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RUSSIA'S BALKAN POLITICS: FROM THE POLITICS OF PAN-SLAVIC RECIPROCITY OF THE TSARIST RUSSIA TO THE “REALPOLITIK” OF THE REPUBLIC OF GAZPROM RUSSIA

Summary

This article investigates the Russian foreign politics at the region of the Balkan Peninsula after the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the time of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) World Order in relation to the Pan-Slavic ideals of intra-Slavic solidarity, reciprocity and brotherhood. The particular stresses are put on four main research topics: 1. The Pan-Slavism and Russia; 2. Relations between pro-Western and pro-Orthodox approaches of the Russian national interests on Russia's domestic political scene; 3. Different attitudes towards the Balkans in Russia; and 4. Historical ties and future perspectives between Russia and the Serbs. A research methodology is based on investigation of the adequate historical sources and studying of the relevant scientific literature on the subject of our research. The main research results of the article show that: 1. Historically only (the tsarist) Russia was interested in protection of the Balkan Orthodox Slavs from any foreign power within the framework of the Pan-Slavic ideology of intra-Slavic reciprocity, solidarity and brotherhood; 2. The Balkan Orthodox nations have mostly to thank Russia for their state independence and preservation of national identities; 3. The post-Cold War Russia is only a taycoonized *Gazprom Republic* having no real intentions, at least until the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, to change the present day NATO's World Order of *Pax Americana*; and 4. The Serbs and Serbia became the crucial victims of the post-Cold War

perfect partnership in international relations between the West and the Gazprom Republic of Russia.

Key words: NATO, World Order, Russia, Serbs, Serbia, foreign policy, Balkans, South-East Europe, South-East Slavs, Pan-Slavism, international relations, global politics, Pax Americana

1. THE PAN-SLAVISM AND RUSSIA

The Balkan Peninsula together with the region of the South-East Europe historically have been one of the most important focal points of the Russian foreign policy, cultural influences and attempts to spread ideology of the Orthodox solidarity and the Slavic reciprocity.¹⁾ These ideas are common to almost all trends of the Russian public life in the past and today.

After Russia lost the Great Crimean War of 1853–1856 she intensified its cultural influence in the region of the South-East Europe for the purposes of beating the Habsburg (the Roman-Catholic) rivalry and to spread an idea of the Pan-Slavism in this part of Europe.²⁾ However, the Great Crimean War was in essence the British war against Russia (Figes, 2010; Lambert, 2011; Small, 2014) in order to stop further Russian victories against the Ottoman Empire (Isaacs, 2001, 156; Anisimov, 298–299). After this war it became obvious for Russia that the West European great powers³⁾ are her enemies, especially the United Kingdom. It will take even 50 years for Russia to sign a military-political agreement with the United Kingdom (in 1907) only after a final sharing the spheres of influence in Persia (Hans-Erich, 1985, 134).⁴⁾

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- 1) The Balkans is a peninsula in the South-East Europe that today includes Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Albania, Macedonia (the FYROM), Bulgaria and the European portion of Turkey. The South-East Europe is enlarged Balkans with Romania and Moldova.
 - 2) The Balkans was all the time a peninsula of a clash of civilizations. According to Samuel P. Huntington, a civilization is a cultural entity and he identified eight such civilizations. One of them was the Slavic-Orthodox. Civilizations differ in terms of history, language, culture, tradition but above all religion. Huntington argued that every civilization had and has a protector core state as, for instance, Russia historically was and today is a protector of the Slavic-Orthodox civilization (Mansbach, Taylor, 2012, 447).
 - 3) Great power was originally in the 18th century the term for a European state which could not be conquered by any other state or even by several of them. After the WWII this term is applied to a country that is regarded as among the most powerful in the global system and global politics (Mansbach, Taylor, 2012, 578).
 - 4) The British-Russian convention over Persia in 1907 divided the country into a northern section under the Russian influence, a neutral part in the middle, and a southern zone under the UK's influence (Palmowski, 2004, 304).

The political and economic rivalry between Russia, on one hand, and the Habsburg Monarchy (Austria-Hungary from 1867) and the German Empire (from 1871), on other, over the dominance at the Balkans was strongly affected in Russia by the growth of the Pan-Slavic sentiment, based on the common Slavic origin, mutual Paleoslavonic language, and above all it was grounded on emotional sentiment to liberate those South Slavs who were under the Ottoman yoke (Jelavich, 1991).⁵⁾ Historically, Russia had three pivotal interests in both regions the Balkans and the South-East Europe: 1) strategic, 2) cultural, and 3) religious (Castellan, 1992). It is important to stress a fact that Russia, together with the West European states, participated in the process of modernization of the eastern Balkan nations and states (Black, 1974).⁶⁾

From a strategic point of view, the Russian diplomacy concerned the Balkans and the South-East Europe as essential for the Russian state security and above all for the stability of the Russian state frontiers.⁷⁾ The Russian intention was to obtain a favorable frontier in Bessarabia (today an independent Republic of Moldova) and to have control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which became very important to the Russian commercial and economic development and geopolitical projects; in particular for the shipment of surplus grain from today Ukraine or known also as a *Little Russia* (Прыжов, 1869; Соловьев, 1947)⁸⁾ to the world markets.

The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles became a part of Russia's "security zone" in both economic and political terms. The Russian main concern was to safeguard free passage through the Bosphorus Straits to the Mediterranean Sea (Jelavich, 1973). Simultaneously, Russia intended to block the expansion of the other European great powers, particularly of Austria-Hungary and Germany, into the region.⁹⁾

Taking religious and cultural aspects of the Russian interests in the Balkans and the South-East Europe, largely due to the Russian Pan-Slavic agitation, Russia succeeded to develop from 1870 a strong

5) About the Pan-Slavism, see in (Kohn, 1960).

6) About the Russian history, see in (Riasanovsky, 2006).

7) About Russia's foreign policy interests, see in (Tsygankov, 2013; Gvosdev, 2014).

