

The Geopolitical Paradigms Within the Analysis of the International Relations

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We think we can outrun the “tunnel historian’s condition appealing also to the paradigm of geopolitics and geostrategy. These can open new prospects and angles of approach within the immediate history analysis. Using specific to geopolitical analysis methods one can find answers to some hardly to solve questions by example, using inductive or deductive methods pre-ceminently present in historical analysis. Using the geopolitical method it is possible to find why an actor (player) – state or politico-military organization etc. disputes his

interests within a certain geographical space and not elsewhere. Geostrategic analysis emphasizes the ways and means this player is or is not able to impose his interests in that space.

For defining specific paradigms of the geopolitics and geostrategy there is needed a definition and certain elucidation in contents of two disciplines as well as a separation of their object. Frequently these become in some specialists’ works synonyms despite their objects of analysis are different¹.

Geopolitics has to be observed, considered and analyzed at least from three perspectives:

1.1 The Geopolitical Paradigms Within the Analysis of the International Relations

a) geopolitical phenomenon as a part of the power relations established between the players disputing their interests in a certain geographic space;

b) geopolitic theory and analysis as a result of examination, research and systematization of the information regarding the disputed by the players interests in that geographic space, the ability to enforce/negotiate with the other partners/ competitors, the type of behavior they practice in order to materialize their interests etc.;

c) Geopolitics propagandistic cartography as a way and an instrument the players use to justify their interests and behavior in a target – geographic space. The geopolitical maps and other products (iconography, graphic representations, statistics etc.) are not necessarily meant only to inform the target – public, but especially to persuade him of justice, morality or usefulness of an action carried on by a player or another in respective geographic space².

The rigid geographic determinism which has governed the geopolitical theory and analysis at

the beginning of the 20-th century and unfortunately, is present yet in some works has to be abandoned. The value of a space for the actors of the contemporary international system materializes in the sphere of economics, politics, war and possibly ideology. The resources of a certain space, its infrastructure or its economical structure, the strategic-military objectives it contains etc. are the elements determining one or more actions to be oriented towards that geographic space and not the geographic environment as such. The space is not any more an “actor” of the history determining in a way or another the development of political events, but it is a background/ an environment where the involved in the contemporary geographic phenomenon players dispute their interests. The assertion made by Napoleon Bonaparte according to which “the politics of states consists in their geography” was justified and supported by the political reality of the 19-th century, but today it has only a historical value. The geographic location of the Great Britain, for example,

compared with European continental powers during Napoleonic wars or even U.S. position compared with Europe during the World War I created some advantages of strategic importance. In the present, when the means of transportation to the target are so improved can we talk about advantages/disadvantages for a state disputing interests with some other actors?

The object of study for geopolitics has been not defined yet in unanimously accepted terms because there is a multitude of angles the discipline itself is seen. I think that the study object of geopolitics can be Kjellen's "planettarischer Zustand" or a part, a certain zone of it observed and examined with specific for geopolitics means but belonging also to some other disciplines, having in view that the geopolitics is a border discipline between history, economics, demography, politology, geostrategy and geography⁴. It has to take into account "everything that is organized within a hierarchy of powers especially political, but also economical and cultural, the states and their alliances-destiny and purposes – in all aspects of the force and its evolution, of the law and its application"⁵.

The approached by geopolitics topic can consequently be more or less ample and it is linked with the policy of the states and other actors' on the scene of the international life. It contributes to description of the interest they have or manifest globally or in a certain space.

The geopolitics must observe and examine the occurred changes in the power relations and the dispute of interest at a global level or in a certain space. The balance or misbalance of power is what ultimately provides the state of international relations system, consequently, of the geopolitical environment at a given moment. The balance has always been associated with peace and security. The intensity and degree of misbalance occurred at a certain moment within the power equation led to crisis and conflicts of all kind – diplomatic, economic, ideological etc. – and, in the last instance, to the war.

The paradigms of the geopolitical analysis allow to the researcher of the immediate history of the international relations to decrypt also the tendencies in development of contemporary political phenomenon, its future status in the system⁶. The geopolitical method in comparison with the historical one offers to the annalists the opportunity to express "his will of anticipation of

the way the world will function in a logical development"⁷. With this purpose he has to identify the player's position and role – states and other political, military, economic etc. organizations – within the equation of power, to establish the nature and intensity of the interest the players have in the analyzed geographical space and to observe the nature of perceptions the players have on their own power capability or on their's adversaries/ competitors in that space⁸.

In the immediate history of the international relations the place and the role a player has within the power equation is important, despite the present tendency is that the force of the principles and public international law to replace the law of force.

