

Anul XX nr. 96-97 (4/2022)



# GeoPolitica

Revistă de Geografie Politică, GeoPolitică și GeoStrategie



**CENTRE DE PUTERE,  
AXE ȘI FALII GEOPOLITICE**

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**CENTRE DE PUTERE  
AXE ȘI FALII GEOPOLITICE**

# GeoPolitica®

Revistă de Geografie Politică, Geopolitică și Geostrategie

București 2023

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## **SEMNAL EDITORIAL**

## SOVIET POLITICAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE STILL ALIVE

*Oleksandr RUSNAK, PhD*

### **HOW THE KREMLIN USES STALIN'S METHODS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

During 1917-1920, the Bolsheviks restored, albeit in a truncated form, the Russian Empire, which had collapsed, unable to withstand the pressures of the First World War. However, the empire was restored in a qualitatively different form - as the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation surrounded itself with a tier of union republics, each of which formally had certain state rights. But the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party tightly held together the conglomerate of the Union Republics, forming a more centralized state than the previous empire.

After the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union formed an outer tier of formally independent states along the perimeter of the western borders of the USSR - from Finland to Bulgaria. With the exception of Finland and Austria, communist parties came to power in them, with the help of which Moscow kept the peoples freed from Hitler's rule in its sphere of attraction. At the same time, Stalin managed to preserve for Russia all the territorial possessions thanks to the implementation of the Ribbentrop - Molotov Pact in 1939-1940, as well as annex new territories - part of East Prussia, the Kuril Islands, and South Sakhalin. Russia also absorbed a small republic located in Central Asia - Tuva.

Having agreed in Yalta on a significant expansion of the Soviet empire in order to complete the defeat of Germany and Japan with the help of Stalin, the leaders of the United States and Great Britain intended to put an end to further encroachment by the Kremlin. However, the end of the war did not stop, but rather encouraged Moscow to new territorial acquisitions. The Soviet Union provided substantial assistance to the Communist Party of China, which was directing the civil war in its country to a victorious end. Active support was provided to the Communist Party of Greece, which also unleashed a civil war. The USSR, with the help of organized „civil society“, made territorial claims to Turkey and Iran. Finally, Soviet Russia actively interfered in the internal affairs of France and other countries of Western Europe with the aim of Sovietizing them.

In 1945, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were fenced off from the western part of the continent by the „iron curtain“ created by the Soviet presence. At first disguised, and then more and more openly, the Soviet administration began to establish political regimes in these countries, which in their main features did not differ from their own. Under the guise of „people's democracy“, the dictatorship of local communist parties, completely dependent on Moscow, was established. Having received power from Stalin's hands, the leaders of these parties had to obey Soviet dictates.

Only in two cases did the Soviet presence not lead to a radical change in the socio-political order. Although Soviet troops were stationed in Austria until 1955,

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and local communists entered the government and even controlled its power structures, the Sovietization of this country did not take place. Austria was saved by the fact that most of it was occupied by the Western allies of the USSR. The leaders of the USSR considered it impractical to create, as in Germany, an Austrian Sovietized state in their zone of occupation. After all, Austria was a very small country.

It was not possible to sovietize Finland either. There were no Soviet troops in this country, but social and political life was regulated by the Union Control Commission, headed by a representative of Moscow. The allergy to the Russian presence among the majority of Finns was so deep that the Kremlin was unable to grow an influential communist party in the country. The Soviets had to limit themselves to monitoring the foreign policy activities of the Finnish government.

In this sense, the year 1947 was indicative. Then Moscow did not allow the satellite countries to participate in the conference in Paris, which discussed the basic principles of the Marshall Plan. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had already formed representative delegations to participate in the conference, as they were vitally interested in American long-term interest-free loans. After learning about Moscow's negative reaction, the governments of these countries were forced to abandon the trip to Paris, that is, the prospect of receiving billions in hard currency loans. In the case of Poland, the matter reached a diplomatic scandal. At a special meeting, the Polish government considered the question of participation in the Paris conference and announced that it would announce its decision only the next day. However, early in the morning on the day of the meeting, Moscow radio already reported that the invitation of France and Great Britain was rejected by Warsaw.

Another tool of Moscow at that time was the Kominformburo, which, contrary to its name, did not deal with information, but with direct intervention in the affairs of countries controlled by communist parties. This organization was used to force local leaders to abandon national specificities in communist construction and adopt the Soviet model. This was achieved not by persuasion, but by force. In the spring of 1948, in the departments of the Central Committee of the CPSUfbj, a block of materials was prepared, intended to substantiate significant changes in the leadership of a number of communist parties. Most serious accusations were contained in the official memo „On the anti-Marxist attitudes of the leaders of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in matters of internal and foreign policy.”

However, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Josip Broz "Tito" was, unlike the leaders of other parties, quite an independent figure. The partisan army created by the Yugoslav communists independently liberated most of their country from the Nazis. The Yugoslavs did not obey Stalin's dictates, just as they did not obey Hitler's in 1941. As a result, the Kominformburo at a meeting in Budapest in June 1948 adopted a resolution whose content was determined by the title: „Yugoslav Communist Party under the rule of murderers and spies.”

In 1949, Moscow created the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), which included all the countries of the „people's democracy”, with the exception of Yugoslavia. The political dictate carried out through Kominform was complemented by economic dictate. However, in many cases the members of the Comecon could use industrial raw materials, fuel resources and goods coming from the Soviet Union at

prices lower than the world level. The Soviet leaders understood that it was impossible to keep the countries of the Warsaw Pact in the orbit of their influence by force alone. They made sure that the standard of living of the population of these countries grew faster than the well-being of the citizens of the USSR.