8) About Ukraine-Russian identity relations, see in (Plokhly, 2008; Plokhly, 2010).

9) About the spiritual and geopolitical rivalry in the Balkans by the great European powers, see in (Поповић, 1940; Narochnitskaya, 1998). According to Lord Palmerston, the nations (states) have no permanent enemies and allies; they have only permanent interests (Cooper, Heine, Thakur, 2015, 72).

interest in the fate of the Balkan Slavs and the South-East European Orthodox Christians. The Pan-Slavism, based on the myth of the Slavic solidarity and primarily on the Orthodox Slavic reciprocity, which created strong ethnic, religious and cultural sentiments among the Slavic Orthodox population (but not among the Roman Catholic Slavs), became at the end of the 19th century one of the dominant driving forces behind the Russian policy in the Balkans and the South-East Europe. The myth of the Slavic solidarity and brotherhood exerted a considerable influence on many intellectuals and found support in official circles in Russia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria.¹⁰⁾

The Tsarist Russia was sincerely trying all the time to reconcile the Slavic nations in conflict, especially those of the Christian Orthodox faith for the sake of the Pan-Slavic ideals of intra-Slavic solidarity, reciprocity and brotherhood. Probably the case of the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict in 1912–1915 over the Macedonian Question is the best example of such Russian policy of Panslavism. In the other words, Russia became the creator of the 1912 Serbian–Bulgarian treaty and recognized arbiter in 1912–1913 diplomatic conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria over the destiny of Macedonia after the Balkan Wars (Ђоровић, 1990a, 20–24). The Russian Balkan policy in this case was a real Panslavonic one as St. Petersburg wanted to satisfy territorial claims by both sides by negotiations and diplomatic agreement between Sofia and Belgrade. When Austria-Hungary declared war to Serbia on July 23rd, 1914 all Entente member states, including and Russia, were making pressure on Serbia to give territorial compensation (the Vardar Macedonia) to Bulgaria for the Bulgarian participation in the war against the Central Powers. Serbia was promised, like in the secret 1915 London Treaty, territorial concessions in the Western Balkans populated by the ethnic Serbs living in the Dual Monarchy. For instance, a Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonov, on August 5th, 1914 urged the Serbian Government to give to Bulgaria Macedonian territories up to the line Kriva Palanka–Ohrid with Struga for Bulgarian active participation in the war against Austria-Hungary and towns of Shtip, Radovishte and the lands up to Vardar river for Bulgarian “friendly neutrality”. For such Serbia’s sacrifice, Russia promised to Belgrade to support Serbia at the end of the war in realization of her “national ideals”. However, Sazonov was clear in this case that Serbia by giving such territorial sacrifice is going to very contribute to the Russian “life wish” to establish the Panslavonic

10) For instance, about Russia’s influence in Serbia from the end of the 18th century to the mid-19th century, see in (Понов, 1870).

fraternity and eternal friendship between the Serbs and Bulgarians (Радојевић, Димић, 2014, 138). The same territorial requirements to Serbia were vainly repeated once again by the Entente member states in 1915 before Bulgaria finally joined the war on the side of the Central Powers in October of the same year (Avramovski, 1985, 55–172; Трубецки, 1994, 21–158).

2. THE POST-COLD WAR RUSSIA BETWEEN THE “WESTERNIZERS” AND THE “PATRIOTS”

With the official end of the Cold War (1949–1989),¹¹⁾ the Balkans, especially the question of the destiny of the former Yugoslavia, reemerged as one of the major concerns in Russia.¹²⁾ However, in fact, for the NATO and its leader – the USA, the Cold War is still on agenda of the global arena as after 1991 the NATO's expansion and politics is directed primarily against Russia (Thompson, 1998) but China as well. Nevertheless, a fact that the NATO was not dissolved after the end of the Soviet Union (regardless on all official explanations why) is the crucial argument for our opinion that the Cold War is still reality in the world politics¹³⁾ and the international relations.

It has to be noticed that the USSR was simply dissolved by one man-decision – the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, who, concerning this matter, made a crucial deal in October 1986 with the US administration at two-days bilateral meeting with the US President Ronald Reagan in Reykjavik in Iceland (Wilson, 2014; Adelman, 2014). It is a matter of fact that the USSR was the only empire in the world history which became simply dissolved by its own government as the rest of the world empires were destroyed either from the outside after the lost wars or from the inside after the bloody civil wars or revolutions.¹⁴⁾

In our opinion, there were three main hypothetical reasons for Gorbachev's decision to simply dissolve the Soviet Union:

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- 11) The Cold War was the struggle and conflict between the USA and its allies, including supporters of the capitalism, engaged in ideological and political warfare against the USSR and its allies, advocates of the communism, an alternative and incompatible, economic and political system (Mansbach, Taylor, 2012, 102).
 - 12) About history of the Cold War, see in (Lewis, 2005; Zubok, 2007).
 - 13) World or global politics is political interactions between and among sovereign (independent) states as well as nonstate actors (ex., the NGOs).
 - 14) About the end of the USSR, see in (Plokhly, 2014).

1. Personal bribing of Gorbachev by the western governments (the USA and the EC).
2. Gorbachev's wish, as the first and the only ethnic Russian ruler of the USSR to prevent a further economic exploitation of the Russian federal unit by the rest of the Soviet republics that was a common practice since the very beginning of the USSR after the Bolshevik (an anti-Russian) Revolution and the Civil War of 1917–1921.
3. Gorbachev's determination to transform Russian Federation, which will firstly get rid of the rest of the Soviet tapeworm republics, into economically prosperous and well-to-do country by selling its own Siberia's natural resources (gas and oil) to the West according to the global market prices.

