

REVIEWS

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THOMAS, A. R. (ED.) „GEOPOLITICS, DEVELOPMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY: ROMANIA AND MOLDOVA AT THE CROSSROADS”

The publication *„Geopolitics, Development, and National Security: Romania and Moldova at the Crossroads”* represents six articles distantly connected not only to each other but also to the main theme expressed in the title. The authors of the preface, Sebastian Vaduva from the Emanuel University of Oradea and Andrew R. Thomas from the University of Akron, see it as an attempt to look closer at the two nations. On the one hand, they share the language, common history and cultural heritage, on the other, after twenty years after the Soviet Union collapse, which was a critical historical occurrence for them, the distance between them on the road to the EU and NATO integrations extends. The intention of the author of this review is not to engage in polemics whether the selection of the articles is adequate for the publication’s theme or not. Let the reader make the opinion themselves. Below one can find their summaries with a brief commentary where geopolitical issues of our concern are involved.

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The elaboration „*Governmental Administration and the Security of Romania in a Global Context*” begins with considerations on the challenges for political elites of 21st century in regard to the phenomenon of globalisation. In this context, the authors (Sebastian Vaduva and Petru Filip from the Emanuel University of Oradea) refer quite generally to the questions of the technological progress (which accelerates constantly, first, it changes the global market environment, second, it contributes to the increase of disproportions between the developed and developing countries, since the former ones have already adopted a new, modern, short-lived cycle production where there is no place for aging of products before new ones appear), the globalisation phenomenon’s opportunities and risks, as well as perspectives of central and integrated management of the future of the global village. These considerations are a background for the second track of the article which refers to Romania. The authors introduce the reader to the socio-political conditionings of Romania after the Iron Curtain collapse. It includes a critical glance on the post-communist heritage and an analysis on the process of law adjustment to the EU standards, which resulted in a successful accession in 2007. We can feel strong pro-European and pro-Atlantic sympathies of the authors who are looking forward to further and deeper integration with western structures as the only right political way for Romania.

The most interesting article in the publication from the geopolitical point of view is the next one – „*Geopolitics and Security by the Black Sea: The Strategic Options of Romania and Republic of Moldova*”. Dan Dungaciu from the University of Bucharest portrays the geopolitical environment of the Black Sea area in a comprehensive manner, referring to the series of questions: geographical (the general map of resources and geopolitical axes in the region), political (e.g. one of the most significant for the Europe transition of German foreign policy strategy from the “*Neo-Gaullism*”, based on the assumption of German-French counterbalance for USA, to “*Euro-Atlanticism*” as closer cooperation with the biggest empire, or the Constitution for Europe project’s failure in 2005 consequences), and the NATO activity in region in the nineties (*Northern European Initiative* and *Northern Dimension Initiative* programmes) and later (the possible extension of the *Action Endeavour* to the Black Sea in 2005 considerations). The author does not forget to mention, how the main political doctrines, that influenced the region, were changing. Namely, the shift from the cold-war concept of „*low politics – high politics*” (subordinating the environmental, economic, social and internal issues as of smaller importance to the political-military one) to the sustainable one, named “*The Copenhagen School*”, is described. A series of comparative studies regarding security issues in regions of other European seas are talked over.

Summing up such a multi-threaded context presentation, the author concludes that only the progressing NATO expansion (and following EU's one) can be a guarantor of the political stability in the region. Given the Romania accession to the NATO in 2004, the next goal should be Moldova, bearing in mind that it has not only military sense but rather political one, which can influence every non-military aspect of the state running.

The political situation in the region has changed after the article was written, so the position of the present commentator is privileged, especially that it is hard to avoid the conclusion that these changes (*i.a.* the Ukrainian crisis together with the Crimea annexation by the Russian Federation in 2014, or the USA influence losses in Turkey in 2016 in result of internal policy of the president Recep Erdogan) came out of the NATO (USA particularly) expansion attempts in the region. Taking into account another occurrences and political conditions (the war in Georgia in 2008, or the progressing power oligarchisation in Moldova), one can have the impression that the NATO members' political engagement in the region recommended by the author is not the only one receipt for its stability.

