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Political Analysis Report

The Impact of the Georgian Crisis on the World Order

- in search for solutions after the failed unipolarism -

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The Georgian crisis, with its regional and global reverberations, will remain in history as a symbolic moment for the end of the unipolar world, much like the removal of Romulus Augustus by the Visigoth Odoacer was considered as the date of the collapse of the Roman Empire or as the revolution of Cromwell was considered as an event to mark the end of the feudal order and the beginning of the modern era. When a country (namely Russia) militarily intervenes on the territory of another to unilaterally promote there its own political logic and the international community realizes it does not have the instruments to impose the return to the status quo ante, it means that the world is in a crisis of means. When the international community (namely the EU and the US) has no mechanisms to define a common point of view and mobilize a common will to defend a status quo and some rules on which it dwells and which tend to preserve it, it means that the world is in a crisis of institutions. When the members of international community (namely, the Euro-Atlantic democracies) are not able to demand to one of them (namely Russia) to respect a single provision of international law which they themselves had not abided by, the world is confronted with a moral crisis. The three crises create the premises for the prevalence of the law of force over the force of the law; they circumscribe the crisis to the international law together with which they mark the crisis of the global order.

Starting from the assessments regarding the state of the present international system, in the context of the Russian-Georgian conflict of August 2008, the “Ovidiu Sincai” Institute intends to examine, through this report, the causes of the crisis of unipolarism, possible evolutions and, also, solutions for the re-organization of the international system.

I. The State of International Actors from the Perspective of the Russian-Georgian War

a) General thesis

The historical significance of the Georgian crisis does not consist in its scenario and unfolding. In this respect, it closely resembles to the smallest detail the American policy in the Western Balkans and, to some extent, in the Persian Gulf after the Cold War; these policies have thus set a precedent, irrespective of what western countries say. The essential part is Russia's showdown towards the US and the fact that the latter can do nothing more than Russia did when it was affected by American unilateralism – mainly protesting. If the Kosovo solution was only a *sui generis* one, as America and some of its western allies pretend, then the Kremlin proves that *sui generis* solutions can also be applied to other places. Or, an order characterized by and defined as a sum of *sui generis* solutions is, in fact, anarchy. For the authority of the single superpower it is devastating the fact

that, during the same three weeks, the US were defeated – with different means – on the battlefield, indirectly, by Russia in the Caucasus and directly, in the Olympic arena, by China, in Beijing. In the context of these failures, Washington was forced to call back its support for Israel in the strategic action concerning the air-strikes against Iran, an action meant that, at the end of the Bush administration, to deter the nuclear ambitions of the Islamic regime in Tehran.

b) United States of America

The collapse of the bipolar world system was not a victory of the capitalist democratic West over the communist totalitarian East but the implosion of the latter under the effect of the objective market laws, correlated with the civilization of the former under the pressure of social demands. At the great scale of history there was more a convergence, which led to an end of the ideological battle short of combatants, rather than the exclusion of the weakest by the strongest or the conversion of the wrongful by the righteous. Therefore, the western bloc, the United States, erroneously also assumed with the triumph the unique title of world peace guardian, a peace organised according to its principles, values and practices. *Pax Americana* could last only as long as its non-American subjects – close to becoming an object of an ending history – had hoped that a the unique superpower has the wish, science and capability to turn the “American dream” not only into a universal project but into a universal reality. Unfortunately, the United States did not know how, couldn’t and did not thrive to integrate neither its very old allies nor its old enemies, neither its new faithful nor its traditional clients in a universe that would combine welfare and dignity, security and freedom, multiculturalism and human solidarity, as they had done on their own territory. Instead they considered themselves in the right of “evangelize” the world imposing the Word of the Holy Scripture of the New American Jerusalem, without the promise land and the offer of saving its dignity. After the end of the Cold War, the American universalism (model) did not exclude American nationalism. After the “Evil Empire” (USSR) has disappeared, the “Good Empire” (USA) had in fact simply become the “American Empire”, mainly preoccupied with collecting its imperial rent rather than with imperial integration. Politico-ideological bipolarism was followed by a politico-ideological unipolarism, when a purely and simply integrative unipolarism was needed. Needed but not possible. Even without America’s errors, Americano-centrism would not have lasted because any unipolarism is essentially unstable. Humankind cannot stand too much on one foot. The American lack of realism and narcissism (at half pace with the globalization of the American model) only accelerated an imminent change.

