respect democratic values and nurture free market economy is nothing else but a trite phrase, which is the fault of people like German Chancellor Angela Merkel or France's President Emmanuel Macron, not to even mention quite ridiculous politicians, with Franz Timmermans at the forefront.

It is the West's duty and responsibility to defy authoritarianism, far from turning a blind eye to this form of government.  
President of the People's Republic of China

Xi Jinping has incited "*Chinese military to be always ready for war.*" Branded as irrevocably fallen in China's communist and Russia's post-Soviet narrative of the information warfare, the Western world must draw adequate conclusions from a few bitter history lessons it had gone through and — instead of rubbing their hands with glee over Chinese yuan — adamantly stand up to contend the utopia of communism. One ought to give hope and where it is possible, also lend pacific support to countries like Taiwan ("*China's only republic*") or Hong Kong that is home to millions of honest and decent Chinese who are undergoing repression and persecution in their homeland resembling rather an Orwellian reality. It suffices to say that members of the 100-million Christian community in the People's Republic of China cannot practice their faith freely. Not incidentally, China is the world's only country to spend more on domestic security (1.4 trillion yuan) than on defense or external security (1.2 trillion yuan). Today, it is worth recalling that the state-controlled and strongly centralized political model of communist China is consistent with that once adopted by the Soviet Union. It is also not true that China is morphing into a capitalist state with the market economy that gives the money somewhat for charity purposes, as the key economy sectors remain in the hands of the state.

In all spheres of its activity — from culture to economy, both traditionally and in the form of contemporary Internet media — China is a total state that strongly and violently interferes with the lives of its citizens and those of other nations, albeit in a far more well-thought-out manner. Besides, communist China sees money merely as a tool for achieving the country's political goals.

**Przemysław Glinka** ■  
November 3, 2019

# US OR EU? IS THERE A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DILEMMA FOR NORWAY?

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SERGIUSZ MOSKAL

The US has been a traditional ally of Norway for 70 years as well as its main guarantor of security. Despite the fact that both countries share a strong bond at the strategic level, there are some incongruencies between them on the level of values and their visions for international cooperation. Dynamic geopolitical transformations and the seemingly inevitable change in the global balance of power determine the question of the future role of the US as a guardian of the global order. At the same time, increasingly bolder ambitions are being demonstrated by the EU, which intends to increase its participation in the security system on the Old Continent. Therefore, in the near future, the EU may appear as a viable alternative and a potential strategic partner for Norway. There are many indications that, at least for now, the number one position among allies is still reserved for the United States.



THE NORWEGIAN FLAG.

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A further escalation in tensions between Washington and Tehran, which developed in June 2019, did not go unnoticed in Norway, where it provoked vigorous discussion. Naturally, the immediate cause was the fact that there had been attacks on tankers belonging to Norwegian shipowners, which took place within a few weeks of each other in the Gulf of Oman. There is no doubt, however, that the main subject of conversations in Norwegian political and expert circles was the issue of broadly understood state security in the context of alliances that connect Norway with other players on the international stage. The majority of decision-makers there asserted the view calling for closer cooperation with the US. Others, however, suggested that Norway's security should be more closely correlated with European defense architecture, and possible partners should be sought among members of the EU. Intriguingly, the two contrasting arguments did not result from differing positions of the government and

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## The two contrasting arguments did not result from differing positions of the government and opposition.

opposition. The positions were also polarized within the coalition currently forming Erna Solberg's office.

The strategic partner with whom Norway should collaborate with for the coming years has been reflected upon and contemplated in this Scandinavian country for some time. Looking at Norway's participation in international alliances and organizations, one could pinpoint in which direction its foreign policy is poised. Transformations witnessed in recent years and the dynamics of international relations mean that the selection of the Norwegian

strategic ally has ceased to be as unambiguous as it may have seemed recently. Moreover, a likelihood exists that there is a conflict of values. What constitutes a peculiar foundation of the Norwegian perception of reality – a global order secured by various institutions, cooperation of entities of international relations, human rights, etc. – does not seem to be at the top of the list of priorities for the incumbent administration of President Donald Trump. There are even reconsiderations on the future role of NATO as the primary guarantor of international security. Can Norway and the EU get closer in these circumstances? Would Norwegian-American cooperation, formed on the basis of many years of tradition, despite the emerging discrepancies, gain even more momentum?

### **RECALIBRATION OF FOREIGN POLICY VECTORS**

For the following contemplations, it is worth examining the events in 2008, which constitute an important temporal turning point. At the time, Norwegian foreign policy was undergoing a kind of recalibration, the context of which extends beyond Norway and onto the global dimension. The economic crisis had caused changes in the perception of international security. As known, economic stagnation creates potential to lead to political and systemic breakdowns, which may have been ultimately resonated most clearly in the only global hegemon; the US, though it was also loud and clear in international organizations such as the UN. It played a role in what could be perceived as reduced intent for the US to exercise its involvement in maintaining international order<sup>1</sup>. Thus, there is a danger for Norway, whose main

guarantors of security are the US and the North Atlantic Alliance.

The second, no less important event of 2008 was the Russian aggression on Georgia. It became clear that a similar scenario could not be definitively ruled out in the case of Norway. As a relatively small state, it can also become an object of analogous assault. Amongst others, it contributed directly to the issue of security returning to Oslo's agenda.

Cold War superpower rivalry had the greatest external influence on Norwegian security policy<sup>2</sup>, and made clear that security itself was an immutable variable. This changed in the 1990's. As in other countries of the Old Continent, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, defense expenditure was reduced. In its stead, the focus was realigned mainly onto foreign operations under the auspices of NATO and the international community. The offensive capabilities of the armed forces had also decreased, where in 2008, a record low defense spending was noted for Norway. In Norway's foreign policy, the concept of security began to be supplanted by the concept of prestige, and realism in international relations was replaced by idealism<sup>3</sup>.

Yet, as a result of those dynamically changing circumstances in 2008, Norway's foreign policy underwent a shift in exactly the opposite direction – from idealism to realpolitik. The focus was on strengthening close relations with Washington and securing Norwegian interests. Changes have also taken place in defense policy, significantly increasing its

<sup>1</sup> Toje Asle, *Norges trilemma: Lite land i en multipolar verden*, w: Samtiden 2/2012, download from: [https://www.asletoje.com/upload\_pdf/264685104.pdf]. access date: 22.04.2019.

<sup>2</sup> Græger Nina, *Norge mellom NATO, USA og EU*, in: Den Norske Atlanterhavskomite KortInfo 2/2011, download from: [https://www.academia.edu/25150945/Norge\_mellom\_NATO\_USA\_og\_EU]. access date: 23.10.2019.

<sup>3</sup> Toje Asle, *Norges trilemma: Lite land i en multipolar verden*, op.cit.

## To know the foreign policy of a country it is enough to know its geographical location.

budget and reactivating the process of rearming. Norway in the years 2007-2011 spent on importing military equipment four times more than in the corresponding period between 2002 and 2006. The then cabinet of Jens Stoltenberg also opted for expanding the security formula based on the concept of an asymmetrical and stronger partnership – in one aspect, the North Atlantic Alliance; in the second, closer ties to European security policy; and in a third, a proposal to create a Nordic defense union<sup>4</sup>.

Especially the latter proposal was strongly pushed by the government headed by the current NATO Secretary General. However, the project was not implemented. The proposed solutions were to constitute a new shape of security architecture considering the character of NATO itself evolved after the end of the Cold War.

### A TRIAD OF SECURITY

As quoted by Robert D. Kaplan, Napoleon claimed that to know the foreign policy of a country it is enough to know its geographical location<sup>5</sup>. It cannot be denied that geopolitics largely determines the foreign and security policy pursued by the Oslo authorities. Norwegian Institute for Foreign Policy (NUPI) analyst Nina Græger aptly describes this as a metaphorical triangle whose vertices

are the US, Russia and the EU<sup>6</sup>, which constantly influence Norwegian foreign and security policy. It would seem the two most-mentioned actors exert the strongest influence. The EU's role is still difficult to categorize unequivocally, taking into consideration that its position may evolve.

These actors influencing Norwegian security policy are also subject to geopolitical influences of their own. Norway, with all its resources and limitations takes into account the broader context of contemporary international landscape, that is, the ways in which namely China, but also regionally-dominating states aspiring for greater influence on the international arena, such as South Africa, Brazil, India, influence the policies of the US, NATO, the EU, and Russia. Norwegian decision makers keep these geopolitical polarities in mind in their calculus of approaches to challenges in its most immediate vicinity, as well as how to operate in the more global dimensions.

### A FUNDAMENTAL SECURITY PROVIDER

In an exposé of the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide delivered to the parliament in March this year, it was clearly stated that “*the United States is Norway's closest continental ally*”<sup>7</sup>. The head of Norwegian diplomacy also emphasized that since the end of World War II, there had been no more important country for Norway than the US. Eriksen Søreide listed the individual points on which the Norwegian-American strategic partnership is founded, underlining the role of the US as a guarantor of the defense capabilities of the North Atlantic

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan Robert D., *The Revenge of Geography. What map tells us about coming conflicts and the battle against fate*, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Græger Nina, *Norge mellom NATO, USA og EU*, op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> *Utenrikspolitisk redegjørelse for Stortinget*, in: [https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/utgreiing\_190305/id2631307/]. Access date: 09.03.2019.

Alliance and the chief architect of global order based on binding international cooperation<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, it is difficult to find any decisions or statements of representatives of subsequent Norwegian cabinets questioning the strong ties connecting Norway with the US, or Norwegian policy towards NATO<sup>9</sup>.

The above declaration could ultimately cut off the hypothetical considerations about a possible alternative to the existing bilateral cooperation.

Norway, like many other countries with similar international positioning, is a consumer of security. Its primary guarantor is the US with technological and military advantage, making bilateral relations with the US a key pillar of defense policy firmly anchored together with allied support via NATO. American stabilizing presence became so common that, as Asle Toje notes, the Norwegians perceived it especially in the 1990's as an integral and indisputable element of the international order<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, Norway was eager to engage in numerous international operations under the auspices of NATO. It resulted from responsibility to the allied commitments, but also from the need of individuals in leadership positions to expand influence and build one's status, especially in Washington<sup>11</sup>. This specific connotation has, at least in part, contributed to opinions being voiced that question the core fundamentals of the military alliance with the US, a primary

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Haugevik Kristin, Sending Ole Jacob, *Norske svar på internasjonale utfordringer: Retorisk endring, stabilitet i tiltak*, in: Internasjonal Politikk 4/2018, pobrano z [<https://nupi.brage.unit.no/nupi-xmlui/handle/11250/2579278>]. Access date: 23.10.2019.

<sup>10</sup> Toje Asle, *Norges trilemma: Lite land i en multipolar verden*, op.cit.

<sup>11</sup> Haugevik Kristin, Sending Ole Jacob, *Norske svar på internasjonale utfordringer: Retorisk endring, stabilitet i tiltak*, op.cit.

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## In Norway, there was once again a discrepancy between the pursuit of a policy based on idealism and that of realpolitik.

component since 1945 of Norway's foreign policy.

In that very same exposé in March, Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide recognized that it is the political changes taking place in the US as one of the variables shaping Washington's new foreign policy. President Trump's administration challenges the legitimacy of bearing American leadership costs and the benefits of international cooperation<sup>12</sup>. This is a new challenge attributed to growing divergences within NATO in Norwegian foreign policy and understandably causes worry for decision makers in Oslo. A potential conflict of values underlying Norwegian foreign policy and the current direction of foreign policy employed by the Trump administration meant that in Norway, there was once again a discrepancy between the pursuit of a policy based on idealism and that of realpolitik.

Naturally, however, the risk of a conflict of values is not determined only by the incumbent at the White House. The situation is not new and similar dilemmas have accompanied Norwegian decision makers in the recent past. Initial misunderstandings have already occurred in the case of the invasion of Afghanistan. The American intervention in Iraq in 2003 put bilateral relations to the test and highlighted the divisions between Europe and the US. Not only did Norway

<sup>12</sup> *Utenrikspolitisk redegjørelse for Stortinget*, op.cit.

## The change in moods is noticeable, but it has no practical dimension yet.

not participate in the Second Gulf War, but also refused to support the American operation. Only skillful diplomatic footwork by the then head of government Kjell-Magne Bondevik and Foreign Minister Jan Petersen avoided a major crisis in Norwegian-American relations<sup>13</sup>.

Between 2005-2013 there were further Oslo-Washington misunderstandings. Issues such as the ban on using the cluster munitions, the war in Iraq, and the lack of consensus on the construction of the American anti-missile shield in Europe led to a partial freezing of contacts. It is symptomatic that Bondevik's successor, Jens Stoltenberg, as the first Norwegian prime minister, did not receive the invitation of the American president to pay an official visit to Washington<sup>14</sup>. In a specific clinch there were also representatives of the lower levels of administration of both countries, which significantly complicated the joint work of defense and diplomacy ministries.

Barack Obama's presidency brought rapprochement between Oslo and Washington again, but fruitful cooperation came under a big question mark with the election of Donald Trump. In Norway, there have been voices about toughening criticism of the US or even revising its bilateral relations. The change in moods is noticeable, but it has no

<sup>13</sup> Græger Nina, *Veivalg og spenninger i norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: Norges forhold til NATO og EU*, in: *Internasjonal Politikk* 1/2019, download from: [<https://nupi.brage.unit.no/nupi-xmlui/handle/11250/2597231>]. Access date: 23.10.2019.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.



practical dimension yet. As Nina Græger notes, the occasional criticism encountered by the Trump administration does not paralyze functioning cooperation in the military, diplomatic or civil fields, which continues without major disturbances. Thanks to joint military practices, which include exchange of knowledge and experience at the officer level, maneuvers, and constant dialogue between politicians and diplomats of both countries have been able to significantly depoliticize a number of elements pertinent to mutual cooperation<sup>15</sup>. The reduction of recent tensions does not change the fact that

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.





**NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER INE MARIE ERIKSEN SØREIDE. DECEMBER 3, 2018.**

© ROBERT GHEMENT (PAP/EPA)

the Norwegians do not always accept American moves in global politics.

### **AN EXPENSIVE AND DEMANDING PARTNERSHIP**

As Norway is foremost a consumer of security, military dependence on Americans is also emphasized by the head of diplomacy Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide<sup>16</sup>. The costs of US security guarantees borne by the Norwegian state raise the question of whether the price that the government in Oslo pays for security goes far beyond the level of financial outlays. Due to the US voluntary withdrawal

from the role of the primary guardian of international order, American security guarantees will no longer be a universal good. As a result, not only would their price increase, but the requirements of the Americans themselves regarding potential interested parties will also increase. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in the administration of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, disapproved of European defense cuts. He argued that Washington is tired of taking the burden of maintaining NATO and responsibility on behalf of those who avoid both risk and cost.<sup>17</sup> Currently,

<sup>16</sup> Lysberg Magnus, *Han som elsker Amerika*, in: [<https://dagens.klassekampen.no/2019-02-13/han-som-elsker-amerika>]. Access date: 24.10.2019.

<sup>17</sup> Toje Asle, *Norges trilemma: Lite land i en multipolar verden*, op.cit.

Americans place even greater emphasis on fulfilling the obligation to transfer 2% of GDP on defense by members of the North Atlantic Alliance. Norway was one of the countries to which President Trump issued an official letter in 2018, calling for increased spending. As one can anticipate, countries that will not meet the 2% requirement must take into account the possibility of falling outside the sphere of American immediate interests. It is no longer in the US interest to cover defense spending on countries that are only partially willing to support US geopolitical goals.

The new security landscape and the divisions within NATO imply that Americans want to see those who among their allies in one way or another will support the implementation of global US interests. Asle Toje claims that for Norway this will mean higher security guarantee costs also in the form of military and diplomatic support for Washington's foreign policy<sup>18</sup>. Norway is one of the few countries that wants to stay among the closest allies of the US. That is why the authorities and diplomatic officials are making effort to reassure Americans of their loyalty. They also realize that requirements will grow over time. In practice, this may mean the participation of the Norwegian Armed Forces in US operations far from Europe<sup>19</sup>. In 2011, Operation Unified Protector in Libya enjoyed important contributions made by Norwegian aviation which clearly signalled that Norway is walking side by side with the Americans. Hence, it cannot be ruled out that in the future Norway, paying its allied obligations, will take part in similar operations.

Considering the cost of the partnership with Washington, a plethora of global conditions also affect Norway's security, though primarily the Russian vector of the

security triad stands out. Strengthening relations with the US has the potential to worsen relations between Oslo and Moscow. US-Russian tensions can do so equally. Norway has traditionally sought to maintain a balance between the two, having attached great importance to nurturing neighborly relations and building cross-border agreements. Supporting American geopolitical goals, which are oft directly contradictory to Russian interests, could put Norway at a disadvantage towards Russia. Thus, the balancing demands the very considerable effort and savvy decision-making the Norwegian authorities are striving to employ.

### **EU: A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE OR MIRAGE?**

The rising costs arising from the strengthening of the alliance with Washington and the potential risk of a conflict of values against President Trump's foreign policy have meant that in recent years, the Norwegians have also begun to look towards Brussels and European security architecture. The discussion on this topic that is taking place in Norway brings some interesting insights. The first place comes with a definitely differentiated approach to the issue of the European Community as a pillar of continental security. In other words, two main currents set the tone of the debate. The division axis is not as obvious as it may seem. Naturally, there are declared opponents of abandoning the alliance with the US in favor of the EU. They consider the possibility of such quite absurd. On the other hand, there is a vision based on moderate optimism towards Brussels. It postulates strengthening of continental relations and development of military cooperation. Alongside these two notions, there is another which puts NATO and the EU at opposite poles. In this case, the EU is considered not only as an alternative to

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Lysberg Magnus, *Han som elsker Amerika*, op.cit.

the North Atlantic Alliance, but also as a player who could potentially replace NATO as a guardian of the global order.

Although having vetoed EU accession twice via its citizens' votes, it would be unjust to assess that Norway seems uninterested in the development of the European security architecture. Practical cooperation in the defense dimension takes place within the framework of the EU Common Security and Defense Policy. Although the Norwegian contribution to European security is relatively small, Norway is involved in several forms of both military and civil cooperation with the EU. Important in this context is the Norwegian participation in the EU crisis management in the military and civil areas, which results from the framework agreement<sup>20</sup> adopted in 2004. Among the EU missions in which the Norwegians participated, there are Bosnia, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Indonesia, Kosovo and Ukraine. One of the more well-known operations with the Norwegian contribution is Operation Atalanta against pirates off the coast of Somalia. In 2008, in 2011 and 2015, Norway participated in the exercises of one of the EU battle groups under the command of Sweden (Nordic Battle Group). In addition, Norway has agreements with the EU regarding the exchange of classified information. Norway, at the earliest among third countries, already established cooperation with the European Defense Agency EDA in 2006. Until 2011, it was the only non-EU country that was part of this cooperation. Activities in context of the European Defense Fund are also carried out with the participation of Norway.

<sup>20</sup> *Utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitisk samarbeid*, in: [<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/europapolitikk/tema-norge-eu/utenriks-sikkerhetspolitisk-samarbeid/id684931/>]. Access date: 07.11.2019.

Such EU-Norwegian cooperation makes it difficult for the authorities in Oslo to define Brussels in the precise terms of a 'strategic partner'. Nevertheless, recent years have set security as one of the highest EU priorities. Brexit is particularly important from this point of view. The EU will find itself in a new security situation deprived of one of the militarily strongest countries on the Old Continent. Divorce with the UK necessarily forces the Community to intensify its security and defense activities. That is why in 2016 Federica Mogherini announced the Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. It assumes that the EU will enter a new level of ambition in securing its global interests, and therefore intends to become a major player in the context of security. If Brussels were able to strengthen relations with the US, it would have a positive impact for Norway, reducing needs for any sort of trade-offs. The complementarity of one entity with the other would strengthen European security architecture. In this case, Norway would like to be more involved in defense cooperation. However, taking into account the resentment of the Trump administration and its own vision of security policy conducted in isolation from NATO, which is postulated by Emmanuel Macron, it is difficult to expect Norwegian support for such activities.

It should also be stressed that all the EU's current provisions on security and defense policy are, from the Norwegian point of view, a serious drawback. There was no space for dialogue with third countries. And this is a real problem in bilateral relations. Having no influence on decisions taken in Brussels, Norway will be difficult to treat the EU as a strategic partner<sup>21</sup>. The EU also lacks a sort of collective defense pact. Nina Græger also draws attention to the issue of Member States' security

<sup>21</sup> Græger Nina, *Veivalg og spenninger i norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: Norges forhold til NATO og EU*, op.cit.

guarantees. The European Community does not have an analogous mechanism to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, the EU cannot be seen as a security provider. Asle Toje goes even further in assessing the current condition of the EU and its members, claiming that Europe is without its representation in a global concert of powers for the first time in modern history<sup>23</sup>.

In this context, the discussion about the possible replacement of NATO by the EU can currently be regarded only as a curiosity or a manifestation of wishful thinking. NATO Secretary General definitely excludes this possibility. Jens Stoltenberg is of the opinion that the EU will never achieve a sufficient level of military capabilities<sup>24</sup>. The main reason is low defense spending. After Brexit, 80% of NATO's defense spending will be borne by non-EU countries. He also regards a similar scenario is likely on the mind of German diplomacy head Heiko Mass, who wrote in one of the columns for *Der Spiegel* that "*without the US, neither Germany nor Europe will be able to defend themselves effectively*"<sup>25</sup>.

### **STATUS QUO MAINTAINED IN THE NORTH**

Despite the strengthening of European cooperation in areas such as security and defense over the past two decades, the EU has left its mark on Norway's security policy to a relatively smaller extent. The main barrier is primarily the poor formal

status of third countries which are not members of the Community. Although Norway is selectively invited to participate in various projects (e.g. under Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO), but without real views on admission to the decision-making process. If, after removing formal obstacles, Norway in the long term decided to become more actively involved in EU defense programs and initiatives, then the EU would be more strongly included in the agenda of the Norwegian security policy. According to some experts, the development of cooperation would also depend on support for the EU itself among Norwegians. And this, unlike other Scandinavian countries, remains relatively low.

NATO's standing and the traditional Norwegian-American partnership are strong in Norway. The growing divergence within the Alliance and the prospect of reducing US involvement raises legitimate concerns in Norway. Just like the policy of President Trump's administration, which is not always receiving total approval in Oslo and sometimes conflicts with that system of values. At the same time, partnership with the US will entail increasing costs and obligations. However, it seems that at present Norway cannot afford a foreign policy which will stand in opposition to the US and elevates risks associated with individuality. The European landscape is characterized by a high rate of security consumers, which is inversely proportional to its providers. That is one of the reasons why the Norwegian authorities sought to increase the American contingent in Norway. Only the US creates real added value in the area of security. The EU, for now, has insufficient capacity and resources to provide a viable alternative.

**Sergiusz Moskal** ■  
November 2019

<sup>22</sup> Græger Nina, *Norge mellom NATO, USA og EU*, op.cit.

