

**Constantin Hlihor, *Geopolitics and Geostrategy within the Analysis of Contemporary International Relations. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations*, National Defense University "Carol I" Press, Bucharest, 2005, 326 pages**

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 generated profound changes in the international security environment that induced increased concern for assessing the actors that could cause, at regional or global levels, political, economic, social or spiritual crisis. Their asymmetric manifestation in the field of international relations led to an increase in the complexity of understanding the current international security environment.

The security issues were usually intrinsically linked to the classic actor, namely the State and its capacity to manage security. Nowadays, the power of international actors is only partially expressed in classic military terms, given that there were added at least two other dimensions to the military one of the power potential: the economic and technical-informational dimensions. Their every day deeper interdependence makes actors of the international relations' system look for non-classic solutions in order to find the best formula to manage world security and stability.

An exhaustive evaluation of international actors in the geopolitical field, the exact knowledge of sources generating political, economic or military crisis, of the causes that make participants to adopt a certain behavior in international relations, all constitute topics of interest for the analyst, scholars and academics. The answers to all these problems can be found out by investigating the reality with scientific tools and adequate analysis methods. The book "Geopolitics and Geostrategy within the Analysis of Contemporary International Relations" fits into the research efforts that experts put to improve analysis tools and methods in the field of international relations.

Basically, the author proposed us a new perspective of geopolitics which, through paradigms and analysis methods, defines what is nowadays particularly called "Critical Geopolitics". As an objective reality in the field of international relations, geopolitics, asserts Professor Constantin Hlihor, manifested itself in the evolution of mankind since the very moment a state/an actor disposed of the power and capacity to control other spaces than the one where it was constituted as a political entity on its own. As a theory, geopolitics has been present in the field of scientific disciplines since analysts begun to observe and study the behavior and interests of actors in certain geographic spaces, more or less strictly determined and delimited.

The historical perspective demonstrates that geopolitics, together with other disciplines, used by a state/an actor to justify political action in a certain space, it turns into a propagandistic tool, outside theory and scientific analysis.

Geopolitics is a relatively new discipline, its paradigms being borrowed from bordering disciplines that transcend both their content and significance in the fields of history, politics, sociology, psychology etc. In this respect, the author proposes an analysis methodology that, besides those of other disciplines, contributes to the thorough knowledge and understanding of contemporary political phenomenon. This book aims to integrate within the effort of studying the contemporary political phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective. Taking into account the risk that, the above proposals do not enjoy general acceptance, the author underlines that the purpose of the book is "to encourage reflection and investigation and not justifying; to monitor the trends and draw the attention to shifts and changes at international level, to provide for the

readers, indicators and analysis methods, useful for these ones to soundly delve into the very substance of international reality and not at all scenarios/best patterns able to be applied everywhere and anyhow”.

The arguments on which the author relies in his endeavor to define the object of geopolitics and to give ground to this discipline's own paradigms are substantial and coherent. The differentiation made by Professor Constantin Hlihor between the classic studies of geopolitics that are closer to geographic determinism and the non-classic ones, that are part of the international relations theory, is very rich in arguments.

Not only does this book constitute a theoretical approach, but also a work tool that proposes the reader an analysis methodology grounded on the fact of explaining and using fundamental paradigms of geopolitical theory: the geopolitical field, actors, balance of power, interest, perception etc.

It is for several reasons that striving deeper into theoretical and methodological reflections on geopolitics and geostrategy seems to be necessary. The enhanced complexity and dynamism of contemporary international relations led to a panoply of analysis perspectives. Geopolitical paradigms were often used to widen the understanding of causes that led to the appearance of certain phenomena and processes that generated tensions within the international security environment. Geopolitics and geostrategy, while in full theoretical and practical-applicative development, went through constant improvement both at conceptual and paradigms' levels. If decades ago geopolitics and geostrategy were perceived in a similar way as during their period of self-reflection, they were to be nuanced by adding new paradigms and join the category of disciplines that analyze contemporary international relations.