The basis of these technologies was used by the Russian occupiers both in Crimea and in part of the Ukrainian Donbas after 2014, and on the territory of the occupied southern Ukraine in 2022. As in the previously described cases after the Second World War, the establishment of a puppet government was preceded by force / military actions (with the difference in the fact that at that time the USSR fought against Nazism and took advantage of its military successes). But in both cases the result is the same - Moscow brings its power on the bayonets. And now also flagrantly violating international law and all possible human rights, in the creation of which at one time representatives of Moscow actively participated.

Let us give an example from the UN. The USSR played an important role in the establishment of this organization. However, from that moment on, it was no secret for anyone that various parties tried to use it for their own purposes. But more often, various manipulations of the Soviet side were most openly observed. Unfortunately, we are seeing similar attempts by Moscow to use the UN for its criminal purposes even now. In particular, regarding issues related to the Russian-Ukrainian war. We strongly believe that significant changes are necessary, including a complete restart of the UN's work on new principles that would provide an opportunity to balance Russian interests. To prove its usefulness to humanity, the UN must start doing something real. Otherwise, the consequences will be the death not only of many thousands of Ukrainians. There is a threat of a new world redivision, in which new victims are inevitable. Especially if Russia continues to participate in it.

#### **RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR BLUFF OR A SCENARIO THAT HUMANITY HAS ALREADY GONE THROUGH BEFORE**

Since the seizure of nuclear facilities on the territory of Ukraine by Russian troops, there have been repeated fears about their possible use for military purposes. However, if earlier it was only about the long-defunct Chornobyl NPP or Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, now we repeatedly hear from Russian leaders about the possibility of their troops using nuclear weapons.

Judging by the general context of events on the Russian-Ukrainian front, Russia resorts to this kind of narrative when there are failures in achieving the goals of their „special operation“. However, taking into account the riskiness of using either nuclear weapons or the possible „irregular“ situations at Ukrainian nuclear plants due to Russia's fault for the territories of the aggressor itself, it is difficult to call these actions anything other than a nuclear bluff.

Not even nuclear blackmail, but bluff. After all, nuclear blackmail is a nuclear strategy in which the state, through intimidation and the threat of using nuclear weapons, tries to get the enemy to take certain actions in its favor. This is a political way of using nuclear weapons, which is quite effective, but only in relation to non-nuclear states. If the strategy of nuclear blackmail is used against a nuclear state, the risk of escalation of the conflict and the start of a nuclear war inevitably increases. This blackmail against non-nuclear states linked to a nuclear state by a military

; alliance is also ineffective.

Since the support of Ukraine after February 24, 2022 by the USA (the largest nuclear power and the largest military machine in the world) is not in doubt, the prospects of nuclear blackmail of Russia are reduced to a low effect or even a partial „shot in the foot“. This Russian bluff is very similar to the case of the Khrushchev era that has already passed in world history, which ended with the Caribbean crisis of 1962.

We will remind that half a century ago, the American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft discovered Soviet nuclear missile launchers secretly delivered in Cuba. Some authors believe that Nikita Khrushchev was going to pull out the missiles in Cuba as a trump card at the appropriate moment and demand the withdrawal of American troops from Europe, but the Americans learned about the redeployment of the missiles before the group could be fully deployed. The data published these days lead to an unexpected conclusion: the world crisis has become partly a storm in a glass of water, since there was practically nothing to shoot at the USA from the „Island of Freedom“.

But the roots of the issue are even deeper. As it later turned out, after the launch of the first Soviet satellite, Khrushchev was desperately bluffing, claiming that Soviet factories were producing rockets „like sausages.“ However, the theme of „missile lag“, which the Republicans allegedly allowed, was already at the center of the American presidential campaign of 1959. Meanwhile, as of January 1961, the USSR had only one 8K71 intercontinental missile at the Plesetsk cosmodrome, theoretically capable of reaching America, and even then, due to technical defects, it was not on combat duty.

And that's when the thought ripened in Khrushchev's head that it would be good to „put a hedgehog in the pants of the Americans“ by pushing the carriers of nuclear weapons to their borders. In addition, having met Kennedy in Vienna in June 1961, the Soviet leader considered him an inexperienced young man who could be easily blackmailed. In fact, Kennedy, unlike Khrushchev, saw the Second World War not from the generals' dugouts, but fought in the Pacific Ocean as the commander of a torpedo boat, and he did not suffer from a lack of determination, despite his intelligent appearance.

What happened as a result? As another Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, later recalled: „I will never forget how Nikita, in a panic, would sometimes send a telegram to Kennedy, then demand that it be detained and recalled. And why? Nikita wanted to deceive the Americans. Shouted at the presidium of the Central Committee: „We will hit a fly in Washington with a rocket!“. And this fool Frol Kozlov echoed him: „We are holding a gun to the Americans' temples!“ And what happened? Shame! And they almost did not end up in a world war. How much work had to be put in to believe that we really want peace!“ said Khrushchev's successor.

The parties managed to reach a compromise, but, according to historians, the Soviet Union suffered a military-strategic and moral-political defeat. The failed operation served as one of the accusations against Khrushchev when he was removed from power two years later.

That is why, with the current superiority of American weapons, including nuclear ones, over Russian ones, the desperate cries of Moscow politicians about the possible use of nuclear weapons are nothing more than an empty bluff.