In this respect, the fact, that the great players of the international life didn't give up the strategy of constraint in order to impose their will, including the case of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia's space is eloquent⁹. Barry Buzan considers that in the present system of the international relations where certain rapports get into the classical pattern of the fight for power and other ones into that of the fight for security, the states "need military power both for their own defense and for larger security purposes regarding the management of the system"¹⁰. Robert Osgood asserted that "the force has to be as essential in the international policy as the elections are in domestic policy, in a well organized democracy"¹¹. Another researcher of the international relations, Hedley Bull expresses the same thing, but seen from another point of view, asserting that "the international order notoriously does not have mechanisms for peaceful change and is simply dependent on war as an agent of the change"¹². Michael Howard is more categorically asserting that "the force is a key-element of the international relations not because some inherent human being's tendency to use it, but because the possibility to use it exists. So that it must be deterred, controlled and if anything else fails, used with discrimination and retention"¹³.

The conclusions drawn by the analysts who put in the centre of the international relations the power are founded on the observance and analysis of the existing military arsenals. Deployment of the military force generates the fear that those who renounce of its use will depend themselves on the pitifulness of those who do not renounce"¹⁴.

Consequently analyzing the geopolitical field and understanding the different players' behavior in their dispute for enforcement of their interests, the establishment of the player's place and role within the equation of power becomes a key – element of research.

The player's place and role within the equation of power are given by his power potential. Trying to decrypt some player's potential the definition and identification of sources, the perception and quantification of power are of special importance. Alvin Toffler thinks that no matter how collisions, cuts away with the saw or hardware the players do, the balance of power “will depend less on their words than on the quantity and quality of power each of them brings at the negotiations table”¹⁵.

The power as a notion has a very reach semantics and it is used for an extremely diversified area of social, economic, military etc. reality. Alvin Toffler considers that “the power implies the use of violence, fortune, and knowledge (in the largest meaning) in order to make people act in a given direction”¹⁶. Robert A. Dahl sees the power as “the ability to make the others do something that otherwise they would not”¹⁷. It can be noticed that two definitions have in common one player's will enforcement to another/ the others. But it can be realized only if that player has also the capability to impose his will, in other words, if he has a potential.

Traditionally, the potential of power has been appreciated as a sum of human resources, economic territorial area, the size and quality of military forces. Since the ancient times till the Industrial Revolution within economy of the first Tofflerian Wave the potential of power was given by the size and the quality of the population of a state. This fact was governing and has been taken into account when the end of the confrontations between the players was to be assessed¹⁸. The entrance with the 17-th century into economy of the second wave made the industry and modern means of transportation because the dominant peaces in projection / assessment of the certain player's potential of power. The unequal rates of development and the application of the achievements of the industrial revolution to the production of arms have disturbed the balances and hierarchies of power.

The weight of the world system of power started to migrate from the states with enormous demographic potential – Russia, Ottoman Empire

for example – to European states in the course of industrialization dominating the specific for the first wave players¹⁹.

During the cybernetic era, specific to the third wave, that player who will understand the importance of the quality in power potential, given by the economic growth, political stability and national will/cohesion, will have an important strategic advantage in the equation of power.

Today, the highest quality power comes from the application of knowledge. This has the advantage in a confrontation, not to impose its will traditionally under constraint. The knowledge, in Alvin Toffler's opinion can be used “to punish, to reward, to convince and even to transform. It can transform the enemy into ally”²⁰. This has been also emphasized during the Gulf War by a military analyst from CNN who mentioned that “the military planners must see behind the use of bombs and missiles if they want to attack the targets precisely. The technology will make possible soon to destroy key – components of a military objective without destroying completely the target”²¹.

The knowledge propelled information as an extremely important component of the player's power potential. The American military analyst Larry Seaquist appreciated that the power potential must be re-defined because up to now it has been conceived narrowly with an express reference to “arms, systems of their application and to certain space systems”. Technology, educational system and economic growth are more important measures of the player's power potential than the population and the size of geographic area he has. Numerically controlled machinery – asserted Larry Seaquist – may be found now in many countries belonging to the Third World. A pharmaceutical plant they need has the inherent capability, to produce biological weapons. Numerically controlled installations producing automobiles of good quality in the Third World can produce good quality missiles too²². It is appreciated from this point of view that “the flow of certain electronic information over the borders can put security problems as serious as the deployment of troops”²³.

The present imbalance in the field of global communication and information generates spectacular changes in the equation of power. That actor who dominates the informational flow is able to impose his aspirations and his own

image of the world, is able to produce heavy damages to the other/ others who from the view point of the classical power potential identifies itself with the enemy. The information precisely targeted is of the same importance as the weapons of precision are and the new means of information will make it efficient in an unprecedented degree²⁴.