The analysis of geopolitics and geostrategy studies and works published in the last years highlights the fact that the classic approach is still valid. The determinist-geographical explanations of the geopolitical and geostrategic shifts in the security international environment after the end of the Cold War were not abandoned.

The author stresses in the first chapters that geopolitics' evolution was highly influenced by the level of development reached by the field of social-humanist disciplines, as well as by the philosophical and political trends that at a certain moment dominated the scientific, scholar, political and diplomatic world. Professor Constantin Hlihor differentiates between the geopolitical reality, as part of the international politics' phenomena and processes and geopolitical theory/analysis as a product of the critical reflection of geopolitical reality. According to the author's arguments, geopolitics is first of all a reality describing a particular behavior of actors at international level and also a depiction of this one that, by evolving operational, can become both method and analysis tool of the international relations.

The confusion between geopolitical reality and the outcome of its reflection in the analysis of the contemporary political phenomenon was preserved because of the success that certain mechanists' paradigms explaining the balance of power enjoyed (“Heartland”, “Rimland”). One can notice the fact that certain great powers' diplomacy made of the classic geopolitics' determinist-geographical theories a “transportation vector” for propaganda, with the aim to justify some foreign policy actions.

The perspectives on geopolitics such as approached by the present book intend to overcome this framework. The premise that led the author's endeavor referred to the fact that nowadays international life has become so complex and diversified that it could not be understood from the perspective of a single discipline. That is why the geopolitical dimension should also be included in the analysis delivered from the historical, sociological, economic, anthropological perspectives. It is from this standing that geopolitics should be re-defined within the framework of disciplines that deal with the study of international relations and it is also necessary to have clarified the working paradigms.

The fundamental purpose of the research undertaken on which this book relies is to prove that geopolitics, although it is not a science, has its own paradigms that can provide valid instruments to monitor the balance of power and interest evolutions in the contemporary world.

The last chapter proposes a different vision on geostrategy, of mutual interactions and interdependence that get this discipline closer to geopolitics. Geopolitics, through its analysis methods, answers the question "why" an actor develops competitive relations in a specific geographical area while ignoring other ones. Geostrategy answers the question "through" which means/strategies an actor promotes and defends its interests in that area.

Currently, the competition between classic actors in terms of interests does not express itself mainly through armed violence as during the second half of the last century. The military strategies are more and more often replaced by the diplomatic, financial, political, image ones. Therefore, in order to successfully compete in terms of interests in a certain area, an actor can undertake a large scale geostrategic action whose military dimension is diminished or even entirely absent. While geopolitics has an inter-disciplinary nature, geostrategy has an integrated one.

The author aims to giving support to a larger introduction in theoretical debates referring to a confrontation between ideas on contemporary geopolitics and geostrategy issues. At the same time, he intends to draw the attention to the fact that theoretical and methodological studies are necessary since most of the disciplines in the field of international relations are modernizing their conceptual system and analysis techniques in order to have the ability to deal with international security environment's challenges.

The operational analysis of the geopolitical field, stimulative as an intellectual exercise, provides the majority of the experts in geopolitics issues with explanations and arguments regarding evolutions in the international relations arena as realistic and plausible as possible. In the uninterrupted data and events flow, theories supply selective outlines to get to the point, to distinguish between details and a general framework so that to have a depiction as adequate as possible of geopolitical realities at the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. The paradigms in this book, submitted to the reader's attention, aims to the deepening and development of the critical geopolitical approach that imposed itself after the end of the Cold War.

This book stresses the fact that geopolitics and geostrategy need to define and coordinate their own tools and analysis techniques in the field of international relations disciplines. Theories have an instrumental value and by being made operational they supply analysis instruments that make possible the explanations regarding the competition in terms of geopolitical interests, in a specific area. Geostrategic theories also supply the necessary instruments for an actor in order to identify the most appropriate way to achieve its interests and implicitly its objectives. From this point of view, the book proposes, through geopolitics and geostrategy, those interested in knowing the international environment, a specific analysis method and an option for carrying out geostrategic and geopolitical scenarios.

The book represents a vigorous conceptualizing approach, a discipline on the point of defining its identity and taking its place in the field of social-humanist sciences and also constitutes an invitation addressed to those interested in international relations to reflect on possible future evolutions.