In order not to spoil very good business relations with the West the Russian foreign policy during the last 23 years, up to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, was totally soft and even subservient to the West to whose mercy Moscow left the rest of the world including and the ex-Soviet republics with at least 25 million of the ethnic Russian population outside the motherland. For the matter of comparison, Belgrade in 1991 also left all other Yugoslav republics to leave the federation free of charge, at least for the second Gorbachev's reason to dissolve the USSR, but with one crucial difference in comparison with the Russian case in the same year: the ethnic Serbs outside Serbia were not left at mercy, at least not as free of charge, to the governments of the newly (an anti-Serb) proclaimed independent states emerged on the wreck of (an anti-Serb and dominated by Croatia and Slovenia) ex-Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁾ That was the main sin by Serbia in the 1990s and for that reason she was and still is sternly fined by the West.¹⁶⁾

Russia's policy and attitude towards the South Slavs in the Balkans after the dissolution of the USSR is a part of a larger debate over Russia's "national interest" and even over the Russian new identity (Laruelle, 2012). Since 1991, when its independence was formalized and internationally recognized, Russia has been searching for both her national identity and foreign policy.

The intellectual circles in Russia have debated very much over the content of the Russian national self-identity for centuries. On the one hand, there were/are those who believe that the Russian culture

15) About different opinions on the nature of Yugoslavia, see in (Allcock, 2000; Sabrina, 2006).

16) About the wars of Yugoslavia's succession in the 1990s, see in (Trifunovska, 1994; Woodwards, 1995; Ullman, 1996; Oven, 1996; Marković, 1996; Guskova, 2003; Sotirović, 2013a).

is a part of the European culture and as such the Russian culture can accept some crucial (West) European values in its development, especially from the time of the emperor Peter the Great (1672–1725).¹⁷⁾ This group, we could call them as the “Westernizers”, have never negated the existence of Russia’s specific characteristics as an Eurasian country, but have always believed that staying within the framework of the “Russian spectrum” is equivalent to the national suicide (a “fear of isolation” effect). On the other hand, there are those who have tried to preserve all traditional Russian forms of living and organizing, including both political and cultural features of the Russian civilization, not denying at the same time that Russia is a European country too. This, we can name them as the “patriotic” group, or the “Patriots”, of the Slavic orientation, partly nationalistically oriented, have believed and still believe that the (West) European civilizational and cultural values can never be adjusted to the Russian national character and that it is not necessary at all for the Russian national interest (a “fear of self-destruction” effect).

A confrontation of these two groups characterizes both the Russian history and the present-day political and cultural development. Very similar situation is, for instance, in Serbia today as the society is sharply divided into the so-called “First” (“patriotic”) and the “Second” (“western”) Serbia supporters.

At the moment, the basic elements of the Russian national identity and state policy are:

1. The preservation of Russia’s territorial unity.
2. The protection of Russia’s interior integrity and its external (state) borders.
3. The strengthening of Russia’s statehood particularly against the post-Cold War NATO’s *Drang nach Osten* policy.

It means that the post-Soviet Russia (the *Gazprom Republic* of the “Power of Siberia”) rejected, at least for some time, the most significant element in her foreign policy that has historically been from the time of the emperor Ivan the Terrible (1530–1584) the (universal) imperial code – constant expansion of its territory or, at least, the position of a power that cannot be overlooked in the settlement of strategic global matters.¹⁸⁾ Therefore, after the Cold War Russia accepted the US’ global role of the new world Third Rome.¹⁹⁾ For the

17) About Peter the Great and his reforms in Russia, see in (Hughes, 2000; Cracraft, 2003).

18) About the idea of the Holy Russia as a Third Rome, see in (Johnson, 2004).

19) About the US’ post-Cold War imperialism and global hegemony, see in (Kiernan, 2005; Baron, 2014).

matter of illustration, the US had 900 military bases in 2014 in 153 countries around the world.

From historical point of view, it can be said that the US' imperialism started in 1812 when the US' administration proclaimed the war to Great Britain in order to annex the British colony of Canada (Parks, 1986, 182–202). However, the protagonists of a “Hegemonic stability theory” argue that “a dominant military and economic power is necessary to ensure the stability and prosperity in a liberal world economy. The two key examples of such liberal hegemonies are the UK during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the USA since 1945” (Heywood, 2011, 229).

At the present stage of Russia's history, characterized by very harmonious (symphonic) economic and political relations with the West, at least up to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, especially with Germany, Russia in fact became a political colony of the West which is seen in Moscow eyes only as a good source for making money. The results of such kind of Russia-West relations are Russian tourists all over the world, an impressive Russian state gold reserves (500 billion €), buying real estate properties all over the Mediterranean littoral by the Russians, huge Russian financial investments in Europe and finally, Russian authorization of the NATO's and the EU's aggressive foreign policy that is mostly visible exactly at the Balkans.

Russia's foreign policy is surely a part of her national and cultural identity as for any other state in history. From 1991 up to at least 2014, Moscow accepted the western academic and political propaganda as a sort of the “new facts” that:

1. Russia is reportedly no longer a global super or even military power, although its considerable military potential is undeniable and very visible.
2. Russia allegedly has no economic power, although it has by very fact an enormous economic potential.
3. Russia, as a consequence, cannot have any significant political influence which could affect the new international relations established after 1989/1991, i.e. the NWO (the NATO's World Order), or better to say – the *Pax Americana*.²⁰⁾

20) The *Pax Americana* is a key phenomenon of the post-Cold War era as an informal the US' empire whose tenets lie in the global capitalist trading system which reached across the globe. After 1991 the USA became a single state in the world with a global hegemonic ambitions and capacities, at least up to 2014. “The core feature of the *Pax Americana* is a multilateral system of global governance” (Atlagić, 2015, 32). About the *Pax Americana*, see in (Dorrien, 2004; Clarke, 2008; Parchami, 2009; Roncallo, 2014). On the remaking of the World Order,

