The Dynamic of Geopolitics in the Middle East

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Abstract: In a complex, dynamic and turbulent world the main confrontation is between fundamentally different values, between democracy and totalitarianism, and it is determined by the major aggression of international terrorism, of religious extremist origin. The objective of the paper is the presentation of geopolitical changes in the Middle East and the factors that influence them. In an increasingly globalized world one cannot stand by and be indifferent to what happens so close to Europe. In this environment, no country can stay isolated or neutral, no country is immune and no one should remain out of the global processes. As a result, the international security tends more and more to show its indivisible feature, and the international community is increasingly aware of its global responsibilities. In the undertaken study we conclude that the major tendencies, that govern the global developments in the post bipolar era, create legitimate concerns, posing new challenges, offering opportunities and presenting risks to national values and interests. This paper is intended to focus on: the reconfiguration of the area in the Asian West in the early 21st century; the Muslim world with its issues (see the Iran's geopolitical position); globalization, major factor in determining the behavior of key international actors.

Keywords: globalization; the anti-terrorist war; southwest Asia; Islamic fundamentalism

1. Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century opens a new era in the international politics, where the security and implicitly the competition for the promotion and consolidation of new power centers occupy a central place in the management of world's evolution and the establishment of the new world order.

Due to the many domains in which there are experienced the effects of the changes that take place at a fast pace on the international arena, no state can remain

indifferent, uninvolved or unaffected by what happens outside its borders. Concepts and notions such as globalization, geo-strategy, defense, and threat are no longer in the idealistic area, but they are associated with the realities which each state's entity must take into account and consider.

It requires more than ever the development of not only the strategic partnerships of solidarity or those made in order to achieve mutual economic, social, political and military benefits, but also to investigate the hostile environment, for understanding the real causes of hazards and threats, to reduce vulnerabilities of the democratic society and the protection of human being.

The events of 11 September 2001 changed the world forever. The beginning of a new century announced a new era of mass terrorism directed towards the civilians. (Maftei, 2009, p. 792). The America's sense of security – as it could not ever happen on its shores - has been shattered forever. Other nations have quickly realized that their cities could be hit by such disasters as well. Since then, terrorism has become a very real threat to countless people around the globe.

The horror of that day has shifted the Middle East to the forefront of the news around the world. Suddenly, what happened thousands of miles away affected people, no matter where they lived. A region which, for many, seemed unimportant now became the center of attention, as nations throughout the world realized that the Middle East in reality can affect us all. Considering how much the Middle East now dominates the news, it is hard to believe that at the beginning of the last century the Middle East "was only a marginal concern" of the Western world.

Currently, the nations around the world are affected by what happens in this volatile region. The global economy works with oil, of which most of it lies under the sands of the Middle East deserts. Oil is the economic life blood, and the Western affluence; also an abundant and cheap source is essential for continuous Western prosperity. This dependence on oil has fundamentally changed the Western nations' relations with this region, turning it into a vital strategic part of the world.

2.   Middle East - Overview

2.1. Reconfiguration of the Asian West Area in the Early 21st Century

The developments of the political-strategic situation in terms of disappearance of the world's division by the "Iron Curtain" have largely favored the diversification and amplification of risks, directly influencing the configuration and conditions of their manifestation in the world.

The emergence of regional actors - who wish to "leave" the stage of secondary power centers (medium) with "limited interests": the Islamic countries (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, Indonesia), some European countries (Poland, Spain, Ukraine), countries in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela) and Asia (South Korea, Japan) - interferes the developments of the United States, China and Russia.

The fragmentation of the international system is structured along the lines of confrontation between "rogue states *vs.* states of concern" imposed by some countries (Libya, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, North Korea), the global asymmetric organizations (substates), non-European geopolitical factor (without a pivotal power center), the imposition of liberal Western democracies in non-western spaces "bloody borders" of Islam dooming the granted inferior status in the global system. We must mention the non-state actors as well, the non-sovereign entities, exerting economic, political and social influences at national level and in some cases at international level. (Simileanu, 2011, p. 31) There is no consensus regarding the members of this category, but some definitions include: the nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, international media, armed groups (rebel forces, militia, war lords), terrorist organizations (Al Qaeda), organized crime (drug cartels), religious groups, transnational diaspora communities and some individuals with influence. (Pitulescu, 1996, pp. 54-59)