Decision in winning the "Cold War" was given by the rifle loaded with images and information, not with bullets. If Nicolae Ceausescu would have understood the impact of the revolution in mass-media and would have studied the role of mass-media in Ferdinand Marcos overturn in the Philippine Islands²⁵, maybe in Romania would have been taken place also a "velvet revolution" as in the most of the former communist countries.

The battle for "informational space" in so-called imagistic (imagologic)/ mass-media (mediatic) war" the victory is recorded neither by the enemy's physical elimination nor his sovereignty space conquest, but by "occupying his mind" with those representations and convictions able to transform the enemy into an ally.

In order to precisely use the weapon of information a player must have the most performant carrying to the target technologies. The economic power as a fundamental mark of the players power potential for the future is also not measured any more only in tangible resources, but especially in those resources dealing with performances which are intangible. The quantity, as in many other domains, does not necessarily accumulate power. Many states having huge primary economic resources are not necessarily the biggest economic powers in the world too. This is also valid for the part of economic resources of the power potential of a state.

The competition for controlling the intangible resources within the power potential tends to push out the military technique and weapons accumulation. As the military threats will decrease the competition/conflicts for economic resources will intensify. In Edward N. Luttwak's opinion the fear of a nuclear war will determine a transfer from the military means to the economic ones in solving the conflicts between states. The "Economic" weapons have worked in the Gulf Conflict as well as in the former Yugoslavia's space²⁶. More and more frequently is promoted the idea according to which "the commercial methods are replacing the

military ones – the available capital instead of the fire capacity, civil innovation instead of technical military progress and market penetration instead of garrisons and military bases"²⁷.

The achievement by a country of a more rapid rate of the economic growth is reflected in its power potential and also in its position within the world hierarchy²⁸. Besides the quantitative marks of assessment of the economic potential of a state, the dynamics of production and the added value of the manufactured goods are of great importance in perceiving the economic developments.

The military dimension of the power potential is even yet considered to give at a certain moment the player's place and role within the equation of power in the international relations system.

In the same way, nobody could ever eliminate completely the importance of the raw materials or of the unskilled labor within the process of production, so it would be a nonsense to ignore the material components of the military potential. The idea that the Gulf War was a high-tech one where the human component has been eliminated in the battle is fancy in Alvin Toffler's opinion²⁹. Superior Officers Rosane Bailey and Thomas Kearm, participants in the Gulf confrontations stated: "The critical factor leading to successful operation of technology remains the human component, typically quoted as an example by pilot's performance in fight, who made use of air-to-air missile AIM-7. It was an over than 5 times bigger progress than the performance in Vietnam as a direct result of the improved training³⁰. The smart weapons request smart soldiers properly trained in order to be able to operate with highly sophisticated technology.

The quality is essential too in assessment of human dimension of the military factor. In the present day an aircraft is the equivalent of a super computer with wings. Its efficiency depends almost entirely on knowledge comprised in avionics in armament, but also in the pilot's brains. The same thing at a smaller scale is happening with the fighters of the other services. The Gulf War has demonstrated it. The famous French military theorist and analyst Pierre Gallois asserted that "the United States have sent 500,000 soldiers to the Gulf, keeping between 200,000 and 300,000 in the rear guard for logistical purposes. But, in fact, the war has been won by only 2,000 soldiers³¹. On the other side,

Saddam Husein opposed to them an army of more than 1 million people, with an experience of war of almost 10 years, but of an inferior quality as it concerns instruction and the general level of training. More than 98% of American volunteers in the Gulf were graduated from the secondary school and a lot of them had even more advanced education.

The nuclear factor played a major part within the power potential after the WW2. It not only gave consistency to security policies of the states, but finally influenced their behavior in the geopolitical field. Barry Buzan appreciated that "the nuclear weapons clearly stimulated an important leap within the historical tendency towards an increased fear of war"³². F.H.Hinsley states that the fear of a nuclear war, and consequently the end of legitimacy of war as a major instrument within relations between the big powers led to a desirable transformation of the nature of the international system. In other words, the existence of the nuclear defense has created an inhibition of states for an aggressive behavior within geopolitical field, but without excluding disputes for their interests.

To notice that the actor's force neither depends on, nor correlates with his power³³. Powers with reduced potential as Austria, Norway, Singapore etc. are powerful state, but some states considered to be important powers as Argentina, Nigeria, Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia are rather weak. In Barry Buzan's opinion the difference between the force and the power of the state is given by the quality of the basic idea of the organization of the state and its institutions as well as by degree of their adherence/ rejection by the citizens³⁴. For example, Soviet Union, but China also in a certain measure, failed to convince till the end of '80 the big number of nationalities living within their borders to adhere to the ideological identity of the communist state. Both of them have confronted an increasing crisis linked with the basis of the ideological identity of the state and finally the "first socialist state" and big nuclear power collapsed by implosion³⁵.