<sup>23</sup> Toje Asle, *Norges trilemma: Lite land i en multipolar verden*, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Stoltenberg: EU kan aldri erstatte NATO, in: [<https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/utenriks/stoltenberg--eu-kan-aldri-erstatte-nato/3423560895.html>]. Access date: 09.11.2019.

<sup>25</sup> Maas Heiko, *Wir wollen und brauchen die NATO*, in: [<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/heiko-maas-sicherheit-fuer-europa-gastbeitrag-des-bundesausenministers-a-1295735.html>]. Access date: 11.11.2019.

# AFGHANISTAN'S CHANCE

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ALEXANDER WIELGOS

It might not feel like it from the headlines, but Afghanistan is ready for peace. The circumstances and timing will never be absolutely perfect. Certain dynamics may be pressuring a potential turning point, and the circumstances might just become good enough for a step towards peace – for the first time since 1978. Implications thereof are further explored in an interview with the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Poland.

Firstly, the stagnation of peace negotiations between the US and the Taliban in Qatar may or may not be only temporary, as hinted on 28.11.2019 of resumption of informal talks. Rivalling entities Russia, China, Iran, and others, have been attentively seeking to present themselves as credible alternatives in mediation, adding some real but limited pressure. Secondly, there is an unobvious potential of further fracturing in the Taliban, in the backdrop of resilience of ISIL

KP and other armed terrorist groups. Thirdly, albeit dismally far from optimal, the ongoing counting of the recent Presidential elections do reflect how far socio-political reform in Afghanistan has come in the meantime. Fourthly, what conclusions local and international actors draw from their observations will impact how they understand the status quo on the geopolitical chessboards they are positioned in. It thence shapes how they think they ought to operate, and a combination of shifts in the correct

## Afghanistan has been in a constant state of conflict since 1978 - that's over 41 years.

directions could be aptly creating Afghanistan's chance for peace.

Poland too<sup>1</sup>, as a close partner of the US and part of NATO Operation Resolute Support (RS), is observing those observing Afghanistan's potential turning point. Poland's input need not be massive, it just needs to be clever. Strategies encouraged ought to be a showcase of the good of humanity, most especially in a chapter where it is so obscure and devoid of optimism.

### RECAP

If you need a quick recap on some of the lead up to what it is that is being observed in this context, you're in luck: Afghanistan has been in a constant state of conflict since 1978 - that's over 41 years at the time of writing this article.

Afghanistan's monarchy was removed in 1973 by the monarch's cousin<sup>2</sup>, Mohammed Daoud Khan with the help of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Daoud feared attempts<sup>3</sup> of the USSR and Iran to influence domestic affairs, and noted in 1974 as India tested its first nuclear weapon<sup>4</sup>, dubbed the 'Smiling

*Buddha*'. Daoud Khan led a Pashtunisation approach<sup>5</sup> with regard to the Durand Line<sup>6</sup>, and reformed Afghanistan's military, which included training Baloch soldiers against Pakistan. By then, Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, had already begun covert operations in Afghanistan, including establishing ties<sup>7</sup> with a Hekmatyar Gulbuddin. Though Afghanistan's relations improved<sup>8</sup> meanwhile with Pakistan and Iran, as well as Egypt and Saudi Arabia with the help of the US, this concerned the USSR, and Pakistan's covert operation-related plans did not go to the dustbin.

In 1978, dissatisfied with Daoud's resistance and fearing he had begun removing internal opponents in the PDPA, the Khalq faction of the socialist PDPA party killed him<sup>9</sup> as they carried out a military coup; the Saur Revolution. Following rebellions across Afghanistan, including in Farsi speaking Herat, made the US quite convinced that intervention from the USSR was both likely<sup>10</sup> and to be dreaded. The US co-opted with Pakistan as improved relations were needed<sup>11</sup> in light of the Iranian Revolution. Hence, limited US support via Pakistan for Mujahideen had begun since just *before*<sup>12</sup> the USSR invasion.

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19.10.2015

<sup>5</sup> Sayed Ziafatuallah Saeedi, *Daoud's Footprints: how Afghanistan's First President Influences Ghani*, The Globe Post, 07.11.2018

<sup>6</sup> Afghan-Pakistani border line originally established in 1893, which cuts through ethnic Balochi and Pashtun concentrated lands

<sup>7</sup> Michael Crowley, *Our Man in Kabul?*, The New Republic, 09.03.2010

<sup>8</sup> Hanif-ur-Rahman, *From Saur Revolution to the Taliban*, Daily Times, 07.05.2019

<sup>9</sup> TOLO News, *Saur Revolution, Inception of Wars in Afghanistan: MPs*, TOLO News, 27.04.2013

<sup>10</sup> David N. Gibbs, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect*, International Politics 37, published 2000, pp. 233 – 246

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Riedel, *What We Won: America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979–1989*, Brookings Institution Press, published 2014, pp. 98–99

<sup>12</sup> John Bernell White, *The Strategic Mind Of Zbigniew Brzezinski: How A Native Pole Used*

<sup>1</sup> Resolute Support Mission Troop Contributing Nations, *Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures*, NATO, June 2019

<sup>2</sup> David Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad*, University of California Press, published 2002, p. 62

<sup>3</sup> Peter R. Blood, ed. *Afghanistan: A Country Study, Daoud's Republic, July 1973-April 1978*, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, published 2001, accessed 03.11.2019

<sup>4</sup> Afzal S. Siddiqui, *Smiling Buddha*, Foreign Affairs,

This support quickly upgraded to propping up an array of factions within the Sunni Mujahideen insurgency. Some largely were independent and moderate, such as those led by the ethnic-Tajik Ahmad Shah Massoud, and some were particularly favoured by Pakistan, such as Hekmatyar. Saudi Arabia also selectively made contributions, to groups such as Ittehad-e Islami and allegedly, the Haqqani Network<sup>13</sup>. Most notably, the Haqqani Network were the first to have brought in foreign fighters into Afghanistan from various countries, demonstrating their ideological understanding to draw better financing than other organisations. Meanwhile, Mujahideen Shia factions, namely of the Hazara ethnic group, merged into the Hezb-e Wahdat and were supported by Iran, though Iran was mostly preoccupied with Iraq<sup>14</sup> at the time. Maoist groups also emerged<sup>15</sup> in the war. Along the way, an offshoot of the Sunni Mujahideen appeared at some point in 1988, which became al-Qaeda, with an ideologically globalised rhetoric of the Haqqani Network's. Eventually, the USSR withdrew in 1989, and support was reduced to arms supplies. The socialist PDPA government struggled against the Mujahideen factions, and fell in 1992.

Entering a new phase of the civil war, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan each intensified their arming of proxies vying for domination via a combination of deal-making and application of violence. The Hezb-e Islami faction, led by Hekmatyar, refused to collaborate with other Sunni Mujahideen groups.

*Afghanistan To Protect His Homeland*, published 2012, pp. 45–46

<sup>13</sup> Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012*, London: Hurst Publishers, published 2013

<sup>14</sup> Mahan Abedin, *How Iran Found Its Feet in Afghanistan*, Foreign Affairs, 24.10.2019

<sup>15</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Ideology Without Leadership: The Rise and Decline of Maoism in Afghanistan*, Afghan Analytics Network, 21.08.2012

## In a bizarre twist, one of those rockets hit the building where Hamid Karzai was a political prisoner, after which he could escape.

Hekmatyar had received more<sup>16</sup> from the CIA via the ISI than any other Mujahideen leader, despite his anti-US stance. Yet, Hekmatyar bombarded Kabul in 1992 in an attempt to seize it. In a bizarre twist, one of those rockets hit the building where Hamid Karzai was a political prisoner, after which he could escape<sup>17</sup>. The bombardment caused massive civilian casualties and unpopularity. Pakistan switched its support to the Taliban, which emerged at some point in September 1994, proceeded on to seize Kabul in 1996, and then to consolidate control of most of Afghanistan by 1998.

Though the power struggle continued, the 3 other main factions lost their entire territorial control, with the exception of the Northern Alliance, also referred to as the United Front. It included Mujahideen commanders such as Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik leader from the north; Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, a Hazara leader from Mazar-e Sharif; Haji Abdul Qadir, a Pashtun leader from Jalalabad; as well as Ahmad Shah Massoud, whose men had been tortured to death by Hekmatyar's; and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, with the Uzbek Junbish-e Mili militia<sup>18</sup>. Iran, Russia, and India supported the United

<sup>16</sup> Michael Crowley, *Our Man in Kabul?*, The New Republic, 09.03.2010

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Many individuals joining Junbish-e Mili were defectors from the PDPA party's Parcham faction

Front against the Taliban, but Iran stopped short of an invasion after 11 Iranian diplomats in its Mazaf-e Sharif consulate<sup>19</sup> were killed in 1998 by a militant group, perhaps noticing Pakistan's nuclear tests.

After 9/11, as the Taliban refused to give up al-Qaeda, the US-led invasion of Afghanistan began in October 2001 and quickly unseated the Taliban, which was by all means the correct move. The US, the international community, and Afghan leaders who opposed the Taliban, including those from the United Front, had the challenge to create a new Afghan state. Note that Hekmatyar was excluded from the Bonn Conference in December 2001. NATO formalised its mission then as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan to secure Kabul to enable the establishment of interim and transitional Afghan governments, in phases. Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1401 of March 2002, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established to back these efforts.

The Taliban persisted with a retaliatory insurgency, as did other groups. Their experience from preceding conflicts suggested using a variety of asymmetric war tactics in the face of being egregiously overwhelmed militarily. This included an influx of foreign fighters facilitated by previous instances. Accessible regrouping locations along the porous border of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa areas of Pakistan became a key contention point in Pakistan's relations with the US and Afghanistan. Moreover, the insurgent's familiarity with Afghanistan's mountainous terrain enabled the insurgent factions to be infuriatingly evasive.

From the mandate of UN Security Council Resolution 1510 of 2003, the

<sup>19</sup> Mahan Abedin, *How Iran Found Its Feet in Afghanistan*, Foreign Affairs, 24.10.2019

ISAF expanded its mission beyond Kabul and repeatedly broadened its objectives beyond the counter-insurgency. This was necessary to preserve gains made thus far. However, it slowly began to be increasingly clear that these aims in the direction of nation-building, training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), etc. were vaguely defined. This year, many US resources were also reallocated to Iraq.

Unfortunately, a lacking understanding of the weight of local tribal, ethno-religious politics, their traditional autonomy, and Afghanistan's traditional resentment of foreign meddling, hindered efforts to make such a nation-wide transformation possible. Additionally, incorrigible levels of corruption not only lingered within the ANSF and government, but supposedly even worsened, and an uncontrollable opium production sustained a portion of Taliban war funding.

Prolonging the cumbersome, stagnant and rescinding war effort unfortunately causes increases in the already staggering civilian death tolls and human rights abuses from the anti-government factions, who deliberately target civilians directly in mass attacks and suicide bombings, or seamlessly blend amongst them to incur additional casualties, if not deterrence. Unfortunately, the NATO side and the ANSF had also inflicted damage unto civilians during operations. Perhaps neither the most common nor damaging, but probably one of the most demoralising incidents were those of internal fire; cases where NATO-supported ANSF troops would turn on NATO forces or their colleagues.

The need to bring the war to an end became clear, but how to do so became just as equally unclear. The alternative is a high-casualty, destructive and costly militarily stalemate seeking an outcome with ambiguously defined means to strive





for it whilst also preserving the positive accomplishments already made.

### **A PEACE PROCESS STAGNATED**

In September 2007, then President Karzai publicly offered<sup>20</sup> peace talks to the Taliban, which they rejected, saying foreign troops suggest the Afghan government is but a puppet. The offer was extended also to Hekmatyar. How an end to conflict may look like took centre stage of campaigns<sup>21</sup> to the 2009 Presidential Elections, attesting to widespread consensus among the public and government circles of its priority. An early attempt of Saudi Arabia to mediate had stalled.

Karzai had then secretly met<sup>22</sup> with Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's second-in-command at the time, at least a few times. Baradar, the enthusiast for negotiations with the Afghan government and the US who avidly persuaded such, however, was detained in February 2010 in a joint US-Pakistani raid in Karachi, Pakistan.

The US continued increasing deployments to about 100,000 by August 2010,

<sup>20</sup> Saeed Ali Achakzai, *Taliban reject Afghan president's peace talk offer*, Reuters, 30.09.2007

<sup>21</sup> Carlotta Gall, *Peace Talks With Taliban Top Issue in Afghan Vote*, New York Times, 17.08.2009

<sup>22</sup> Dean Nelson, *Hamid Karzai held secret talks with Mullah Baradar in Afghanistan*, The Telegraph, 16.03.2010

with the ISAF total reaching 140,000. Notably, Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011 during a separate precise US operation, which was an important, albeit more symbolic accomplishment. At this stage, al-Qaeda had long spread further across several countries across several regions, in which they operate independently under a common ideology.

Thus far, the impasse pertained to the Taliban refusing the negotiate with the Afghan government, and the US refusing to negotiate with the Taliban. Shortly after the surge, however, a first turning point in what could be considered the Afghan Peace Process was the US announcement of a timeline for withdrawal plans from Afghanistan aiming for 2014. Note: at this time the US is also set to withdraw from Iraq. Regrettably, the signal to the armed anti-government insurgent terrorist groups was clear: the US is seeking an exit strategy, conditions are ripe to begin a resurgence in operationality and simply wait them out. Rather than indicating their defeat, it unavoidably empowered the Taliban morale.

This made neither the Taliban nor the US keen negotiate with one another, refuting the possibility and naming clearly unattainable demands for talks. With reference to said impasse, for the Taliban



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**A COALITION FORCE MEMBER PROVIDES SECURITY FOR AFGHAN SOLDIERS DEPLOYING WITHIN AFGHANISTAN ON MARCH 4, 2013.**

the condition was that if they were to negotiate, it would be with the US directly without the actual Afghan government, but the US would not negotiate with what is, in the end, still a designated terrorist organisation.

Despite hesitation, as early as some point in 2011, secret talks, confidence building measures, were rumoured to have taken place in Qatar between US officials and some Afghans who indirectly represented the Taliban. Because this leaked<sup>23</sup>, however, whether intentionally or not, the talks collapsed.

Later, in mid-2013, with agreement from the US, a Taliban representative office was opened in Doha, Qatar, to facilitate dialogue between the US and the Taliban. Less than a month later in July 2013, it had to be closed<sup>24</sup> because the Taliban used their pre-2001 Islamic Emirate flag, exploiting the situation to falsely present themselves as an alternative government or government-in-exile seeking legitimacy.

Mounting valid worries that the Afghan government would be sidelined are more than understandable. Even worse, it

<sup>23</sup> Dean Nelson, *Secret peace talks between US and Taliban collapse over leaks*, The Telegraph, 10.08.2011

<sup>24</sup> Associated Press, *Taliban close Qatar office in protest at flag removal*, The Telegraph, 09.07.2013

shows a precedent that Afghan civilians are completely excluded for prospects of what could lead to peace talks. Following Saudi Arabia's earlier attempt, a four-way international conference<sup>25</sup> was held in Pakistan in January 2016, though boycotted by the Taliban. Seeing this did not work, another secret meeting<sup>26</sup> followed in October 2016, this time informally between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Most notably, the most risky appeal was President Ashraf Ghani even openly stating the idea that the Taliban can transform from an insurgency group into a political movement. Paradoxically, for this to be accepted by the Afghan society, many of their day-to-day conduct must cease (which includes egregious human rights abuses, by the way) which gave them the negotiating leverage in the first place by not being vanquished militarily in the field. At some point perhaps even around this time<sup>27</sup>, the Taliban had slowly managed to regain control of more territory of Afghanistan than any time since their unseating. It is also worth

<sup>25</sup> BBC News, *Pakistan hosts four-way Afghanistan peace talks*, BBC News, 11.01.2016

<sup>26</sup> James Rothwell, *Taliban holds 'informal' peace talks with Afghanistan*, The Telegraph, 18.10.2016

<sup>27</sup> Military Times, *The Taliban now hold more ground in Afghanistan than at any point since 2001*, Military Times, 16.06.2016

noting that by the end of 2016, the US had only 8,400 troops in Afghanistan. It was still higher than the planned withdrawal. In effect, it was a beginning of a reversal.

In 2017, the US announced a revised strategy<sup>28</sup> for their efforts in Afghanistan, which included refocusing their efforts on more densely populated cities. Sadly, this second turning point which entailed ceding the remote country side to the Taliban and other insurgents meant that their operatives had unhindered time and places there to regroup, and at times and places of their choosing, to infiltrate those very cities, conducting attacks on civilian, political, and military targets.

Hence, at this time and the beginning of 2018, there was another, more shocking surge in violence across Afghanistan. Civilians protested decisively and loudly across several cities, completely fed up with the misery and bloodshed. The reminder is that both the Afghan government and the Taliban react to the appeal of the civilian population, though, the Taliban generally do so by terrorising those they are unable to persuade.

Therefore, it was a welcome surprise when, in June 2018, there was an announcement from President Ashraf Ghani for an entirely unprecedented, nation-wide 3-day ceasefire, between the Afghan government and the Taliban for Eid celebrations. Just as there was a glimmer of hope, added by the Afghan government extending the ceasefire unilaterally, another suicide bombing ruined those celebrations<sup>29</sup>. It is worth noting, the Taliban was internally divided still about the ceasefire, some keen and others adamantly against. This bomb

was denied by the Taliban, and may be likely the work of the ISIL faction aiming to disrupt peace efforts. Or, that of the Taliban members against the peace efforts, skilfully blaming their rival insurgents.

Though the Taliban resumed fighting and their preconditions remained i.e. all foreign forces are to be expelled, etc., it did nonetheless construe a significant, albeit symbolic, third turning point indicating that through mass civilian pressure and encouragement, it is possible.

In July 2018, low-key negotiations between the US and the Taliban at the political office in Doha began<sup>30</sup> without the Afghan government. In October 2018, with a now released Baradar heading the Taliban negotiation side, these expanded formally with US Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, and began a series of rounds. In these, there are 4 main elements:

1. a guarantee is needed from the Taliban to prevent armed groups use Afghanistan as a base to attack externally, which would in effect demand a disavowal of al-Qaeda;
2. an entire withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan;
3. dialogue between the Afghan government, the Taliban, and other relevant entities;
4. and, most precariously, a permanent ceasefire – and a real end to the violence.

Though a positive development, the fighting continued, and it continues messily. Worse still, a UNAMA report<sup>31</sup> states that

<sup>28</sup> Lara Seligman, *One Year On, Little to Show for Trump's Afghanistan Strategy*, Foreign Policy, 23.08.2018

<sup>29</sup> Voice of Wadi, *Car bomb kills 26 during Eid ceasefire gathering in Afghanistan*, Voice of Wadi, 16.06.2018

<sup>30</sup> Taimoor Shah, *U.S. Diplomats Held Face-to-Face Talks With Taliban, Insurgents Say*, The New York Times, 28.07.2018

<sup>31</sup> UNAMA Human Rights Service, *Midyear Update on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1*

in the first half of 2019, pro-NATO and pro-Afghan government forces had been responsible for more civilian deaths than the Taliban and other armed insurgent or terrorist groups, for the first time.

Since those initial talks in July 2018, a total of 9 separate rounds of talks between the US and the Taliban have taken place in Qatar. Yet, as the negotiations and Afghan government consultations were ongoing, in the field, fighting continues. To be clear, this does not mean some sporadic clashes here and there. The Taliban was still launching frontal offensives<sup>32</sup> and suicide bombings across Afghanistan, and NATO forces were responding with ferocious airstrikes and coordinating raids. Negotiating belligerents, therefore, aim to continually elevate their negotiating position by displaying their reach and operational capabilities.

The most recent of the talks in Doha, the 9th round, wrapped up on 01.09.2019. The next day, 02.09.2019, US Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to present a draft outline<sup>33</sup> of a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, culminating from a year of discussions. Albeit just the very same day, i.e. 02.09.2019, a Taliban suicide bombing<sup>34</sup> targeted international organisations and aid agencies in Kabul killing 16 civilians, during a TV interview<sup>35</sup> with US Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in which he was just saying the peace agreement had been ‘in principle’ tentatively finalised.

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January to 30 June 2019\*, United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, 30.07.2019

<sup>32</sup> France 24, *Chassés de Kunduz par l'armée afghane, les Taliban lancent de nouvelles offensives*, France 24, 01.09.2019

<sup>33</sup> Al Jazeera, *US envoy shows draft of deal with Taliban to Afghan president*, Al Jazeera, 02.09.2019

<sup>34</sup> France 24, *Un attentat revendiqué par les Taliban fait au moins 16 morts à Kaboul*, France 24, 03.09.2019

<sup>35</sup> TOLO News, *Exclusive Interview With US Chief Negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad*, TOLO News, 02.09.2019

A Taliban car bombing on 05.09.2019 within the fortified Shash Darak zone<sup>36</sup>, which includes the US Embassy, killed 10 Afghan civilians, a Romanian soldier and a US service member. Hours later, another attack outside an Afghan military base killed more Afghan civilians. Hence, on that same day, the US cancelled the negotiations<sup>37</sup> and a secret meeting at Camp David. The concept was flawed<sup>38</sup> and premature regardless.

What the mediating parties and US officials which engage with the Taliban core deal with, however, is that the Taliban, like several other insurgent terrorist groups had undergone splits, joints, shifting alliances – all of which substantially dictate their mode of conduct.

### INSURGENCIES FRACTURED

Shifts in organisational structures of these groups can be attributed, in part, to changes in core leadership, hence the logic of going after leading figures in terrorist groups. The **Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)** separated<sup>39</sup> from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 2002. Differences in regard to the approach of those which split to the IJU from the IMU really only manifested after the death of their leader<sup>40</sup>.