On the other hand, the emergence of international terrorism and the anti-fundamentalist coalition - led by the U.S.A. - has created a diplomatic rift between the West and Islamic space. The philosophical dimension of the space separating the West of the Islamic space developed a syndrome of "related" states – according to the theory of H.D.S. Greenway[1] - that have common reactions consistent with a certain political-religious ideology - and a common code of values. The context of the current power structures and centers complicates the operation of the trinomial

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[1] Columnist, former editor of Foreign Policy of The Boston Globe publication.

reconstruction (after violence), reconciliation (between the parties) and resolution (on the progress of the conflict). (Simileanu, 2009, p. 38)

The center of the Islamic world is a large peninsula surrounded by the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf and Oman Sea. Since the major political-religious transformations of Islam have their source here, to this region it was given special attention since the beginning of the emergence of world powers and the international systems' configuration. Especially the Bay received a special importance, which grew more and more, leading even to insist upon the pivotal role the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea play in the global strategies of the 21st century. (Ezzatti, 2010)

In the second half of the 20th century after a series of political events in the Islamic world, the Muslim state's heads considered necessary to establish an organization able to end the division and divergences between over 60 Islamic countries and establish unity and solidarity among them. Finally, the first steps were made by the heads of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Morocco in 1969, when there was a conference of foreign ministers from Arab countries in Cairo in which they discussed the way of taking action in order to create an organization that meet the criteria of Islam. Following this meeting, the foreign ministers of Morocco and Saudi Arabia had a meeting in Jeddah in the first week of September of 1969 and decided to establish a preliminary Committee at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The task of this committee was to present and analyze the projects in order to establish a conference of the states' heads in Muslim countries. (Ezzatti, 2010, pp. 117-118)

The fractures of the Islamic world - due to inter-Islamic, inter-Arab conflicts, the religious antagonisms and the absence of a Islamic-Arab "Piedmont", which is based on power poles Arab disputes with secular Islamic states axis - such as religious, linguistic and ethnic – stressing on the rupture with the West, affecting the global international relations. For this reason the new internationalism imposed by the globalization process is not reflected in certain geographic areas, among them being the Islamic space. In this context, the Islamic countries are poles of power inside the Islamic space and it cannot impose in the global world due to the internal prohibitions, but especially prohibitions and exclusions imposed by other geopolitical spaces that come under some congruence of the international relations system.

Unfortunately, there are still approaches concerning the Islamic culture as a reactionary one, and the international strategies "avoid" this area of major

importance for insuring international security. "The escape" of power centers of Islamic states in the Islamic strict area - considered as closed by the world leaders' states - is the great challenge of the globalization process and it has a very important role in the new theoretical approaches of global security.

There are two key topics in as clear as possible form, showing the way in which Muslims perceive the Western world: the first is the overthrow of the longstanding superiority of Islamic civilization and the other the widespread feeling among Muslims that are subject to siege and rule of Western civilization in considering that it has a vulnerable position. These two ideas can surprise many Westerners, as they believe the contrary: the Islam maintains a self-sufficient belligerent mentality, always ready to attack. If we do not perceive this way of thinking in the Muslim world, we ignore important, vital dynamics of the two regions.

2.2. Muslim World and Its Issues

Muslims are aware of their superiority in cultural, ideological, scientific, technical and military terms of their 1,000 years civilization, a situation that ended with the renaissance of the European life, followed by the era of Muslim world's decline, an era where the Europeans imposed their colonial and imperialist power on the Muslim world. The negative effect of this defeat was intensified by disillusionment feeling and the collapse of the unitary Islamic civilization. In the last two centuries, the Islamic world has given its place to the Western influence. This penetration of Western civilization has broken the ties of Islamic civilization, forcing it in various ways, to conform to civilization and the Western power. But the Islamic world has not yet fully complied with these profound permutations of power relations. Nowadays, the Muslim communities are troubled by anxiety and uncertainty, although it is possible that they do not find a clear form of expression.

