

Marcin Górnikiewicz / Radosław Bielawski (eds.)

# **Influence of Russian Activities**

Middle-East Europe, the Visegrad Group Countries  
and Ukraine



**unipress**



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With 72 figures

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## Foreword

Dear Readers,

There are many books on the market dedicated to international security future predictions. Their authors usually represent a selected field or discipline of knowledge, or even a specific school such as American or Copenhagen in security sciences. On the other hand, there are no positions in which the authors would use the methodology of research in various fields and disciplines. This would allow not only to compare the obtained results, but also to confront and jointly develop the final conclusions. The more authors representing different schools and research methodologies, the greater opportunity for an objective and therefore verifiable result. I believe that the last aspect related to the credibility of the proposed vision of the future is the most important when any prediction is made. Ultimately, only predictions with a high level of verifiability count. For this to be possible, the objective should be achieved. This was the thought of the authors of this book. Striving to confront many different methods, techniques and research tools. Research work of representatives of various fields and disciplines carried out independently one from another. Only to summarize the obtained results and check where they are different and where they coincide, and to determine why this happened. This publication is a record of such research. However, it is surprising that there were not so many differences, and all authors, regardless of the represented fields and disciplines, and the used research methodology, came to similar conclusions. However, it is worrying that these conclusions are not very optimistic. On the other hand, the enormous and internally diverse research potential involved in work on this publication leads us to an assumption that the obtained results are not only as objective as possible, but yet it also very worrying.

The question which needs to be answered is the following one: How will mutual relations and impacts in the area of regional security evolve between the Russian Federation and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the 21st century?



Nearly thirty people representing various fields and scientific disciplines were involved in the work, thus contributing to a diverse research methodology which they used in the development of the undertaken issues. Ergo, the work uses methods, techniques and research tools in the field of security sciences, strategic sciences, political sciences, international relations, economic sciences and management sciences. Both qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods were applied.

The work also uses qualitative and quantitative forecasting methods, including an innovative method of cultural forecasting based on the quantitative evaluation of subconscious cultural codes that determine the international decision-making process, when formulating final conclusions for each chapter. As a result here it is the work in which representatives of various fields and disciplines, applying a variety of research methodology corresponding to the sciences they represent, developed individual chapters that fit into the top-down work structure. The most surprising thing is that despite such a great variety of methods, techniques and research tools used, and the making of individual parts of this book by individual authors independently, all of them ultimately came to very similar conclusions. The results of their research work are presented partially in conclusions to individual parts and as a whole at the end of this book.

With respect to the aforementioned structure of the work, it was not a coincidence or the authors' loose deliberation on the future shape of the next scientific item, but a graphic expression of a top-down research process focused on the raised issues. The process is divided into stages, and each part of this book focuses on the study of a specific country: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine. Each part, however, consists of four sections dedicated to the following: the geopolitical and geostrategic situation of the analyzed country in terms of the relationship with the Russian Federation; Russia's influence through measures within the scope of "hard power" and "soft power"; measuring the size of the Russian influence potential using selected quantitative and qualitative methods and using prognostic methods (also qualitative and quantitative) to try to construct a forecast/strategic foresight for the development of bilateral relations between the researched country and the Russian Federation as well as the implications of these interactions on the level of regional security and, as a result, the shape of the geopolitical and geostrategic situation in Central, Eastern and Eastern Europe. Each part consists of three chapters, the first two are related to the characteristics of the current state, whereas the third chapter is a summary and contains conclusions of a prognostic nature. As a result, the partial results obtained in this way made it possible to formulate final conclusions for individual countries and a comprehensive view of the regional security using the prism of the directions of development of mutual relations between the Russian Federation and the researched countries in the future.

