

RESEARCH STUDIES 21

ISIS

BUILDING A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE FOR MANKIND: IS THERE A BLUPRINT?

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Attached is the Presentation of the author at the session on Topic 5 of the High-Level Symposium: “Consultation, Contribution, Shared Benefits and Global Governance” on 6th November, 2019, Phase I, 9:30-11:00. Moderator of this session was Hu Jiping, Vice President of China Institute of Contemporary International Relations. Foreign Moderator was Phalla Chem, Acting Executive Director of Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Cambodia.

Attached is also the CV of the author as presented to the organizers and hosts in China.

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INTRODUCTION

70 years ago Bulgaria and the People's Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations. As a small country we are proud to be among the first that recognized the new great state and to have a record of long and constructive relations throughout this period. Despite the differences in the socio-political systems the bilateral relations of our countries are at its peak. The PRC is a key partner of both Bulgaria and the European Union (EU), to which my country belongs. I am personally grateful to the organizers of the high-level symposium for this first visit of mine to understand the sagacity of a Chinese proverb, I paraphrase, it is better to see something once than read about it one hundred times.

China proved – and this is a lesson for all, that direct copying of experience and models of development of other countries may lead to nowhere. A methodological lesson in statecraft given by China from the end of the 70s of the last century till nowadays is that thinking big and whole while recognizing the truth in the facts of life, opening to the rest of the world and persistently reforming in a strategically chosen direction is the right way to success. The ability to take the best from the experience and wisdom of the past, sincerely seeking to share the achievements of mankind is a Chinese accomplishment that deserves to be studied by present and future politicians, including in my part of the world.

WHAT KIND OF WORLD AND MAJOR DEPENDENCIES FOR MANKIND?

Mankind is a single and comprehensive system that encompasses various states and nations. Each state and nation depends on its own efforts for development, but the system effect means reliance on the relations and the exchange with the other countries. What is the state of the international relations system today?

First, we live in a world characterized by its **single economic space**. This is obvious despite the efforts of blaming globalization for the deficiencies in individual countries, no matter how strong they are. Unfortunately, we are far from turning the world into a single social-economic space, in which every individual would be guaranteed a decent and normal existence.

Second, the world has always existed as a **single ecological space**. The retarded realization of this simple fact has created one of the most dangerous situations for humankind – the present climate changes, accompanied by inadequate activity to cope with them.

Third, our world is for decades already a **single information space**. The opportunities of developing a real community for human beings have become incomparably bigger compared to earlier historic and technological periods. At the same time the temptation to take the most from the electromagnetic field and cyberspace, conceived as a special geopolitical sphere for egoistic national consumption, has dramatically changed the perspectives of the security threats and dangers to the worse.

Fourth, thanks to human progress – economic, technological and social, the world has become a **single humanitarian space**. Though different states share different visions and approaches to guaranteeing the whole spectrum of human rights to each individual by prioritizing some at the expense of others for the time being, there is no doubt, the world is more humanistic today compared to earlier periods of history. The drive to individual dignity and freedom balanced with the responsibilities to the respective national societies and states is a significant feature of the present world.

Fifth, the world is for a century a **single military-strategic space**. The ability to defend – from a more pacific and futuristic perspective, could be also interpreted as a constantly developing human ability to destroy, including self-extermination. However, living with this sober reality requires prevention of taking wrong decisions that would deprive us from future.

These five characteristics of the present world constitute a constructive prerequisite for turning gradually human beings into a **single planetary civilization**, deserving and able to pretend of extending its creative and peaceful capacity beyond the Earth. This is how I conceive the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. This is a future that deserves to be educated to our children and grandchildren.

However, this future is impossible without the adequate leadership of the present global great powers, one of which is a superpower and another one has the potential of becoming in the next two or three decades a superpower too. Reaching this goal depends on these global actors: the United States of America (USA), the PRC, the EU, the Russian Federation and potentially –

India, Japan, Indonesia and Brazil. Each of the leading four global actors has its own and not overlapping with the others concepts and vectors, with the specific magnitude and direction, in the complex parallelogram of forces trying to deal with the persisting needs of survival of mankind, its progressive evolution and the formation of the future global civilization. These vectors of political attitude are heavily loaded with national concerns, threat perceptions and sheer interests. And the clash between global responsibilities and national obligations puzzle the will for action in favor of the future of mankind.