It made Russia a western well paid client state as in essence no strategic questions can be solved without Russian permission, however for certain sum of money or other way of compensation. For instance, the Kosovo status was solved in 2008 between Russia and the NATO/EU on exactly this way as Russia *de facto* agreed to Kosovo self-proclaimed independence (as the US's client territory or colony) for in turn the western also *de facto* agreement to the South Ossetian and Abkhazian self-proclaimed independence as in fact the Russian client territories or colonies.²¹⁾

Russia as a country is unpredictable when it is isolated, and its unpredictability can be dangerous for the surrounding regions as well as for the global international relations. This thesis has had its confirmation in the events concerning the conflicts in both former Yugoslavias (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – the SFRY and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – the FR Yugoslavia), and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the FYROM). The cultural, religious and historic ties with the Orthodox Slavs who live in the Balkans (together with the western money) determine the Russian attitude and politics towards the political challenges in the South-East Europe during the last decades especially what concerns the Orthodox Slavs in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo-Metohija and Macedonia (i.e., the Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians).²²⁾

In Russia emerged after Gorbachev's dissolution of the Soviet Union two ideological-political streams in the general debate in the Russian society about the national interest. The first emphasizes the importance of Russia's long-standing ethnic, cultural and religious ties with the Balkan peoples, especially with the Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians and Macedonians.²³⁾ The second stresses the importance of the good ties with the West and integration of Russia into a broader Euro-Atlantic framework.

see (Huntington, 2002; Kissinger, 2014). On the post-Cold War US-Russia's relations up to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, see in (Stent, 2014). In essence, the *Pax Americana* is nothing else than a synonym for a post-Cold War New World Order: "A term coined by George Bush Sr following the successful expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait in the first Gulf War... the idea that New World Order was short-hand for US policy preferences and further American imperialism" (Haynes, et al, 2013, 712).

- 21) About the "Kosovo precedent" and the ethnopolitical conflicts in the Caucasus, see in (Weller, 2009; Tsurtsumia, 2010; Hehir, 2010; Francis, 2011; Souleimanov, 2013; Sotirović, 2013b).
- 22) About Russia's foreign policy, see in (Donaldson, 2014). About Russia and her closest neighbours, see in (Szajkowski, 1994; Huntington, 2011, 151–155). About Russia and the Balkans after 1991, see in (Ekinci, 2013).
- 23) About the Montenegrin ethnic origin and identity, see in (Glomazić, 1988; Lazarević, 2014). On the problem who are the Macedonians and the "Macedonian Question", see in (Martis, 1984; Poulton, 2000; Pettifer, 2001; Damianopoulos, 2012).

Since Russia formally has lost all the attributes of a super power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (up to 2014), her political elite has in the early 1990s become oriented towards closer association with the institutional structures of the West – in accordance with her officially general drift towards liberal-democratic reform (in fact towards the tycoonization of the whole society and politics, like in all East European transitional countries). Till 1995 Russia had become a member of almost all structures of the NATO, even of the “Partnership for Peace Programme” what is telling the best about the real aims of the Gazprom Russia’s foreign policy up to 2014 when Russia finally decided to defend her own national interest, at least at the doorstep (i.e., in the East Ukraine) of her own home. In May 1997 Russia signed the “NATO’s–Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security”, what meant de facto that she accepted the NATO as the core of the Euro-Atlantic system of security.

For the matter of comparison with the USA, in October 1962, at the height of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union came to the brink of a real nuclear war over the placement of the USSR’s missiles in the island of Cuba – a courtyard (not even a doorstep) of the USA. It was the closest moment the World ever came to unleashing the WWII (Kennedy, 1999; Munton, 2006; Dobbs, 2008; Pardoe, 2013). In the other words, during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 Kennedy’s administration was ready to invade the independent state of Cuba (with already the US’ military base on the island) and even to go to the WWII against the USSR if necessary as Washington understood Cuba as a courtyard of the USA.

Whether or not the ruling structures in Russia had expected a more important role for their country in its relations with the new partners, since 1995 there has been certain stagnation in the relations with the West, accompanied by the insistence on the national interests of Russia. In practice, this was manifested in the attempts to strengthen the connections with the Commonwealth of the Independent States (the CIS) with which Russia had more stable and secure relations. However, the state of relations within the CIS, accompanied with a very difficult economic and politically unstable situation in some of the countries in the region, prevented any organizational or other progress in this direction. Still, the CIS has remained the primary strategic focus for Russia, especially when it comes to the insolent expansion of the NATO towards these countries (the NATO’s *Drang nach Osten*).

3. RUSSIA, THE WEST AND EX-YUGOSLAVIA

An economic and political situation in Russia, the changes, the rate and the content of her fitting into the existing international relations influenced Russia's attitude towards the wars on the territories of the former SFRY. Since the beginning of the disintegration of the SFRY, Russia has taken very diplomatic position that these conflicts are the Yugoslav domestic (inner) affairs and consequently should be settled peacefully, without the use of force, with the United Nations (the UN) or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (the OSCE) as the mediator organizations.²⁴⁾ Russia kept this official position throughout all wars in Yugoslavia, till the end of the military conflict in Kosovo-Metohija in June 1999, but even and during the NATO's military occupation of Kosovo-Metohija followed by the expulsion of majority of the ethnic Serbs and all other non-Albanian ethnicities by the Albanians from the region from 1999 up today (*March Pogrom...*, 2004; Чупић, 2006).²⁵⁾

In a view of Russia's position in Europe and the world (especially in relation to the USA), characterized by her need and wish to become at least a respectable partner to the most developed countries, Russia was until 2014 blindly following the decisions of her "partners" from the West, especially at the time of the "western clown of Boris Yeltsin"²⁶⁾ in the global politics. For instance, Russia recognized Croatia and Slovenia in February 1992 as independent states; in May 1992 she did the same with the FYROM and in August of the same year with Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although Russia was formally on the side of Serbia and the Serbs during the time of the dissolution (destruction) of ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, mainly because of deep historic, cultural and political linkages with the Serbs, Moscow actually accepted the decisions of its western partners and followed their obviously anti-Serb Balkan policy (Guskova, 1996). Such attitude was the result of her orientation towards the policy of getting closer to the European economic, political and security institutions, but above all to the European market. For Russia, the Balkans is still just a part of her European (economic) strategy, but not the main task of her European (political) policy.