On the ruins of the former Soviet Empire the newly appeared states have other organizing ideologies at the basis of their identification agreed by the citizens and not imposed by force.

When the political power and ideology as an organizing basis of the state are contested from the interior, that state loses capacity to coherently act and to defend its interests in the

geopolitical field even it owns an impressive power potential. The case of former Soviet Union and of its satellites – countries is more than conclusive.

The actors' behavior within the contemporary international relations system knows a great diversity and complexity regarding orientation, attitude and intensity they manifest themselves in the international life, including their interests. Depending on the aimed targets, on the initiated actions and promoted values the interests can be manifested within the economic, political or spiritual spheres or even in the military field.

In geopolitics the interest can be considered as such only if the actor as an element of the international relations system has the capability to achieve its materialization. If this is not possible, there are no interests, but only aspirations which can be proclaimed and claimed.

In American analyst Hans I.Morgenthau's opinion, if we will consider all states "political entities following their own interest defined as power, we'll be able to make justice for all in a double meaning: we'll be able to judge other nations in the same way we judge ours own and by doing so we are able to elaborate strategies that respect other nations' interest, protecting and promoting our own interests"³⁶. Making use of historical analysis, Morgenthau ascertains that these ideas have been noticed in action since the ancient times till the present day. Thucydides, by example, asserted that the identical interests are the most reliable link between states and between individuals. This idea has been taken over in the 19-th century by lord Salisbury, who mentioned that "the only lasting link between nations in the absence of the opposite interests"³⁷.

In James Rosenau's vision, the interest has a double quality. It is an instrument of analysis for the researcher of the contemporary international political phenomenon, but it is also an instrument of action for the players (actors). "As an analytical instrument – stated James Rosenau – it is used to describe, to explain or to estimate the sources of the nation's foreign policy or its proper character. As an instrument of political action it is a tool in proposing, justifying or blaming policies"³⁸.

Within the geopolitical field the interest can be seen in a triple perspective. Within the geopolitical phenomenon the interest determines and orientates a player to act in a certain space and not in some other one. Within the geopolitical theory and analysis the category of interest

becomes an instrument approximately measuring and establishing how much a player is involved in solving a problem which can appear in a certain region of the world. Within the propagandistic geopolitical cartography the interest can be very well a tool for influencing and manipulating domestic or international public opinion.

In a world more and more dominated by the mass-media "the guns" loaded with information and image can very easily convince the public opinion of the "justice", the enterprise action represents and not necessarily of truth or goals determining that action.

The criteria of classification and assessment of the interests the players promote in the system of international relations, including geopolitical field are multiple and very diversified. This fact generated extremely large and even contradictory definitions of the interest.

From the point of view of political action within the contemporary geopolitical phenomenon a certain ambiguity in defining and classifying the interests is accepted for some researchers.

It is appreciated to be extremely difficult to get an agreement with a partner if one of our own interests has been defined so precisely, that could make it inflexible, and consequently unnegotiable³⁹, but in geopolitical theory the analyses and appreciations would be lacking in realism and objectivity if the ambiguity is maintained.

From the geopolitical perspective at least two elements are relevant for specifying the nature and dimension of the interest: the payers' nature and the geopolitical value of disputed space. To begin with the players (actors), their interests may be classified according to the aimed purposes within the international relations system, and they can be economic, political, territorial, ideological, strategic. In the second turn, the actors' interests differ according to the priorities they establish in a certain moment and in this case they may be considered as vital or secondary ones. According to the intensity or permanence of the goals in their action in the geopolitical field the interest are defined as being stabile, variable, general or specific⁴⁰. The interests can be identified by the actors' position within the international relations system. These can be common, if the objectives and goals followed by two or more players in the same space are the same complementary, if the

strategic objectives are not antagonistic and one of the actors can renounce of a specific interest in contradiction with another one of the same category, and conflictual, when the aimed by an actor strategic goals in a certain space are irreconcilable with some other actor's interests.

The time is important factor in actors' interests' identification. For a short term, the interests expressed by two or more actors may coincide, but they can differ or even be irreconcilable for a long term. England, USA and USSR, during the World War II had a common interest for a short term – to eliminate Germany from the power equation of the European Continent. After they reached their objectives in the war the partners in UN Coalition have placed themselves on irreconcilable positions because the USSR strategic objectives for a long term were completely different from those of the big western democracies. This generated a completely new aspect of the confrontations between actors, the actual geopolitical phenomenon known as the "Cold War"⁴¹.