This book provides the readers passionate for the concerned topic and particularly experts in international relations with a necessary tool that contributes to both understanding and explanation of the evolution of the political phenomena that we encounter in the field of contemporary international relations.

*Laurențiu-Cristian DUMITRU*

*The Institutional Organization of the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Papers and Documents, vol. I (1859-1919), vol. II (1920-1947)*, Titulescu European Foundation, Bucharest, 2004 (Edited by Ion Mamina, Gheorghe Neacșu, George G. Potra, Nicolae Nicolescu)

The first volume contains 55 fundamental papers and documents regarding the institutional organization of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, as conceived by the founding fathers of modern Romania, which clearly show the commitment and actions taken to the national interest/cause. Official papers and documents are edited – laws, regulations, displays of arguments brought on legislative projects, parliamentary rapports, speeches made in the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies – all being fundamental for the evolution of Romania’s foreign policy until 1919. The Unification of January 5/24, 1859 opened the process of renewal, modernization and setting of new bases in all fields of the Romanian society. One of the priorities of the newly elected ruler Alexandru-Ioan Cuza was the unification and standardization of the political-administrative field. On February 22, 1859, a Decree opened the series of organizational measures taken for the central administration. A few months later, on July 2, 1859, Walachia’s Foreign Affairs Ministry was founded. A step forward was taken together with the establishment of a single Foreign Affairs Ministry, on July 27, 1862, a Ministry that had three sections: Consular Affairs, Political Affairs and the Administrative Court.

After the establishment of the constitutional monarchy (1866), the entire Romanian diplomacy strove to accomplish the two main national purposes: the state independence and unification. The new realities resulted from the 1866 Constitution imposed the elaboration of several organic laws referring to the departments that formed the state’s central administration. Thus, on March 21, 1873, the bill for the organization of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, concerning the foreign policy and actions of the Romanian state, was adopted. This document also stated that Romania was represented by diplomatic missions in eight capitals – Constantinople, Paris, Belgrade, Vienna, Berlin, Saint Petersburg, Rome, and London – and the country’s representative officials should provide information on “its origin, past, national advantages, level of culture, skills, desires, and aspirations”. After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war (1877-1878) and Romania winning its independence, the 1873 bill had to be changed in accordance with the country’s new international status. On February 14, 1879 an additional bill was voted; in essence, this bill stipulated a new organization of diplomatic missions and a representation “as wide as possible” on the European stage. A final organic law was adopted on February 13, 1894 and, together with the changes of the modified bill of March 15, 1912, it coherently summed up the legislative measures taken up to that moment and added the improvements occurred in the diplomatic practice.

The first volume concludes with a document dated December 23, 1919, a Decree signed by King Ferdinand I, which establishes a special Commission to carry out the Peace Treaties signed by Romania at the Paris Peace Conference.

The 72 documents of the second volume show the main directions and steps taken for the organization and functioning of the institution during a time that covered Great Romania, the territorial losses of the summer of 1940, and the participation in the unification war, followed by the Red Army occupation that brought the Communist government into power.

On July 19, 1921, the bill that modified several articles of the 1921 law – in force at the time – was adopted. Thus, three new departments of the Foreign Affairs Ministry were established – Judicial, Borders, and Media – which represented a necessity after World War I.

Structural changes occurred afterwards thanks to Nicolae Titulescu, Minister during July 6, 1927 – July 30, 1928; on August 1, 1928, he forwarded a Decree draft regarding a new organization of the Foreign Affairs Ministry central administration. The aim of these measures

was to "ease the Ministry's work until a new bill would be voted", as Nicolae Titulescu stated in the display of arguments. Another important step initiated by Nicolae Titulescu was the foundation of the Diplomatic Superior Council (February 1, 1928), in charge with the study of "important foreign matters". The latter was replaced by a Diplomatic Consultative Council, on February 1, 1937, that maintained the same assignments.