24) Russia strongly opposed an official western stereotyped standpoint on the fundamental causes of the destruction of ex-Yugoslavia. According to this view, a personality of Serbia's President Slobodan Milošević and his political idea to create a Greater Serbia was the main cause of the destruction of the country followed by the bloody war (Mansbach, Taylor, 2012, 442).

25) About the "Kosovo Question", see in (Grujić, 2014).

26) About Boris Yeltsin and Russia in his time, see in (Colton, 2008; Curtis, 2014).

This is quite similar with the case of the NATO's military aggression on the FRY in 1999 for the real reason to occupy and separate Kosovo-Metohija from Serbia for the final sake of creation of a Greater Albania (Hadjimichalis, 2000).²⁷⁾ Formally, Russia remained resolute in her demand that the conflict in Kosovo-Metohija had to be resolved in the Security Council of the UN or in the OSCE, but in fact nothing did to really help the Serbs in their legitimate struggle against the Albanian secessionist nationalism and the US' imperialism – exactly what Washington and Brussels wanted and needed from Moscow at that time. From the very fact, when several western countries decided to intervene against the FRY in March 1999, Russia did nothing concrete to change that decision, although Moscow nominally disagreed because there was no formal decision in the Security Council of the UN and she was against the use of force in regional ethno-political conflicts in general. In fact, the Russian pro-western tycoon authorities did not wish to get directly involved in the conflict in Kosovo-Metohija in order to keep very prosperous economic relations with the West. Formally, during the NATO's military aggression on the FRY (much more on Serbia than on Montenegro) Russia tried to sustain contacts with Serbia. These attempts met with the approval of a part of the public, which, along with the nationally oriented intellectual and political elite, was pushing Russia into a conflict with the West, with the USA in particular, for the matter to defend the Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans as historically Russia was a natural, and even recognized, protector of them during the time of the existence of the Ottoman Empire.

For the matter of fact, the Russian protection of the Balkan and the South-East European Orthodox population started with the Treaty of Küçük Kajnarca of July 21st, 1774 with the Ottoman Empire when Russia got the right to establish within the Ottoman Empire her own diplomatic consulates in Iași and Bucharest, and to make representations on behalf of the Orthodox Moldavia and Walachia (today parts of Romania) in Istanbul (Magocsi, 2002, 72). The Russian Empire by this treaty even became a protector of all Balkan Christian nations especially the Orthodox (Поповић, 1940; Радојевић, 2014, 114).

During the Kosovo Crisis and War of 1998–1999 the relations between Russia and the USA became the worst since the end of the

27) About the NATO's military intervention in 1999 against Serbia and Montenegro, see in (Gibbs, 2009; Phillips, 2012).

Cold War period, but in essence nothing was changed after the war in relations between Russia and the West.²⁸⁾

Nevertheless, the Russian participation with the NATO in international contingent of the “peace-keeping” forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina (the IFORS/SFOR) and Kosovo-Metohija (the KFOR) shows that (Gazprom) Russia became highly opportunistic and even smarmy to the West as she consciously accepted to participate in these NATO's military missions only for the reason to internationally legalize the new NATO's World Order (*Pax Americana*) that is obviously on the first place *de facto* anti-Russian.²⁹⁾ It is very unconvincing explanation by the Russian “Westernizers” that this decision to participate in the NATO's “peace-keeping missions” in the Balkans in the 1990s was for Moscow only possibility to “prove” that Russia is still not out from the arena of international politics of the great (western) powers and to have some influence in the region. However, it is known that this participation (till 2003) was under the full-scale dictate of the NATO what is clearly visible from at least three facts:

1. Russia did not get its own sectors of protection and command either in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Kosovo-Metohija nevertheless Russia required them. The territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided into three sectors of protection: the Canadian, the US, and the French, while Kosovo-Metohija into five: the British, the Italian, the French, the German and the US. However, it was no single Russian one.
2. A brigade of the Russian peace-keepers has been based in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the US' sector, the Multinational Division North, since January 1996, numbering only some 1,200 airborne troops. The Russian zone of responsibility was running between the predominantly “Croat and Muslim Federation” of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the predominantly “Serb Republic”. However, about 30 US' soldiers were permanently stationed at the Russian brigade's headquarters in Ugljevik (the North-Eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina) while the Russian peace-keeping troops were in fact under the US's supervision and command. In this respect, can you imagine the US' military brigade under the Russian supervision and command in Afghanistan or Iraq? We have also to notice that in 1877 Russia entered the war against

28) About this issue, see more in (Headley, 2008).

29) About the globalization of the NATO pact, see in (Kitchen, 2010; Nazemroaya, 2012).

the Ottoman Empire because of Bosnia-Herzegovina (the so-called “Great Eastern Crisis”) and even the First World War in 1914 after the “Sarajevo Assassination” and Austria-Hungary’s ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia (Радојевић, Димић, 2014, 113–114).³⁰⁾ However, it was an imperial Romanovs’ Russia (not at all in much better position to the western great powers as today Russia is), but not the Gazprom one. In July–August 1914 Serbia could see and feel who was her a real and only friend (even the “mother”) in Europe what was very proved in the Great War until the very end of the Romanov’s Imperial Russia (i.e., until the 1917 March Revolution). In the other words, Russia risked everything, even not properly prepared for the war at all, in order to give a crucial help to unprotected Serbia – a country facing at that time a real possibility to disappear from the map of Europe as a state and political reality.³¹⁾ We have to