The actors in their action on the geopolitical ground can promote in the short term indirect interests in fact instruments of promotion of some completely different, but not so obvious interests. The Statement of Romanian Government of February 1998 regarding participation with all the means, including military ones in the operation "Desert Thunder" has been determined by the need to make the White House sensitive to Romania's application to join NATO, but also to reshape the country's image abroad and its credibility on the international scale.

The intrinsic geopolitical value achieved or attributed to a geographic space has an important role for the orientation, hierarchy and intensity the players dispute their interests in a certain moment in that space. We take into account only the geographic space – that territorial framework where the natural circumstances make possible human life and activity⁴² – not the space on the whole. The geopolitical value of the space is given by its natural, human and economic potential.

The actors of the contemporary geopolitical phenomenon, according to the interests they promote, are attracted in a different way by a region or another of the world. Ion Conca drew attention 50 years ago on the fact that the political map of the world had "points and regions of maximum or minimum political interest". He

defined the first as being "regions of intense political life" and the last ones as being zones "where the political rate of the planet is slow"⁴³. The famous Romanian theorist and analyst has specified for the fourth decade of the 20-th century several regions "of friction or convergent interests and disputes": Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Pacific Ocean⁴⁴.

In the present day such zones of friction have been coagulated around the big basins of energetic resources and strategic points. The serious crisis in the Gulf region and the dispute for controlling the oil routes from Caspian Sea are only two of the multiple zones of maximum interest for the actors of this end of century and millennium.

The perception, as a result of the geopolitical phenomenon, but also as an analytic paradigm completes and increases the efficiency in knowledge of the immediate history of the international relations. Depending on the nature of perception the actors have on the geopolitic ground upon a geographic space, upon their place and role within the equation of power as well as the perception on their own interests or on their opponents' interests they choose a certain type of political, military, economic or of other nature behavior. The problem of perception is a basic one because it affects/ the entire informational basis sustaining the decision making process, the actors' behavior on the geopolitical field inclusive⁴⁵.

A proper perception, for example, on the own potential of power or on the opponent's one in a geographic space of interest can determine an efficient action in the geopolitical field for that actor. An oversized perception on the own potential of power correlated with an undersized one on the opponent's in a space of interest leads often to some risky policies and actions on the international relations plan. Among the big number of examples the history kept in mind the cases of Germany for the first half of the 20-th century for unleashing the World War Two in order to impose his supremacy on the European Continent and all over the world⁴⁶, and of Argentina in the early '80 for trying to get Falkland Isle by force are typical.

If an actor has an undersized perception on the own power potential in a space of interest and his action in the geopolitical field is uncertain, he is predisposed to compromises affecting his fundamental interests in the short a long term. The France and Great Britain's behavior, by

example, against the force action initiated by Germany on the European political scene during the period 1936-1939 is eloquent in this sense.

The distortion of perceptions appears as a consequence of the methods and instruments used in collecting and analyzing the information about the quantity and quality of the components of the power potential and of the interest or because all needed information cannot be collected. Even the biggest powers can collect only a small part of this information for a background of the analysis of the actors' behavior in the geopolitical field⁴⁷. Frequently the errors in perception are mutually induced by competitors themselves by different methods starting from usual ones till manipulation using mass-media⁴⁸. The classical example is that of informing domestic and international public opinion about the nuclear weapons by the two superpowers during the "Cold War". Each part accused the other of increasing quantitative and qualitative force of missiles as well as of intention to use them in order to get world supremacy.

At the beginning of the "Cold War" Moscow in his propaganda against the West was very sternly pedaling on American imperialism's aggressiveness and on the imminent attack from the U.S. In fact, Stalin was extremely well informed about the capitalist adversary's intentions and policies due to his very efficient intelligence net and he "stretch the rope" of the fight against capitalism within his foreign policy so that to reduce the risks up to the lowest levels⁴⁹.

The perception is an important component of the contemporary geopolitic phenomenon. This becomes in the geopolitical theory and analysis a product of observation and knowledge of the relations of power as well as of the interests determining two or more actors to dispute/negotiate their presence or control in a certain geographic space. From this perspective, the perception within the analysis of the contemporary geopolitical phenomenon is materialized in a set of information accompanied or not by cartographic or iconographic representations. Very frequently we meet the situation when a "hot" geopolitical zone is presented in mass-media as a map indicating the actors, friendly forces or adversaries, the space of crisis and conflict. The geopolitical drama is staged by using maps making of territories the real "actors of the history"⁵⁰. If it is accepted the fact that perception is a component of the contemporary geopolitical reality and¹ in the

same time an element of the methodology of analysis within the geopolitical theory, legitimately rises the question: what is this and how can be it defined?