The political dimension of Islam is itself a reaction to the phenomenon of decline. This is why Islamic countries are making efforts to determine the reasons for their weakness, to correct them and to find sources in order to restore the past glories of Islamic civilization in modern Muslim societies. Muslims, who suffer from the lost greatness, loss of power and the decline of their glory, are equally animated by an intense feeling of anger and concern on the Western civilization, which ended the supremacy of Islam. From the Muslim's point of view the history and experience

of the new world offer numerous grievances and complaints against the West. There are two reasons why the West should be aware of these complaints:

- firstly is that history shows us a truth, that is for various reasons Muslims were oppressed and their rights have been violated.

- secondly refers to the way in which Muslims "read" the history that includes psychological, cultural, historical elements of the contemporary world.

The first factor, namely the existing internal discontent in the Muslim world is not considered as being only the prerequisites extremely important for the international development of radical Islamist forces, but in the case where the general discontent on the regional conditions would lead to an acceptable level, then it is less likely for the international issues to occur inside, a consolidation of the main radical Muslim movements across the international borders. Unfortunately, in many Muslim countries, the domestic discontent has grown. The enhanced economic problems, unemployment, lack of opportunities, the increasing rates of population determine the state to become unable to provide social services and the necessary infrastructure; the inefficient state sector and the inability of management, corruption, poverty and lack of some represented member states - these are all examples of key adverse factors. Most governments in the region are suffering from a crisis of legitimacy, because there are not elected governments and most enjoy a small area of the needed legitimacy in times of crisis.

The second factor that acts as a catalyst for Islamic unity has as source the foreign policies that lead to the defeat, humiliation and considerable sufferings among Muslims. The traditional issue of Muslims represents the outstanding differences related to the Palestinian issue, the Western military attacks against the territories inhabited by Muslims and, more recently, the crisis in Kosovo, which just ended.

In the coming years, given the new expectations of Muslims on the international quality and prestige, the military intervention of the West in the Islamic world will involve a high cost. These behaviors can be illustrated by examples consisting of expressing the feelings of most nations in the third or non -European world.[1]

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[1] Middle East Mirror, 28 June 1993.

The third factor relates to the fact that in the future, the formation of one or more radical Islamist regimes in the Muslim world could become a crucial regional element in creating Islamic united positions. (Ezzatti, 2010, pp. 137; 146-147)

2.3. The Geopolitical Position of Iran

Iran plays an essential natural role, and this position gives it influence, to a greater or lesser extent in all matters relating to the current situation in the Middle East. In terms of political, economic, cultural, religious and military point of view, the importance of geographical and geopolitical position of Iran reaches a rate that no country in the Middle East or even in Asia can overlook. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 5)

Iran is seen by all the States in the Gulf as a violent destabilization agent of the old status quo. Facing such situation, all the Arab monarchies leaders in the region have adopted a policy founded on three principles: a state of passivity, to appease the revolutionary regime, "re-islamization" of the society in order to try defeating the Islamists on their own grounds and a more active cooperation between the six states, in order to repress any attempt of destabilization.

The study "Iran and its Strategic Role in the Persian Gulf"[1] shows that foreign and security policy priorities of Iran are:

- As regional power it will continue to work to expand its influence in the Persian Gulf and the surrounding areas and to seek equality in international agreements; its interests reject any foreign military presence in the region;

- It will remain strongly aware of its influence on the Strait of Hormuz;

- As Islamic nation it will seek to preserve its unique heritage and it will try to revitalize to a greater extent the nationalist feeling. Tehran's strategic military purposes will be defined as regional states capabilities such as India, Pakistan, Iraq and Israel. (Simileanu, 2009, pp. 173-174)

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Iran and Russia were once again involved in a double geostrategic dispute - a general and a substantive one, on the triangular rivalry of Russia - Turkey - Iran for regional supremacy in the

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[1] Drafted in June 1998 by the Institute for Public Policy, by James A. Baker III from Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA.

Caucasus and Central Asia, the other being linked to the camp in favor of intervening in the Azeri - Armenian conflict of the early '90s.

Following the Azeri - Armenian conflict, Turkey and Iran have redirected their attention to the Central Asia, specifying that the first still maintains closed the border with Armenia. Iran has still adopted a greater caution to its behavior in the region, at least until the conflict erupts in the Caucasus. Previously the Tehran recognized the independence of Azerbaijan proclaimed in November 1991, only after the USSR did it.