30) About discussion on the origins of the WWI, see in (Бјелајац, 2014). It has to be noticed on this place that the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia in Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914 that triggered the Great War as an excuse for the Dual Monarchy to formally declare war to Serbia (Ђоровић, 1990b, 79) was organized and committed by the conspiratorial revolutionary underground organization from Bosnia-Herzegovina – the *Young Bosnia* (like *Jung Deutschland Bund*) with a great help of Serbia’s military officer Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis (later Colonel) who was a leader of another conspiratorial underground revolutionary organization from Serbia – the *Black Hand* (Казимировић, 2013). Serbia’s Government did everything to prevent the assassination but it in vain. However, the Austro-Hungarian state intelligence service knew very well about the preparation of the assassination but purposely did nothing to prevent it. An essence of the issue was that the members of the Young Bosnia have been not from Serbia but from Austria-Hungary, fighting for a pan-Serbian political unification in a form of a united or Greater Serbia (Dieterich, 1925, 226) likewise Apis too who was originally an ethnic Vlach (not a Serb) from the Eastern Serbia. Both organizations knew well that a price for the unification was a war against the Dual Monarchy in which Serbia had to pay a terrible price. Unfortunately, after the Great War Serbia was out of 25% of her pre-war population and 50% of the pre-war industrial infrastructure. Nevertheless, at the end of the war it was not created a Greater Serbia but rather a common state with the Roman Catholic Slovenes and Croats and Muslim Bosniaks who became at such a way abolished for their terrible war crime atrocities in the uniforms of the Dual Monarchy against Serbia’s civilians during the Great War and occupation of Serbia. Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) was also one of those South Slavs fighting in the Western Serbia in 1914–1915 as a soldier of infamous the *42nd Devil Division* which committed recorded war crimes against the Serbian civilians (for instance, recorded by a Swiss German Archibald Rudolf Reiss, 1875–1929). Similar war crimes and torture against the Orthodox Serb civilians were done in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war by the Austro-Hungarian authorities (Ђоровић, 1920). It is interesting that according to the American historian MacMillan, the Young Bosnia’s ideals were of the Pan-Slavonic nature. However, she equated the Young Bosnia with Al-Qaeda and Iran (MacMillan, 2006).

31) The Russian Emperor Nicolas II expressed to Serbia’s Prime Minister Nikola Pašić a final support to Serbia’s independence and real military-political protection in the case of Austro-Hungarian proclamation of the war to Serbia in the spring of 1914 (Драгнић, 1994, 118).

notice on this place a very fact that when Serbia received a war proclamation by the Dual Monarchy on July 23rd, 1914 she had only two formal (by treaty) allies: Montenegro and Greece from 1912. However, only Montenegro put into effect its treaty obligations, while Greece interpreted the 1913 Military Convention with Serbia on the way that Greece was obliged to give a military assistance to Serbia only in the case of a war proclamation by Bulgaria to Serbia but not and by Austria-Hungary (Радојевић, Димић, 2014, 136).³²⁾ However, at the time of the Austro-Hungarian war declaration to Serbia, Russia did not have any formal (treaty) obligations to Serbia to help her but regardless to this fact Russia proclaimed a military mobilization in order to protect Serbia from the aggressive Germanic *Drang nach Osten* policy at the Balkans. The Russian military mobilization became just a pretext to Germany to declare the (Great) war against Russia (on August 1st, 1914) and against France (on August 3rd, 1914) (Palmowski, 2004, 693).

3. The Russian peace-keeping contingent in Kosovo-Metohija of some 3,150 soldiers (out from total 45,000 international NATO's troops in Kosovo-Metohija) was deployed in three sectors: in the US-led Multinational Brigade East, in the French-led Multinational Brigade North, and in the German-led Multinational Brigade South. In June 1999, when the NATO's troops occupied Kosovo-Metohija, the NATO's headquarters in Brussels decisively rejected the Russian demand that Russia should have her own sector of protection in Kosovo-Metohija. We also have not to forget that the Russian troops (came from Bosnia-Herzegovina) occupied the Prishtina airport in June 1999 before the NATO's troops from the south reached the administrative centre of Kosovo-Metohija. That was at the moment a greatest victory of Russia over the West from the time of dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, very soon the same Russian troops left the Prishtina airport under the

An ultimate support to Serbia Russia expressed on July 24th, 1914 (a day after the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia) during the meeting between Sazonov and Spalajković in St. Petersburg (Поповић, 2007, 86–87).

32) Nevertheless, Greece did not proclaim war to Bulgaria in 1915 when Bulgaria did it to Serbia due to the pro-German policy of the King Constantine I who was the brother-in-law of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II.

western pressure what shows at the best a real self-wanted position of (Gazprom) Russia in the NATO's World Order after the end of the Cold War (1949–1989). Consequently, Moscow in 2001 left Afghanistan in full mercy of the US' occupation – the land which was only three decades ago (in 1979) understood by Kremlin as exclusively its own sphere of dominance without any western interference.³³⁾

Obviously, only limited and formal Russian participation in the so-called “peace-keeping forces” in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo-Metohija, that is in fact just international legalization of the NATO's occupation of these lands, is accepted by the NATO's headquarters as it gives the NATO a legitimacy of “human rights protection” in the Balkans. Following its orientation towards the “well-to-do Russian home”, combined with her new national security concept of protecting Russia's state borders, but without crossing them in international relations (up to 2008 informal war with Georgia and especially the Russian direct military involvement in Syrian conflict in 2015), Russia was trying to achieve the optimum of such kind of politics – to play a role of a formally respectable power on the international scene which will take its part in the most significant strategic changes in the world done by the NATO's and the US' administrations followed by their crucial European client – the European Union (the EU) for the sake of keeping perfect economic relations with the West. However, the 2014 Ukrainian crisis clearly shows that for the West any kind of Russia's defense of her own national interest around the globe, including and on the doorstep of her own home, is simply seen as a form of a new Russian imperialism (Mankoff, 2011; Herpen, 2014; Lucas, 2014).