When it analyses an aspect or other of the relations of power or the different actors interests in a geographic space, the geopolitics operates with notion of perception, but it has a different meaning of that offered by psychology. The reality of perception is easily to be seen in geopolitical studies and analyses because it accompanies/ is a part of geopolitical phenomenon but the concept is not yet clearly defined and specified.

From the viewpoint of the signification the term "perception" used in geopolitics is close to what the psychology defines as "social representation". The term in this case exceeds the "perceptive side" and contains informative cognitive, ideological, normative components, beliefs, attitudes, opinions and images we can find in a form or other in the definitions of the social representations.

The researches in the field of the social representations has been resumed rather recently by Serge Moscovici. He brought into specialists' attention a concept launched at the end of the 19-th century by Emile Durkheim: the collective representation. In the famous sociologist's concept this formed a very general class of psychological and social phenomena including also consciences, myths, ideologies. The collective representations belong to the social category because they were results of some common characteristics of a group or of a society but also of the psychology, stated E. Durkheim, because the perception of the reality and the organization of thought are an individual work⁵¹.

Going further than the E. Durkheim's vision, Serge Moscovici considers that the social representation is "a system of values, notions and practices regarding objects, aspects or dimensions of the social environment allowing not only to establish the life framework of the individuals and groups, but equally is an instrument of directing perception in a certain situation and elaborating the answers"⁵².

According to S. Moscovici three circumstances are needed for the appearance of social representations. The dispersion of information regarding the object of representation, the social group's position related to the object of representation and, the third is

concerned with people's need to produce coherent behaviors and discourses regarding an object they know rather badly⁵³.

Synthesizing the definitions largely circulating, in the specialized literature, Adrian Neculau considers that "the social representations, designate an estimating apparatus, a scale of reading the reality, a location in the world of values and the own interpretation of this world"⁵⁴. It means to remake and to rebuild the reality from the view point of the individual's life philosophy because it is located at the "crossroad" between the objective thinking, "scientific", and the effective reflection of the environment. Equally the social representation is an instrument helping social actors to mutually regulate their relations but also a mechanism for elaborating theories and ideologies about the social environment.

Within geopolitics the perception incorporates a component we cannot find in the definition given by psychology or psycho-sociology – the interest seen in all its aspects of materialization. As an illustration we will make use of perception the main actors of the international relations system had about the crisis in Kosovo, and especially of the way they saw its solution. The chief of the Russian diplomacy/ percept the way out of the situation by "negotiations between the Serb authorities and Albanian minorities, but respecting the Yugoslavia's territorial integrity"⁵⁵. The State Secretary Madeline Albright asked for international involvement for getting a solution and imposing sanctions to Belgrade. European Union sees a way on through an international mediation, but having reserves as it concerns the sanctions the U.S.A. thought to be necessary⁵⁶. The Ambassador of the Federal Republic Yugoslavia in Bucharest, Desimir Ieftic, referring to these differences in perception of the way of solving the situation stated: "It is certain that the most important international actors know very well the real situation in Kosovo and Metohia, but when some decisions on it have to be taken, they are often guided by their own political interests and not by the rules and principles of the international law"⁵⁷.

In geopolitics, the perception has to be approached from the perspective of the way it becomes objective in geopolitical reality phenomenon, in geopolitical theory and analysis, but also in geopolitical cartography of propaganda.

In geopolitical reality the perception is a psycho-socio-cognitive process for getting information by the actors about the economic and strategic characteristics of a certain geographic space and forming a coherent image on their own position or on their adversaries/competitors' one within the equation of power as well as a functional vision on the international relations system in order to impose/defend their own interest in that space.

The actors of the geopolitic field by the help of perception get an image more or less adequate according to the nature and quality of information on economic and strategic resources, benefits/facilities a certain geographic space offers. The obtained image, correlated with the actors' functional needs form a stimulus. This determines or not the respective actor's orientation in that geographic space.

In the geopolitic field, the actors' perception is oriented to knowledge of the sensitive or hard opposants' points from the economic, political or military perspective.

If an actor wants to be in a favorable position within the international relations system and to intervene into a certain space of interest, he has to know (to have an adequate perception) the competitors "/partners' weak sides or forces. From this view point the actors tend to mutually analyze their deficiencies of potential in order to occupy an as better as possible position within the equation of power. During the "Cold War" this permanent correction of the perception on the own potential, but especially on the enemy's one led to the start of the armament contest between the superpowers⁵⁸. The analysts of the contemporary politico-military phenomenon affirm that the end of the "Cold War" didn't put an end to this correction and to the improvement programmers of the "Nuclear force of the big powers.