In 1937, under the Victor Antonescu government (August 29, 1936 – December 28, 1937), two very important regulations were approved: the Regulation regarding the traveling expenses and the wage for those working abroad (April 14, 1937) and the Consular Regulation (October 24, 1937). This final document, having 206 articles, replaced the 1889 one, including its later changes.

During Nicolae Petrescu-Comen's office (March, 30 – December, 21) a Foreign Affairs Ministry's organic law was adopted by Royal Decree on July, 16 1937, 44 years after the first such document (February, 13 1894). According to the law, the Ministry had "Romania's relations with the Society of Nations and the international judicial institutions in its exclusive powers".

After the territorial losses of the summer of 1940 – Basarabia and North Bucovina (50,762 sq km and 3.9 million inhabitants) in favor of USSR, the Northeastern part of Transylvania (48,492 sq km and 2.7 million inhabitants) being conceded to Hungary, and the Quadrilateral to Bulgaria – the Foreign Affairs Ministry was confronted with several waves of refugees. In order to assure order and responsibility, the General Commissariat for the resettlement of the population in Dobrodgea (September 13, 1940) and the General Commissariat for the resettlement of the population in Northern Transylvania were established by Decree-Laws, both subordinated to the foreign affairs department.

The problems that the Romanian state had to deal with between September 1940 and August 1944 did not allow for a normal evolution of the Romanian diplomatic system. By taking part in the battle of liberation of the territories occupied in the summer of 1940, Romania clashed with a number of 10 states and had to reduce the number of diplomatic missions by 22, and therefore the number of clerks.

It is only in the spring of 1944, after many plans and propositions, that the most complex Foreign Affairs Ministry organic law was elaborated, based on a new and unitary conception. On April 8, 1944, the Decree concerning the laws on the establishment of Romania's exercise of international functions was adopted; this included the following procedures: the Law regarding the organization of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in the Romanian Kingdom (229 articles), the Law regarding the establishment and organization of the Royal Romanian Institute for International Research and Political Sciences (61 articles), and the Law regarding the establishment and organization of Romanian schools and cultural institutes from abroad, state scholarships and the situation of the Romanian students abroad (45 articles). After August 23, 1944, all these bills were abrogated, under the pretext of being "an artificial creation of the military dictatorship regime".

A year after the establishment of Dr. Petru Groza's Government (March 6, 1945), a new bill regarding the organization of the Foreign Affairs Ministry was adopted, supported by Gheorghe Tatarescu, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and leader of the department in question. The bill also included the first interferences from the left wing forces, with long and harmful effects on the Romanian diplomacy. Among others, this was the moment when career diplomats and politicians started to disappear, while middle-educated officials began to be hired. The measures taken to remove professionals from diplomatic positions started with the Decree-Law for the purification of the public administration (October 7, 1944) and with the one regarding the purification of the media (February 9, 1945), which led to the elimination of a large number of specialists and technicians from the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Ministry for National Propaganda. Moreover, on August 31, 1947, Gheorghe Tatarescu signed a Ministerial Decision to suppress budgetary positions that affected 234 persons, from chiefs of diplomatic missions to couriers and janitors. By the end of 1947, another 24 people would be dismissed from the

Ministry's central administration. During Ana Pauker's office at the Foreign Affairs Ministry (September 6, 1957 – July 11, 1952), a number of 161 jobs were "compressed", all these affected persons being hired before March 6, 1945.

It is only on July 16, 1957, 10 years after the removal of a high-educated minister, that Ion Gheorghe Maurer, originally a legal advisor, was appointed as head of the Romanian diplomacy. Before him, the position was held by people lacking the necessary studies, qualities and abilities, such as Simion Bughici (July 11, 1952 – October 3, 1953) and Gheorghe Preoteasa (October 3, 1953 – July 6, 1957).

The geopolitical interests of world powers forced on Romania, for several decades, a series of restrictions and political, economical and military pressures that the Bucharest governments tried to elude and surpass by political and diplomatic measures and efforts. The two volumes of documents illustrate the concern of Romania's decision factors to develop and promote the national interests by means of diplomacy – this art of the well-educated and the chosen.

*Alin Spânu  
Oana-Maria Preda*