Yes, there are many challenges to the present international relations system, but drafting, designing a master plan and a road map, acceptable for all leading global powers, that would be the model, providing guidance to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, could be named the ‘hyper-challenge’ of the day. While for long it was normal to build our concepts of the world around the catchword “the American century”, the notion of “the Pacific century”, according to me, also proves to be inadequate for the complexities of the international system. The spatial framework of conceiving the blueprint for building a community with a shared future for mankind should be much broader and encompassing the whole planet. And if we cannot but agree that presently the great power relationships are in flux, no less pressing is the understanding that these relations should be mended.

IS THERE A WIN-WIN POSSIBILITY FOR THE GREAT POWER RELATIONSHIPS?

No major shifts in the international relations system are possible without the decisions and activity of the world great powers. The post-Cold War world passed through the period of unipolarity to the present state of multi-polar configuration of great powers with varying layers of hierarchy. In the economic area we witness three clear poles of power – the USA, the EU and the PRC. In the military nuclear field – the old Cold War rivals – the USA and Russia. In the area of conventional weapons – the US leadership continues, but ambitious military programs in Russia, China and the EU add specific new characteristics to the rivalry in this direction.

This state of affairs coincides with a turbulent and unpredictable international relations system. The responsibility of repairing this situation is mostly of the great leading powers – in the direction of a new global and multipolar balance of power, in which the conflicting and the

cooperative interests would be in a satisfactory for all equilibrium, especially on the issue of the global commons. The global challenges and real threats are serious enough to give pause to national ambitions before the international system collapses. Just to enlist some of them:

- nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction proliferation;
- vacuum of power in some small and even medium states;
- terrorism, organized criminality and corruption;
- the climate changes and the dramatic consequences, including with geopolitical repercussions in the Arctic, the Antarctic, islands in the oceans and seas, the coastal regions of all continents;
- outer space and how to guarantee the future of mankind by rationally engaging with activities there;
- global pandemics.

The road to a win-win situation in the complex configuration of relations among the leading great powers necessarily requires turning all the enlisted issues into motivational factors for cooperation with each other. Efforts are needed to change a win-lose into a win-win situation. This is possible only if the USA, China, the EU and Russia realize they have one and the same problems to solve and the solution would be profitable for all of them and the other almost 200 more states. Which are the stumbling blocks I consider of major importance in working on that solution?

First, the statuses in terms of gross power of the four leading global actors are not equal. However, the cooperative effect of their interaction measures higher in terms of effectiveness for global peace and stability, compared to individual victories of each one over the others. That means that *each one of them should be treated as a key actor in the new global balance of power*, euphemistically called sometimes “new world order”. If these leading powers can reach this state of mind, then, probably, it would be possible to draft international legal rules that would mitigate geopolitical threat perceptions and ambitions. Rules-based international order provides better opportunities for peace and prosperity.

The political, but also the intellectual complexity of such an exercise is tremendous. However, this is not just responsibility for the leading world powers, but also for all other countries

participating in international relations. Why so? Because the positive solution of the upper mentioned issues would be in favor of the interests of all countries. And also because history teaches us that sometimes the win-win results for the great world powers take place at the expense of the interests and even survival of smaller and weaker nations. These nations need to be active in realizing their interests too. One more argument– the global challenges and threats require participation by all as dealing with them is not up to the capacity even of the strongest of states.

Second, the policy of diminishing the equal status of the EU by the present US Administration and by the Russian Federation. The arguments that the EU is not a federal structure, not capable of taking fast decisions as 27-28 countries need to participate in the decision-making process, the missing single armed force of the Union and a full-fledged and encompassing foreign policy underestimate the real capacity of an *integration community* which has passed the trial of thousands of years of intensive relations, many wars, including two world wars mostly concentrated on the territory of Europe. The EU is not just a leading economic power, it is a new level of integrating various national societies, an experiment that continues more than 60 years and has developed a new political culture, societal links and individual relationships of almost 500 million people and institutions that predominantly raise the governmental capacity of the national governments. The multiplying effect of the Common foreign and security policy of the Union and the national foreign and security policies of 27-28 states should be taken seriously. And most of all – the EU and the many contending for EU membership countries would not allow any present or future leader in both Washington and Moscow deprive the people of the Union of applying the most effective instrument of discarding war from the political tool box of the states in the continent – *widening and deepening of integration*. The will of the Europeans for peace is unmatched though not having yet fully functioning federal structures. Any effort to test the resilience of the EU, as we have seen by Russian meddling in the elections in many countries of the Union, or by stimulating Brexit-like behavior by Washington is doomed to failure. The tendency is of turning the EU more and more into a single and effectively functioning entity proud of the values it is based on.