The Haqqani Network the most lethally instigated carried out asymmetric war tactics<sup>41</sup>. As it was designated a terrorist entity by the US in 2012, it seamlessly

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<sup>36</sup> Al Jazeera, *Taliban claim deadly attack near US embassy in Kabul*, Al Jazeera, 05.09.2019

<sup>37</sup> BBC World News, *Afghan peace deal: Trump says Taliban talks are 'dead'*, BBC News, 09.09.2019

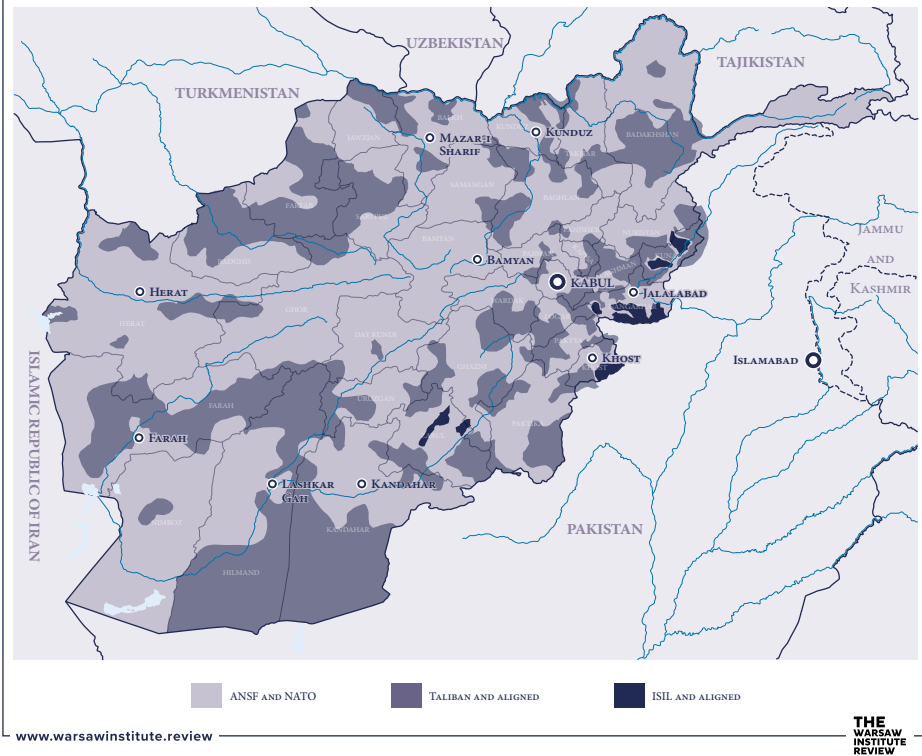
<sup>38</sup> Aaron David Miller, *The Taliban Hardly Deserve Camp David Talks With a President. What Was Trump Thinking?*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 09.09.2019

<sup>39</sup> Ronald Sandee, *Islamic Jihad Union*, The NEFA Foundation, 14.10.2008

<sup>40</sup> Jumaboi Ahmadjonovich Khodjiyev

<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Dressler, *The Haqqani Network: A Foreign Terrorist Organization*, ISW, 05.09.2012

Areas of Influence and Control in Afghanistan as of November 2019



merged in with the Taliban, further complicating matters. Indeed, using inclusive methods like this, the Taliban was able to coherently overcome ethnic and tribal divisions since its inception. Therefore, when the internal division within the Taliban’s ‘*Rahbari Shura*’, or Leadership Council, that began to sow, it constituted a vital turning point, but taking advantage of it is neither simple nor obvious.

A partial, though quite real, part of this was caused by the hesitant yet increasing indicators that the US may be willing to negotiate with the Taliban upon its announcement of withdrawal plans. Whilst some Taliban members were enthusiastic about this, others were sternly against even considering the possibility. Early instances of fragmentation entail a separate, supposedly even more radical faction, Mahaz-e Dadullah, led by Mansoor Dadullah, a Kakar Pashtun, which began operating even as early as 2010 as a wing of the Taliban, and beginning to

target political figures<sup>42</sup> of the Afghan government. Additionally, another splinter group, Fidayi Mahaz, emerged in 2013, from discontented members both Mahaz-e Dadullah and Taliban, dogmatically opposed<sup>43</sup> to negotiations with the US.

Even more straightforwardly impacting the internal Taliban divisions, however, was that in April 2013, Taliban founder Mullah Omar died. It would be kept a closely guarded secret for another two years<sup>44</sup>. Besides some Taliban higher ups, the resentful leaders of both these groups too argue that the new Taliban leader, Akhtar Mansour, was not chosen to succeed and so had killed his predecessor, not tuberculosis as claimed otherwise.

<sup>42</sup> Bill Roggio, *Mullah Dadullah Front claims assassination of Afghan High Peace Council member*, FDD’s Long War Journal, 14.05.2012

<sup>43</sup> Sami Yousafzai, *Mullah Najibullah: Too Radical for the Taliban*, Newsweek, 30.08.2013

<sup>44</sup> Matthew DuPée, *Red on Red: Analyzing Afghanistan’s Intra-Insurgency Violence*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 11 Issue 1, January 2018, p. 27

Hence later, in July 2015, when Mullah Omar's death could no longer be kept hidden, the Taliban's largest split occurred, and as a direct result, its main splinter emerged; the Islamic Emirate High Council of Afghanistan (IEHCA). The shift also induced a merger<sup>45</sup>, where Mansoor Dadullah, the leader of the Mahaz-e Dadullah faction, became the deputy in IEHCA. Moreover, the Afghan government began to quietly aid<sup>46</sup> the breakaway faction, as it weakened the Taliban core.

This opened a new front against the Taliban, and a sudden increase in violence, during which Mansoor Dadullah and several commanders were killed in November 2015. This infuriated Obaidullah Hunar, another Kakar Pashtun, who had remained<sup>47</sup> on the core Taliban side. He created yet another splinter, the Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (IMA) in February 2016. Though he too was killed shortly after, the IMA remains affiliated to the now weakened IEHCA, having fought against the Haqqani Network members which retained support for Akhtar Mansour.

Complicating matters further, a distinctly additional (third) front has opened against the Taliban as attacks in Afghanistan began to be carried out by the ISIL Khorasan Province (ISIL KP) faction<sup>48</sup>, also in early 2015. Defectors from the Taliban, al-Qaeda as well as from other fractured insurgent groups in the region joined ISIL KP.

The al-Qaeda and ISIL split of August 2013 had eventually caught up to this part of the world too. The IMU, operating in northern

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>46</sup> Taimoor Shah, *Afghan Government Quietly Aids Breakaway Taliban Faction*, The New York Times, 19.06.2017

<sup>47</sup> Matthew DuPée, *Red on Red: Analyzing Afghanistan's Intra-Insurgency Violence*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 11 Issue 1, January 2018, p. 29

<sup>48</sup> BBC Monitoring, *Islamic State moves in on al-Qaeda turf*, BBC World News, 25.06.2015

Afghanistan since 1998, had now shifted its allegiance from al-Qaeda to ISIL KP. This triggered *another* internal split<sup>49</sup>, where part of the IMU wished to distance itself from this move and remain allied to Taliban and al-Qaeda instead. In this instance, IJU had pledged allegiance to the Akhtar Mansoor leadership of the Taliban. This may attest to continuity as the preferable alignment in in IJU's deal-making or ideological calculus.

Hence, the war had now become even more multifaceted, and roughly in time for a pivotal moment as well. Replacing ISAF, the NATO Mission Resolute Support (RS) officially inaugurated in January 2015, whose objectives remained similar, though shifted approach to 'advise and assist' the Afghan government and ANA, considerably increasing their share of responsibility for meeting these objectives. US troops in Afghanistan had reduced to 16,100 at this point, and other NATO members are withdrawing.

In May 2016, Akhtar Mansour was killed in a US drone strike, which initially cancelled potential talks with the US (again), and the Taliban appointed Haibatullah Akhundzada to lead the Taliban. Haibatullah is different than both Omar and Akhtar Mansour. Whilst he is a highly regarded clerical figure, he does not have as much of a strong personality to manage Taliban military hierarchy, nor does he have their hands-on approach. *Note*: the strongest advocates to appoint Haibatullah as head of Taliban were military commanders from Kandahar, similar areas in which the Haqqani Network is nefariously active. His appointment, therefore, may be to some extent an allegory to sustaining Taliban unity rather than him assuming a concrete leadership role. A situation of an absent leader may be also

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Joscelyn, *Central Asian groups split over leadership of global jihad*, FDD's Long War Journal, 24.08.2015

indicative of which elements internally wield decision-making influence.

NATO and ANSF operations against ISIL KP intensified in 2017 and they were remarkably effective. As soon a new leader was identified, he was killed<sup>50</sup>. The Taliban strategically accused insurgent opponents<sup>51</sup> as affiliated with ISIL KP, making use of the concentrated efforts of other entities, namely the ANSF and NATO forces, to hunt ISIL KP expansion down. It is worth noting that ISIL KP is significantly different than ISIL in Syria or Iraq.

### FIRST PEACE AGREEMENT – THE CURIOUS CASE OF HEKMATYAR

Such developments convey shifts in the status quo on the geopolitical chessboard 'in the field' in Afghanistan. It is not farfetched reasoning to suggest that among effects these shifts have, they could encourage those to head towards the negotiating table who would have otherwise been previously reluctant, or had insufficient incentive to do so.

Upon the Taliban dominating Afghanistan, and Hekmatyar having lost the support of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and other Mujahideen, he fled to Iran in 1997, with a shared antagonism for the Taliban. Moreover, Hekmatyar was excluded from the formation of the new Afghan government in 2002. He aligned his group's motives alongside al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and fought against the Afghan government and NATO, and so, that same year Iran expelled him.

In his absence, several of the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin faction's members had defected<sup>52</sup>

to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Other defectors of the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin faction had a different approach; they joined Hamid Karzai's administration<sup>53</sup> in the Afghan government, taking up over 30% of government positions even prior to 2004. Intriguingly, Hekmatyar's intent to remain independent whilst avoiding marginalisation was conveyed in a two-pronged approach, in a way, mirroring the paths of his defectors. Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin faction reminded of its presence with sporadic suicide bombings throughout the course of the conflict, being possibly responsible for a notorious attack<sup>54</sup> on aid workers in August 2010, and attacks on civilians, military and political targets. Yet, on the other hand, the political party wing of Hezb-e Islami, functioning in local politics, also began to take up seats in the Afghan parliament. Also in September 2010, Hezb-e Islami secured 16 out of 249 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elections.

Therefore, for others it could have been difficult to distinguish between those which did indeed defect from Hekmatyar and those which stayed loyal to him, or in a grey area in between. This would make his perceived influence in both government and jihadi circles larger than probably was, which was in turn used to *de facto* increase his influence, whilst yielding a shadow over his defectors.

It is also not farfetched to assume the interwoven nature of the Hezb-e Islami political party and Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin military faction, regardless of claims otherwise. Around this time, Hezb-e Islami made appeals<sup>55</sup> to negotiate with the Afghan government, reiterating

<sup>50</sup> Transnational Threats Project, *Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) Backgrounder*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 09.11.2018

<sup>51</sup> Matthew DuPée, *Red on Red: Analyzing Afghanistan's Intra-Insurgency Violence*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 11 Issue 1, January 2018, p. 28

<sup>52</sup> Muhammad Tahir, *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Return to the Afghan Insurgency*, The Jamestown

Foundation, 29.05.2008

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Rod Nordland, *Gunmen Kill Medical Aid Workers in Afghanistan*, The New York Times, 08.08.2010

<sup>55</sup> Bill Roggio, *Hekmatyar's 'peace plan' calls for NATO withdrawal by 2011*, FDD's Long War Journal, 22.03.2010

earlier demands for expelling NATO forces, and presenting it as a peace plan, meeting again in 2012 with Karzai. Considering the increased activity of other factions and dominating role played by the Taliban in the anti-government circles, the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin faction was becoming steadily less relevant. Hence, the decision to formally ally with the Afghan government.

As a result of continuity, Ashraf Ghani saw that in September 2016, the first peace agreement<sup>56</sup> was signed since the post-invasion phase of the war, inked between the Afghan government and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin faction. These would be later backed by the EU in 2017. Of course, the citizens of Kabul who remember the shelling were not too happy about this. Others were just relieved some peace deal had been sealed. It does set a precedent, for what circumstances and incentives can be identified or stretched in pursuit of peace.

What the case of Hekmatyar gives insight to is also the changes since 2002 in the socio-political landscape of Afghanistan, in the backdrop of the war and insurgency, that are rather remarkable.

### THE WARSAW INSTITUTE INTERVIEW WITH H.E. GUL HUSSAIN AHMADI, AMBASSADOR OF AFGHANISTAN TO POLAND

The author of this written piece held an interview with H.E. Gul Hussain Ahmadi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Republic of Poland at the premises of the Embassy in Warsaw on Thursday, 07.11.2019 during a 'Strategy Duologue'<sup>57</sup> meeting with The Warsaw Institute Review (WIR), for insights into ways forward.

<sup>56</sup> Al Jazeera News, *Afghanistan: Ghani, Hekmatyar sign peace deal*, Al Jazeera, 29.09.2016

<sup>57</sup> Alexander Wielgos, *Strategy Duologue at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Warsaw*, The Warsaw Institute Review, 07.11.2019

*Note: This interview has been edited and condensed for the purpose of publication. An account of the remainder of the discussion can be found on the WIR website.*

**Alexander Wielgos:** *What are the next definite steps needed for the Afghan Peace Process?*

**Ambassador:** The journey to stable and democratic Afghanistan has already begun since 2002, and in this journey there are many achievements. We will continue this political process and development at the best pace we can, we believe the Taliban dialogue can happen, it should happen, though under the leadership of the Afghan government. In the meantime, we will continue all political mechanisms which have already started, parliamentary elections, provincial councils, keep doing our best to strengthen the democratic process.

Source of terrorists should be addressed, and the places they enjoy a safe haven need to be tackled. The ANSF is facing the challenges, international community is supporting, with concrete frameworks right up until 2024, and beyond. Afghanistan is grateful for the international community's support, and it is important to acknowledge that Afghanistan is front line in the fight against terrorism, in which we have lost thousands of soldiers and our civilians. On top of the Taliban, there are several other terrorist groups, from a surprisingly large number of nationalities. Terrorism is a dangerous threat for the world, and Afghanistan is on the front line.

*What does the international community not understand about Afghanistan?*

Mostly, that Afghanistan is an entirely different country than it was even just 10 years ago, let alone since the post-Soviet phase. There is incredible progress in



education, with multiple million more education institutions. Higher education institutions have increased, both public and private. In energy, the TAPI Pipeline and the CASA-1000 projects show real cooperation with neighbouring countries, as well as in infrastructure, such as the multinational-funded Highway 1, or the 'Lapis Lazuli corridor', also as trade links with neighbouring countries. The civil society is flourishing, with think tanks, many independent and government media and radio outlets, and of course, four complete presidential electoral cycles have taken place, with the vote of the most recent elections of 28.09.2019 underway. Whilst imperfect, the pace of progress is really something.

*Should we encourage the US and Taliban representatives to return to the negotiating table in Doha?*

Any such meeting is welcome, though as a preparatory step. So, we encourage the US Envoy. Afghanistan is ready for peace, to accept Taliban for integration in the society in the proper manner for the best of the future of Afghanistan. The first priority for the Afghan government is bringing peace to Afghanistan, and is determined to negotiate with the Taliban, and to bring them back into society. Such meetings can help prepare the ground for the intra-Afghan talks. We believe the peace negotiation should be Afghan led and Afghan owned, as well as inclusive of various political parties, so if we are going for dialogue, we need dialogue not just from government, but also outside the government, as there are many parties that are not in the government.

*How do we separate members of the Taliban who want negotiations, and those who are adamantly against them? Is there an idea for a mechanism to give them a chance to defect safely?*

It ought to be underlined that the Taliban are not a unvarying set of people. Its best understand that there are 3 layers. The first is the top leadership, who have an office and base, in Qatar and Pakistan respectively. Second is leadership of commanders in the field, in districts, and rural areas. Finally, the third layer is the people, they are not Taliban largely because of ideological sway, but because they are poor, or just living in an area overwhelmed by the Taliban, and so they take up the guns, and get salary for waging violence and avoid retaliation for saying 'no', these people are all young, less than 30 years old. It comes down to manipulation and poverty. We need to deal with leadership, especially if they are receiving support from other countries, pressurise of sources of Taliban. Furthermore, comprehensive disarmament processes were underway from 2002 to 2006 on a nationwide scale, stopped because it was finished with the warlord-era setting. Afghanistan underwent mass disarmament and some individuals were taken to the ANSF, and some went to private sector from resistance groups fighting against Taliban.

#### **OBSERVE THOSE OBSERVING**

The Ambassador's insight shows us that Afghanistan's circumstances are becoming more and more prime of a country ready to move on from insurgency phase.

Geopolitical developments within Afghanistan and in the South Central Asian region have *always* been intertwined and observant of one another, very much characteristic of a '*two-level game theory*' environment. In that, insurgency groups in Afghanistan have frequently and chaotically undergone fragmentation, shifts, and realignments.

Indeed, immediate effects of the US cancelling peace negotiations with the Taliban included an uptick in operational intensity, but also competing states



© EMBASSY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN IN WARSAW

**STRATEGY DUOLOGUE AT THE EMBASSY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN IN WARSAW, ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019; THE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND, H.E. GUL HUSSAIN AHMADI AND WIR ADVISOR ALEXANDER WIELGOS.**

seizing the opportunity to swiftly step in to present themselves as alternative interlocutors, attesting to their perceptions of the status quo and their understanding of the Taliban.

On 09.09.2019, just 4 days after talks were called off, consultations between the Afghan government and the Taliban took place in Iran. Previously, 30.12.2018 Iran had also hosted a Taliban delegation in Tehran. Iran's foreign policy objective in Afghanistan is to achieve stability<sup>58</sup>, and avoiding confrontation, as indicated by not having attacked US forces there, even in light of tensions in the Persian Gulf. Moreover, Iran does have a history of having recruited Shia militants from Afghanistan, taking advantage of the sectorial dissonance, to fight in Syria as

well as in Iraq, often accompanied with promises of potential work permits in Iran.

Russia has made strides to present itself as a more reliable partner than the US, competing for favour across various countries possibly in part in the belief that this would make its claims in contention points elsewhere more valid. As Russia also began avidly hunting ISIL in Syria, and extended their hunt to Afghanistan, too emerged suspicions they did this also by means of supporting the Taliban. After military operations and drills, some equipment would simply be left behind in convenient places. Later on, Russia has also made strides to present itself as an alternative mediating party to the conflict in Afghanistan, attempting to appeal to partners in the Central Asia region. Having invited the Afghan High Peace Council, separate from the Afghan government, as well as the Taliban, to Moscow in November 2018 and in

<sup>58</sup> Mahan Abedin, *How Iran Found Its Feet in Afghanistan*, Foreign Affairs, 24.10.2019

February 2019, Russia did not hesitate to do so again upon hearing the cancelled talks on 13.09.2019, and received another Taliban delegation visit. What was particularly pertinent in these talks, however, was that Russia conveyed it was in its interest that the peace negotiations go through, and the Taliban declared it was willing and open to returning to negotiations with the US. Russia offered to act as a guarantor for US-Taliban talks on 28.08.2019, just days before they collapsed.

That week, UN Security Council Resolution 2489 renewed UNAMA's mandate. Yet, at the UN Security Council, China was threatening a veto as the document no longer made references to the Belt and Road Initiative, as some in the past had done. Other Members regarded this as an attempt to exploit a conflict zone to force in a separate pursuit of geopolitical interests. China had previously conducted special military operations in the north-eastern parts of Afghanistan, long the border with China, against ISIL units, and those which would cooperate with militants in Xinjiang.

Qatar has been facilitating these negotiations in Doha, presenting itself as a reliable partner in the MENA region and as a facilitating mediator. This is important for Qatar's relationship with the US, on top of hosting the Al-Udeid Air Base, as those observing are also the countries which have imposed a blockade on Qatar since 05.06.2017 i.e. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt. Unsurprisingly, some of which have offered themselves as an alternative to Qatar as a mediator in this affair, though thus far without success, and then criticised Qatar's role in it.

Hence, naturally Iraq is also observing the developments in Afghanistan, as a country that too has a NATO presence in it. Namely, the Hashd a-Shaabi, the dominant

pro-Iranian militia, which is comprised of multifarious factions and too are at times internally divided, are watching how the Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan deal with the US, but also vice versa, since they are already legitimised to some degree with their political wings enjoying seats in the Iraqi parliament.

As such, on the other hand, the US can feel the pressure, as its geopolitical rivals as well as its close friends, need to know what the status quo really is. Having acknowledged the time has come for NATO to depart, and having agreed that the withdrawal cannot be too rapid or reckless as it would compromise the limited achievements already secured.

Pakistan has attempted to distance itself after 2001 from the Taliban, though the networks to some extent remained, and are changing with avid precariousness. Pakistan is presenting itself as a reliable partner to the US, and as a go-to for communications to encourage the Taliban to the negotiating table with the US. Most especially, after having being criticised of not fighting hard enough against Taliban and affiliated elements, Pakistan does also use its involvement in Afghanistan as a leverage point to bring the US into the Kashmir dispute with India.

India, meanwhile, has been the only state actor in the region to affirmatively deny potential legitimacy to the Taliban. India has also firmly has refuted international mediation in the Kashmir dispute since 1971, maintaining that this is a bilateral issue, and recently, that it is merely an internal issue, and downplaying Pakistan's card in Afghanistan.

#### **AFGHANISTAN'S CHANCE FOR PEACE**

A conclusion which can be drawn is that: Actors on the international area, that find themselves in a similar situations

mimic other actors, adjusting for their specific situations, but learning from their lessons. Just as important, therefore, or perhaps even more important than the actual capability to exert force, is how the projection of power is perceived by other actors, because that is what they will act accordingly to.

Whereas for the attitudes amongst civilians, a Foreign Policy article illustrates that people risk their lives to vote<sup>59</sup> in areas threatened by the Taliban, some understandably refrain, but because of the danger of attack, not all from apathy to the political system. Meanwhile, UNAMA efforts are concentrated on encouraging insurgent fighters to give up their arms, with relatively modest, but very important progress made in part of the Afghan government Peace and Reconciliation Process. It showed that some Taliban members wanted out. It also showed that, certain Taliban members joined because waging violence to earn a living was their only option, and when presented with an alternative, they took the risk.

When a social fabric is re-engineered, it rarely is implemented immediately. The seeds have been planted, for Afghans are beyond tired of war, conflict and violence, and even after the US withdraws, some values elements will remain. Noting that the Taliban will have to win hearts and minds should they seek to continue their pursuit of legitimacy, and to do that they will have to cease their terrorist conduct. Soft power is the underutilised instrument of peace in this scenario. With this, the symbolism of another ceasefire becomes more attainable. Afghan civil society entities are keen to play a better role, advocating for human and women's rights, as Afghan

civilians excluded from these closed-door negotiations, the effects would be suboptimal – this is not to say that, in the midst of resurging violence whilst seeking an exit strategy, this is easy or feasible.

Furthermore, is the factor that the US is to withdraw conventional troops, but funded paramilitary groups, directly reporting to the US and NATO allies, will still operate in Afghanistan. Perhaps even expand. If the US can show both China and Russia, that it can exit a quagmire which it entered with reason, it can realign priorities, having secured some achievements – this strikes a very different message than having been defeated politically, which is not necessarily the case, as some would argue. The other message is that, if the necessary changes have not been achieved, then withdrawal does not happen. The message is therefore, after the US-Australian-Afghan and Taliban agreed prisoner exchange of 20.11.2019, and return to informal negotiations in Doha besides Trump's Afghanistan 28.11.2019 visit, that real concessions are needed, and they are not as costly as would seem – avoiding them could be more costly to both sides.

At the end of the day, the Ambassador's elaboration really emphasises how the setting, despite the backdrop of insurgency, is one that is ready for peace, with mechanisms already existing to reintegrate ex-insurgents. The fracturing of the Taliban due to some being intent on negotiations gives momentum to this, as does the example of Hekmatyar, although not everyone was happy with it, factors which attest to peace and hint eventual normalisation are getting better.

Afghanistan's chance for peace is at hand.