Russia's attitude towards the “Serb Republic” in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM was up to 2014 regarded in the contexts of her attempts to put into practice her common westernization policy with the ultimate goal to integrate Russia into the western political scope and system.³⁴⁾ Having in mind this, it was quite predictable before the 2014 Ukrainian crisis that the Russian military forces could participate in the future in the NATO-led international peace keeping forces in the FYROM (MACFOR), Vojvodina (VOJDFOR) or Sanjak (SANDFOR) under the same conditions as it was in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo-Metohija.

33) About the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, 1979–1989, see in (Grau, 2002; Fremont-Barnes, 2012; Riedel, 2014). On the US' military involvement in Afghanistan from 2001 onwards, see in (Gall, 2014).

34) About this issue, see more in (Mendeloff, 2008; Kanet, 2010; Leichtova, 2014).

For the matter of better clarification, Serbia's northern region of Vojvodina, populated by the Serb majority and non-Serb minority (predominantly the Hungarian one) and her south-west region of Sanjak (in Serbian language Raška), populated by mixed Orthodox Serbian and Muslim Bosniak population (ethno-linguistic Serbs of Shtokavian language who became voluntary converted into Islam during the Ottoman rule) (Вуковић, 1911; Костић, 1955),³⁵⁾ are scheduled by the West (the USA, the NATO, the EU) as the next regions of separation at the Balkans where the western peace-keeping troops are going to be located if Russia would surrender to the West in the case of Ukraine. Thus, such Russian role in the Balkan affairs fits to the ideas of the main Russian proponents of the so-called "Atlantic's School" (for instance, a former Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrey Kozыrev), which tends to play down the idea of Russia as the protector of the (Orthodox) Slavs in the South-East Europe.

However, on the other hand, the Russian "Westernizers" emphasize the crucial importance of co-operating with the West for the Russian economic and cultural development in the future. Subsequently, they explicitly reject a policy based on the ethnic, religious and cultural ties with the Balkan Orthodox Slavs, particularly with the Serbs. Absolutely the same situation is and with the Serbian "Westernizers" (the "Second Serbia") who are rejecting any ties with Kosovo-Metohija for the sake of Serbia's (i.e., remains of Serbia) "prosperity" in the (western) future. It was quite visible either during the process of dissolution (or better to say – destruction) of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s or after that up today.³⁶⁾

The myths of a fundamental Slavic brotherhood and the pan-Slavic solidarity, based on common Slavic origin and language, and especially with the Orthodox South Slavs, based on shared culture and the same religion is by now put aside as an ancient history by Moscow. It was visible, at least, twice in relations to the Serbs: 1) when the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia proclaimed a state unity with Russia in 1999 during the NATO's aggression, and 2) when Kosovo-Metohija's Serbs (around 90,000) required Russia's citizenship in 2011. However, Moscow in both cases simply was deaf, regardless on the fact that it would be a perfect opportunity and formal excuse for Russia to do really something for the Serbs and to stop a NATO's military machinery at the Balkans.

35) About the Bosniaks, as a matter of comparison, see in (Donia & Fine, 1994; Pinson, 1996).

36) About the problems and challenges of the Balkan security and Russia in the 1990s, see in (Shoup, 1990; Гуськова, 1992–1993; Larrabee, 1994; Бодсон, 1996; Gow, 1997).

Nevertheless, some of influential Russia's political leaders and representatives are still ardent to the ideology of the Pan-Slavic common ethno-linguistic origin, cultural reciprocity, solidarity and brotherhood – at least formally. For instance, during a visit to Serbia in January 1994 Vladimir Zhirinovsky warned the West that any attack on Serbia or Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs would be considered by the Russians as an attack on Russia herself.³⁷⁾ However, when it happened in reality in 1995 and 1999 Russia did simply nothing to protect Krayina's and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs (in 1995) and Serbia (in 1999). It is interesting that on the same occasion he called for a union of all Slavic nations from “Knin to Vladivostok”. Zhirinovsky was at that time also the main advocator of a radical revision of the political map of Europe, especially in the South-East Europe. In the other words, in his conception of reshaping the political map of Europe, the new (Russian) order in the South-East Europe has to be based on the (by now utopian) “Slavic pyramid” as:

1. Bosnia-Herzegovina would be divided between a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia.
2. A Greater Bulgaria would be created with its capital in Sofia.
3. Greece would be given parts of European Turkey.
4. Hungary would get back Transylvania from Romania.

It is quite predictable that the idea of the Pan-Slavic solidarity, reciprocity and brotherhood will be put on agenda of the Russian national interest if the Russian “Patriots” and the “Pan-Slavic nationalists” gained political power in Russia (we do not consider Putin's regime as a real patriotic one). In this case, the concept of reshaping the South-East Europe on the model of some kind of the “Slavic pyramid” will surely play a significant role in the Russian foreign policy.

Nevertheless, there would be a very little chance for the Roman Catholic Slavs to accept such political program as they are firstly the Roman Catholics and only than the Slavs as the Yugoslav experience shows. In the other words, Vatican will never agree that the Roman Catholics are going to be governed by the Orthodox Christians (Екме-чић, 2010, 516). On the other hand, during the Great War of 1914–1918 a Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov (1910–1916) was explicitly advising Serbia's ambassador to Russia,

37) A same kind of just declarative support to Serbia was expressed by a President of the *Gazprom* Republic of Russia – Vladimir Putin in Belgrade on October 14th, 2014.

dr. Miroslav Spalajković (1913–1919) that any state combination with the Roman Catholic Slovenes and Croats would be political disaster for Serbia as Slovenes and Croats will be all the time just Vatican's separatist fifth column and trouble makers in any kind of Yugoslavia.³⁸⁾ In reality, as a matter of historical fact, both the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz's Titoslavia were destroyed with a great help of Vatican exactly by the Roman Catholic Croats (who were strongly supported by the Roman Catholic Slovenes in the case of destruction of Titoslavia in 1989–1991).³⁹⁾