Third, joint problem solving in a win-win mode is not possible without *adequate trust* among the leading world powers. One source of mistrust has its roots in the different ideological

backgrounds, purposes and motivations of the four major world power centers. It is an objective reality that each of these power centers would like to link logically the successes of the respective states, economies and societies with the chosen ideological path. The conceptual debate is a fact of life and as in any debate these power centers should admit that each one of them has its domain of validity of the arguments and positions taken so far. In order to chart a dialogue that would drive forward the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind deep and sincere mutual respect for the vital interests of the other partners is needed. And also – a higher level of empathetic thinking should be educated to the representatives of these four power centers who should simultaneously discard the zero-sum strategic thinking.

Another unfortunate source of mistrust stems from the conscientious return in the international relations toolbox of the instrument of military power in reaching foreign political ends. As if the world power centers were sincerely united in their joint fight on terrorism in the beginning of the present century, when mighty nuclear Russia applied military force in neighbouring Georgia during the Olympic games in 2008, and in 2014 – in neighbouring Ukraine, annexing the Crimean peninsula and gaining control over large territories in the eastern part of the country. The achievements of decades of intensive work, including in the Cold War period in Europe, that created the Helsinki Act of 1975 and that stipulated solemnly that no change of territory in the continent would be possible but by peaceful negotiations, were one-sidedly buried by Moscow. And the aggression on Ukraine took place after Kiev voluntarily gave up its status of military nuclear power after the collapse of the Soviet Union and after being promised by Russia to guarantee its territorial integrity in the Budapest Memorandum of December 1994.

The troublesome element here is that one power center has decided not to focus on gaining economic might, as the other three, but concentrating on non-productive and not stimulating global economic growth militarization of society and state, easily producing aggression on other countries. Apart from the political and social pressure on such a policy, self-restraint would be key to repairing the trust in the complicated power centers relationships. This is a condition without which the win-win behavior and end results would be virtually impossible.

And to finish this section – the world needs the cooperative working relations of the leading power centers, the implementation by them of global economic projects for the good of mankind. A community with a shared future for human beings, a planetary civilization cannot be born

without projects of the magnitude of the One Belt One Road, without the cooperative efforts in outer space, in dealing with climate change, in the Arctic and the Antarctic, without crushing global terrorism and organized criminality, without getting rid of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, without pacifying conflicting areas and regions.

CONCLUSION: WHAT ROLE FOR SMALL COUNTRIES LIKE BULGARIA?

The community with shared future for mankind would necessarily include the invested effort of more than 70 per cent of the countries of the world rated from the point of view of the national power as small states. The vision, the leadership, the responsibility and the example of the four great centers of power is not to polarize the relationships in the international relations system around axes or alliances that would be eventually shaped in search of more advantageous geopolitical, geoeconomic and finally – geostrategic and military positions. We have seen that with World War I, World War II and the Cold War and it would be detrimental for the objective trend of gradual formation of global, planetary human civilization whose working concept could be the building of a community with shared future for mankind.

Where does my country, Bulgaria stand in these human and social endeavours?

After the end of the Cold War Bulgaria played a leading role in South East Europe in turning the peninsula from a potential war zone between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact into a regional security community. It is characterised not by overcoming conflicting interests, but by dealing with them only in peaceful way. Getting rid of the wars in the Balkans was not an easy job, especially with the destructive dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, but with the support of the European Union now it is a fact of life that South East Europe has turned into a normal and immune of wars region of Europe. Membership of Bulgaria in both EU and NATO, strategic relationship with the USA and sharing of universalistic values as protection of the environment, respect for international law, democracy, human rights, nuclear non-proliferation, fight on terrorism as part of the global counter-terrorist alliance under the auspices of the United Nations constitute the invariant foreign-policy and security strategies of the country in the last 25 years.

Very disturbing for Bulgaria as a country on the west coast of the Black Sea are the developments in the region after 2008 and 2014. The aggression of Russia in Georgia and Ukraine marked the post-Soviet period in the most negative way possible. It is impermissible for a big country, nuclear armed and with huge military size to bully smaller and weaker states. The perception in the group of nine countries, the so called Bucharest 9 states – the three Baltic states, the four Visegrad states, Romania and Bulgaria, is that Russia is aiming to make this area into its traditional sphere of influence with violent means. While the focus of Bulgaria's foreign policy is the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU, the efforts to deter aggression from the East, including with the support of NATO, while keeping the channels open for cooperative relations between the Alliance and Moscow have not stopped. Bulgaria believes there are great chances for cooperation and prosperity of both the East-West and the North-South strategic corridors, whose intersection is in the Black Sea-Caspian Sea area.