The Iranian Propaganda against Saudi leaders is as intense as the anti-American or anti-Hebrew one. From an ideological standpoint, the Tehran accuses the rulers of Arab monarchies to have departed from the precepts of Islam, to exploit the country's wealth for their benefit and, above all, to be allies of the U.S. and thus managed to participate in the Israel's games. As a regional power, Iran will seek to develop weapons of mass destruction. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 95; 106)

2.4. A New Power Axis: China-Russia-Iran

Shaping a new power axis China-Russia-Iran is a real threat, medium and long term's perspective excludes the risk of a military classic confrontation with Russia, even if the scenario in question involves an alarming probability at the moment.

The real leadership, but latent of China imposed the Asian power in international diplomatic mediations, in particular in the Middle East and East Africa Islam (relations with Israel, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine Liberation Organization etc.) but also with countries in Africa.

The development of a new strategy has attracted in the China's sphere of influence states considered as being regional powers. The initiation and extension of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (member states Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; observers: India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia) are considered as an alternative to EU and NATO's enlargement and counteracting the American interests in Asia. Attracting China's sphere of influence of the nuclear powers (Russia, Pakistan, India and Iran) and the states that possess unexplored hydrocarbon resources (Russia, Iran, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) will generate a supranational structure that will counteract the USA's hegemony. At the same time China will coordinate the development of regional

actors who will "restrict" USA: India will prohibit access to the Indian Ocean, Iran will manifest as a pole of power in the Middle East and it will be able to transfer the Islamic revolution, Mongolia will recover economically, Russia will dominate the European oil market (working with China in their exploitation in Siberia) and China will win - along with Japan - the market of Southeast Asia and the South Atlantic. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 115)

In the whole strategic equation and global security, Beijing believes that Tehran and Islamabad along with Riyadh have a pivotal role in the region, including under the aspect counterbalance of Washington's foreign policy – perceived by the Chinese authorities as having a profound unilateral feature. Against this background, in political terms, China acts to reduce the isolation of Iran, due to the nuclear dossier to which is being submitted, being suspected of involvement in supporting the insurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq, supporting the Hezbollah and Hamas organizations.

The political ties between China and Iran have experienced a permanent development and consolidation after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Successive governments in Beijing and Tehran have recognized over time, the substantial capacity of the bilateral cooperation to allow the achievement of their national interests. They have varied over time, from the resistance against Soviet expansion in opposition to the American unilateralism, the bilateral cooperation relations remaining constant. Amid Iran's tensioning political dialogue with key actors on the international stage - in the context of Tehran's nuclear concerns - China is working to strengthen its bilateral cooperation, particularly in the energy domain, with the Iranian theocratic regime.

From the political point of view Iran aims at strengthening the relationship with China for its support to the increasing pressures of the EU and the U.S. regarding the Iranian nuclear program and for maintaining Tehran in the equation of political and economic interests in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, namely the possible affiliation as a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The bilateral cooperation Iran - China in the military domain was focused on providing by Beijing the reference technology and technical support for missile development program. Regarding the issue of Iranian nuclear dossier, China "protects and respects the right of Iran as a signatory country of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes", but it requires for the "Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

and UN's specialized agencies to clarify all aspects on the subject and the amiable resolution of the diplomatic dossier within the IAEA." (Simileanu, 2009, pp. 122-125)

In relations with Russia and China, U.S. uses political and military deterrence (big stick), but also the power of economic and financial persuasion (dollar diplomacy); in this complex game the political-military actions of Americans and allies in African Asian space will have as base a unique design and in successive stages, aiming at long-term, problem solving in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia and the Central Asian states, possibly with the support of those countries and the U.S. sphere of influence from the Arab world. U.S. relations with Russia would improve and develop, pursuing its involvement in some Euro-Atlantic initiatives, particularly in the fight against international terrorism. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 130)

Currently Moscow's position can be characterized as ambivalent: while welcoming the developments in the region, weakening Washington's hegemonic ambitions, it shows a definite interest in knowing the Tehran's activities, regarded as a competitor in the global energy market. At the same time, given the influence and the level of American investments in Kazakhstan, it is expected for the Americans to adopt a prudent policy on their reaction to the Kazak-Iranian relations on the line of cooperation in the oil domain, hoping that they will maintain their influence in Central Asia. On the other hand, we should also note the fact that Iran proves to have the utmost concern for the stability of neighboring states, considering it as a pre-requisite for its own national security and the way in which it develops its relationships is a proof of this fact.