**Alexander Wielgos** ■  
November 2019

<sup>59</sup> Stefanie Glinski, *Risking Life and Limb to Vote in Afghanistan*, Foreign Policy, 27.09.2019

# TURKEY'S INVASION OF SYRIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPE

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Turkey's invasion of North and East Syria has exposed the powerlessness of European countries, which, in spite of establishing a common position, have been unable to take any effective action. It will also have a far-reaching impact on increasing terrorist threat, new humanitarian crisis, and change in the geopolitical balance. Turkey's dependence on Russia will also increase, and war crimes committed in Syria will affect NATO's image.

## **THE DEFEAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE AND TURKEY'S DISSATISFACTION**

Turkey launched its invasion on 9 October, firing on Kurdish-dominated border areas from the Euphrates to the Iraqi border. The main strike took place between Tall Abyad

and Sere Kaniye, where after two weeks of fierce fighting, Turkey and its subservient jihadist troops managed to occupy both cities. This was due to, among other things, intense air raids during which a local hospital was bombed, as well as the earlier



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**SYRIAN KURDS WAVE FLAGS AS THEY TAKE PART IN A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE TURKISH OFFENSIVE INTO NORTHEASTERN SYRIA AND IN SUPPORT OF THE SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN SYRIA'S NORTHEASTERN CITY OF QAMISHLI ON OCTOBER 28, 2019.**

dismantling of border fortifications by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) defending the area.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has long announced the attack on North and East Syria (NES). NES is a de facto autonomous territory created in the areas controlled by the SDF, a coalition formed on the initiative of the Syrian Kurds, which also involves Arab and Christian (Assyrian) troops. The SDF played a crucial role in defeating the Islamic State (IS) in Syria. Most of the territory of NES was previously occupied by IS. Before the Turkish invasion, the NES area covered approximately 27% of Syria's territory.

An effective fight against IS in Syria was possible as a result of the close cooperation between SDF and the USA. Its beginnings date back to the end of 2014 when intense American air raids on IS positions near the city of Kobani (also referred to as Ayn al-Arab) led to the

breakdown in the terrorist attack and the beginning of the Kurdish counterattack. The cooperation intensified in 2016. During the battle for the city of Manbij and, subsequently, during the key, almost a year-long campaign to push IS out of its headquarters in Raqqa, the USA was transferring more and more weapons and military equipment to the SDF. At the same time, intelligence cooperation has also intensified. It happened as a result of the SDF's intelligence, which managed to track down and kill IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. According to some sources, the Kurds have also provided Americans with intelligence on the activities of Iran and its allies in Syria.

From its very beginning, the Kurdish-American cooperation was being negatively received in Turkey. Meanwhile, despite some IS attacks in Turkey, it could be argued that, in a strategic calculus, Ankara may have not seen Syrian al-Qaeda or IS jihadists as a direct threat,

but as an indirect instrument in the fight against the Kurds and the SDF. Indicators which may point to what may be considered potential cooperation of the Turkish MIT secret service with IS include relevant evidence where some high-ranking IS officers taken prisoner by the SDF have testified to this. The value of a terrorist's testimony, under which conditions, and potential purposes is up for debate. Another indicator is Baghdadi's last location, a village a few kilometers from the Turkish border in north-west Syria, in areas controlled by militias supported by Turkey. Baghdadi was still in Baghouz in the Deir ez-Zor province of southeast Syria at the beginning of 2019. Baghouz, the last bastion of IS, was occupied by SDF in March 2019. It is difficult to imagine another way that Baghdadi could get from there to his last base – where he was killed – than through the territory of Turkey or Turkey-controlled areas of Syria.

#### **A THREAT FROM THE PKK OR THE ETHNIC TARGETING PLAN?**

At the same time, Turkey is still acting with its traditional hostility towards any manifestation of Kurdish emancipation, fearing that this will also strengthen the Kurds in Turkey. Therefore, Turkey did not want to allow any Kurdish autonomy to be formed in northern Syria. Moreover, it is also in Turkey's interest to induce shifts in demographic compositions of persons settled along the border belt (inhabited by most of the Kurdish population in Syria) in order to separate the Syrian Kurds from their compatriots in Turkey and Iraq. This could be achieved by creating the so-called "Arab Belt," referred to as the "safe zone" by Turkey. It would mean the resettlement of 2-3 million Syrian Arab refugees currently living in Turkey. There are two problems with this solution: first, that they namely come from Western Syria, and secondly, this is a precariously

**Neither the SDF nor the YPG have taken any action outside Syria, including, in particular, against Turkey.**

delicate undertaking to avoid incidents which could be accused of resonating with harmful activity and human rights violations.

Turkey claims to be running an "anti-terrorist operation," and the SDF (as well as the Kurdish YPG troops and the main PYD party) is part of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been fighting guerrilla warfare in Turkey for 40 years. A contrasting view, however, suggests that the reality of the relationship between SDF/YPG/PYD and the PKK is that it is very loose and comes down to the recognition of the symbolic leadership of Abdullah Öcalan, one of the founding members of the PKK, who has been imprisoned in Turkey for 20 years. Neither the SDF nor the YPG have taken any action outside Syria, including, in particular, against Turkey. In 2013 the PYD even conducted negotiations with the Turkish MIT secret services and with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to normalize their relations, but the Turkish side terminated these talks. Although the PKK provided support to the YPG at the beginning of its activity, it was only against the Islamic State. The PKK also took similar actions in Iraq – for example, it evacuated thousands of residents from the IS-besieged mountain of Sinjar in August 2014. In 2016, after the creation of the SDF and the intensification of cooperation between the Syrian Kurds and the USA, the PKK decided to cut all relations with the Syrian Kurds not to

It was expected that the withdrawal of the US would result in Turkey's attack, and, consequently, the Kurds involved in the conflict would not be able to prevent the reactivation of IS activities.

give Turkey an excuse to attack and not to hinder the cooperation between the SDF and the USA. Therefore, Turkey's claim that the SDF/ the PYD constitutes a threat to its security is not based on solid argumentation.

The invasion, which began on 9 October 2019, was not the first military operation by Turkey in northern Syria. In August 2016, Turkey carried out Operation Euphrates Shield which formally targeted at the Islamic State but also intended to prevent the Kurdish region of Afrin in north-west Syria from being merged with the rest of the NES. This theoretically not very complicated operation lasted up to 7 months. However, in January 2018, Turkey invaded Afrin, occupying the region after two months of fighting. The Kurds finally withdrew, not wanting to allow the massacre of civilians as a result of air raids. The majority of the inhabitants, namely about 300,000 people, left Afrin at that time. During this operation, Turkey used jihadist militia units (to which they referred to as the Syrian National Army) for the first time, which committed numerous crimes, kidnappings for ransom, executions, and looting. Both local sources and international organizations have documented this.

#### **TURKISH ATTACKS AND SDF-US COOPERATION**

The occupation of Afrin did not affect further US-SDF cooperation for two reasons: the Americans were not present in the region, and they never took responsibility for it. The situation was different for the areas to the east of the Euphrates and the Manbij regions. In December 2018, however, Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of about 2000 American soldiers from Syria. This has provoked sharp criticism in the US, both from Democrats and Republicans. The argument against the US withdrawal from Syria was based on three points. Firstly, the war with the Islamic State was not yet over. Moreover, even after its termination, it was expected that the withdrawal of the US would result in Turkey's attack, and, consequently, the Kurds involved in the conflict would not be able to prevent the reactivation of IS activities. There was no doubt that despite the military-territorial defeat of IS, this organization retained its ideological potential and created a network of hidden units. Secondly, leaving the loyal ally of the SDF would not be a good signal for other US partners in the world and would constitute support for Russian propaganda, which has long been convincing the Kurds that they should subject itself to its auspice. Thirdly, the US withdrawal could unblock the transit routes that Iran wanted to use to link its territory with the Mediterranean. This, in turn, would not benefit such US partners as Saudi Arabia and Israel. These countries would have to rely on Russia to block US action in Syria.

The consequences of the invasion that began on 9 October already confirm these concerns. However, it seemed that Trump would give up his plans to withdraw US troops from Syria. In September, the United States negotiated with Turkey and the SDF the implementation of the so-called "security mechanism." Its result





**A TURKISH-BACKED FREE SYRIAN ARMY SOLDIER HOLDS HIS WEAPON AS THEY CELEBRATE AFTER REPORTEDLY CAPTURING THE CITY OF AFRIN, NORTHERN SYRIA, MARCH 18, 2018.**

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was that Kurds withdrew their forces from the five km-wide border belt and removed the border fortifications to prove that they did not pose a threat to Turkey's security. Joint patrols of the USA and Turkey appeared there, and Turkey was also able to carry out several reconnaissance flights. However, a few days before the invasion, President Trump suddenly announced that, in the face of a planned Turkish attack, he was withdrawing US forces, thus opening the way for Turkey.

### **REVITALIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE**

Before the Turkish attack, the SDF held in its prisons about 12,000 IS terrorists, including about 1,000 so-called foreign fighters mainly coming from Europe. Moreover, in the camps Ain Issa and al-Hol, there were about 100,000 members of their families, mostly very radicalized, faithful to the IS ideologies. Of these, around 8,000 children and 4,000 women were from outside the Middle East. However, countries of Europe refused to cooperate with the SDF on the European prisoners of war and their family members. The reluctance to repatriate these people was somewhat understandable due to concerns about the

terrorist threat. The attempt to ignore the problem, however, posed a growing risk that it would go off under the influence of external factors, such as the Turkish invasion of NES and the uncontrolled migration of these people to Europe. This is what happened, although its scale is difficult to assess. During the Turkish bombings, many terrorists escaped from some of the prisons, there was an attempted revolt in the al-Hol camp, and about 750 people associated with IS managed to escape from the camp in Ain Issa. Most of them tried to get to Turkey from where many of them could then get to Europe.

The weakening of control over IS activity (as a result of the US withdrawal and the engagement of the SDF in the fight against Turkish invasion) has a far more significant impact on IS operational potential than the elimination of Baghdadi. It is worth recalling that the culmination of Jihadist terrorist activity in Europe happened in the years 2015–2017. The later decrease in the number of effective attacks was caused by and directly correlated to the SDF's liquidation of the command center for these operations based in Raqqa. The concurrence in time of the removal of IS by



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**TURKISH SOLDIER STORM THE KURDISH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING AFTER CAPTURING THE CITY OF AFRIN FROM KURDISH POPULAR PROTECTION UNITS (YPG) FORCES, NORTHERN SYRIA, MARCH 18, 2018.**

the SDF from Raqqa and a radical decline in the number of successful terrorist attacks in Europe is no coincidence. However, just one month after the start of the Turkish invasion, the activity of the hidden IS units in North and East Syria has clearly increased. During the first 21 days, there have been 38 IS attacks, including two severe bombings in Qamishli. A total of 51 people were killed in these attacks. The number of joint US-SDF attacks on IS hideaways has decreased dramatically.

European countries were aware of the threat posed by Turkish aggression to the reactivation of IS, but they did not take any action to counteract it. After Donald Trump's announcement in December that American troops would withdraw from Syria, only a few European countries declared their willingness to have a symbolic military presence in these areas (Great Britain and France had already had small contingents in Syria before). For example, the Germans completely ruled out the possibility of sending their forces there. The SDF's calls for creating an international tribunal to try IS terrorists have been ignored, and judicial cooperation with NES institutions has not been established. The latter was motivated by the fear of Turkey's protests against official relations with the NES institutions, which could lead to a gradual recognition of their subjectivity.

### **EUROPE'S INEFFECTIVE RESPONSE**

Two days after Turkey's invasion, five European states-members of the UN Security Council (Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Poland) tried to push through a resolution condemning Turkey's actions and highlighting the threat they pose to the revitalization of the IS. However, the resolution was blocked by the collaborative action of the superpowers: Russia, the USA, and China. It was a spectacular failure for Europe. It should be mentioned that the Security Council has the tools to solve the crisis. The aim is to bring international peacekeeping forces into the NES based on Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Since Turkey claims that the alleged activity of the PKK in northern Syria poses a problem for this country, then UN forces could verify it and – if necessary – block such a threat. The fact that the Security Council is not in a position to take such a decision, however, shows that the parties concerned have completely different intentions than the stabilization of these areas.

Erdogan, in response to the criticism of his actions by Europe, used the classic argument, namely blackmail, of carrying out a demographic attack on Europe using 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. The Turkish President also demanded that the rhetoric used by European politicians

be aligned with the terminology used by Turkish propaganda. In particular, it is about forcing politicians and the European media not to use terms such as 'invasion', 'ethnic cleansing', 'war crimes', and 'crimes against humanity'. Agreement with these demands would translate into the total collapse of Europe – if, under the influence of blackmail, it would give up one of its foundations – freedom of speech.

### **THE PLAN'S IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE**

One of Erdogan's demands was that Europe should finance his project to develop infrastructure in the zone of occupation after the resettlement of refugees from Turkey to Europe. This would make Europe participate in the Turkish plan which critics could deem ethnically-orientated. So far, these demands have been rejected, but at the beginning of November, Erdogan met with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, after which he announced that the UN would study the resettlement plan for the population in northern Syria. It is worth recalling that the Turkish invasion of Afrin has already forced 300,000 inhabitants of the region, most of whom are Kurds, to leave their homes. A month after the start of the invasion of northern Syria, another 300,000 people fled from the areas under the Turkish attack. This number represents almost ¼ of the total Kurdish population in Syria. Among those subject to the plan's immediate effects are not only Kurds but also Christians. All this is just the "minimum" option aiming only in the areas where Turkish occupation was agreed at the Putin-Erdogan meeting. It is a belt of about 100 km and a depth of 32 km, stretching between the towns of Tell Abyad and Serê Kaniyê. The open question is whether this would also include Christian Tell Tammer (35 km from the border) – which would mean the destruction of one of the last Christian regions in northern Syria. There is no doubt that Christians will not be able to stay in these areas if they

are under the occupation of Turkey and Turkey-supported jihadists. However, if Turkey implements its plan to create a zone of occupation of more than 400 km, the number of refugees will increase to at least 800,000, and Christianity in northern Syria may be ultimately eradicated.

The plan merits worry because any activity which either intentionally aims to, or as a side-effect causes, on such a gigantic scale a shift in demographic composition has risks of human rights violations. Moreover, the said activity has the possibility to continue gradually and intensify in its harshness. We hope it will not go in that direction, but after all, we remember that ethnic cleansing is a crime against humanity. It is an action that can have serious consequences in Europe. Firstly, there is the threat of a significant number of Kurds migrating to Europe. Although only 12,000 people crossed the border with Iraq in the first two weeks after the invasion, this number may promptly increase. Furthermore, Iraqi Kurdistan is already home to around 200,000 Syrian Kurds. Increasing persecution of the Turkish Kurds may also affect their migration. Although it is unlikely that the scale of this migration will exceed tens of thousands of people, the influx of these people into Europe could cause riots on Europe's streets. Clashes are already taking place between the participants in the pro-Kurdish demonstrations and Turkish nationalists. Several times speeding cars were driven into the crowd of protesting Kurds. The influx of large numbers of victims of the Turkish invasion and its implications thereafter will undoubtedly lead to a radicalization of attitudes and may, in countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, result in a regular street war between the PKK and Turkish terrorist organizations such as Die Osmanen Germania gangs. Combating the latter was not adequately managed in Europe because of their links with the Turkish authorities

and the fear of European governments of a diplomatic scandal and Turkey's reaction.

### **NATO'S IMAGE PROBLEM AND THE STRENGTHENING OF RUSSIA**

Contrary to popular belief, Europe is not powerless against Turkish blackmail. Germany is Turkey's largest trading partner, and both imports and exports to and from Europe account for more than 50% of Turkey's foreign trade. Meanwhile, the Turkish economy is extremely fragile and vulnerable to shocks. This was shown, among others, by the sanctions imposed on Turkey by Russia (after shooting down SU-24) and then by the USA (in connection with the imprisonment of Pastor Brunson). The EU's imposition of an embargo on Turkey would, in a very short time, lead to a gigantic crisis in that country and would force Turkey to withdraw from all its aggressive actions. Unfortunately, Europe is not capable of doing that. After the Turkish aggression against Syria, EU politicians announced the imposition of sanctions on Turkey, but in the end, no real measures that would effectively hit the Turkish economy were introduced.

The war crimes accompanying the Turkish invasion can also be very troublesome not only for Europe but also for NATO – of which Turkey is a member. In the first days of the war, recordings of executions of prisoners of war and civilians by jihadists under Turkish command were revealed. One armed group also ambushed a car carrying Hevrin Khalef, one of the leading Kurdish politicians in Syria, and then brutally murdered her. Turkey was also accused of using chemical weapons (white phosphorus). International inspectors, however, refused to verify these allegations despite having collected all samples needed. Hospitals and ambulances were also bombarded. Three nurses of the Kurdish Red Crescent were kidnapped and murdered. These crimes have given rise to voices calling for the need to make the

Turkish leadership, led by Erdogan, stand before international criminal jurisdiction. For example, Carla Del Ponte, the former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, expressed such an opinion. However, there is no indication that anyone will be held accountable, including the direct perpetrators who have already committed similar crimes. This will leave a mark on the entire North Atlantic Alliance and would evidence a complete contrast between NATO's declared values and the practice of one of its members.

The recent events in Syria also represent a considerable strengthening of Russia. It was Putin who dictated the final ceasefire conditions. Turkey adapted to them even though they were less favorable to this country than the arrangements previously made with US Vice-President Mike Pence. It is also up to Russia now to decide how far it will allow Turkey to go. Turkey's inclination to comply with the Russian guidelines was visible, among others, when it immediately released (at the request of the Russians) a group of prisoners of war from the Syrian government army (supporting the SDF in the fight against Turkish forces) and transferred them to the Russians. Besides, Turkish patrols in the ten km-wide border belt ride by Russian escort and (at the Russians' request) without a Turkish flag. Russia can also take control of transit routes, and it will be up to it to decide whether the Iranian blockade will be effective. In this way, it will gain greater opportunities to put pressure on Israel or Saudi Arabia, as well as a bargaining chip in talks with the USA. This may also have its consequences for Europe – especially in its eastern part.

**Witold Repetowicz** ■  
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# IRAQ SURVIVED THE “ISLAMIC STATE”

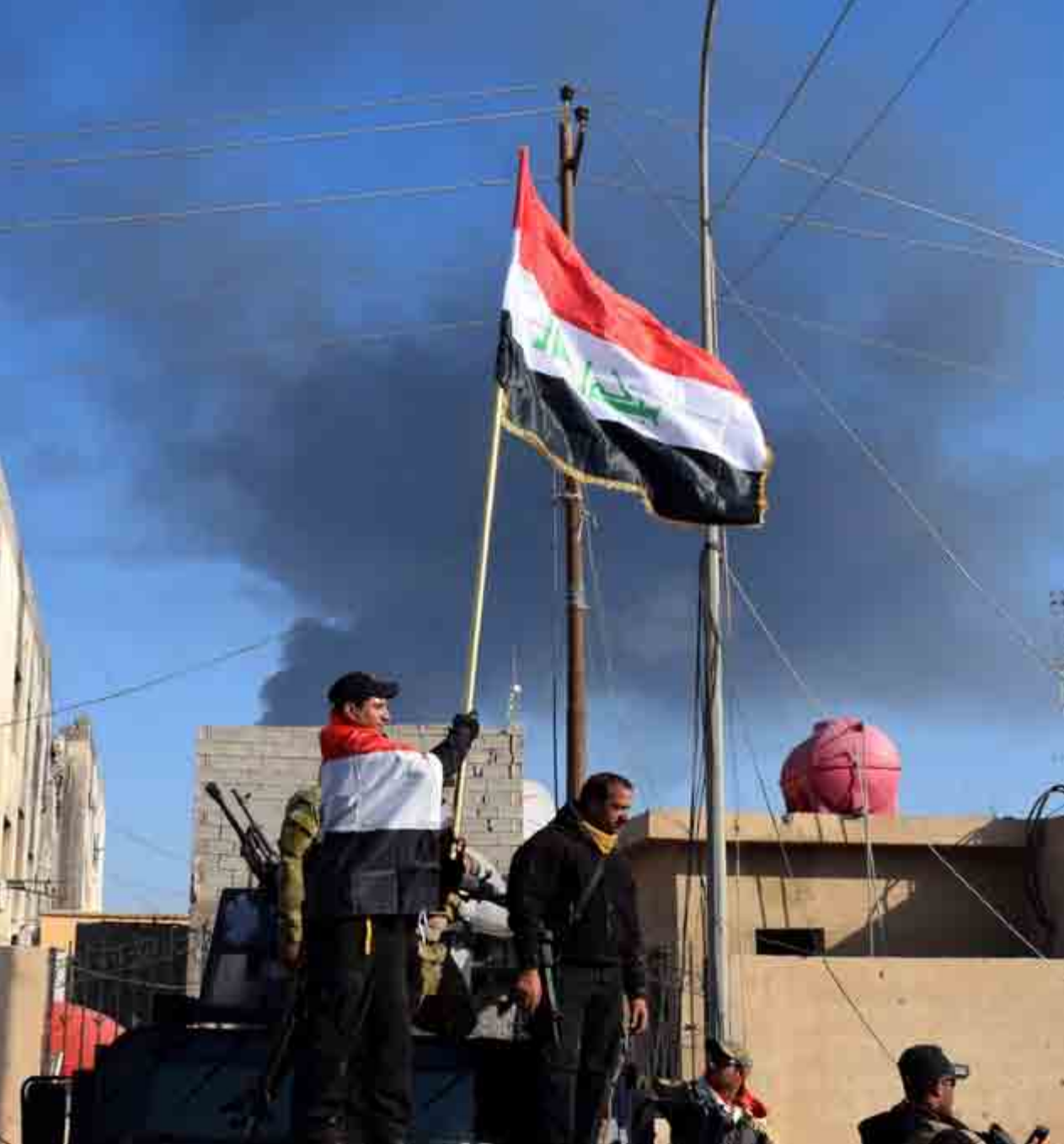
MICHAŁ BRUSZEWSKI

It is impossible to discuss the situation in the Middle East — from social, economic, military, or, broadly speaking, geopolitical perspectives — without taking into account the war with ISIL.

**R**egarded as second only to Syria in terms of being the critical battlefield against the so-called ‘Islamic State’ abbreviated as ISIL, ISIS, or IS, the shadow of ISIL had bedimmed Iraq, with jihadists having control of an dishearteningly large part of the country. This induced crises with regard to migration and a mass exodus of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and multifaceted crises, which include economic (war-related impoverishment of society), military (loss of territory to ISIL), and political, the latter of which pertaining to personnel reshuffles in

Iraqi authorities and a change in the political moods across the country.

In March, the so-called Islamic State faced defeat in its final enclave in the Syrian town of al-Baghouz. Though ISIL insurgents had been subdued “*in the field*,” this yet did not put an end to inhumane practices of the terror group. The war against ISIL was not over, and what changed was nothing but its scale and dimension. Fighting had ceased while Syria’s Euphrates River Valley is now seeing what could be referred to as the process of ousting insurgents and ISIL marauders from the area, an operation



**IRAQI SOLDIERS RAISE THE IRAQI NATIONAL FLAG INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT COMPLEX, THAT WAS RECAPTURED FROM THE ISLAMIC STATE (IS) MILITANTS, IN CENTRAL RAMADI, WEST OF IRAQ, DECEMBER 28, 2015.**

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which was conducted jointly by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Syrian Arab Army (SAA).