Locally any small country is in a position to contribute to the construction of a community with shared future for mankind. The four power centers should lead the way.

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BUILDING A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE FOR MANKIND: IS THERE A BLUPRINT?

Prof. Dr. Plamen Pantev, Bulgaria

Ladies and Gentlemen

WHAT KIND OF WORLD WE LIVE IN AND WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DEPENDENCIES FOR MANKIND?

We live in a world characterized by its single economic space. The world has always existed as a single ecological space. Our world is for decades already a single information space. Thanks to human progress – economic, technological and social, the world has become a single humanitarian space. Finally, the world is for a century a single military-strategic space.

These characteristics of the present world constitute a constructive prerequisite for turning gradually human beings into a *single planetary civilization*, deserving and able to pretend of extending its creative and peaceful capacity beyond the Earth. This is how I conceive the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. This is a future that deserves to be educated to our children and grandchildren.

However, this future is impossible without the adequate leadership of the present global great powers: the USA, the PRC, the EU and the RF. Each of them has its own national concerns, threat perceptions and sheer interests. And the clash between global responsibilities and national

obligations often puzzle the will for action – an unfavorable development for the future of mankind.

Yes, there are many challenges to the present international relations system, but designing a master plan and a road map, acceptable for all leading global powers, that would be the model, providing guidance to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, could be named the ‘hyper-challenge’ of the day. While for long it was normal to build our concepts of the world around the catchword “the American century”, the notion of “the Pacific century”, according to me, also proves to be inadequate for the complexities of the international system. The spatial framework of conceiving the blueprint for building a community with a shared future for mankind should be much broader and encompassing the whole planet. And if we cannot but agree that presently the great power relationships are in flux, no less pressing is the understanding that these relations should be mended.

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The troublesome element here is that one power center has decided not to focus on gaining economic might, as the other three, but concentrating on non-productive and not stimulating global economic growth militarization of society and state, easily producing aggression on other countries. Apart from the political and social pressure on such a policy, self-restraint would be key to repairing the trust in the complicated power centers relationships. This is a condition without which the win-win behavior and end results would be virtually impossible.

And to finish – the world needs the cooperative working relations of the leading power centers, the implementation by them of global economic projects for the good of mankind. A community with a shared future for human beings, a planetary civilization cannot be born without projects of the magnitude of the Belt and Road Initiative, without the cooperative efforts in outer space, in dealing with climate change, in the Arctic and the Antarctic, without crushing global terrorism and organized criminality, without getting rid of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, without pacifying conflicting areas and regions.

CONCLUSION: WHAT ROLE FOR SMALL COUNTRIES LIKE BULGARIA? (I am ready to discuss it in the Q&A period and/or during the tea-break). Thank you for your attention!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Born 1952, graduate of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Law School. Ph. D. in International Relations and International Law of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", Law School. Founder and Director of the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia, 1994, www.isis-bg.org. Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky", lecturing 'Theory of International Relations', 'Theory of International Negotiations', 'Introduction to Security Studies', 'Balkan and Black Sea Security Issues', 'EU Security and Defense Policy', 'International Security Negotiations' and 'Democratic Control of the Security Sector'. Founder and Head of the International Security M. A. Program Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridsky".

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (ISIS)

The Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS) is a non-governmental non-profit organization, established legally in November 1994. It organizes and supports research in the field of security and international relations. Fields of research interest are: national security and foreign policy of Bulgaria; civil-military relations, democratic control of the armed forces and security sector reform; European Integration, Euro-Atlantic security and institutions; Balkan and Black Sea regional security; global and regional studies; policy of the USA, Russia and the other centers of power in international relations; information aspects of security and information warfare; quantitative methods and computer simulation of security studies; theory and practice of international negotiations. ISIS organizes individual and team studies; publishes research studies and research reports; organizes conferences, seminars, lectures and courses; develops an information bank and virtual library through the Internet; supports younger researchers of international relations and security, and develops independent expertise in security and international relations for the Bulgarian civil society. The institute networks internationally and establishes links with academic organizations and official institutions in the country and abroad on a cooperative and on a contract basis. ISIS is an independent think-tank, not linked to any political party, movement, organization, religious or ideological denomination. The institute has a flexible group of voluntary associates – four senior research fellows, seven PhD holders, and two MAs – nine altogether.

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- member of *Europe's World* Journal Advisory Board of think-tanks
- member of the **EU Non-Proliferation Consortium Network of think-tanks** (<https://www.nonproliferation.eu>)
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