The structural weaknesses of the American power policy, previously mentioned, have become the more obvious in a historical context that joined them:

- i) ***The end of Bush Administration mandate***, while the American president has a low confidence rate both in the United States and abroad. Hence, the US military and diplomatic establishment is in a standby state, in

- order to see the result of presidential elections and the directions that the new president will set to the American policy in the post-Bush era;
- ii) ***The hardships of American economy***, in the context of the financial crisis caused by *sub-prime* credits, as well as by the rise in oil price. America has thus become more dependent on capitals based on petrodollars of Middle East dynasties, as well as on China's subtle blackmail, as the latter continues to preserve its reserves in dollars and not in euro. Due to the huge financial reserves held by China we can even speak about co-dependence relation between Beijing and Washington;
 - iii) ***The complications of the "Iraqi file"***, to which one does not envisage short and medium term solutions, both Barack Obama and John McCain having few strategic options in order to win peace and region securization, after the removal of the Saddam Hussein regime;
 - iv) ***The precariousness of the military situation in Afghanistan***, as the European allies from NATO are reserved in what concerns a substantial logistic involvement and Pakistan offers ever more obvious signals that it is set to quit the logic of a US faithful ally. As a desperate reaction, the Bush administration decided to end the trade-nuclear embargo imposed to India, in order to check the new president from Islamabad and the Islamist party supporting him but also in order to gain arguments in order to deter a too close strategic relation between New Delhi and Moscow.

The United States could not remain insensitive to the Russian-Georgian conflict, in their attempt to preserve a certain control over the Caucasus area. As an immediate retaliation move the protocol for deploying the Theatre Missile Defence in Poland was signed (although Washington continuously claimed that this is not and cannot be set against Russia) and the military show-offs in the Black Sea were intensified (although they thus reduce the chances of an agreement between Russia and Turkey to modify the Montreux Treaty). The United States have tested Russia, by sending a military sheep in the Georgian port of Poti, which had previously been under the control of Russian troops and was declared by Moscow as part of the "security area". Russian military did not risk a confrontationist attitude towards the US, being conscious that they cannot involve in a conflict that can have incalculable costs. Also, the representatives of the Washington "hawks", Vice-president Dick Cheney, visited the Caucasus region, sending warning message to Russia. Anyhow, one can say that the American response was especially oriented at the level of rhetoric.

On the other hand, an imminent question concerns the role of the United States in triggering the Russian-Georgian conflict. The answer is still at the level of a hypothesis. A first version is the official one, according to which the Georgian attack was achieved without the US acceptance, the impetuous president Saakashvili betting on a Russian non-reaction, as a result of the "Olympic truce". On the other hand, a hypothesis was launched according to which the United

States knew about the imminence of a Georgian attack or even suggested this course of action to Tbilisi, as the “hawks”, supporters of a strong stand towards Moscow, would thus create in America a favourable psychological context for McCain rather than for Obama. The reasoning behind such a hypothesis is that John McCain would be preferred instead of Barack Obama if the American public opinion would be “mindset” in the logic of war, confrontation, as the old war veteran would be considered fit for an open competition with Russia than the multicultural Afro-American candidate. It is interesting that such hypothesis were advanced both in the democratic European media and by Vladimir Putin. A clear answer cannot be given but in the future.

c) Russian Federation

The great merit of Vladimir Putin, in the eyes of Russians, is that of restoring Russia’s pride, as a result of introducing state control over the economy and restoring order in the security and defence system, while the members of secret services became more “involved” in the power system, both formally and informally. The range of frozen conflicts implanted at the end of the Cold War, from the Caucasus, through Transdnistria, until the Kaliningrad enclave, were considered safety elements of a Russian defensive strategy during the Boris Yeltsin period. Under Vladimir Putin, they were reconsidered in the perspective of a Russian offensive policy, for organizing some test-cases which would certify the new international endeavour of the Russian Federation. Before the formal beginning of the Russian-Georgian conflict, the power of Tbilisi was subjected to some harassment both by the Russian aviation and by South Ossetian and Abkhazian leaders. In fact, Georgia was at a dead end, as the unclear situations from South Ossetia and Abkhazia, formally under the sovereignty of the Georgian state, a situation recognized by the international community, blocked its accession perspectives into NATO and the European Union. Therefore, it is not highly speculative too say that Russia set a trap to Georgia, though military harassments from the period May-June 2008, and the imprudent president Saakashvili fell into it, hoping that a clarification of the South Ossetia’s status and, presumably, of Abkhazia’s, will open the path to the small Caucasian state towards NATO and the European Union.