3. Geopolitics and Globalization in Middle East

3.1. Reconfiguring Geopolitics at the Beginning of 21st Century

From the moment it was introduced the term geopolitics, it was discussed the significance of the relationship between power and territory-population; it concluded that this binominal has a fundamental role in obtaining power. French General Pierre Gallois[1] defines geopolitics as being "the study of the link between

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[1] The author of "Geopolitics, ways to gain power", published in 1990.

the political orientation of a power, at international level, and the geographical context of its actions." (Ezzatti, 2010, pp. 13-14)

After the Second World War, the world was divided into two geopolitical spheres, which were composed of the territory depending on sea trade[1] and Eurasian continental power.[2] Regionalism has enabled maritime areas such as Europe, Japan and China to foreshadow as great powers. The multipolar system of great powers grants power to other areas of the world so that they get a clearer geopolitical form and, as the bipolar monopoly failed regarding the European economic situation, being in an exceptional competition to a large scale with United States in the Latin America area, and their revitalization (Japan and the European Community) grants to the countries in Middle East a new freedom in terms of international orientation. Each situation offers to the countries in geopolitical region several ways to increase their influence in the region.

A consequence of ignoring the importance of understanding the geographical position is a significant growth of the geopolitical issues. The most important example of misunderstanding of this aspect can be found in the geographical territory of the Fertile Crescent.[3] Given the geographical unitary feature of the peninsular group of southwest Asia (Middle East), and the position and specific mountain range of the Fertile Crescent Corridor, stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, dominating Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Arabian Peninsula and Iran, and bearing in mind the fact that the countries along this operation corridor, due to their specific geopolitical situation, for two thousand years has always been an area of instability, when on these territories it would establish stability and security.

The borders of these countries were so drawn throughout history so that none of them enjoy the necessary freedom of action, and each country perceives its neighbor countries as being complementary. For this reason, if they would be divided it be based on a unified geopolitical thinking, it could solve most of the

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[1] Trade Dependent Maritime World.
[2] Eurasian Continental Power.
[3] The term was invented by archaeologist James Henry Breasted, University of Chicago, in the ancient Egyptian archives, around 1900 and it shows a region in western Asia, bordered by the dry climate of the Syrian Desert to the south and the Anatolian highlands to the north. Currently, the countries that have territories in this area are: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Jordan, plus the south-eastern Turkey and Western Iran.

economic, military, social and political problems.[1] The situation in these countries is opposed to that of Turkey, which understood very well its geographical position, using it to its maximum in order to reach to its current situation. Therefore, when there are made decisions and set policy directions, a careful analysis of geopolitical and geostrategic situation is a guarantee for their correct application. All the advances in technology and communications, and past experience in wars showed that whatever a country's geostrategic position, it could never stay away, or become isolated from the developments occurring worldwide; it will become willy-nilly part of a military strategy, and it should seek to act as an element of strategic balance, in relation to the geographical location and taking advantage of it in order to achieve progress and the development of its country and nation. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 66)

It is a geographical reality the fact that no other country of the world has depended more than Russia of geopolitics in terms of its extreme policy directions. During the era of the former Soviet Union and the Cold War, including the 21st century, the Russian policy leaders had to take it into account. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 90) "*In the former Soviet Union and in Russia, as a state that substitutes the first, there were ups and downs of the two prevailing paradigms, namely: the imperial and ideological pattern, and the new thinking patterns.*" (Hannes, pp. 361-391) The new ideology emerged in the mid '70s and it continued until the end of 1992. Its essential elements were: the international expansion, military power and the imperial structure.

These ideologies are generally old forms of international leadership. After a significant period that lasted about three centuries, a state composed of three Slavic nations, namely Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian collapsed and its importance went beyond the loss of the three Baltic republics, because this meant that Russia, as successor of the former empire, was deprived of the territories that were the "bridge" with the rest of Europe. Ukraine was not only an ancient symbol for Russia, with its Orthodox roots, but a place where more laic traditions have developed, by combining elements of western European culture. This aspect highlights the deep crisis of identity which, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has become a divisive factor. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 94) The geopolitical factors such as poverty, racial and ethnic discord, the geopolitical isolation and limited resources

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[1] Dreidel, Alexander. *Geografia politică a Orientului Mijlociu si Nordului Africii/ Political Geography of the Middle East and North Africa*, *3rd Part*.

often induce pressures on countries neighboring the first degree powers (Algeria, Cuba, Indonesia, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Zaire).