The applied process of creating the analysis and the forecast prepared on its basis are the result of the teamwork established within the Laboratory of Security Forecasts and Analyzes operating within the Department of Security, Logistics and Management of the Military University of Technology with its seat in Warsaw. The future will show whether the applied innovative process of conducting this type of research will bring results in the form of verifiable and confirmable forecasts in the area of international security. It is worth adding that the adopted time perspective for the formulated forecasts concerned the subsequent decades of the 21st century. Apart from the direction of the development of the situation, the mutual attitude of the surveyed societies in the situation of:

a) Maintaining a strong position of the EU supported by the US in Central and Eastern Europe b) Weakening of the position of the EU and the withdrawal of the US from Central and Eastern Europe, leaving the Russian Federation free in terms of geopolitical and geostrategic activity.

The authors involved in the work on this subject come from both civilian expert and scientific backgrounds, as well as professional active and former officers with significant knowledge and experience in creating analytical and forecasting studies. This special combination of scientific knowledge, extensive and varied scientific and research workshop and practical experience gained from many years of service along with the use of unique and proprietary forecasting methods, resulted in a very detailed and multi-directional analysis, and a forecast of the development of the situation based on hard quantitative and qualitative data. It is worth mentioning that the final content of the forecast contained in the ending was a big surprise for the authors who, while working on individual elements of this book, did not know about the research studies carried out by other authors. The obtained convergence of the results, as well as their pessimistic tone, may prompt a deep reflection on the future shape of the geopolitical and geostrategic situation in the studied part of Europe.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that this publication is the first published scientific book, which offsets not only the efforts of scientists and experts working within the Laboratory of Security Forecasts and Analyzes, but it also displays substantive guidance of the entire scientific staff of the Department of Security, Logistics and Management. Acting as the initiator, founder and manager of this laboratory, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all my colleagues involved in this project.

Fruitful reading.

*Please note: The research in this book covers the period 2020–2021, before the conflict in Ukraine started in February 2022.*



## Part I: Poland



**Section I:**  
**Poland's geopolitical and geostrategic position**  
**in the regional Kremlin's game in Europe**



Patrycja Wróbel-Bryczek

## **Chapter 1: The geopolitical situation of Poland in relation to the foreign policy of the Russian Federation**

Contrary to the optimism of Francis Fukuyama, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union did not bring an end to the conflicts between the great political systems, and the peaceful end of history he predicted and the triumph of the liberal democracy model did not take place (Fukuyama 1992). Moreover, the turn of the second and third decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by a unique dynamics of events and decisions, which indicate that we are dealing with the process of reconstruction of the geopolitical system, which applies in particular to Eurasia. An arrangement in which the role of the United States of America (USA) as the main decision-maker and creator of the present international order is questioned, primarily by the People's Republic of China (PRC), but also by countries such as India, Turkey, Iran and the Franco-German alliance (Fra-Ger), and the Russian Federation (FR), which are increasingly creating an independent regional policy.

The aim of this chapter is a synthetic analysis of the current conditions and an assessment of the geopolitical situation of Poland in this new system, taking into account the contemporary foreign policy of the Russian Federation in the Central European region.

At the beginning, it is necessary to specify the current (type of view) of “geopolitics” in which this analysis was conducted. This is necessary, because this concept has been constantly evolving since its first use at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by the political scientist, Johan Rudolf Kjellén. However, although the terminological workshop of the contemporary geopolitics is very rich, the essence of the concept remains unchanged, defining it as: a way of shaping reality by the leadership elite of societies related to the resources of their territories. Adjusting the strategies and methods of operation of political entities to the geopolitical situation is aimed at securing their own development (raw materials, communication routes) and preventing the taking over of resources by other entities, which would give them the opportunity to gain an advantage.

However, this work does not refer to the description of the reality of all the eminent authors of geopolitical theory, such as: Friedrich Ratzel, Alfred Mahan,



Karl Haushofer or Carl Schmitt, because the aim is to draw conclusions about the geopolitical situation of Poland in the context of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, and not to conduct considerations on the very concept of geopolitics. Therefore, the work refers primarily to the achievements of the British geographer Halford John Mackinder. He treated Eurasia as a “world island” on which the fate of the whole world depends, and regarded Eastern Europe as its critical region, stating: *“Whoever rules over Eastern Europe rules over the Central Area; whoever controls the Central Area controls the World Island; whoever rules the World Island rules the world”* (Mackinder 1942). When analysing the activity of the largest powers in this region, this statement seems no less valid today than when it was formulated. The more so because in a globalized world, connected by international supply chains, both communication and transport of goods across the Central European lowland are cheaper and more effective than through the Alps or the Carpathians. All key players know this, as well as the fact that the fastest logistics for large armies with heavy equipment is possible on flat and relatively dry terrain, and in the temperate Central European lowlands, food can be produced with ease. This is why, for hundreds of years, the territory of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine has been of key geopolitical importance in the region and in the world, especially for their closest neighbours.