Iraq is *de facto* still where troops, law enforcement agents, and special service forces are carrying out an operation with a mission to detain further ISIL-linked terrorists, while ISIL itself is considered a real threat. Although Islamists no longer hold a grip on any part of Iraq's territory, they still deem a menace after having

gone underground. The so-called Islamic State, or a quasi-state genocidal creature proclaimed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, bears full responsibility for war crimes. Though investigations are underway to estimate the scale of executions and persecutions, each subsequent month brings new revelations about the discovery of graves containing remains of ISIL victims, thus unveiling a horrifying truth about torture, killings, rape, and robberies ISIL insurgents committed. With the so-

called Islamic State comes the nightmare of Yazidi women, or even girls, bought by jihadists at slave markets and treated as property.

While writing the report from a makeshift camp for displaced refugees near Dohuk, Iraq, I recall an account given by a Yazidi woman who managed to buy herself out of Islamist captivity. She was physically abused, and shortly before being freed from captivity, jihadi militants knocked her teeth out with a Kalashnikov rifle butt. I was in disbelief as I was told how young this woman was as she looked elderly. Though she survived, al-Baghdadi’s thugs deprived the woman of her health and youth, and she ultimately found herself in a makeshift refugee camp, living in poor conditions. Though far from fusillades and rapes, she has taken up yet another struggle, fighting to survive every single day, albeit in the shelter for displaced refugees. There are thousands of accounts like hers.

What has come as an aftermath of the jihadist incursion is yet another ethno-religious turmoil which has yet to be resolved properly. This is also illustrated by the Christian community that had dwindled from around 1.5 million in the early 2000s to just 200,000. Added to this are the Kurdish aspirations for independence, the Sunni-Shia conflict — that had grown exponentially also prior to the ISIL incursion — and even the case of the Yazidi minority. Suffice it to recollect that northern Iraq, which served as the main theatre of war against the so-called Islamic State, is but a multi-ethnic and multireligious region inhabited by the mainly-Christian Assyrians, Yazidis, Turkmen, Arabs, and Kurds. An insightful look into ISIL activities shows that the group’s militant jihadis in the past tended to target similar melting pots due to their vulnerability to conflict. Iraq and the war against the so-called Islamic State

saw both the involvement of a U.S.-led international coalition and the Iranian military intervention. Baghdad surely saw the war against ISIL as a test.

#### **ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI, A SELF-PROCLAIMED CALIPH**

From the earlier stages, al-Baghdadi’s jihadi militants targeted Iraq to carry out their rogue activities. ISIL incubated out of a terrorist group known by its acronym of ISI — the Islamic State of Iraq. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi for many years remained elusive. In June 2014, in Mosul, he announced the establishment of a self-proclaimed caliphate. Dubbed one of the world’s master criminals of the 21st century, al-Baghdadi has emerged as an object of analysis, with his biography being under scrutiny in search of further details. Al-Baghdadi personally made sure that the world knew as little about him as possible, avoiding public appearances, photographs, or video footage. He features in few materials, alongside the said 2014 “proclamation” of the “caliphate” in Mosul while in the latest video showing al-Baghdadi, the so-called Islamic State claimed responsibility for Sri Lanka’s bombings on April 21, and sought to deny rumors on his alleged death. Yet it is dubious whether the man with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s appearance was actually him.

Even after confirming reports on al-Baghdadi’s death in a U.S. raid on his compound in Syria’s Idlib province, experts are still pondering who the world’s top terrorist really was. What is known about Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi? Not incidentally, his moniker makes a reference to Iraq’s capital city of Baghdad. This is where he pursued a doctorate at the local university and served as an imam before branding himself a self-styled caliph. He is said to have harnessed radical Islam back when Saddam Hussein was in power. Interestingly, al-Baghdadi was

reported to apply for the post of a state official in the time of the *ancient regime*, which means that his family nurtured friendly ties with the then ruling Baath Party of Saddam Hussein. As it later found out, among ISIL jihadi leaders were those identified as former senior officers in Hussein's army.

It is unknown when exactly al-Baghdadi became affiliated with an Islamic terror group. At the time of the U.S. military intervention during the Second Gulf War (2003), he is believed to have preached at a mosque in the city of Samarra, Iraq. While establishing contacts with terrorists, he was arrested by chance, but a subsequent amnesty and his release could indicate that either al-Baghdadi did not hold a prominent position in the terrorist hierarchy or this fact simply escaped notice. When held in a detention center at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq in 2005–2009, al-Baghdadi was thought to have come into contact with other jihadi insurgents. He was to a great extent influenced by the extraordinary cruelty of his mentor, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, notorious for slaughtering Shias and Christians. A more in-depth insight into al-Baghdadi's biography of before then is challenging, and other terrorists went by a similar *nom de guerre*, as exemplified by that acquired by Abu Bakr's immediate predecessor as the head of ISI, Abu Omar or Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi, killed in 2010. The self-styled caliph might have met al-Zarqawi as early as in the 1990s in Afghanistan, other sources reported. This would mean that he stepped onto the path to jihadism much earlier than previously thought.

Let's go back to 2010. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi served as the "emir" of Rawa, a town in Anbar province, the region I refer to in the further part of the this written piece. Located in western Iraq close to

the Syrian borderland, the province is dominated by Arab-Sunni elements and inhabited by tribes torn between the terror group and U.S. troops deployed to the area to fight against jihadi insurgents. Back then, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi gained notoriety for his ruthless efforts to kill opponents and enforce brutal Sharia law. The choice of the area they were active at the time was not incidental, showing al-Baghdadi's endeavors to target regions hit by smoldering conflicts and earn the loyalty of local populations, the latter seen as a top priority. Then, 2011 saw the outbreak of a civil war in Syria.

### **SYRIA – A BASE FOR IRAQI OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS**

At its height in 2014–2015, the so-called Islamic State waged war both on Syrian and Iraqi fronts. But this is a rather simplistic vision — if we overlay an ethno-religious grid onto a map of attack directions, it is vital to distinguish the jihadi invasion on the two Kurdistans – Syrian and Iraqi. Before launching a massive attack in the direction of Iraq, jihadi militants had taken advantage of the Syrian civil war to build their position and base, as well as expand their "territorial depth." What is alarming is both the scale of their genocidal crimes, and the military momentum al-Baghdadi's forces had when besieging subsequent cities. The ISIL-led war campaign began when the caliphate deployed some of its experienced Iraqi jihadist insurgents to Sunni-inhabited lands with a mission to form coherent military groups, train terrorists and launch an offensive operation.

Of all regions, al-Baghdadi's loyalists were most active in the provinces of Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Aleppo, and Idlib, with an exceedingly skillful tactic being adopted since the very beginning. The fighting over the Euphrates River proved that ISIL first provoked conflicts to be then able to gain profits from disputes smoldering on a



given territory; they have targeted both the Damascus-loyal government forces and Kurdish-led military units in Rojava, the autonomous region of Syrian Kurdistan, while facing off rebel factions of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other jihadi-like groups like the al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat An-Nusra. When fielded to the Syrian front line, ISIL sought to wage war against virtually anyone while plotting intrigues and enfeebling its theoretical allies. Though this study refers chiefly to Iraq, the Syrian example exhibits that the civil war absorbed — either directly or not — both local and global powers, from Turkey and Saudi Arabia, through Iran, to Russia, the U.S. and France), where ISIL has yet emerged as a belligerent party. The Syrian conflict morphed into somewhat an ethnic and political Gordian knot, a situation that for a few years was much to the liking of Islamic insurgents.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda who succeeded Osama bin Laden following his death, voiced criticism over al-Baghdadi’s “doctrine,” and these two terror groups eventually drifted apart. Interestingly enough, al-Qaeda might have seen Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as responsible for “dirty work,” the man whose actions could eventually be restrained on Syrian soil. Perhaps al-Baghdadi masterminded a great mystification since the dawn of the Syrian civil war, seeking first to form some unspecified jihadi groups — initially intended to conceal their radical nature — in a bid to impose the bloody Sharia rule and pledge loyalty to his figure once his faithful insurgents conquer and win control of the territory. To a large extent, he managed to accomplish its goal.

Also, al-Baghdadi spoke in favor of merging the two terror groups. But a rift within a “jihadi family” saw ISIL — an organization viewed as more affluent and stronger — taking over both personnel and assets of any affiliates of al-Qaeda or

other radical factions. Along with ISIL’s territorial expansion, jihad “volunteers” aspired to swell the ranks of the so-called Islamic State, instead of any other rebel grouping. What raised the militant group’s attractiveness in the eyes of Islamic fanatics was a new propaganda model, with a large-scale *social media* campaign. On the tide of “retaking” lands from FSA and an-Nusra rebel fighters, ISIL took complete control of Raqqa by January 13, 2014, later the capital of the self-declared “caliphate.” ISIL succeeded in joining together a great deal of hotbeds around Syria’s eastern provinces, mainly in the Islamist-occupied region of Raqqa, part of Aleppo province, Deir ez-Zor region — yet without the city itself — all of which laid the groundwork for the self-styled caliphate. The geographical scope of the jihadist attacks is evidenced by the fact that the Kurdish town of Kobane, known under its official name of Ayn al-Arab, which the terrorists besieged from September 15, 2014, to March 15, 2015, is located on the Syrian-Turkish border.

#### **THE EXPANSION OF THE SO-CALLED ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ**

With the fighting to secure ISIL’s base on Syria being underway, militants launched an offensive in Iraq. ISIL militants preyed on the Sunni-Shia conflict that rattled Iraq for a couple of years, though remained dormant since the dawn of the said statehood. When second time in office between 2010 and 2014, Iran-backed Shia Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki faced accusations of downplaying and discriminating against the country’s Sunni-inhabited regions, purges in the army and ministries and personnel reshuffles, to the benefit of the Shia population. What occurred as the boiling point was the outbreak of mass protests within Iraq, sparked by the Sunni Arab population, were deadly clashes that swept across the town of Hawija in April 2013. Ethnic and religious divisions — already



**IRAQI DISPLACED PEOPLE FLEE THEIR HOUSES DUE TO THE FIGHTING BETWEEN IRAQI FORCES AND ISLAMIC STATE GROUP (IS) AT THE OLD CITY AREAS, WESTERN MOSUL, IRAQ, JULY 5, 2017.**

© AHMED JALIL (PAP/EPA)

apparent at that time — eventually gained never-before-seen momentum, morphing into a political front line. Meanwhile, al-Maliki’s cabinet underwent further political purges while an ambitious U.S. Army project aiming to drag Anbar-based Sunni tribes to the side of the government was abandoned. Al-Maliki recognized such militias as a threat. The U.S. was pulling its military contingent out of the country. This was so much to the liking of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Driven by the Sunni Arab insurgency in Anbar province in December 2013, al-Baghdadi’s loyalists began to put into action an extensive plan for an Iraqi offensive. In early January 2014, they at least partly asserted control of the border town of al-Qaim, Fallujah, Karmah, al-Khalidiya, Haditha, Saklaviya, Ramadi and Abu Ghraib. ISIL’s incursion flashed the first urgent warning for the Iraqi government, given that the Islamist-seized town of Fallujah is located on the outskirts of Baghdad, just an hour’s drive from the country’s capital. Anbar province and even Baghdad Governorate were set on fire.

While the ISIL momentum and its territorial claims stirred the imagination of residents of the Middle East and experts

interested in Iraqi affairs, reports on the militant group’s seizure of Mosul, Iraq’s second-largest city, profoundly shocked the world. Especially that the circumstances of the fall of Mosul could have been taken as a bad omen for the further fight against jihadi insurgents. On June 5, 2014, militants from what was then known as ISIL launched an assault against the rich city of Mosul, the main urban area in northern Iraq. The Iraqi government army had 30,000 soldiers and officers, and troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Motorized Division of the Iraqi Army were deployed to defend Nineveh. Roughly 1,500 jihadists were fielded to seize Mosul. Yet, by June 9, Iraqi troops and police officers deserted the battlefield while Islamists marched into the city. Speaking from the podium of Mosul’s Great Mosque of An-Nuri on June 29, the first day of Ramadan that year, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the establishment of the so-called Islamic State and proclaimed himself “Caliph” Ibrahim.

The seizure of Mosul paved jihadists’ way for a military offensive and the conquest of the Nineveh governorate in August later that year. Also, jihadi fighters captured the Iraqi city of Tikrit, known as the capital of the Saladin governorate and the birthplace of Saddam Hussein.

After the escape of Iraqi troops and police officers, a political vacuum emerged in the Nineveh Plains, a strip of no man’s land where fled thousands of displaced war refugees. At that point, Iraqi Kurds joined the operation — Kurdish forces known as the Peshmerga marched out of the autonomous Kurdistan Region (KRG), quickly filling the void left by Iraqi government forces. Territories where jihadi militants clashed with Kurdish forces are referred to as “disputed,” what could be called a “bone of contention” between Erbil, the capital city of Iraqi Kurdistan, and Baghdad. Though of little importance back in 2014, the dormant Iraqi-Kurdish conflict could resume much earlier than anyone might expect.

As a result of the fighting, the front line between the so-called Islamic State and Iraqi Kurds eventually leveled off. ISIL jihadi insurgents imposed their bloody rules and started executing the Christians, Yazidis, and Shias. They forced the Assyrians, the Christian minority indigenous to northern Iraq, to convert to Islam, while men were murdered and women raped. The terror group was also reported to be extracting jizya taxes — a humiliating levy forced upon the Christians. Following the capture of the Yazidi-inhabited region of Sinjar, local women and girls were sold into slavery, the fact that I have mentioned above. The slave price list blatantly shows how perfidious and sadistic ISIL jihadists were. In 2015, Zainab Bangura, the U.N.’s Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, said young children, up to the age of nine, fetched around \$165, adolescents — \$124, while women generally fetched lower prices as they got older. Jihadi militants enforced their strictly extremist-interpretation Sharia law in the conquered areas, depriving women of their rights and banned music and smoking, the latter of which is popular in the Middle East. The

brutal rule of the so-called Islamic State involved severe punishments like public flogging or crucifixion. Though seen as a quasi-state creature, al-Baghdadi’s “caliphate” imposed a totalitarian regime, with a vast machine of repression and terror. At its height, the “caliphate” stretched:

- from Sinjar to Mosul in northeastern Iraq, through vicinities of the city of Kirkuk in the east, to Fallujah and Baghdad’s outskirts in the southeastern part of the country
- from the outskirts of Aleppo in northwestern Syria, through Kobane in the north to Syria’s western governorate of Hama and the city of Palmyra.

It is estimated that al-Baghdadi had eight million people in territories under its control, said to be roughly the size of England. Even if overestimated — with some saying that at its height, ISIL controlled just over 90,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land — the terror group brought to life a quasi-state that destabilized the whole region of the Middle East, cutting Iraq off the Syrian and Jordanian borders. ISIL became what could be called the world’s wealthiest terror group, looting 500 billion Iraqi dinars — \$429 million — from the Iraqi city of Mosul, and seizing oil-rich areas.

#### **BAGDAD IN THE FACE OF THE JIHADI OFFENSIVE**

The fall of Mosul shocked namely also the country’s Shia political elites. In the face of such a major military defeat, Nouri al-Maliki’s position was weakening day by day. On June 13, 2014, Ali as-Sistani, a prominent Shia cleric, urged people to take up arms against Sunni-led insurgents, calling on Shia youth to join militia branches, later known as the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). Similar calls were raised by influential Shia religious leader Muqtada as-Sadr. On June 11,

Tehran sent to Baghdad troops from the Quds Force, an elite unit in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The ISIL expansion on Iraqi soil coincided with the country's political deadlock at home. It was only in July that Fouad Masum, an ethnic Kurd, was approved as president after the April presidential vote. Theoretically, al-Maliki could form his next cabinet, though in the face of worldwide pressure and military defeats, he was succeeded by Haider al-Abadi. Not only was Nouri al-Maliki accused of having lost the political campaign in 2014, but also of antagonizing the country, and — most importantly — the newly formed Iraqi government, due to its shaky position, and had to restore relations with Washington. Maliki held responsibility for running an anti-American campaign, making his best efforts to pull U.S. military contingent out of the Tigris River. In a last-ditch solution, he could hope to ask Tehran and Iran's theocratic system for help. When Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, eventually lent support to al-Abadi, former prime minister al-Maliki resigned himself to the loss of office. The change in power in Iraq was warmly welcomed around the world, especially by the countries of the Middle East: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other states of the Arab League. In its war against the so-called Islamic State, Baghdad was supposed to get help simultaneously from Washington and Tehran.

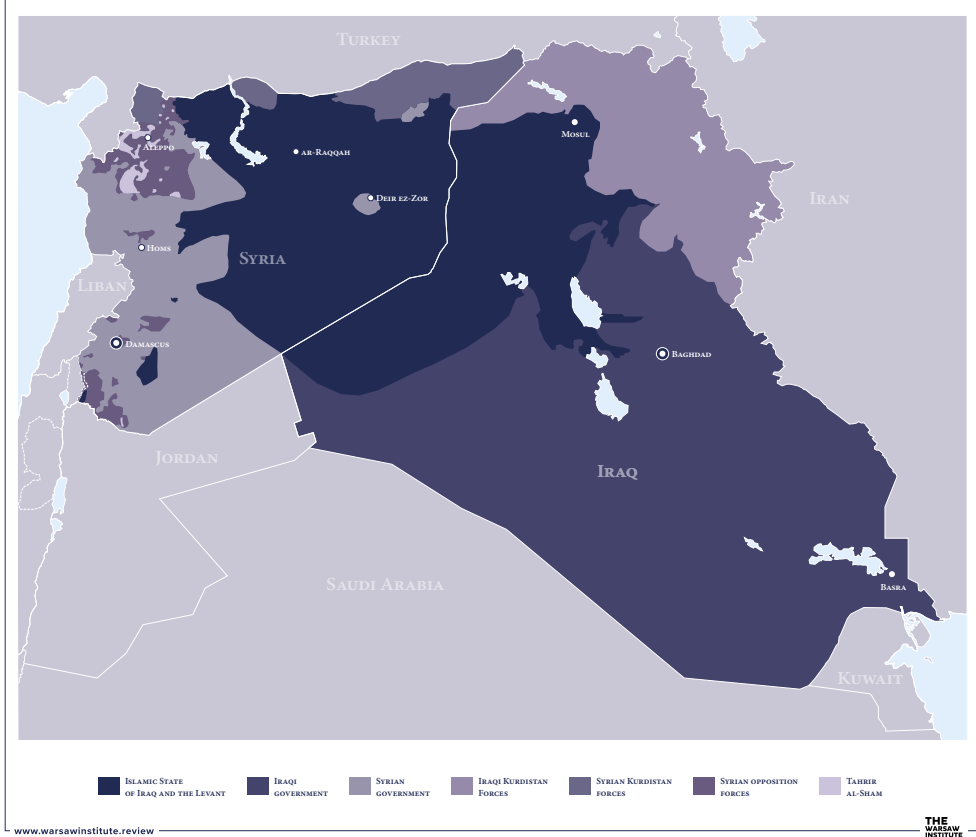
### WASHINGTON'S PERSPECTIVE

Back in time, then U.S. President Barack Obama downplayed the significance of the ISIL case, saying the terror group included some low-level terrorists. However, everything changed in August 2014 when the world discovered how “the caliphate” pursued its offensive in the Nineveh Plains, where jihadi militants raped, executed, and abducted mainly Christians and Yazidis. Seeing 150,000 Christians fleeing Nineveh province, primarily to Iraqi Kurdistan, and

the escape of defenseless Yazidi population into the mountains of Sinjar, Washington launched an international military and humanitarian intervention. From the beginning, the operation involved air forces and special operations, with the participation of commando forces, artillery, training component, and humanitarian aid. Once deployed to the field, they solved the problem of the “boots on the ground” doctrine, seen by U.S. society as highly unpopular, while allowing them to engage in the conflict. In October 2014, the intervention — being underway at that time — came to be officially known as *Operation Inherent Resolve* (OIR). Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF–OIR), an ad hoc contingent taking part in the mission, was deployed mainly to the Iraq theatre while also encompassing Syria. Reports say that U.S. Air forces carried out up to 80 percent of all the air strikes as part of OIR, and the remaining 20 percent – by U.S. allies – the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Netherlands, Belgium, and some regional actors, among which Turkey, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates or Jordan. The Global Coalition against Daesh was formed, at that time comprised of 70 countries (the coalition is still expanding). Iran, which carried out its own operation in Iraq, was not included as part of OIR. What surged as a decisive moment for the international coalition was a Mosul offensive, or a military operation with an aim to liberate Mosul and whole Nineveh province from the yoke of the so-called Islamic State.

The U.S. ensured patronage under the operation, providing cutting-edge military hardware, especially aircraft carriers. The land operation was undertaken by two armies — Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), backed by the PMU and some other military branches, including the mainly-Christian Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) and the Kurdish Peshmerga, fighting alongside local Christian military

ISIL's territory, in grey, at the time of its greatest territorial extent – May, 2015



groups: the Nineveh Plain Forces (NPF) and Dwekh Nawsha. Combined all together, the above forces numbered more than 100,000 militarymen, managing to accomplish their assumed goals during roughly ten months of the campaign (October 16, 2016 – July 20, 2017). The U.S. military involvement and the success of the operation paved the way for halting Iraqi-Kurdish resentments on these two’s disputed lands. Also, this permitted to indicate where to attack and break through the defense cordon of the so-called Islamic State and cleanse the shame of the Iraqi army after a defeat it suffered back in 2014. This helped rebuild Baghdad’s credibility and kick off a broad operation intended to liberate Syria and Iraq from the jihadi scourge. The U.S. policy, for its part, redefined the presence over the Tigris River. While deploying troops to Iraq did not meet with wide public support,

members of society approved the purpose of the fight against the terror group, along with how it was carried out, by relieving land forces of its military tasks. Among those who involved in the operation against the Islamic State was U.S. freshly elected President Donald Trump, who took office in January 2017. Though Trump is far from being branded as a proponent of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East, the war against ISIL was high on his list of priorities. He introduced changes in both how financial support was distributed to Syrian insurgents and “Obama’s doctrine,” depriving unpredictable Sunni (jihadi) groups of help to the benefit of the Kurdish-led stable coalition of SDF.