3.2. Globalization, a Major Factor in Determining the Behavior of Key International Actors

Globalization is the defining feature of the era in which we live (Tsang, 2008, p. 311), a process in which the geographic distance becomes a less important factor; it performs a reordering of time and space in the social life, with three main causes: technological, political and economic.

Globalization generates the increase of skills and maximizes performance worldwide; it is a complex phenomenon that includes all nations and joint effort aiming at finding solutions to major problems of humanity: cross-border crime, poverty, terrorism, ecological disasters, etc. The creation of international economic institutions such as the IMF, WTO and World Bank often had a favorable impact on solving problems of any nation, even if in some cases the effects were not as expected; on the whole, it is estimated that globalization generates gain for each participant. (Liteanu, Toma, & Degeratu, 2007)

Worldwide, the global commercial exchanges expanded unevenly, rewarding some, but punishing others. The globalized communication system offered profound cultural challenges to certain groups. At the same time, it provided to opponents new weapons and new ways to convey messages. Al Qaeda used the Internet "the network of the networks" for propaganda, communications and even to provide terrorist expertise. The globalization has created an "interconnected world" in which the groups from the shadow move elegantly, while the states lumber. (Tsang, 2008, p. 316)

Globalization, by the processes which it devolves upon in the near and medium horizon, has generated multiple tensions that will influence, and not always positively, the international security environment. Fragmentation and integration, localization and internationalization, centralization and decentralization are just few of the situations that have generated uncertainty to some spaces. In this context, we can say that globalization process gives no guarantee to a direct and accessible ideal way of constructing peace and stability; on the contrary, the ongoing phenomenon has generated many situations that threaten the security at certain levels and during time periods. (Simileanu, 2011)

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For the moment it is difficult to speak with any certainty about the long-term effects of the globalization phenomenon on the international community, but, even now, it is clear that the globalization process has both a positive and negative impact. The positive side of this process is that it will increase the interaction between countries, which in turn it opens up new possibilities for the development of human civilization, especially in the economic sphere. Increasing trading exchanges, investment and technology between different regions, facilitating contacts between people, familiarity with other cultures are certainly beneficial to mankind.

The globalization of policy does not only determine a movement upward of decision making process towards regional and international level, but also a movement downward towards the subnational levels. At the same time it occurs a growing number of decisions made at the supranational level and a decentralization of decision making within states. A first example is the European Union, where the sub-regions have increased their presence in the European institutions. The recognition of sub-regions is part of the responsibility development and democratic representation in the EU. (Liteanu, Toma, & Degeratu, 2007)

By assimilating the new members and the enlargement policy towards the Asian space, the European Union joined the global race of the geopolitical chaos. Some states have been "taken up" and integrated into the union, while others have huge economic and social issues. The strategy of increasing the global importance of the EU through territorial expansion can turn into a big disadvantage for European states, which risk decreasing their own forwarding speed in the geopolitical race, open by the globalization process. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 75)

In the 21st century the central axis of thought and geopolitical transformations are the people and nations; under these terms we should observe a gradual reduction of the power of states and governments and its gradual transfer to regional units and transnational companies, which could influence significantly the world's map. In such a geopolitical climate, where states will not find a way to be consistent with the circumstances related to the geographical environment, no doubt this will be enforced and thus it has a reduced possibility for maneuver in order to protect and defend. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 115) In the context of integrated world, the consequences of regional instability are no longer limited, but it affects the neighboring countries, where it generates an instability spiral that threatens the international peace and security. In this context, the instability can be described as a contagious trajectory

leading to endemic conflicts - internationalizing "their problem". (Simileanu, 2009, p. 129)

Globalization collides with tribalism and fundamentalism, symbolized by "Jihad" - the primary reaction, and based on fundamental myths, moral axioms and self-imposed certainties in a world where borders collapse. Samuel Huntington expressed his concern regarding the Islam culture, talking about the bloody borders of the Muslim's world. In fact, these borders have produced along the centuries many strategic and cultural differences and conflicts. Not just those regions were the place for the outbreak of disagreements, but everywhere in the bloody borders - across Eastern Asia, Western Europe, the Middle East before Islam, in Africa. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 157)