The Russian Federation is the country with the largest area in the world and one of the world’s largest military powers (Ayupova, Kussainov et al. 2020). Therefore, from the perspective of the Russian Federation, the issue of Central and Eastern Europe is not its only challenge. It can even be said that it is definitely less important than taking the right position on the two largest political and economic forces: USA and the PRC. However, it should not be forgotten that, in Moscow’s opinion, border security can only be ensured if an appropriate sphere of influence over the neighbouring countries is maintained (Brzeziński 1998, Berls Jr. 2021). Therefore, from the point of view of the Russian Federation, the collapse of the USSR and the loss of the surrounding satellite countries, once grouped within the Warsaw Pact, are treated as a threat to the security of the homeland. The more so as many of the former allies in the West are now potential enemies, both on the economic and military levels (belonging to the European Union and NATO).

That is why the Russian Federation shows clear ambitions to fight for its interests in Central and Eastern Europe, putting itself as the main heir of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). If we look at the policy of the Russian Federation from this perspective, we can clearly see that it does not want to and cannot remain a neutral country. The more so as the major world powers, i.e. the US and the PRC, are seeking to take a form of control over Russia or to disintegrate it.

The USA and its allies almost succeeded once, during the presidency of the pro-Western Boris Yeltsin, when the country was on the verge of economic collapse (Buchs 1999). China is also a real threat, as it focuses on the policy of small steps (Wang 2020) and chooses actions counted over decades. Such as, for example, the Chinese settlement in Siberia, which, combined with the depopulation of the eastern territories and demographic problems of the Russian Federation, may lead to the loss of control over the eastern territory in an almost “peaceful” manner (Bordachev 2018).

Taking into account the current situation, however, we can suspect that the temporary threat from the West, and above all from the USA, is more important. That is why the leaders of the Russian Federation preferred to decide on a temporary alliance with the PRC (Sidorova 2019). Also because the rapidly developing China is an excellent outlet for Russian energy resources, as well as advanced military technology, which are two strategic export goods of the Russian Federation (Apokin, Belousov et al. 2015). An excellent project that links this alliance is also the New Silk Road (NSR), forced by the PRC, which has designed and implemented lines running through the territory of the Russian Federation (Sevastianov 2016). Its creation will bring economic profits for both parties.

Of course, apart from the benefits, cooperation with China also poses a certain threat to Russia. It results, among others, from the dependence on Chinese products, which may lead to the collapse of Russian producers, and the risk of taking over Russian companies by Chinese capital. On the other hand, it may be an opportunity to modernize the light industry, and carrying NSR through the territory of the Russian Federation will allow Russia to some extent control the flow of goods between Asia and Europe (Mladenovic and Ponomareva 2018).

Moreover, the development of NSR also affects US interests, which are based on the control of trade through sea communication routes (Bartosiak 2019). It is not in favour of the USA to transfer the goods transport to the land, as they currently have the strongest navy and military bases located at communication junctions in the world ratings (Bartosiak 2019). The USA does not support NSR also because it may lead to the creation of a new system of economic and political alliances in Eurasia, which will accelerate the collapse of the already shaken global domination of the United States (Brzeziński 1998).

This may mean that in the countries through which the NSR lines are to run, there are plans to intensify the activity of American troops and intelligence. It is worth looking at the Middle East (mainly Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey), the Balkan countries, where Romania has retained a leading role, as well as the Central European countries, where Poland is the economic and military leader. An example of this activity may be the decision of November 2016, on the basis of which the sale of the land of the former military unit near Łódź was suspended in