**ERBIL PERSPECTIVE**

Whilst this analysis does not encompass the assessment of the U.S. invasion in 2003, both journalistic sources and more

insightful studies put the U.S. Army's presence in Iraq in the negative light, depicting the conflict itself as an overall failure. Though ridiculed by experts for years, Operation Iraqi Freedom genuinely brought freedom to the Kurds who seem to see the whole undertaking positively. In 2003, the Kurds confirmed their autonomy, by *de facto* establishing their own state having its disposal territory, services, army (Peshmerga forces), administrative structures (Kurdish Regional Government, or KRG), and parliament that empowered Kurdistan to push forward its economic and diplomacy policies, independently of Baghdad. What lacked was a *pro-forma* recognition of autonomy as an independent state. Kurdistan's local politics fractured into the two clan-affiliated parties: the Barzani-controlled Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), held by the Talabani family. Under Iraq's constitution, the president must be a Kurd, and the prime minister a Shia, a solution to regulate ethnic strains, which is why subsequent heads of the Iraqi state welcomed the Kurds on the country-wide political stage. Though from the autonomy's perspective, its split with Baghdad only beefed up as Iraq cut off oil deliveries to Kurdistan, though following the escape of Iraqi forces in 2014, Kurdish Peshmerga forces captured the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, claiming its historical ties to the region. Since 2003, when Iraq suffered an economic collapse, the Kurdistan region saw the development of its economy, attracting groups of investors.

To prove Kurdistan's absolutely sovereign policy, suffice it to cite an example of an agreement between Masoud Barzani, the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and Turkish President Recep Erdogan, with Ankara surging as a top economic partner for Erbil. In 2016, Turkey's exports to the KRG were \$5.4

billion, compared to \$7.6 billion for Iraq in total. For Erdogan, Erbil became a leading partner in trading oil and natural gas. Although Erdogan is enforcing a drastic anti-Kurdish policy, he did not mean to target Iraqi Kurdistan or the Kurdistan Democratic Party — instead, he sought to strike a blow to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Rojava-based People's Protection Units, or YPG. The PDK even invited the Turkish military mission that trained the Kurdish Peshmerga forces, a step that Baghdad saw — without its prior consent — as the admission of foreign troops into an integral part of Iraq.

Iraqi Kurdistan launched its secessionist process on a tide of Peshmerga's direct participation in the fight against the so-called Islamic States and beefing up its independent position across the country. But even Kurdistan's good relations with Turkey and Iran and bordering with the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (DFNS) — a *de facto* autonomous region inhabited by Syrian Kurds who, though themselves did not struggle for independence, saw the entire process positively — as well as autonomy of Baghdad could no longer bring well-preserved geopolitical deals to a halt. KRG's secessionist endeavors were yet stopped by their neighbors' blatant stance on the Kurdish minority. An independence referendum for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was held on September 25, 2017, with final results showing 91.8 percent of votes cast in favor of secession. The vote triggered off a series of strong reactions against Erbil, while Israel emerged as the region's only country to back sovereign Kurdistan (as part of the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq). This drew sharp reactions from both Ankara and Tehran. Iraq's Supreme Federal Court ruled the Kurdish independence referendum was unconstitutional. Four days after the referendum, the Iraqi government stopped most international

flights into the two international airports of Erbil and Sulaimaniya. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi urged the Iraqi military to launch an offensive against the KRG.

Between October 15 and October 27, 2017, Iraqi units reclaimed all the lands that Kurdish Peshmerga forces had seized while fighting against ISIL. What was particularly valuable was regaining control of the city of Kirkuk and its oil-rich vicinities. The Iraqi army claimed the disputed lands that were to be voted on during the referendum. Iran blocked border crossing with the KRG. Not only did Erbil have to recognize its military defeat, but it also lost some of its autonomy (e.g., border control) it had enjoyed prior to the referendum. After the Iraqi-Kurdish war and the ultimate failure of Kurdistan independence attempts, Masoud Barzani, who since 2005 had served as the president of the KRG, resigned from his post.

### **BAGHDAD PERSPECTIVE**

Ahead of the incursion of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq, the country-wide political stage witnessed the domination of Shia politicians, with ever-growing support from Iran and its influence on the balance of power in Baghdad. The war against ISIL intensified Baghdad-Tehran ties, but the country saw a series of personnel reshuffles in nation-wide politics. On August 11, 2014, Haider al-Abadi was named as new prime minister. He changed the manner in how Iraq was perceived worldwide while masterminding an effective, albeit lengthy and bloody, the offensive against the so-called Islamic State. Al-Abadi — who completed his Ph.D. at Manchester University, removed al-Maliki from power, and trumpeted the end of the jihadi rule over Iraq (though this was a premature conclusion, after the Iraqi military entered the rubbles of the Great Mosque of an-Nuri in Mosul, blown up by jihadi militants in June 2017) — was seen throughout the world as a natural

game-changer for Iraq’s domestic political stage. Al-Abadi turned into a West’s favorite — but as it was the case before — the world failed to bear in mind what moods prevailed in Iraqi society.

Held on May 12, 2018, the parliamentary election surprised worldwide public opinion with its results. Media initially reported on the triumph of al-Abadi’s Victory Alliance. But it was Muqtada as-Sadr, an eminent Shia cleric, emergent triumphant in the vote, whose party forged a political alliance with Iraq’s Communist Party, which may sound strange for a Polish reader. His Sairoon alliance won 54 seats in the parliament while al-Abadi’s coalition came in third, securing 42 seats. Interestingly, in his election campaign, as-Sadr blamed the country’s elites for bribery while voicing criticisms against the U.S. (as-Sadr’s Mahdi Army was behind an anti-U.S. rebellion in 2004), and Iran’s policy on the Tigris River, the last of which surprised many. As-Sadr’s followers called for forming a technocrat cabinet, without any affiliations to the outside, and in 2016, they stormed Baghdad’s Green Zone in an apparent bid to demand political changes in the country. The war against ISIL revealed a change in social moods, of which Muqtada as-Sadr took advantage when boasting his independence. However, this did not imply that a pro-Iranian party stepped down from the Iraqi political stage. Quite the contrary, it only gained momentum. The anti-ISIL military offensive gave rise to the establishment of the PMU — an umbrella organization of predominantly Shia paramilitary groups — viewed as military, yet not so much political, force.

In the 2018 elections, the Fatah Alliance, the PMU’s backbone led by Hadi al-Amiri, earned 48 of the seats in Iraq’s parliament. The U.S. special envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh branded al-Amiri, a commander and member of the

Iraqi parliament, as “the most powerful and pro-Iranian.” An army of Shia militia, estimated to comprise between 60,000 and 150,000 fighters, morphed into a critical support tool in combatting ISIL in Iraq, albeit it poses a thorny problem for Iraqi politicians. A *levy en masse* — once furnished with weapons — cannot be demobilized so quickly, serving as an armed arm of various factions. Politically, it is impossible to conduct an operation against the PMU, though Shia militias are mighty enough to exclude such an option from a military perspective. In March 2017, the Iraqi military began operation with a mission to include the PMU as its special forces component. Among those who called for boosting integration efforts was even Ali as-Sistani. Nonetheless, private armies of Shia politicians are their substantial assets in Iraq’s dirty political game. The PMU has taken its toll on geopolitical issues, with a possible threat from Shia militias serving as the key reasons for evacuating U.S. diplomatic missions in Baghdad and Erbil in May. The PMU is far from being homogenous, while the Fatah Alliance enjoys support from the Badr Organization and *Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH). After the parliamentary vote, Adil Abdul-Mahdi was named Iraq’s prime minister and formed a new technocrat cabinet — a stipulated by as-Sadr’s followers — upheld by both Sairoon and Fatah.

### **WARSAW PERSPECTIVE**

In 2004, Muqtada as-Sadr, who is seen today as Iraq’s mightiest political leaders, staged an uprising, with the heaviest fighting taking place over Karbala’s City Hall. The Poles, together with Bulgarian soldiers, were given the task of defending the municipal hall. Between April 3 and April 6, Polish and Bulgarian troops managed to protect their positions, with no losses for either. The cleric-led rebellion eventually suffered a defeat from coalition forces. What occurred back then did

not place a burden on Polish-Iraqi ties — Warsaw and Baghdad maintain good relations, while the Polish government engaged in the fighting against the so-called Islamic State, also in Iraq. Instead of providing combat missions, Poland contributes to the training of local military forces. Being part of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh, Poland dispatched two of its contingents: the Polish Military Contingent, or the *Polski kontyngent wojskowy* (PKW) OIR Iraq — a special forces training component, supplemented by logistics and technical unit, as well as the air reconnaissance mission tasked with performing its duties over the ISIL-occupied lands of Iraq (including Mosul) — as part of the PKW OIR Kuwait. A Baghdad-based Polish training mission has had the task of instruct Iraqi repair crews for Soviet-built equipment, still used in the military’s stockpile of Iraqi armed forces. By providing direct training for soldiers and military staffs, and technical support for crews in tanks and armored carriers, Polish troops and special forces can exchange their experience while offering tangible support for the ISF in an effort to boost the military’s quality. Furthermore, since Poland’s Law and Justice — United Right came to power in the 2015 parliamentary vote, Warsaw has opted for lending relief assistance to victims of the war in conflict-affected areas while supporting those in need by repeatedly increasing humanitarian aid. Thus, Poland lends practical support for both Iraq, and the victims of ISIL, by funding module houses for the internally displaced, building livestock farms, reconstructing workplaces and offering medical and education aid for the local population.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

ISIL’s expansion and occupation of Iraq (2010–2017) sparked off several threats, both to Baghdad and the entire region. The self-styled “caliphate” rolled up the already



existing process in Iraq, among which are backing jihadi militants by the country's Arab-Sunni part and the political dominance of Shia-led movements. Thus and thus, ISIL accentuated smoldering conflicts within Iraqi borders. The war against ISIL brought Iran's role to the foreground while there reemerged the issue of halting a plan to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq. Eventually, in order to combat al-Baghdadi's loyalists, Washington had to endorse Iraqi government forces and Kurdish Peshmerga. The war against ISIL failed to topple a set of long-rooted geopolitical vectors in the Middle East — on the contrary, it kept them up, as one could see the Kurds, who tragically deluded themselves into thinking that the world's sympathy amid its fighting against ISIL would morph into approval for their secessionist aspirations. Iraq still has to grapple with a series of challenges that ISIL has left behind. In addition to ethnic, religious, humanitarian and military aspects mentioned above, there is still such a commonplaces issue as educating younger generations after years of ISIL domination. In the lands that were under ISIL rule, jihadi insurgents imposed their interpretation of Sharia indoctrination in garrison-like schools, training adolescents to become suicide bombers. These youngsters still inhabit the same territories. What poses yet another problem is the issue of children born to ISIL fighters; the Iraqi justice system is probing on ISIL militants and their associates, among whom are foreign passport holders who came for jihad. For years, Iraq has been part of a larger geopolitical theater in the Middle East, with the war against ISIL coming as its yet another chapter. These challenges should not be considered trivial from a geopolitical perspective. The Middle East is fearful of the resurgence of an “Islamic State 2.0”, while the flood of jihadi volunteers, also from Europe, is still high on diplomatic agenda. The countries of the

**The war against ISIL failed to topple a set of long-rooted geopolitical vectors in the Middle East — on the contrary, it kept them up, as one could see the Kurds, who tragically deluded themselves into thinking that the world's sympathy amid its fighting against ISIL would morph into approval for their secessionist aspirations.**

Middle East have a problem with the jihadi fighters, while Europe fails to acknowledge their presence.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To ensure Iraq's development and future, what seems the sole legitimate advice is an alliance transcending any divisions, with full respect for ethnic and religious minorities. An example of this can be mainly seen during the manifestation in Baghdad. Otherwise, the country will slowly yet inevitably drift toward the disintegration into three parts that emerged during the ISIL expansion: Sunni, Shia and Kurdish. The caliphate's rule is nevertheless still a painful lesson for Iraq's Arab Sunni regions which bears the brunt of lending support to al-Baghdadi's



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**THIS IMAGE RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019, AND DISPLAYED AT A PENTAGON BRIEFING, SHOWS AN IMAGE OF ISLAMIC STATE LEADER ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI.**

terror group. Shia factions should learn the lesson from the aftereffect of the policy of isolating Sunnis. There is no other path than forming a legitimate government of “national unity,” unless this is, of course, not merely a political *phantasmagoria*<sup>1</sup>. ISIL is still killing people, therefore the Global Coalition has its *raison d’être* while anti-terrorist operations are currently underway on African and Asian fronts. Western European governments should draw lessons from maintains security, as their unreasonable tolerance for illegal border violation sparked off the migrant crisis. Alongside other refugees heading to Europe were also ISIL-affiliated militants. The threat of such “escapes” has only drawn nearer in the face of the “caliphate’s” territorial collapse.

The basis for easing tensions in the Middle East and establishing peace across the region are pragmatic undertakings: rebuilding cities and villages, hospitals,

workplaces while offering support for civilians undergoing the process of independence. What serves as an example of a realistic policy towards the Middle East are actions taken by the Polish government. Poland’s relief assistance for victims of ISIL has attracted attention worldwide, while at the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom (MARF) conference in Washington, speakers from Poland were requested to present their achievements in humanitarian and development aid. Iraq will grab the attention of both the region’s countries — Iran, Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia — and the global powers: Russia and the United States. It remains an open question, however, how successful Baghdad’s attempts will be to become a subject and not an object of worldwide politics. The years-long war waged against ISIL has only underscored the meaning of this question.

**Michał Bruszewski** ■  
November 2019

<sup>1</sup> a shifting series of phantasms, illusions, or deceptive appearances

# THREE SEAS GAS INITIATIVE. IS IT POSSIBLE?

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PAWEŁ MUSIAŁEK

Natural gas trade is possibly the most promising area for cooperation within the entire Three Seas Initiative. The infrastructure currently under construction will be an important factor in the further integration of the entire region. Despite all this, it is still vital to remember that states taking part in the Initiative see their own role in the integrated gas market differently to one another, and some of the ideas proposed by them promote competitiveness over cooperation. If Poland wants to become an important gas hub in the region, it needs to change its logic from the defence paradigm into the market one. This change will only be possible after year 2022, when all pipeline upgrades are completed, and the Russo-Polish gas supply contract expires.



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**THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE SUMMIT IN BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, SEPTEMBER 18, 2018.**

### **WHAT NOT TO MAKE OF THE TSI**

The recent discussions regarding the Three Seas Initiative (TSI) often seem illogical. People discuss what the TSI seems to be rather than what it really is. The TSI critics often underline that the Initiative is nothing but a geopolitical block, that will be anti-Russian and anti-German at its core and will therefore strive to implode the European Union from inside. It is also claimed that due to its conservative beliefs and an embedded hate towards Brussels, it was the Polish Government that came up with a cunning plan to take Warsaw out of the EU and build an alternative European alliance. The Three Seas Initiative is often compared to the Intermarium Initiative, that was conceived during the Second Polish Republic and was aimed to be an important military alliance. Critics are quick to point out that any of such ideas are not only dangerous but also unreal. They are also keen to point out the differences in the approach towards Russia and the United States amongst different Central and Eastern European states (CEE). This in turn is supposed to showcase that the idea of the TSI is built on unstable grounds.

What is also interesting is that those opposing the TSI are often aided by unlikely friends – the supporters of the Initiative. They themselves often underline the need for Poland to build an anti-German

political block in this part of Europe as the interests of Warsaw and Berlin tend to clash more and more often these days. The CEE states seem to be an ideal partner for such a bloc as they, just like Poland, need more autonomy, that for now is very much being limited by Germany. The TSI is therefore nothing more than a well-planned ‘grand strategy’ idea. This interpretation of the whole TSI idea comes from the ‘geopolitical awakening’ of the Polish public debate, especially in the realm of the internet where any ‘grand strategy ideas’ skyrocket in popularity immediately after publishing.

### **WHAT IS THE TSI REALLY?**

Unfortunately for both TSI critics and flawed supporters mentioned above, the Initiative is something completely different. It is an informal platform that allows for a better coordination of regional cooperation in some of the most crucial areas, namely those which can benefit all TSI member states. The Three Seas Initiative was designed to be a framework for projects, majority of which will be infrastructural, and which aim to more closely integrate the North and the South, and not only East and West as it was happening before. The focus on infrastructure is intentional and comes from the historical issues within the region – namely the policies of the Soviet Union that wanted to integrate the CEE states only with the one central state of the USSR

(Russia) while at the same time avoiding a regional cooperation too close for its liking.

The coordination of cooperation within the TSI mainly focuses on a joint project implementation and the allocation of political power in order to make them more powerful and better heard of in the EU. Having said that it is clear that the Initiative is but a project coordination effort and not a 'Union within a Union' idea. This should come as no surprise as, since its very beginning, all actors related to the TSI underlined the complimentary character of the idea, both within the Union and in the region as such. Such a *modus operandi* was chosen by the member states of the TSI because it was much more realistic than any wishful thoughts of building a solid political bloc that will have a common stance of all international political issues. Those who invented the Initiative very much believed in the saying to 'make haste slowly', and rightly so.

Amongst the most crucial areas for cooperation within the TSI are things such as: businesses and entrepreneurship, economic propellers, transport and energy cooperation mainly in natural gas. Spotdata, in their recent report focusing on the investment needs of the TSI states, calculated that the region requires as much as 290 billion Euro worth of road, rail, waterway and air-related investments and over 97 billion Euro in energy infrastructure projects, 28 billion Euro of which would be for regional-scale investment.

Therefore, the TSI serves not only as a mean to help choose projects that will have the greatest benefits to all its members, but also helps in securing funding for them. Because the EU funding remains on of the key ways of funding the TSI promoted projects, all its member states are also members of the European Union. Other methods of securing funds include the Three Seas Fund that will serve as leverage

for the selected infrastructural projects. This method is similar to the global trend of finance diversification with regards to infrastructural projects where 30% to 40% of funds comes from public sources and the rest is provided by private investors. The Three Seas Fund is therefore aimed at combining public and private funding for TSI projects.

### **GAS COOPERATION**

The cooperation in the field of natural gas does seem to be the most attractive area for cooperation within the TSI. Amongst the multilateral projects that have been agreed upon during the Bucharest 2018 TSI summit were the: Poland-Latvia gas interconnector, the Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria gas interconnector, the Eastrig Pipeline, the Romania-Hungary-Slovakia connector, Adriatic Pipeline, Baltic Pipe Pipeline with the expansion of existing Polish pipelines, the Poland-Slovakia as well as Poland-Czechia connectors and an LNG terminal on the island of Krk. All of the abovementioned projects are aimed at enabling a free, uninterrupted transfer of gas between the CEE nations, mainly between the North-East vector. The building of so many gas connectors is no coincidence and has been the priority of interregional cooperation in this area for many years. This is because the CEE region is still very much unintegrated with regards to gas infrastructure. Several years ago, the biggest threat connected with this was the over-reliance on the Russian gas. Nowadays this problem means that the region is unable to fully use the benefits of the common gas market that is slowly emerging in the EU. As much as the standardisation of the gas market (including gas prices) in the Western Europe is very advanced, the CEE area still needs more time to catch up. The greatest consequences of this are that the gas prices are higher for customers in the CEE area. Yet, it is important to remember that despite the price differences being still visible between the Western and

Central-Eastern Europe, the extent of those variations is much lower than it used to be several years ago.

### **BUILDING THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR**

The North-South Corridor consists of several different parts. Some of these are already complete, some are currently in construction and some are still only in the planning and concept phases. From the Polish side, the most important part of the Corridor was the competition of the Swinioujscie LNG Terminal in 2015. Another milestone will be reached in 2022 upon the completion of the Baltic Pipe pipeline alongside with all necessary infrastructure that will allow for the distribution of Norwegian gas throughout the whole of Poland as well as its transfer all the way to the Polish southern border. A further extension of the existing Swinioujscie LNG terminal is also planned alongside with the installation of the floating LNG terminal in Gdansk.

Furthermore, the construction of the Poland-Slovakia gas connector (Strachocina-Velke Kapusany) has already begun and is set to be completed by 2021. It was also in the 2019 that all necessary permits have been given out for the construction of the Poland-Lithuania pipeline. Discussions regarding the construction of the Poland-Ukraine gas pipeline are currently at a remarkably developed stage. The one gas interconnector that seems to be the most problematic is the Poland-Czechia pipe (Stork II). Although its planning went alongside the Poland-Slovakia interconnector, not much progress has been made since 2015. Poland has been clear that it was interested in building a connection with Czechia only after the Baltic Pipe pipeline is complete which should happen sometime in 2022. The competition of the Czechia-Poland pipeline earlier creates an undesired possibility that the gas reaching Poland would come from

the Russian Federation via the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and its land-based portion called the Eugal pipeline that would run along the Polish-German border and into Czechia. The ceasing of the construction efforts to build an interconnection with Czechia means, that Slovakia will shortly become the main gateway for transporting of natural gas from Poland and to the South of Europe. This at least is how the Polish side expects matters to go.

Slovakians are also keen on formally confirming this plan, saying that the need for such pipelines is both valid and considerable as it would serve as a backup in case the Russian Federation chooses to cease the transfer of gas through Ukraine, which at the same time accounts for several percent of all the gas consumed by the Slovaks. Several days after the inauguration of the construction efforts, the Slovak operator of Eustream presented a feasibility study for the Eastring project that is intended to connect Slovakia with Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and that employs the Poland-Slovakia interconnector that is currently under construction. According to Eustream, the Eastring project could become the main source of gas diversification in the CEE. This project is an important attempt to save the position of Slovakia as an important transit point for gas passing through the East and to the West, after the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine and Slovakia is terminated. It is worth mentioning that if this concept ever comes through, the transit of gas does not necessarily have to run through the North and into the South. Instead, a reversed direction transit is also possible. What is more, the gas being pumped into Bulgaria and then being transferred to Slovakia via Romania and Hungary could also potentially be of Russian origin coming from the newly built Turkish Stream pipeline. It is therefore becoming clear, that despite being faced with the same problem – the lack



PRESIDENT LECH KACZYŃSKI'S LNG TERMINAL IN ŚWINOUJŚCIE, POLAND, APRIL 24, 2019.

of sufficient infrastructure, the regional cooperation in the field of gas in the CEE is not easy, mainly due to various projects proposed by different nations that often exclude or compete with one another.

#### **WHO WILL BE THE MAIN GAS TRANSIT?**

If the above-mentioned ideas would to come true, the Poland-Slovakia Interconnector could soon face the same problem as the one with the Poland-Czechia pipe. The core of the problem lays in the dilemma regarding who should be the main exporter and the main importer of the natural gas? According to the plans of the Polish Government and the main Polish gas operator (state owned), the connections with both Czechia and Slovakia are to be used for exporting natural gas from Poland and all the way into the South of Europe (as well as the Eastern Europe via an interconnector with Ukraine). As such, the Polish national operator – Gaz System – could earn a revenue for transferring gas either directly from the LNG terminal or from the Baltic Pipe pipeline. Thanks to this the Polish Government could not only receive additional income on the pipes but also lower the cost of transiting gas for Polish recipients. This may prove problematic as Poland's southern neighbours also would like to build their own positions as important gas exporters, especially when considering the fact that for

years they have been doing just that but in a way that was considerably more efficient than Poland, earning much more than Warsaw did. Furthermore, any import of gas from Czechia and Slovakia and through Poland is not welcomed as these states do not have their own natural resources meaning that any natural gas coming from them is most probably going to be of Russian origin. The main goal of the Polish government when building interconnectors is to gain independence from Russian gas and not to receive the same Russian resource but through an alternative route.