Russia has intervened militarily in Georgia in the name of the doctrine of “defending Russian citizens”, the Georgian attack being considered an act of aggression. Russia used impressive military resources to confront a noisy but weak opponent, because they knew the United States will not be able to have a defending reaction towards their ally or, in any case, not an immediate one. As in the case of the United States in Iraq in 2003, the military confrontation was quickly won but managing the new situation is more difficult. The couple Putin-Medvedev demanded the creation of a new international order, based on the rules of multi-polarism. However, even during the warm conflict in the Caucasus it was clear that the Russian Federation is not a clear winner of this conflict, as a part of

the western capitals in Russia quickly left the country, the Moscow stock exchange collapsed, the oil price did not rise but, on the contrary, it continued to shrink and the West vocally expressed concern regarding Kremlin's intentions. The Swedish minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, did not hesitate to compare Russia's rise to that of Nazi Germany in the 30s of the last century. Taking advantage of the ambition of the impetuous French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, of being the mediator for a Russian-Georgian agreement aimed at re-freezing the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts, Russia skilfully negotiated a plan in six points, full of ambiguities which allowed for interpretations supporting both the preservation of its troops on Georgian territory, exceeding the border of the secessionist provinces and its recognition of their independence. Even if, under the pressure of some of the allies and the public opinion, the French president was then forced to adopt a more firm attitude, the firmness did not exceed the level of words. The presence of Russian troops as "peace-keeping" forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia was confirmed and their international status was accepted, even if only implicitly, as a discussion issue, in spite of declarations concerning the respect for Georgia's territorial integrity (declaration similar to those concerning Yugoslavia's territorial integrity, a decade ago).

In essence, Vladimir Putin's strategy of turning Russia into a great power again is based on the idea of the West's dependence on the Russian federation in a double meaning: *economically/energetically* (Europe) and *strategically* (the United States need Russia in the Afghanistan conflict and in the resolution of the Iran issue, in continuing the international space programme etc.). Russia's tactics are inspired by the Latin saying *divide et impera*: Moscow aims at untying Europe from the United States under the promise of building an economic integrated bloc as well as of friendly tariff policies in the energy sector, but also at paralyzing the European Union as a result of irreconcilable divergences between the supporters of a conciliatory "soft" attitude and those of a firm "hard" position. In what concerns the aspect of European rhetoric, harsh messages were mixed with less hostile ones.

At another level, Russia initiated policies of global competition or uses a rhetoric typical to the bipolar era: the intention of using Syrian ports in the competition with NATO in the Mediterranean; demonstrative military exercises in the Far East, various skirmishes with the United States' ally, Japan; sending military ships in the Atlantic and bombers in Latin America, in collaboration with Chavist Venezuela; the threat of remilitarizing Kaliningrad or hitting the Theatre Missile Defence from Poland and the Czech Republic, followed, though, by the proposal of accepting the location of American interceptors in exchange for cancelling the support for Georgia. All these elements of the Russian politico-diplomatic ballet were perceived as attacks launched in a slow rate, in order to prove Russia's strength, so that western negotiators are put under pressure and tactical gains are transformed by Moscow in strategic ones. For example, Russia wants to control the energy routes in Georgia, insisting on maintaining a *sui*

generis “security area” beyond the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, on Georgian territory, with the collateral effect of blocking the access of the Georgian state to NATO and the EU.

The gesture that can prove to be a strategic error for the Russian Federation is its recognition of South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s independence, to the extent to which these new “*sui generis* cases” could generate similar chain reactions within Russia. The Russian political elite seem to forget the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union was first achieved from within, as a result of the national impetus which destroyed the walls of the “Soviet camp”. It is hard to believe, though, that the risk was not calculated. Its acceptance indicates the fact that *Russia not only sees as possible the forced containment of internal secessionism, but also less costly taking into account the geo-strategic advantage gained in Transcaucasia and the politico-diplomatic one in the negotiations related to Transdniestria, Crimea and Kosovo, generally in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.*

What seemed to count less was the loss of moral superiority which Russia had gained in the world against the US, as a defender of the territorial integrity of small and medium size states. On the long term this could seriously limit Russia’s political manoeuvre capacity at global level.