Perception in the contemporary geopolitical field is a component decisively influencing the actor's behavior. It contributes to a certain state of mind and finally to their behavior within the international relations system. By perception, the actor forms a functional vision on the geopolitical reality allowing to make sense and to correlate it to his own capability of action. He adapts and defines his place within the dispute for a space or another.

From the view point of the geopolitical theory the perception is an instrument of work, an estimating apparatus, a scale of reading

geopolitical reality/phenomenon helping to obtain an image more or less adequate, depending on the descriptor's quality. The perception so understood is closer to what Denis Jodelet defined as representation as a form of practical knowledge linking a subject to an object. The subject in this case is the geopolitical but can equally be the politician or the journalist interested in a problem/crises in a geographic space and the "perceived" object is the geopolitical reality itself.

The perception in the geopolitical analysis is always the representation of something – either it's about the power potential or the established among the action relations in a certain space – and belongs to somebody: the political analyst or even the simple man on the street. So it has with it's object symbolizing (it is a substitute) and interpreting (it gives meanings) relations.

As a form of knowledge, the perception will materialize in a speech, press news, or in the most complex form/geopolitical scenario and will introduce itself as a form of modeling geopolitical reality being adequate in different degrees. The obtained by a journalist, for example, image about the crisis in Kosovo will be almost always more approximate than the image built by the researcher or the politician because the information (stimulus) differs from qualitative point of view.

On the other hand we find a perception also at the public opinion's level. This is very close to what the specialists in psycho-sociology define as "naive knowledge" which should not be rejected as a false one⁵⁹. It is only mediated and filtered through mass-media according to the interests the actors have in a space or another. The reasons of the conflict, but especially the culprits guilty of crime and terrorist actions during the crisis in Bosnia, by example, have been presented in a different way by media in the west and in Moscow.

From this angle it can't be an identical perception for all actors in the geopolitical field. As the social representation for an individual/group, the actor's perception on the geopolitical field is not a simple reflection of the reality, but a reflection of a reality significantly organized. The signification is determined by the context. Firstly, by the informational context, because, in the most of cases, the ordinary people form a perception regarding an event in the geopolitical field appealing to an amount of press

news or politicians' speeches. In these circumstances it is necessary to carefully analyze the circumstances generating news, speeches, information because in the biggest number of

cases they are destined to a target-audience who must be convinced and to whom it follows to be presented some arguments.

NOTES:

¹ Mattei Dogan, Robert Phare, *The New Social Sciences "Intercepting Disciplines"* Translated from French by N. Lotreanu, 2 Ed., Bucharest, 1997, p.230

² See at length Francois Caron "*Geopolitique et geostrategie*" in "Geostrategie", No.58, February, 1995, Institute de Strategie Comparee, Paris, pp. 32-33; Zbigniew Brzezinski, "*The Big Chess Plate The American Supremacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*", translated by Amelia Ionescu, Univers Enciclopedic, Bucharest, 2000 pp.49-53

³ Constantin Hlihor "*History and Geopolitics in Europe of the 20th century. Theoretical and methodological considerations*", AISM, Bucharest, 1999, pp. 124-126.

⁴ Frank Debie, "*Is Geopolitics a science? An aspect of the Peter Tayloris political geography*" in the volume E.I.Emandi, Gh.Buzatu, V.S.Cucu "*Geopolitics*", Jassy, 1994, p.316. Sterie Culache "*Influences upon the perceptions of the political world*" in the mentioned – above volum, p.326.

⁵ Apud Herve Coutau – Begarie, "*Geostrategie: le mot et la chose*", in "Strategie", no.58, February, 1995, p.65.

⁶ I.E.Emandi, Gh.Buzatu, V.S. Cucu, mentioned above, pp.61-62.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p.302.

⁸ Constanton Hlihor, mentioned above work, p. 127.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Constantin Hlihor, "*The Role of Geopolitics in the Analyses of the Contemporary Political Phenomenon*" in "Euro-Atlantic Studies", 2, 1999 pp.25-33.

¹¹ Lawrence Freedman, "*Strategic Coercion*" in "Strategic Coercion, Concepts and Cases", edited by Lawrence Freedman, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 15-36.

¹² James Gow, "*Coercive Cadence: The Yugoslav War of Dissolution*" in the volume "Strategic Coercion", pp.296-297.

¹³ Barry Buzan, "*The peoples states and fear*", second edition, translated into Romanian by Vivia Sandulescu, Cartier Pinting House, Chisinau, Codey 2000, Bucharest, 2000, p.274.