#### **THE BASIC DILEMMA – SECURITY OR MARKET**

We have touched upon the main dilemma, that is related to the Polish aspirations to become a gas transit hub in the CEE with the help of the TSI. If Poland will continue to sort gas according to its origin, it will be extremely difficult for Warsaw to become a gas hub as this would significantly disrupt the rules of the game as set by other V4 nations. The dislike towards the import of Russian gas in Poland is understandable, especially considering the diversification strategy that is currently in place. The construction of LNG terminal or the gas connection with Norway required Poland to sign long lasting contracts that were of crucial importance for the issuing of investment loans to Warsaw. When combining this with the ongoing Jamal

Contract that is set to expire in 2022, the Polish gas leader PGNiG has a large quantity of gas in its portfolio that needs to be sold off to different states, if Poland wants to avoid financial charges. The opening of the Polish market for other providers, at least before 2022 would create a risky situation when PGNiG could not sell all the gas that it would receive. It is precisely because of that, that the Polish Government currently only views any gas cooperation with its neighbours in the 'selling' and not 'importing' terms. This is the effect of having to operate within the boundaries of energy security logic that dictates that any free market cooperation should be subjected in such a way that the infrastructure building plans can be completed, that otherwise would not have been completed on the free market but which are crucial for the maintenance of optimal security levels in terms of gas transits.

The creation of gas hub in Poland, where gas from the entire region would be redistributed requires a complete opening from the Polish gas market, where gas is treated as a commodity and not a strategic resource that can be heavily regulated. Only when the gas in Poland will not be subject to sorting in accordance to its country of origin and when it will be able to freely circulate both ways in between Poland and its neighbours – and it will be then that our country will have any realistic chances for increasing the profits it makes on transiting gas. At this point it is important to underline that the astonishing pace for the development of gas infrastructure in Poland that begun several years ago has significantly increased the Polish energy security. This creates room for the change of Polish paradigm from the logic of energy security into the logic of the free market. In effect, 2022 is set to become a symbolic end to the security paradigm in Poland. It is then that the long-lasting Jamal Agreement that provided Poland with Russian gas will also finally expire. On the same year, the

extended LNG terminal in Świnoujście will also be completed as well as the Slovakia-Lithuania-Ukraine interconnector and the Baltic Pipe pipeline. Furthermore, another LNG terminal, a floating model in Gdansk, is also planned to open at the same time. As each of the abovementioned investments are materialised, Poland will have a model diversification of gas infrastructure in place that will not only ensure its energy security but will also become a key player in gas transit market in the whole region. By 2022, Poland would then have an capability to amass as much as 50 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually with an usual consumption of only 18 billion cubic meters in the same time scale.

In order for the transit capabilities to be used to export gas, Poland requires not only the competition of the previously mentioned investments and a full opening of Polish gas markets for foreign imports (current Polish legislation is a serious obstruction to that idea). What it really needs is a transit system that will be more attractive when compared to its greatest competitor – the German system where there is a liquid gas stock in place, allowing customers to buy whatever quantities are required. We should also remember that Czechia, Slovakia Ukraine, Austria and other Northern European state will have the ability to import gas not only through Poland but also through Germany, which thanks to Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 pipelines wishes to become the major gas wholesaler for most European recipients. It will be the price and not the Russian origin of the gas that will ultimately decide which of the transit route will be selected by wholesalers and recipients in the region. The final price of gas consists of not only the value of the resource itself, but also all the transit tariffs that the gas companies pay for the transportation of gas from the entry point of the given system, and all the way to the exit point of the receiving customer. It certainly will be the second of the two



issues that will pose a serious problem as the transit tariffs are dictated by the cost incurred by the transit operator during the construction of each pipeline. The more investments there are, the higher will be the cost that the operator will need to cover and that in the end will dictate the charges put on the users of each network – the gas trading companies. These companies will in turn shift these costs on the final receivers of their gas. The key question related to the attractiveness of gas coming from Poland is closely interlinked with the height of the transit tariffs after all planned pipelines and interconnectors are constructed. It can be speculated that Poland might not become an attractive place to sell natural gas to from Czechia or Austria since these two nations have very well-developed connections with Germany and can therefore import gas directly from Berlin. The export of gas to Slovakia and Ukraine is far more realistic, especially when the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine will finally be shut. Such a scenario means that the ceasing of any planning and construction works on the Stork II interconnector may be *ad calendas graecas*, since there is no solid argument supporting its existence both from the security or market perspective.

It should therefore be noted that one of the key factors that will influence the final financial balance of an investments conducted by the Gaz System will be the regional demand for natural gas. Any opportunities for the re-export of gas from Poland will be feasible only if the regional demand rises significantly. If this does not happen, then Poland will be faced with a threat of the newly build pipes being ‘dry’ and unused, becoming just an emergency use option that cost Polish gas customers millions.

## SUMMARY

For the last 30 years it was the main aim of the Polish natural gas-orientated policies to diversify its directions since

a considerable time frame in which we had been heavily dependent solely on the Russian gas. This meant that the deregulation of the Polish market was being delayed since the absolute priority was given to the investments focusing on the energy security that were built by the Polish operator and guaranteeing long-term gas providing contracts by the Polish gas leader – the PGNiG. Poland is already not dependent on Russian gas anymore, but the full comfort will only be enjoyed in 2022 when all infrastructural projects aimed at interconnecting Poland to other states’ gas lines will come to fruition.

From 2022 (which will also be the year when the Russo-Polish gas contract expires) Poland will be able to change its paradigm and start treating gas more as a commodity rather than a strategic resource. If the planned Polish investments in the North-South vector are supposed to pay off (even partially) then it is crucial that a better reputation about Poland as a potential hub for gas transit is established requiring the full opening of the Polish gas market and the ceasing gas sorting practices according only to its country of origins. It is worth noting that even the undertaking of all necessary steps will not definitely guarantee that Poland will be able to earn more on transiting gas, because Poland will be competing against Germany that has much stronger resources than its neighbours to the East. Secondly, the CEE region is currently experiencing the emergence of competitive gas-related projects. It is not yet certain whether the Polish vision for the regional cooperation in gas will come out to be the most attractive, yet it would be wrong to claim that Poland is not in the lead to a considerable, even definite extent.

Paweł Musiałek ■  
November 2019

# A NEW OPPORTUNITY IN POLAND'S ENERGY POLICY AND ENERGY SECURITY AFTER THE 2019 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

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KRZYSZTOF KSIĘŻOPOLSKI, PHD

The most recent parliamentary election campaigns, which took place in 2019, did not bring new elements into Poland's energy policy. Debates and discussion were largely unimpressive and none of the political blocs put forward ideas that could present newly added value. The problems in energy policy are serious. In the next and following parliamentary terms thereafter it will not be possible to evade them. Issues pertaining to electricity prices and energy security are categorically considered among the most pressing among societal opinions.



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**GOVERNMENT PLENIPOTENTIARY FOR STRATEGIC ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE PIOTR NAIMSKI DURING THE CEREMONY OF SIGNING AN AGREEMENT IN WARSAW WITH THE AMERICAN COMPANY SOLAR TURBINES FOR THE SUPPLY AND SERVICE OF A SET OF COMPRESSOR UNITS FOR THREE COMPRESSOR STATIONS INCLUDED IN THE BALTIC PIPE PROJECT. WARSAW, POLAND, AUGUST 14, 2019.**

### **DETERMINANTS OF ENERGY POLICY AND ENERGY SECURITY**

Consider: 54.5% of Polish women and men are strongly worried about a deteriorating economic situation; 53.6% are worried about a worsening state of the environment; 70% are worried about tax increases; 65.2% about increases in food prices; 63.9% about a crisis in healthcare; but as much as 63.6% fear an increase in electricity prices. It could be argued that there is an apparent

incongruity in the logic and perception of voters, where they consider environmental issues a significant threat on the one hand and electricity prices on the other result from a lack of discussion; and in it, a blunt but honest acknowledgement that improving the quality of the environment requires paying, among others, increased electricity bills. Taking into consideration the growth of household income in Poland during the last 4 years of PiS rule, there is

space for increasing electricity prices. The average monthly household income per person increased from PLN 1,386 in 2015 to PLN 1,693 in 2018. The share of expenses in disposable income decreased from 78.7% to 70.1% in the same period<sup>1</sup>.

Regrettably, politicians were more inclined to reassure voters that they would guarantee the current level of electricity prices. In the context of an economic slowdown and the situation of energy enterprises, this is not feasible. Without an increase in electricity prices, it is not plausible to implement an energy transformation in a way that will not lead to an energy fragmentation of Poland<sup>2</sup>.

The determinants of energy policy include not only the issue of citizens' convictions in the field of energy policy, but also the issue of restrictions resulting from lacking sufficient quantities of the country's own oil and gas resources, alongside increasing pressure from the European Union, with that from its strongest countries (Germany and France) in the energy sector using oil and gas as a political and economic tool for Russia's influence onto Poland, as well as institutional, cultural and analytical weaknesses, including *disinformation*<sup>3</sup>. The aforementioned catalogue sets out the challenges facing energy policy in the coming years.

The main challenge confronting energy security and the quality of the coherent implementation of energy policy are the shortcomings in Polish politics and limited willingness to compromise. The Energy Policy of Poland by 2040 (EPP by 2040), having been prepared by the Ministry of Energy, inopportunistically did not leave the project-planning stage,

which results from a misunderstanding that creating energy policy is a political process that requires dialogue. The consequence of this inaccurate assessment is the dissolution of the Ministry of Energy, with the creation of which in 2015, many people had associated a qualitative change. Nevertheless, despite these weaknesses, the Baltic Pipe project, the expansion of LNG and the development of the transmission infrastructure are crucial for energy security and the future of energy policy. Their implementation gives the opportunity for a strategic maneuverability from 2022 and after. Poland will be able to meet all the needs for gas imports from a direction other than Russia, increase its regional significance, and use gas as a transition fuel in the transformation period<sup>4</sup>.

Wriggling free from the grip of the Russian bear does not mean, however, that energy security issues will be instantly resolved. This is but one of the pieces of a much broader energy security puzzle, the key to which is to possess technology that facilitates a competitive economy in terms of natural resource-energy characteristics<sup>5</sup>.

### TECHNOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS

Research on the potential of low-emission technologies indicates that Poland does not have a satisfactory number of patents guaranteeing the use of native technologies to strengthen energy security in this area. Alongside some infrastructural inadequacies in gas networks and the possibility of purchasing gas from a supplier other than Russia, this is probably the most crucial limitation. In the post-2022 phase of better maneuverability from Baltic Pipe and other infrastructure, Poland can feel

<sup>1</sup> Household budget, pp. 20.

<sup>2</sup> K.Ksieżopolski, *Economic security and integration of electricity market in Trimarium*, ISS, nr 1/2017, pp. 151-166.

<sup>3</sup> K.Ksieżopolski, *Climate and energy policy in Poland in the years 2014-2015*, ISECS, Warsaw, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> K.Ksieżopolski, *Strategy Game. Euro Norwegian Cooperation in the Field of Energy Security and Energy Efficiency. Methodology, Recommendation and Conclusions*, Warsaw 2017 r.

<sup>5</sup> K.Ksieżopolski, *Energy security*, Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, Warsaw 2012.

## A NEW OPPORTUNITY IN POLAND'S ENERGY POLICY AND ENERGY SECURITY AFTER THE 2019 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

much more assured that it can look to a paved way to increase the proportions of renewable energy in its sector. As such, the ability to prepare adequate low-emission technology capabilities from now until the said post-2022 phase, has already become an important factor for Poland's energy security.

A comparison of countries with similar GDP indicates that they enjoy significantly more patents in the field of low-carbon technologies than Poland (see Figure 1). Undoubtedly, this fact may be influenced by the conditions of culture and energy policy, weaknesses in strategic thinking as well as analysis and management problems specific to countries undergoing transformation, to which Poland is afflicted by.

Patent applications in Poland dominate in the group "*thermal processes and devices*". The change in development research directions, suggested by the growth of patents in a particular group, requires a political decision regarding the future structure of the energy mix, i.e. a departure from *path dependency*. The drafted but not yet implemented EPP by 2040 and its amendment – a few days after the election but before the liquidation of the Ministry of Energy – has resulted in a lacking clear definition of the direction in which research should be conducted.

Of course, the adoption and implementation of the "Clean Air" program, which assumes thermo-modernization of buildings and change of heat sources, or other programs, may be an impulse to conduct research. Yet these will be addressed to individual recipients, i.e. households or an audience where the amount of funds may be insufficient with regard to the wider purpose. Thus, their impact on research and development of technologies needed by the entire economy is limited. The data contained in the Patsnap database indicate that this problem

does not concern only Poland, but the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Only a small number (7%) are active in the Patsnap patent database. Based on the said research<sup>6</sup> of the database, 130 active patents were identified. Most of these patents were published relatively recently, i.e. in the years 2016-2019, but there were also precedents. Hence it can be assumed that they constituted solutions to the latest current problems. The most active concerned wind energy (43), followed by heat management (30), and then by heat pumps (29), biogas (18), biomass (5), biofuels (4) and thermal hybrid (1). Patsnap data do not really constitute a source of consolation, but timely signal the need to get out of technological marginalization. In the CEE countries, almost 21% are patents registered by companies with foreign capital, which proves the existence of a certain correlation between FDI inflow and an increase in eco-innovation. Thus the deduction that one of the ways to overcome marginalization is targeted FDI.

### **POLAND AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS**

Increasing pressure on the electric energy sector from the strongest European Union countries, technological weaknesses in the field of low-emission technologies, import of electricity from abroad and prices of electricity on the wholesale market, altogether, aptly make Poland an excellent market for investment. Average electricity prices on the wholesale market in Poland in 2017 amounted to 158 PLN per MWh, and in 2018 to PLN 225 per MWh. Converted into Euros at a rate of 4.3 PLN,

<sup>6</sup> For the Patsnap patent database, the following patent phrases were used: wind energy, wind power, PV thermal hybrid, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, bioenergy, biogas, energy efficiency, Heating - (systems, SFH, efficiency), low emission transport, electric mobility, hydrogen (transport), biofuels, geothermal energy, heat pumps. Only active patents, i.e. ones that have been paid for, are included.

Decreasing prices of renewable energy technologies, mean that in the coming years an increase in renewable energy investments from domestic and foreign investors should be expected, even without support mechanisms.

it equals 36.74 Euros in 2017 and 52.3 Euros per MWh, respectively. The prices obtained during auctions held in Poland in wind technology ranged from 157 to 216 PLN per MWh. The decreasing prices of renewable energy technologies, both in wind and solar energy, mean that in the coming years an increase in renewable energy investments from domestic and foreign investors should be expected, even without support mechanisms in the form of 15 year-term guaranteed support. The first investments in solar energy (500 MW) with the participation of Chinese capital and investments in wind by Polenergia have already been announced.

Completion of the 2022 gas infrastructure expansion, resulting from a reluctance to import Russian gas to Poland, will reduce the hindrances of renewable energy development considerably. Thus, it should be expected that the government in Poland will employ a strategic maneuver to increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix. Given the experience gained so far regarding problems in the formulation of energy policy, this



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process will be spontaneous and based on economic calculations of enterprises. At present, individual signals indicate that even despite the lack of government action, economics inexorably pressures such solutions to be undertaken by enterprises.

### CONCLUSIONS

An open question persists on the response of large energy companies in Poland to regulatory and market changes that are causing a decrease in the profitability in producing electricity from coal. If they want to survive, they have probably already begun to consider investing in low carbon technologies, i.e. renewable energy or nuclear. Such projects are evident in investment portfolios. The most promising from the point of view of the state's energy policy is the construction of offshore wind farms due to the possible generation of electricity, and making this technology an export product that increases the competitiveness of our economy.



**OPENING OF THE FIRST LNG REGASIFICATION STATION IN THE LUBUSKIE PROVINCE AND GASIFICATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF DOBIEGNIEW, POLAND, SEPTEMBER 27, 2019.**

The technological gap between Poland and the leading countries with renewable energy technologies cannot be overcome quickly – by 2022 – though focusing on supporting this area is imperative for Poland's energy security. A significant constraint on the harmonious development of renewable energy is the attachment to the current path's dependency policy and multiple weaknesses resulting in a lack of calculated steps in energy policy. Its adoption would give a clear signal to enterprises what actions from the government should be expected in this and in the next terms, which would result in reducing the political risk of investment. This, in turn, involves reducing costs and encouraging increased spending on research and development, which is particularly important from the perspective of energy security.

Currently, the key to the development of renewable energy and a possible strategic maneuver is the completion of the Baltic Pipe and the development of other elements of the gas import and transport infrastructure. Without this, Poland's energy policy will be limited. The actions undertaken so far in this respect indicate great determination and initial successes in the implementation of these investments. However, on a more worrisome note, the closer these are to reaching completion, so are the possibilities its foreign opponents would take action against it, most notably in the form of devising pressure on the government, disinformation, and other actions characteristic of hybrid war should be anticipated.

**Krzysztof Książkowski ■**  
November 2019

# A MEMORIAL OUT OF TIME?

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DANIEL POGORZELSKI

The magnificent Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge is not just another historic structure. This construction, also known as the I-74 Bridge, is the oldest existing suspension bridge over the Mississippi River. Dedicated to Illinoisans and Iowans who served in the First World War, it unites not just the Quad Cities but also the citizens of both states who fought on behalf of the US and Poland. After all, the sizable contingent of young Polish-American men who ended up fighting in Haller's Army on behalf of the Polish cause before returning stateside are commemorated by this bridge, as are locals who served under the flag of the United States.



# WALKWAY OVER THE MISSISSIPPI



**T**he view from the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge is a sight to behold. While this pair of suspension bridges appear to be carbon copies of one another, you would be mistaken. Decades divide the two structures. While the first roadway was

constructed during the Great Depression in 1935, its twin wouldn't be built until well after the end of World War II in 1960. An entry on the bridge at the website [HistoricBridges.org](http://HistoricBridges.org) neatly sums this up by writing “*simply having two identical suspension bridges side by side is a unique*



**I-74 BRIDGE SPANNING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER BETWEEN BETTENDORF, IOWA, AND MOLINE, ILLINOIS, NOVEMBER 1, 2010.**

*feature. As such, an interesting place to view the bridges is in between the anchorages of the two bridges. This is a unique view that cannot be found anywhere else.”*

The elegant design of the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge is more than just an intriguing piece of eye candy however. It brings together the intertwined histories of Poland and the United States in another important way – namely, through the bridge’s Chief Engineer: Rudolf Modrzejewski, or Ralph Modjeski, as he was known outside of the country of his birth. With his involvement in the building of nearly 40 bridges across North America, it’s no surprise that Ralph Modjeski was hailed by the New York Times as “*the world’s leading bridge builder.*”

### **A SON OF POLISH GALICIA**

Modjeski was born in Bochnia, one of the oldest cities in the region of Lesser Poland on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1861 – just a few months before the outbreak of the American Civil War began in April of that year with the bombardment of Fort Sumter. With Poland absent from the map of Europe and partitioned amongst three different states at this time, Bochnia was a minor settlement in the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s province of Galicia.

While industry loomed large in Bochnia at the time of Modjeski’s birth as it had since the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century when its well-known salt mines first began operations, this locale had seen better days as the Empire had demolished the



Town Hall in addition to liquidating two abbeys after taking charge in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This downward trajectory in Bochnia had only recently begun to reverse shortly before Modjeski's birth with the expansion of the Galician Railway of Archduke Charles Louis in the region and the city's subsequent elevation as a county seat in 1867.

Austria-Hungary's failure to create the necessary transportation networks for the development of industry and markets contributed significantly to Galicia's rampant poverty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The economic situation was so dire that historian Norman Davies characterized it as possibly more severe than that of Ireland at the time, estimating that Galicia might have even

been "*the poorest province in Europe.*" Given this background, it is quite fitting that Ralph Modjeski would spend his life connecting the North American continent, a legacy which helped cement the economic vitality of the rapidly growing United States.

#### **FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA**

At the age of 15, Modjeski left the Polish lands with his mother, esteemed actress Helena Modjeska, for the United States. Helena was famous in her own right as a master of the female role in Shakespeare's plays both in Poland and the US. A culinary legacy of Helena's popularity are the Modjeska candies available in the Louisville, Kentucky area which still delight locals with a sweet tooth.



**WALKWAY OVER THE HUDSON, A FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE HUDSON RIVER, NEW YORK, USA, OCTOBER 11, 2009.**

After attending school in the United States, Modjeski ultimately decided to return to Europe. He would enroll in the prestigious *Ecole nationale des ponts et chaussées* in France, the first institution created to educate students in civil engineering. Although Modjeski didn't qualify the first time he applied, his persistence paid off on his second attempt and he was admitted as a student in 1881. Modjeski ultimately ended up at the top of his class when he graduated in 1885 with a degree in civil engineering.

### **SPANNING AMERICA**

Having acquired US citizenship while he was studying in France, Modjeski returned to the United States in 1885. The newly minted graduate would come under the tutelage of George S. Morison, a former lawyer turned civil engineer who was key to changing the path of the future Panama Canal from Nicaragua to Panama. Modjeski would continue to work for Morison in various capacities until 1892. Shortly after that, Modjeski went into private practice, opening his

office in Chicago, the capital of Polish America.

Thus begins Modjeski's career long climb into the elite of the US bridge building industry. The Thebes Bridge in Thebes Illinois, the Broadway Bridge in Portland, Oregon, the Huey P. Long Bridge in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, and the Mears Memorial Bridge in Alaska are all examples of notable crossing structures designed by Ralph Modjeski.

Basia Myszynski, one of the producers of a documentary film on Ralph Modjeski's work titled "*Bridging Urban America*" had this to say about his prodigious output in an interview with the *Cosmopolitan Review*: "*Experiencing Modjeski's bridges first-hand was mind-blowing... The sheer size and the complexity of the projects, the science and the skill that was needed, and the number of people required for it all was overwhelming. Erecting one such bridge is enough for the entire lifetime of an engineer. Yet Ralph designed and constructed over 40 such structures and almost all of them are still serving us.*"

### A LEGACY UNDER THREAT

Although Modjeski passed in 1940, his legacy endures into the present day as the firm he cofounded in 1893 along with Frank Masters continues to be a leader in the bridge services industry. That includes the new I-74 Bridge currently being built alongside the existing Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge. Current plans foresee the Iowa-Illinois Bridge being demolished after completion of the new bridge in 2020.