If in the ways of solving the peace process there is an obvious connivance, the EU and U.S. views on the degree of involvement in the destiny of the Middle East are increasingly diverging in the recent years. A dispute between the EU and the U.S. has targeted the American project of "Extended Middle East Initiative": Washington's geopolitical concept, covering the space between Morocco and Pakistan. Thus the basic assumption has been that the population here, lacking political and economic rights, is moving towards extremism, terrorism, international crime and illegal immigration.

It is therefore necessary to implement democracy, political empowerment of women and increasing the aid to non-governmental organizations. The second objective of the strategy was to promote the "knowledge", that is not only an educational reform that would limit illiteracy, but to adapt the education system to the norms and values of modern-Western type.

Finally, at the economic level, it aims at increasing the capacity of the private sector through microfinance. It is even proposed the creation of a development bank for the "Extended Middle East" and the creation of "free trade". This initiative was undertaken in part by establishing the "common area of Gulf states" by the Saudi Arabia and a part of the Persian Gulf states (except Iran) (Simileanu, 2009, pp. 71-72).

This project, however, is seen as being reluctant to the EU and it is highly appreciated by the Arab-Islamic states. The EU marked in turn by the joint French-

German position in developing the "Strategic Partnership for a Common Future with the Middle East".[1]

3.3. Terrorism and its Origins in the Middle East

The terrorist act aims at general deterrence and the result seeks to necessarily produce terror, at this stage, the prospects of conceptual approach consider that the target audience is influenced largely by the emotional responses to terrorist organizations and movements. Worldwide it unanimously manifests moral condemnation of terrorist acts and the committed elements, avoiding panic and terror that imprints on the social segments, even if it manifests personal affinities (moral, political, ideological, cultural, ethnic or religious).

Executive item of the terrorist act - the terrorist or terrorist group - has the attitude influenced by the individual circumstances, individual and group psychology, regarding the transposition in life of the ideology and specificity of the movement (historical arguments, determined by the aims and ideologies to which they have joined, the tactics and strategies to address for the performance of the terrorist act with technology (sometimes the latest) and the culture and religion to which they belong. (Simileanu, 2011, p. 158)

Thus, considering the reflection of the traditions specific to the Islamic world, reflecting the phrase Islamic terrorism is no longer adequate, leaving open the way to identify the terrorist who abusively invoked Islam. To judge Islam as a violent religion, based only on the facts of Bin Laden and Al- Qaeda, who seek to legitimize their acts through the words of Islam, it is not a correct approach. Terrorism represents for the modern society a signal of deficiency, of an anomaly. To suppress terrorism is not enough to track down its perpetrators, it is necessary to identify and solve the problems and the contradictions that generate this phenomenon. Terrorism is, therefore, a thermometer, an indicator of the extent to which a particular disease affects the society, is the expression of frustration and

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[1] The "Strategic Partnership for a Common Future with the Middle East" presents a project based on joint discussions between the Arabian, European and USA representatives, providing solutions to the problems of the region relating to its realities. In fact, the EU fears that the United States will take a lead in implementing their strategic vision in the Middle East, which could affect the European interests in the region or at least be subject to increased scrutiny of the U.S. So far the American project is in the preliminary stages, for its first actual application, the installation of a democratic regime in Iraq, proves to have insurmountable difficulties. Meanwhile, the EU is trying to impose itself to the states in the region as a more flexible interlocutor.

dissatisfaction to which certain individuals or groups have reached. Thus, one can even say that terrorism is a game to an open stage, with or without an audience. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 7)

Viennese newspaper "Kurier" believes that the fight against terrorism can be won only through diplomacy and diplomatic tours of the Secretary of the American State and European politicians in New Delhi, Islamabad and Tehran. (Simileanu, 2011, p. 150) Similar issues have been promoted also in the Swiss newspaper "Berner Zeitung", which drew attention upon the danger of increased terrorist threat.[1]