¹⁴ Robert Osgood and Robert W.Tucker, "*Force Order and Justice*", John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1967, p.32 apud Barry Buzan, above mentioned, p.274.

¹⁵ Hedly Bull, "*The Anarchical Society*", Macmillan, London, 1977, p. 189, apud Barry Buzan, quoted work, p.274.

¹⁶ Michael Howard, "*Studies in War and Peace*", Temple Smith, London, 1970, p.II, apud Barry Buzan, quoted vide, p.275.

¹⁷ Barry Buzan, quoted vide, pp.274-276.

¹⁸ Alvin Toffler, "*Powershift/Puterea in miscare*", translated into Romanian by Mihnea Columbeanu, Bucharest, 1995, p.24.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p.32.

²⁰ Robert A.Dahl, "*Who Governs? Democracy and Power in American City*", Yale University Press, 1961; quoted above Mihail E.Ionescu "After hegemony. Four security Scenarios for East-Europe in the 90", Bucharest, 1993, p.II.

²¹ Mihail E.Ionescu, q.v., p.II.

²² Alvin Toffler, q.v., p.33-34.

²³ *Ibidem*, p.24.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 155-156.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 135-136.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p.236.

²⁷ James N.Rosenau, "*The turbulence in the world politics. A theory of the change and continuity*", Bucharest, 1994, pp.156-157.

²⁸ Sergiu Tamas "*Geopolitica*", Alternative, Bucharest, 1995, pp.220-221.

²⁹ Alvin Toffler, q.v. p.203.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 347-348.

- ³¹ Sergiu Tamas, q.v. p.228.
- ³² Constantin Hlihor, q.v. p. 135.
- ³³ Sergiu Tamas, q.v. p.230.
- ³⁴ Alvin Toffler, q.v. p.93.
- ³⁵ *Ibidem*, p.94.
- ³⁶ *Ibidem*, p.95.
- ³⁷ *Ibidem*, p.94.
- ³⁸ Barry Buzan, q.v., pp.292-294.
- ³⁹ Apud Barry Buzan, q.v., p.292.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 106-107.
- ⁴¹ Helene Carrere d'Encousse, "*Imperiul spulberat*", Bucharest, 1993; *Ibidem* "*Triumful natiunilor sau sfarsitul imperiului sovietic*", Bucharest 1993; M.Tatu "*Gorbachev URSS va-t-elle changer?*" Paris, 1987; F.Thom, "Le moment Gorbachev" Paris, 1989.
- ⁴² Hans J.Morgenthau, "*Politics, Armory, Nations. A Realist Theory of International Politics*", in "Documentary booknote", vol.2, no.4, 1981, p. 15.
- ⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.
- ⁴⁴ Apud Sergiu Tamas, q.v., p. 166.
- ⁴⁵ Constantin Hlihor, q.v., p. 147.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 148.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 149.
- ⁴⁸ Armand Tremond, "*Histoire d'une recherche distences et espaces*" in "Espaces vecu et civilisations", Paris, 1982, pp.25-27.
- ⁴⁹ I.E.Emandi, Gh.Buzatu, V.S.Cucu, q.v. p.59.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.
- ⁵¹ Barry Buzan, q.v., pp.344-345.
- ⁵² See at length, Jaqucs de Launay, "*Big decisions of the World War 2*", vol.1, Bucharest, 1988; A.P.I.Taylor, "The Origines of the World War 2", Bucharest 1977; Andre Maurois, "The reasons of the war in 1939", Bucharest, 1939.
- ⁵³ *Ibidem*, p.345.
- ⁵⁴ See at lenght Pierre Raimond, "*L'Art de manipuler*", Ulrich, 1996; Francois Thorn, "*La langue de bois*", Julliard, Paris, 1987; Thierry Wolton, L'Histoire interdite", Lattes, Paris, 1998; Vladimir Volkoff "*Tratat de dezinformare. De la calcul troian la Internet*", translated into Romanian by Mihnea Columbeanu, Antet, Bucharest, 1999.
- ⁵⁵ Martin Mc.Cauley, "*Russia, America and the Cold War*", 1991, translated into Romania by Mihaela Barba with an introductory study by I.Ciuperca, Polirom, Jassy, 1999, p.58.
- ⁵⁶ Sergiu Tamas, q.v., p. 174.
- ⁵⁷ Serge Moscovici, *Psihologia socială sau mașina de fabricat zei*; 3rd edition, Polirom, Jassy, pp.27-58.
- ⁵⁸ Serge Moscovici, *La psychanalyse, sa image et son public*, P.U.F., Paris, 1976, p.43.
- ⁵⁹ Adrian Neculau, preface to *Psihologia câmpului social: Reprezentări sociale*, Bucharest, 1995, p.44.