Once again, the website HistoricBridges.org candidly summarizes the situation surrounding the bridges:

*“These bridges, despite their historic and aesthetic significance are slated for demolition as part of a replacement project. The main reason for replacement is that the lanes on these bridges are narrow, and there are no shoulders, undesirable for an Interstate highway. Additionally, there is a desire to add a third lane for the roadway. HistoricBridges.org does not dispute the need for additional space and capacity on the Interstate. However, it is highly disturbing that this project includes the demolition of both of these beautiful historic bridges.*

*At the very least, one of the two bridges should be left standing next to the new bridges for pedestrian use. This solution would provide for the needs of the freeway, while also preserving one of the beautiful historic bridges. Even this solution would be a major compromise since it would destroy the unique visuals associated with a pair of suspension bridges, however, it would be a fair compromise that would address the concerns for capacity on the freeway and the need to preserve our nation’s transportation heritage.*

*However, compromise has apparently been thrown out the window with this project. Even through these bridges are in structurally good condition (they are being*

*replaced due to their narrow roadways) there is a refusal to leave one bridge standing for pedestrian use, even though it would likely be able to serve such light traffic for decades even with minimal maintenance. It is disappointing to see this lack of concern for these beautiful bridges that were built to honor the veterans of the World Wars.”*

### A POTENTIAL SOLUTION

The effort to preserve the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge has a successful precedent. The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, also designed by Modjeski was similarly slated for demolition. Today this structure has been reborn as the most visited State Park in all of New York State. According to a 2017 update of a 2011 study, Walkway Over The Hudson, as the transformed Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge is now called, has provided a \$24 million boost to the economy of the Mid-Hudson region. The Poughkeepsie Journal reports that *“In the 10 years since it was opened, the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park has hosted more than five million visitors and become a global destination that showcases the natural beauty for which the region is known.”*

A group of Illinois residents, including the author of this article, has recently come together to support a similar reuse of the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge called “Walkway Over The Mississippi.” The group believes that preserving this bridge is an opportunity to bring a unique attraction to the Quad Cities area- the first park OVER the Mississippi River. While there are numerous creative possibilities for the bridge’s reuse, they all hinge on preventing the demolition of this historic edifice. Losing this landmark connecting Poland and the United States ultimately benefits no one.

Daniel Pogorzelski ■  
November 2019

# THE PHENOMENON OF THE POLISH UNDERGROUND STATE

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KATARZYNA UTRACKA

The Polish Underground State, also known as the Polish Secret State, had been built in complete secrecy during the joint occupation of Poland by Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. To this day it remains a world renowned phenomenon. Nowhere in occupied Europe was there an equally complex and well-working organisation, that came complete with its own administration, judiciary system, educational facilities and, most importantly, a well organised army. The most important task of the Polish Secret State was, alongside the organisation of underground activity, to provide the flawless functionality of the Polish state – the maintenance of the pre-occupation national institutions as well as making all necessary preparation for the power takeover after the end of war.



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**GENERAL TADEUSZ BÓR-KOMOROWSKI DURING THE AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT WŁADYSŁAW RACZKIEWICZ.**

**O**n 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, the German Army, without officially declaring war, attacked Polish soil. A heroic fight ensued to defend the nation from the overwhelming enemy forces. When on 17<sup>th</sup> September the Soviet Army joined the Nazis by attacking Poland from the East, the fate of our nation had been sealed. At the beginning of Fall 39', the Polish state found itself under the rule of two ruthless occupation forces: The Soviet Union and the Nazi Third Reich, that without wasting any time

began to fulfil their dreadful plans – to wipe the Polish society out of their native land.

The part of Poland that fell into German hands was further divided into the Third Reich and the General Governorate. The territories added to the Third Reich were to be forcefully germanised while the General Governorate land was treated as a source for cheap slave-like labour. On top of countless executions, random arrests, forced resettlements and food rationing, the Germans have been working tirelessly



GENERAL WŁADYSŁAW ANDERS AND COLONEL LEOPOLD OKULICKI.

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to erase any national identity from the people of Poland. A ban on any political parties had been introduced while at the same time education was purposefully limited, cultural institutions were shut, and any press being printed was under the careful eye of Nazi propaganda experts. Furthermore, Germans obstructed all religious practices and conducted careful looting and even destruction of Polish cultural and historic heritage.

The situation was not much better in the Eastern parts of Poland that fell under the Soviet occupation. Terror was used as a widespread tool of cohesion. Forced deportations were being conducted where thousands of Poles were relocated deep into the uninhabited territories of the Soviet Union. Those who according to

Soviet commanders could potentially disrupt their plans of wiping out any remnants of Polish society and culture were executed without trial.

Despite the constant threat, the Poles had quickly undertaken actions aimed at fighting the occupational forces. These were not random and uncoordinated actions, but instead were planned and run by the *Polskie Państwo Podziemne*, or Polish Underground State, with its capital still in Warsaw. The PPP always acted with consent and in direct contact between itself and the legitimate Polish Government, that due to the Soviet and Nazi aggression was forced into exile and operated alongside Polish allies in the West – first in France, and then in the United Kingdom. It was from there, that after some personal changes, the *Rząd*



na *Uchodźstwie*, or Polish Government in Exile, was able to control both the civil and military administration on the Polish territory. The Polish Government in Exile was widely recognised by the international community and was established in full accordance with the Polish pre-war Constitution – thus guaranteeing the continuity of all state institutions. This was important as it was these institutions that had the major impact on the legal functioning of the PPP, giving it the full, lawful legitimacy – something unheard of amongst other European resistance movements.

### **HIDDEN OPERATIONALITY**

The first secret anti-occupation organisations were beginning to take shape as early as September 1939, while some defensive fighting was still ongoing in the central parts of the state. Until the end of 1939 in the city of Warsaw alone, as many as 40 different secret resistance organisations were formed, majority of which were either strictly military or a mix of armed force and political ideas. By 1940 this number skyrocketed to reach an impressive 140. It was also then, that the lengthy process of unifying the entire Polish underground movement begun, thus decreasing the number of completely independent organisations to a minimum. The most important and arguably also most symbolic moment in the entire process of creating the PPP was the establishment of the *Służba Zwycięstwu Polski*, or Service for Poland's Victory, under the command of General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz. The Service was formed on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1939 in Warsaw, only days before the unconditional surrender of the city. The organisation became a *de facto* mother organisation for the *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*, or Union of Armed Struggle, later renamed as the *Armia Krajowa*, or as known across the world, the Home Army – the famous armed forces of the Polish Secret State.

For the next five years, life in occupied Poland was split into two completely different worlds. The first of these, the unconcealed world, was characterised by daily random arrests and forced relocations associated with slave labour. The second of these worlds was concealed – this is where all operations aimed at weakening and destroying the occupation force were being carried out. These included the popularisation of anti-German slogans, armed attacks aimed diminishing the Nazi Germany's military might, all the way into executing the Polish collaborators, which were far fewer than in any other state, as well as important figures working for the German terror apparatus. Despite the brutal occupation, the Poles were also able to rebuild their cultural, social, charitable, self-helping and ideological sentiments that pushed them into supporting the PPP.

### **STRUCTURE AND MAIN GOALS OF THE POLISH SECRET STATE**

The main goal of the PPP was to continue the struggle for independence and the re-establishment of the physical Polish state. As such, constant preparations for the armed struggle were being made, but before it could begin, a different warfare was being fought. It included intelligence gathering, sabotage, diversion and most importantly, the civilian struggle which focused on fighting the occupation force in all spheres of Poles' everyday life. On top of fighting the enemy, the PPP was also actively taking care of its inhabitants by supporting secret education courses, establishing its own media, and promoting various cultural and historical activities, including the documentation of German crimes. Furthermore, several actions were undertaken that focused exclusively on the drafting on Polish state post-war, its social and economic characteristics as well as the general place on the geopolitical map of the post-war Europe.

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The Polish Secret State rested on two main pillars: the civilian and the military one. *'It was only when the civilian activities of the Polish underground movement were combined with its military capabilities was when this entirely unique creation, now known as the Polish Underground State born. It was unmatched to anything known before in the history of the Polish state and the history of WWII as such'* – recalled one of its members, Stefan Korboński<sup>1</sup>.

The civilian part of the PPP was known as the *Delegatura Rządu na Kraj*, or Government Delegation for Poland, that consisted of numerous departments that were similar in structure and name to the pre-war government Ministries. These departments dealt with issues such as judiciary, social care, farming, press and information services, education and culture as well as war relief, rebuilding efforts and foreign affairs. The Government Delegation for Poland was run by a Government's Delegate for Poland who was later given the title of the Deputy Prime Minister, with his deputies becoming Ministers. The Delegate was the highest-ranking representative of the Polish Government in Exile in France and later in the UK. He was responsible for all underground activities in occupied Poland and personally headed the efforts to establish directions and means of social resistance against the occupation forces. He was also preparing his government for the overtaking of power in Poland when the country is finally liberated.

Political parties were amongst on the of the key elements of the PPP. It is estimated that there were approximately 50 of them operating within the underground state. The representatives of the main political forces such as the socialists, the Christian democrats, nationalists and peasants

were amongst the men who made up the *Radę Jedności Narodowej*, i.e. the Council of National Unity, a parliamentary-like structure that had an advisory and opinion-forming functions.

### THE ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS

An army was the integral part of the Polish Secret State and derived directly from the Polish Armed Forces that fought against the occupation forces continuously, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. They were first known as the *Służba Zwycięstwu Polski*; the Service for Poland's Victory, but was later renamed into the *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*; the Union of Armed Struggle. In February of 1942, the Union was renamed yet again, this time into the now famous Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*). Before this last change was able to take place, a large-scale operation needed to be conducted in order to fully combine its different units and teams. These actions were coordinated by General Stefan 'Grot' Rowecki and was later continued by the Head of the Home Army, General Tadeusz 'Bór' Komorowski all the way until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Thanks to their heroic actions, the largest underground armed formation in Europe was conceived, consisting of approximately 300 000 soldiers in 44'.

This mighty army consisted of people who voluntarily agreed to join its ranks. It was led by professional army officers, some of whom were not mobilised in 39' but did so later as they preferred underground struggle rather than being prisoners of war somewhere in Germany or Russia. With time, the junior officer positions were filled with soldiers who gained their ranks in secret officer schools. The '*Cichociemni*' – Polish commando operatives trained in the UK and then stealthily moved to Poland came out to be a great support for the underground Polish Army. Once on the occupied territory, they would take over the command of a local resistance

<sup>1</sup> S. Korboński, *Polish Underground State. A guide to the underground from 1939-1945*, Bydgoszcz 1987, p. 7.



**PHOTOGRAPH OF THE WARSAW UPRISING. ŚRÓDMIĘSCIE PÓLNOCCNE, WARSAW. INSURGENT AT THE OBSERVATION POST IN THE CORNER WINDOW ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE BUILDING OF THE FORMER INSURANCE COMPANY "RUSSIA" AT 124/128 MARSZAŁKOWSKA STREET. WARSAW, POLAND, 1ST HALF OF AUGUST 1944.**

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movement and performed intelligence and sabotage-focused operations. From amongst over 300 trained Cichociemni soldiers, 1/3 died fighting the German forces. The functioning of this enormous volunteer army would not have been possible without the mass support from the Polish society.

The main objective of the Home Army was to fight for the independence of Poland. The underground Polish Armed Forces were gathering weapons and training constantly, thanks to having a complex network of gun and explosives production workshops. All of this was done in preparation for the armed national uprising to come. Its outbreak was planned for when a decisive allied offensive would come swooping through Poland. In the meantime, numerous sabotages, intelligence and diversion operations were conducted on the daily basis. The Home Army's Intelligence Service did not focus solely on Polish territory but instead operated both in the homeland and hundreds of kilometres away from

the Polish borders. Its significant role has been much appreciated by the allied forces since it conducted numerous successful operations and helped the allies in uncovering the technical mysteries behind the Nazi weapons, such as the famous V-1 and V-2 rockets.

Younger Poles, including Scouts have been involved in operations often related to as 'small sabotage'. This included, but was not limited to, the distribution of anti-German propaganda, the distribution of leaflets, attacking cinemas playing German movies with smelly substances and painting of the special 'anchor' symbol. It was an official symbol of the Polish resistance movement and comprised of letters 'P' and 'W' crossed together to depict an anchor. The letters 'PW' stand for *Polska Walcząca*, or Fighting Poland. It became not only a symbol of Polish resistance and the fight against the German forces but was also used to boost the morale of Polish civilian population. In no time the 'anchor' became a symbol of the entire Polish Underground State. According to



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**INSURGENT AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LOWER PART OF THE HOLY CROSS CHURCH. A TENEMENT HOUSE "POD MESSALKĄ" AT 16/18 KRAKOWSKIE PRZEDMIEŚCIE STREET IN THE BACKGROUND. ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE PÓLNOCCNE, WARSAW, POLAND. AUGUST 23, 1944.**

the order given out by the Commander General of the Home Army in March of 1943: *'Our aim is to taunt the enemy and deal harmful blows to his troops by sabotage and diversion operations. We shall also employ revenge attacks for when the civilian population is harmed by the enemy. (...) The revenge operation should be conducted under unit's own name but,*

*where possible, the Fighting Poland symbol should be left in a visible spot*<sup>2</sup>.

The Nazi attack on Soviet Russia has changed the situation in Poland by putting its whole territory under the German

<sup>2</sup> *Home Army 1939-1945*. Source selection, A. Chmielarz, G. Jasiński, A.K. Kunert, Warsaw, 2013, pp. 261, 265.

occupation. Furthermore, it was also being used as the supply zone for the whole of the Nazi Eastern Front. This new situation has led to the increase numbers of sabotage operations conducted by the Home Army that were predominantly aimed at the wartime industry of the Third Reich. According to some sources, from the beginning of 1941 all the way until June 44' more than 700 trains had been blown up and 400 were set on fire. This led to the destruction of a total of 14 000 train carts and the destruction of 38 bridges.

### THE UNDERGROUND JUDICIARY SYSTEM

The underground judiciary system has been one of the most features of the Polish Secret State. It has been rebuilt from scratch at a huge cost, following its collapse after the German invasion. The main goal of the underground judiciary was to maintain the loyalty of Polish civilians towards the PPP and the rules it has been setting. It was also aimed at showing the society, that any acts of treason and collaboration with the occupation forces will be punished. The aim was to deter anyone from working for the Germans and to strengthen the belief that justice will eventually be served by the Polish state if any crimes were committed.

The first death sentences on traitors and Gestapo collaborators have been conducted by the end of 1939 by the local units of the *Służba Zwycięstwu Polski*, or Poland's Victory Service, and later the *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*, or Union of Armed Struggle. By the spring of 1940 a full underground judiciary system became operational. Both civilian and military Special Courts have since then been sentencing people to death for treason, collaboration, espionage and the torturing of the civilian population. Those demanding ransoms from Jews in hiding or from Poles giving them shelter

as well as providing paid information about hiding Jews to the Germans were also severely punished. Such acts were treated just like any other treason and were punishable by death.

More than 350 death sentences have been given out to people by the Warsaw Military Special Court alone. Death sentences were being carried out by the special units of the Home Army and all information regarding the killings was being released to the underground press.

### UNDERGROUND EDUCATION

The most common sign of the continuous existence of the Polish society was the existence of the secret education system that run despite the ongoing occupation. It is important to remember that the German occupiers have completely abolished middle and higher education in Poland, leaving the Polish youth with only primary and vocational schools, all with very limited schooling programme. SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler has demanded that: '(...) *the Polish society in the East should not have access to schools higher than the 4-year primary school. The objective of such school should be to teach Poles how to do simple calculation, up to no higher than 500 and how to write their own surname. Furthermore, teachers should tell them that it is a God's command that they should always obey Germans while being hard working and honest. Learning the ability to read is by no means a priority*<sup>3</sup>.

Thanks to the tremendous involvement from thousands of teachers, a well-developed network of underground schools was created where Polish youth could learn freely. Thousands of high school pupils were able to continue with their education in areas such as history and native language. They were even able

<sup>3</sup> J. Ślaski, *Poland Fighting*, Warsaw 1986, pp. 34.

to pass their secondary school certificate exams called 'Matura' in Polish. There were over 6,500 such certificates issued by underground schools in Warsaw alone. What is more, Poles were also able to establish underground higher education centres that taught students to be linguists, historians, mathematicians and doctors. During the entire duration of the WWII, over 10,000 students were able to complete their underground universities. Many of those involved in secret education were put in prisons, concentration camps or even killed.

### THE UNDERGROUND PRESS

Another key mean of completely erasing Polish national identity by Germans was the destruction of all Polish press and editors. Printed text became an important tool in the Nazi plan to break the Polish nation. Throughout the entire period of occupation, the Germans employed as much as 40 different press titles, all printed in Polish, to spread their propaganda. They were all commonly referred to as 'gadzinowki' and reading them was considered as wrongdoing. These newspapers were often filled with articles aimed at persuading the readers that the Polish nation is unable to exist on its own, without the German presence.

In response to the destruction of Polish independent press, an underground press movement was quickly established in its place. Different secret organisations had their own press titles. Articles in such secret newspapers focused predominantly on crimes against Poles that Germans hid from the society as well as providing information about Allies military victories. They were also aimed at establishing and strengthening of patriotism among the population. The scale of these projects was immense. Over 700 different newspaper titles as well as books were published throughout the war in the city of Warsaw alone.

### 'ŻEGOTA'

By the end of 1942 the Government Delegation for Poland has established a Polish Council to Aid Jews (in Polish, the *Rada Pomocy Żydom przy Delegaturze Rządu RP na Kraj*) and given it a codename: 'Żegota'. It was a continuation of the Provisional Committee to Aid Jews (in Polish, the *Tymczasowy Komitet Pomocy Żydom*) that has been established months earlier. It was a single government-supported organisation in the whole of occupied Europe that was established with a goal of helping the Jewish population. One of its founding members, Władysław Bartoszewski recalled: '(...) *this was the first organisation, where the members of the Bund party, Zionists, Catholics, Polish democrats, socialists, peasants - all either Jewish or Polish worked together against the Nazi occupiers*'<sup>4</sup>.

On top having its central HQ in Warsaw, 'Żegota' also operated in different Polish cities. Its members were tasked with organising help for Jews being kept in ghettos or those hiding away from them. Within the organisation, several specialised bureaux existed that dealt with all sorts of issues: legalisation, financial, housing, counter-ransom, propaganda, provincial, medical and clothing. A child-focused bureau also existed and dealt with helping Jewish children by finding shelter for them in Polish families, orphanages and in other similar institutions. Irena Sendlerowa, who was nominated to the Nobel Peace Prize, has become a symbol of the movement as it was thanks to her immense courage and devotion that over 2,500 Jewish children were saved from the certain death in the ghettos by her alone. It is worth remembering that helping Jews was punishable by death and the sentence was carried out not only on the offender but also a randomly captured group of

<sup>4</sup> W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *This one is from my homeland. Poles with the help of Jews 1939-1945*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 78.

Poles to emphasise the severity of the crime.

### THE FIGHT

In January 1944 the Soviet Red Army has crossed the pre-War borders of Poland. Yet again, Poles were forced to face the threat of Soviet aggression. The General Command of the Home Army has drafted a plan codename *'Burza'*, or *'Tempest'*, that aimed at conducting attacks on the back of withdrawing German forces. Nevertheless, both the military victories as well as a well running cooperation with the Red Army did not help the Home Army in securing the political objectives so much desired by the PPP. The NKVD operatives together with the Soviet counterintelligence that entered Poland together with the advancing troops quickly begun arresting anyone claiming to represent either civilian or military underground government of Poland. The Home Army soldiers were disarmed and forced to join the Red Army or sent to labour camps deep inside the Soviet Union.

In the summer of 1944, the Red Army has arrived on the outskirts of Warsaw. After nearly 5 years of enduring German terror the Polish capital was ready to finally fight the occupier. German failures on the Eastern and Western fronts as well as the failed assassination attempt on Hitler were only some of the signs that the Third Reich was already doomed. The commanders of the Polish Secret State wanted to liberate Warsaw using only their own forces, before the Red Army troops enter the city. It was supposed to be a strong sign that all this time the Poles continue to fight the Germans and that they are still determined to win back their independence.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944, the Varsovian citizens responded to the patriotic call to arms and the Warsaw Uprising had begun. The uprising meant that the PPP and its



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THE "FIGHTING POLAND" EMBLEM. WARSAW, FEBRUARY 14, 2019.

armed forces – the Home Army could leave the hiding and begin an open fight with the German army. For over two months Polish democratic institutions were able to operate freely. Although controlling only on a small patch of land within the besieged Warsaw, Poles were able to establish state administration there and even openly run political parties that published their own press. There have even been two radio station (Polish Radio and *'Błyskawica'*) operating in the constantly shelled city of Warsaw. Their broadcasts could have been heard as far as in the United Kingdom. The Post Office was also running and so where the military and

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civilian law enforcement agencies as well as charities and social aid bureaus helping the inhabitants of the city.

Despite all these efforts, faced with lack of adequate support from the Allies, huge civilian casualties and the overwhelming technological advantage of the German forces the General Command of the Home Army was left with no choice but to eventually stop the heroic fight. The Warsaw Uprising lasted for 63 days and was one of the bloodiest street battles ever in the history. It was also the biggest and most violent battle in the whole history of Poland.

### EPILOGUE

After the fall of the Warsaw Uprising and despite the huge casualties, both the Home Army and the Government Delegation for Poland decided to reassume their operations. On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1945 when most of the Polish territory was already under the Red Army control, the last commander of the Home Army, General Leopold 'Niedźwiadek' Okulicki decided to disband the Home Army. Only the Government Delegation for Poland and its Council of National Unity remained operational, still in deep secrecy.

At the end of March 45<sup>'</sup> the NKVD has arrested the heads of the Polish Secret State. Amongst those captured were: the last Commander of the Home Army, General Leopold „Niedźwiadek”, Okulicki, the Chairman of the Council of National Unity Kazmierz Pużak, the Government Delegate for Poland and *de facto* Deputy Prime Minister Jan Stanisław Jankowski as well as the heads of all main political parties. A Joseph Stalin-orchestrated trial of those arrested took place in mid-June 1945 in Moscow. The main goal of putting the heads of the PPP on trial was to smear all those involved in the operations of the Polish Secret State and to denunciate all Poles who opposed Soviet domination

in front of the Western European states. Fake allegations of collaborating with Nazi Germany were amongst some of the techniques used to achieve this cunning goal. All arrested have been sentenced to prison but in practice three of the convicts (including General Okulicki) were killed (Gen. Okulicki died in Soviet prison in unexplained circumstances).

At the same time, in accordance with the agreement reached between the 'Big Three' in Yalta, a communist Provisional Government of National Unity was established in Poland that was completely subordinate to the Soviet Union. By agreeing to this, the free world withdrew its support for the Polish Government in Exile which led to the dissolution of the Government Delegation for Poland and the Council for National Unity.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1945 the last appeal of the Council for National Unity was published that contained the Last Will of the Fighting Poland. The appeal was to be one final message of the Polish Underground State. *“The decision to dissolve the Council for National Unity should not be viewed as the spiritual capitulation of the Polish nation. The aims that the Fighting Poland movement strived to achieve still stand. We strongly believe that those involved in the PPP will not cease their struggle until our main goals of regaining full independence and establishing a democratic system in Poland will not be met”*<sup>5</sup>.

The fulfilment of all pledges that were included in the Fighting Poland's Last Will, such as the regaining of independence and freedom, was possible only half a century later.

Katarzyna Utracka ■

November 2019

<sup>5</sup> M. Gałęzowski, *Testament of Fighting Poland. Last uploads Polish Underground State*, Warsaw 2014, pp. 17.



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Musiałek Paweł

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