Regarding the global war on terrorism, the main analytical premises of the planning process of information consist of distinguishing between immediate and long-term tendencies. It is essential to reflect on war period, since we treat Al Qaeda threats as a war against terrorism. We should keep clearly in our minds the idea that there is a fundamental distinction between the nature and the feature of the war. On the one hand, the feature of war may change, especially due to the technological progress. On the other hand, the nature of war tends to remain constant, historically speaking, and one of the basic rules for understanding the nature of war remains the ability to distinguish clearly between its strategic and operational dimensions. (Tsang, 2008, p. 259; 264)

In foreign policy, it is unlikely that Islamist governments would fundamentally alter the current actions based on producing and fixing the oil prices (oil policy). All oil producing countries are exposed to pressures in order to obtain maximum profit, and therefore the oil production over the limit does not allow for its price to rise too much. Thus, there are considerable differences between the Islamic countries regarding the attention granted by the state to the oil policy. If an oil-producing Muslim country would want to use oil as a weapon against the West, especially in the case of regional crises, it is likely to open the way. (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 155)

It is known that from the beginning of the 21st century, the great challenge of international relations is connected to the Central Asian energy resources and it

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[1] In the article entitled "Fear as a weapon", the Swiss newspaper stated: The "*opponents of the Western world have acknowledged which is the most effective weapon of terror. Not the destruction step by step. Not the deaths of innocents, but the fear of all. The fear crumbles in the spirit of a free society and that is exactly what the terrorists want. Washington and its allies face a war that is worn on two fronts: outside, the fight against extremists, and inside, with fear, a justified fear of course.*"

appears as a veritable "El Dorado" of energy, due to the large reserves of hydrocarbons. In the Central-Asian space, the Chinese presence implements the regional alliances, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization" is considered a vector of the Russian-Chinese alliance, appeared to be a genuine Asian "NATO", in fact a response of China and the Russian Federation to the entrance of the United States in Central Asia.[1]

Thus, although within the development strategy conducted by the Beijing the Chinese-Iranian cooperation has a major position[2], China, the main global consumer of raw materials and petroleum products, with an economy which is in constant expansion, promoting an aggressive foreign policy in order to secure and diversify its sources of conventional energy. (Simileanu, 2009, p. 47)

Despite the growing rise of the economic and cultural interdependence the global system is characterized by inequalities and it is divided into a "mosaic" of states whose interests may be common but also divergent. There is no clear evidence of a political consensus in the near future that may overcome the conflicting interests of states. A world government can eventually occur, but it will be the result of a fairly long process. In many ways the world becomes more united, and some sources of conflicts between nations tend to disappear. However, large differences between highly developed societies and the poor ones can easily be sources of international conflicts. There is no world "agency" that can effectively control these tensions or achieve a redistribution of prosperity and peace in the world.

4.   Conclusion

Middle East is one of the most dynamic areas, with the highest risk in terms of producing even a world's conflagration. In the last 60 years there have been countless wars, mostly rather short, the longest being those between the USSR and Afghanistan, 9 years (1979-1988) and Iraq - Iran for 8 years (1980-1988). But they all had the same effects: damaging the state's economies, mass flee, millions of people murdered, destroying goods, industrial offenses, destruction of goods, and even influencing the global economy, jeopardizing it by raising the oil prices caused by the instability of the area and the lack of transport safety.

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[1] Geopolitical developments in Central Asia, pp. 13, 15.
[2] Iran holds worldwide No. 2 in terms of proven natural gas reserves and no 3 for oil.

From a geopolitical perspective, the evolution of world politics requires senior players to adapt to their bilateral relations to the dynamics of the events and actions of the various states. Thus, if in the early 90s, after the fall of the USSR, the U.S. remained the only super power, in the contemporariness, at the world's level tends to lead to a multipolar world that exists in every corner of the world, influence vectors such as: Russia, China, Japan, Australia, Brazil, the EU and Iran, a country of a second rank, which wishes to become a second center of decision making.

In economic terms, the interests of the U.S. and other countries refer to huge oil resources of the "Middle East, which has about 70% of the world's proven oil reserves" and the U.S. along with China, in the near future, the largest consumer, want to ensure at all costs the oil resources necessary for economy's development.

Democracy, efficient governance and the rule of law, as new principles of global security, assume that the relations between states take into account the existence of divergent interests, without resorting to the use of force as a means of solving conflicts.

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