REGIONAL SECURITY CONCEPTS
IN THE "THREE SEAS SYSTEM"

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After the fall of the Iron Curtain and end of the Cold War between the antagonist camps, a significant and important phenomenon that was hampering the natural development of humanity was also abolished: border impenetrability and passage difficulties. This aspect provided the possibility to the different power centers to create new and global projects in order to enhance (disseminate) their influence and to strengthen their positions.

Naturally, the ideas of dissemination and strengthening influences of the aforementioned power centers turned into systems of concrete actions. These systems were deemed as "globalization projects," and entered into the competition amongst each other.

This discrepancy is quite obvious in the field of global infrastructure systems, which are necessary from a geo-economic standpoint because creating a joint global economic system is one of the most important preconditions for development. However, from the geopolitical perspective, this objective creates fierce competition for global infrastructures in control.

In the actual area pertaining to Armenia, this competition in total essence (wars, activation of latent conflicts – which are causing civil wars and outbreaks of violence, – massive and uncontrollable migration processes) is displayed in the "Three Seas System:" the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian Seas.

The concept of the "Three Seas System" relies on both traditional political and geographic/taxonomic perception of the term "region," and also on its actual meaning[1].

The principal characteristics of the "Three Seas System" are the (1) objective necessity of unified access to the natural resources available in the region, (2) the peculiarities of the professional development of the work resources, (3) the relative easiness of unification of communication and transport infrastructures, and (4) the joint dominating values and threats (the most important trait.)

The first rationale for this system to be perceived as a region was seen immediately after the end of the Cold War when the Euro-Atlantic and European "Greater Middle East" and "Wider Europe" projects were publicly introduced. In the framework of these mega-regional projects, conventional infrastructural NABUCCOs were developed and were considered propaganda-based and aggressive.

The objective is that the power centers (whose resources are sufficient for the implementation of such global programs) face the resistance of the power centers with inadequate/insufficient resources for project implementation.

These centers attempt to obstruct those who aspire to get involved, which will make those claims impossible.

In other words, all of those tools, which can block communication and transportation lines, are applicable for this purpose. In turn, a chaotic situation prevails in the "Three Seas Systems." Eventually, the Chinese "One road, one belt" was joined to these projects.

It is clear that different means and tools are used for the implementation of these goals. The economic projects are also ideological and political, as they utilize propaganda, military, cultural and migration subjects. NATO is expanding, CSTO has been established, the borders of the EU are enlarging, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasian Economic Community strive to develop their economic and cultural spheres, and so on.

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[1] For the details about "Three seas theory" see: Hovhannisyan D., Regional tendencies in the context of "Three seas theory" // Analytical bulletin: The system of three seas - Center for Civilization and Cultural Studies, vol. 9, Yerevan, 2016, pp. 8-36.

As a result, proxy wars begin such as the "Arab Spring," and several important areas of the "Three Seas System" are being destroyed. This phenomenon impacts the whole system. Simultaneously, regional players are trying to gain a bigger share upon receiving their role and placement in the different management positions associated with communication and transportation structures.

For that purpose, the inherited mythologems are reinterpreted and reenacted, and new mythopolitic fields are created with old names originating from the content and goals under the flags of new ideologems. Such types of ideologems are from the "Islamic world," "The Kalifate (ISIS)," "The Turkish world," etc.

These ideologems are widely used in propaganda and information fields. In some cases, the ideologems help implement infrastructural projects reaching their goals. On the one hand, this phenomenon is important from the regional development perspective, but on the other hand, it aggravates conflict and increases instability and tension. As a result, the little sub-region called the "South Caucasus" has recently reappeared in the political center of attention of the world.

There are clear reasons to explain this: the Black Sea within the "Three seas system" sharply increases tension. This is evident in the case of the developments around Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the increasing tensions of Georgian-Russian relations, and the unpredictability of Russian-Turkish relations in light of recent developments.

There are also tensions in NATO-Russia relations, which are especially dangerous in the Black Sea basin where military and naval subdivisions belonging to these two forces are deployed.

The additional tension to these gives the issue of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which is constantly at risk of increasing into war. The outbreak of military tension in 2016 was possible to prevent, but its threat remains.

When engaged in wider contexts, this sub-region that was peripheral in the past, is turning into a link of important communications. Currently, the South Caucasian countries are impacting inter-regional challenges and contradictions, and interests and occasional power confrontations which were assumed external for this region in the recent past.

Developments in the Middle East with refugee migration, increasing threats from fighters returning from military operation zones, and other migratory threats (i.e. smuggling, trafficking, limiting and interrupting economic projects and links,) are multiplying due to the dangers faced by the sub-region.

In this framework, there are urgent indefinite questions: (1) how do all the stakeholders see the security system structure, (2) what future developments can be expected from the aforementioned and from the unstated but nevertheless important processes, (3) what solutions are the regional players introducing, and (4) what kind of new conflict zones can develop in the foreseeable future.

In the 1990s, a number of proposals were made regarding the South Caucasus security system. Some examples include the "Caucasian Home" initiative raised by Eduard Shevardnadze, the "4+1" format initiated by Russia and contained Russia+ Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the EU proposal called "2+3+3" that included the U.S., EU+ Russia, Iran, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, to name a few. Shortly following the August 2008 War, Turkey created a proposal that did not include Iran; this is why it was doomed to fail.

All of the aforementioned examples of security systems did not consider specific motions within the modern world, and they did not logically coincide with the "Three Seas System."

Meanwhile, this logic is present in the actions of existing military-political field, primarily the NATO and CSTO- organizations, and it is possible that a third power will join them soon: the military organization of the EU. The formation of this organization was suspended as a result of the failure of the constitution of the EU, but the process of its creation was restarted after Great Britain's decision to leave the EU.

The main issue, however, is that these systems are in a competitive state and before this competition eventually ends, both the mega-region and our small sub-region will continue to remain unstable and endangered.