The articles in third and fourth chapters of the publication concerns, respectively, the new technology transfer between the "global village" and Romania in the context of progressing globalization, and the propositions of the research on Romanian

hospitality industry. The former is interesting from the geopolitical point of view only for its considerations on the pessimistic “brain drain” phenomenon (the outflow of valuable individuals from the developing countries to the developed ones, like the USA), or the disproportions concerning foreign investments' access to modern technologies (*Foreign Direct Investments*) resulted from the globalisation processes. The second study may have a geopolitical significance only assuming that tourism, as a strategic branch of Romanian economy, would have an important impact on the budget of the country.

Chapter 5., containing the elaboration „*Between Russia and the EU: The Sociopolitics of the Republic of Moldova – A Transdisciplinary Approach*” is quite a theoretical presentation of socio-political conditionings in Moldova in its newest history after regaining independence in 1991. Without any doubt precious for acquainted with the issue, the article represents too general and wide collection of commentaries on particular phases of political transformations in the country which can be hardly absorbable even for lettered layman. What is valuable, at least some essential obstacles in smooth conversion from post-Soviet republic into the western-style democracy are identified very accurately. The author enumerates here *i.a.*: 1) the social split to fractions: pro-Romanian, pro-Russian, and opting for independent path “in the middle”; 2) a big distance from the western countries and institutions in case of Moldova in contrast

to Romania, Poland, and Baltic states, what brought completely different results for the mentioned countries; 3) lack of uniform, consolidate, pro-western informational message in Moldavian media which would support pro-European course of the political elite. The author assumes optimistically that the Moldova's EU accession is possible in 2019 already (the elaboration is dated of December 2014) with the following conscious remark that the EU and NATO engagement can provoke some negative reactions from Russia's side.

It is hard to escape the feeling that in the article – which in fact is of high value – some questions were treated in quite a superficial manner. Namely, in such wide elaboration more information on factors which represent some serious obstacles for democratisation processes in Moldova shall be provided. First of them is the fact of the existence within its borders (because the independence of this quasi-state has never been recognised by Moldova, the official state border does not exist, too) separatist Republic of Transnistria. The next one is unprecedented – as for European standards – deep misappropriation of the country by oligarchic elites which are interested only in the drain on its resources and finances. It would be worth to mention also about the huge employment emigration which has permanent character and concerns, according to official data, about 15-20% of Moldova's population. These factors, in the opinion of the author of this review, are of the great importance for the question being the main theme of the article. Moreover, we should notice that at

present, in 2016, given the international conditionings, as well as the internal political situation in Moldova, any anticipation on the data of its accession to the EU is too optimistic. In my opinion it was too optimistic at the end of 2014 as well.

The publication is finalized by an interesting article representing a comparative study on two religion systems of the antique times – the polytheism of Mesopotamia and biblical monotheism, in the context of the ancient societies' sense of economic and military security. However, it is hard to refer its content to the issues related to current conditionings and geopolitical trends in the region, no matter if one speaks of the Black Sea or the Middle East areas.

To sum up the whole publication, we can assume that the reader who is not acknowledged with the socio-political characteristic of both Romanian-language countries would gain some general knowledge in terms of their political and socio-economic conditionings and problems resulting from their newest post-transition history. On the other hand, for persons of a good familiarity with the subject, most of the information regarding the newest history of Romania and Moldova would be precious as much as such selective content would be complementary for their knowledge.

The authors – one after another (where the elaboration refers the geopolitical issues) – present clear pro-European and pro-Atlantic preferences and show their concern about possible Russian interference in the Europeanization processes in the region. The

publication showed up in December 2014 and some of its elements doubtlessly have an earlier date of edition. The authors' concerns turned out to be right and their optimism – in the matter of Europeanization - did not find its confirmation in the reality. The western expansion has been stopped. In this regard we shall admit that the occurrences which have happened in the region since 2014 have changed the reality so profoundly that its perception shall be for sure brought up to date, and expectations adjusted to the real scale.