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end we will express several basic conclusions in relations to the topic of contemporary Russian relations with the Balkans, or better to say, to the debate of the main issue of the present-day Russian foreign policy – between the West and herself:

- 1) The post-Soviet Russia was at least until 2014 Ukrainian crisis politically very deeply involved in the western system of international relations and cultural values that was basically giving to Moscow a status of the western client partner on the international scene of the NATO's World Order.
- 2) A full victory of the Russian "Westernizers" up to 2014 allow them to further westernize Russia according to the pattern of the Emperor Peter the Great with the price of Russia's inferiority and even servility in the international relations. For that reason, the West already succeeded (at least up to 2014) to encircle Russia with three rings of Russia's enemies: the NATO at the West, the Muslim Central Asian states at the South and China at the South-East.
- 3) The West was buying Russia's inferiority at the international scene by keeping perfect economic relations with Moscow that was allowing Russia, especially Russia's tycoons, to become enormously reach. These harmonious West-Russia political-economic relations are going to be broken in the

38) About the process of creation of the first Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) during the Great War, see in (Sotirović, 2012).

39) About debates on the reasons for the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation in the 1990s, see in (Guskova, 2003, I, 51–59).

future only under two circumstances: I. If the Russian “Patriots” will take political power in Kremlin (after the military putsch or new revolution?), or II. If the West will introduce any kind of serious economic sanctions against Russia (i.e. to restrict importing Russian gas and oil or to limit business operations of the Russian oil and gas companies outside Russia).

- 4) Up to now, the South-East Europe is left to the western hands by Moscow and the region is already incorporated into the NATO’s World Order as a part of the western (the NATO & the EU) post-Cold War concept of the Central and East Europe as a buffer zone against Russia.⁴⁰⁾
- 5) Russia in this region has only and exclusively economic-financial interest (the “Southern Stream”, investments, buying the real estate properties, selling her own products, etc.). The region was becoming more and more under the Russian direct financial control. As one of the best examples is Montenegro with 40% of the Russian investment out of total foreign one.
- 6) The only political and national losers at the Balkans, as the outcome of such West-Russia post-Soviet relations, are the Serbs who as a nation have been expelled from Croatia and lost their Republic of Serbian Krayina, lost 20% of their ethno-historical land in Bosnia-Herzegovina, lost Kosovo-Metohija and will lose Vojvodina and Sanjak in the near future if Russia will lose a current battle for Ukraine (or the *Little Russia*). In this case, the state territory of Serbia, according to the western designers from the very end of the Cold War era, would be reduced to the borders of the so-called *Bismarck’s Serbia* (or *Bismarck’s pašalik*) after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 up to the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.⁴¹⁾

40) About the post-Cold War western supremacy in the global politics and international relations, see in (Mayer, 2014; Pijl, 2014). About a typical example of the western (the US’) colony in the region, Kosovo-Metohija as a part of the *Pax Americana*, see in (Hofbauer, 2009). On the relations between the NATO and the European Union, see in (Simon, 2013). About the history of a greater concept of the East Europe between the Germans and the Russians, see in (Bidleux & Jeffries, 1999; Janos, 2000). It is realistically expected that Montenegro will become a full Member State of the NATO in 2016 or at least in 2017.

41) At the Congress of Berlin (from June 13th to July 13th, 1878), Bismarck’s main political goal was to maintain a balance of power in Europe which would block creation of any anti-German bloc. His assessment was based on the *realpolitik* politics of hard practical interests. Serbia’s official representative to the Congress, Jovan Ristić, became “brought down to earth during the second week of the Congress” (Misha, 1999, 149).

- 7) The essential historical disadvantage of Serbia and the Serbs as a nation was and still is that they did not have and do not have a common state borders with (the tsarist) Russia and Russians – the only European great power nation and state who never humiliated Serbia and the Serbs and the only nation and state in the world to whom the Serbs have to really thank for the preservation of their national identity and state independence.

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БАЛКАНСКА ПОЛИТИКА РУСИЈЕ: ОД ПОЛИТИКЕ СВЕСЛОВЕНСКЕ УЗАЈАМНОСТИ ЦАРСКЕ РУСИЈЕ ДО „РЕАЛ-ПОЛИТИКЕ“ РЕПУБЛИКЕ ГАЗПРОМ РУСИЈЕ

Резиме

У овом чланку се истражује спољна политика Русије на Балкану након нестанка Совјетског Савеза у времену светског поретка који диктира НАТО пакт а у вези са идеалима панславизма, међусловенске солидарности, узајамности и братства. Посебан

нагласак је стављен на следеће четири најбитније истраживачке теме: 1. Панславизам и Русија; 2. Однос између прозападних и проправославних снага на политичкој сцени Русије по питању руског националног интереса; 3. Различити приступи руској балканској политици у Русији; и 4. Руско-српски повесни односи и перспективе у будућности односа Русије и Срба. Методологија истраживања је заснована на коришћењу адекватних повесних источника и релевантне стручне литературе везане за тематику чланка. Главни резултати нашег истраживања показују да: 1. Историјски посматрано, само је (царска) Русија била заинтересована да заштити балканске Словене православне хришћанске оријентације од било које стране силе а у оквиру политике свесловенства и идеологије засноване на међусловенској узајамности и братству; 2. Балканске православне нације могу пре свега да захвале Русији на својим независним државама и очувању свог националног идентитета; 3. Русија након Хладног рата није ништа друго него тајкунизована *Газпром Република* која нема стварних намера, бар до украјинске кризе 2014. г., да нарушава тренутни светски поредак НАТО пакта – *амерички мир*; и 4. Срби и Србија су постали главне жртве овако идеалних партнерских односа на међународном плану након Хладног рата између Запада и Републике Газпром Русије.

Кључне речи: НАТО, светски поредак, Русија, Срби, Србија, спољна политика, Балкан, Југоисточна Европа, Јужни Словени, панславизам, међународни односи, глобална политика, амерички мир

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