At the same time, Moscow’s gesture has awakened the concern of Central Asian countries, terrified that they could become objects of subversion from their powerful neighbour, under the pretext of defending the cause of Russian citizens, as it happened in South Ossetia. The Shanghai Group, of which China is also a member, seen by Russia as a balance against the United States, did not approve Moscow’s gestures of punishment against Georgia and, even less, its recognizing independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In turn, Armenia, a faithful ally of Moscow, scared by the fact that Azerbaijan could attempt a military solution in Nagorno-Karabakh, counting on the lack of Russian military-diplomatic resources necessary for repeating the Ossetian scenario (especially the lack of a common border with that province), decided to warm up relations with Turkey. *(Turkey is maybe the great winner of the Georgian crisis, through the political and diplomatic importance it gained in the Black Sea and Caucasus region, an objective role hard to ignore both by the US and the EU.)*

Irrespective of the way in which Russia’s cost calculation is made concerning its action in Georgia and its retreat from this country, one can ultimately believe that the relevant and pursued goal was the strategic win related to the purpose of redefining the world order and, within it, a redefinition of Russia’s post-Soviet role at global level. Beside this objective, Moscow probably wanted to impose an opening of negotiations concerning a post-unipolar order and also to strengthen its position within these negotiations; on the other hand, by maximizing the chances of the Republican candidate, John McCain, of winning the presidential elections in the USA, it aimed to acquire the most convenient negotiation partner. In such a context, it is interesting to mention the strong points

of Russia's global strategy, as they were recently synthesized by President Medvedev:

- **An international order based on principles and rules.** By this primordial object, Russia wants in fact to benefit from predictability and stability, taking into account the fact that its interests are complex and their achievement is hard to manage on so many levels.

- **A pluri-polar or multipolar order.** In this case, the problem resides in what Russia understands through multipolarism. If this multipolarism is *Orwellian*, in which some poles are more important than others, then one can imagine that Russia continues to be nostalgic about the times of bipolarism and, therefore, it must be convinced to accept not only multipolarism, but also a symmetry of poles.

- **An order that would exclude confrontation.** The principle is correct and implies the reform of international institutions, but it can also hide the acknowledgement of the fact that Russia does not have the resources to confront the other global actors on medium and long term.

- **An order that would admit Russia's right to defend its citizens, no matter where they would be in the world.** In fact, this is a nationalist approach which changes, at the same time, the purpose into means.

- **An order in which Russia would obtain recognition if its interests in its near-abroad areas.** Obviously, this is a comeback to the spheres of influence, which is unacceptable and proves that Russia must modernize its concept of multipolarism.

Russia's war with Georgia has emphasized, once more, the structural identity dilemma of the Russian state: its integration into the Extended West, with all that this means under the aspect of political and economic organization or its establishment as a separate bloc, with Central Asian satellites or Far Eastern partners – mainly China, organized under the rules of “sovereign democracy”. The Medvedev-Putin couple seems to have reached the conclusion that Russia's power secret does not lie in finally choosing one of the alternatives but in fact in an incertitude that equally fascinates and horrifies the West and the East, keeping awake the curiosity and attraction for the “Slavic soul”. *For Russian strategists the winning cocktail seems to be a combination between the management of international relations through crisis, the controlled slide in tactical actions, its own security obtained at the expense of its neighbours' insecurity, political use of the energy asset and exploiting the fear of global actors towards the perspective of direct confrontation among them (so, including with Russia), the interchange between cold and warm, sweet and bitter, aggressiveness and friendliness, intransigence and conciliation, verticality and cynicism in the attitude towards the Euro-Atlantic West, the balance between opening towards Europe and opening towards Asia, encouraging bilateral relations with EU member states cumulated with direct negotiations with the USA over the heads of Europeans. One cannot*

say for sure that such an approach is necessarily correct. In any case, though, it indicates that the reaction of Euro-Atlantic democracies towards Russia will have to take into account the complexity and sophistication of the latter's strategy and at the same time find the proper balance between conciliation and confrontation or, more precisely, by rejecting both to accomplish the right balance between (strategic) firmness and (tactical) flexibility.

d) European Union

Through a fortunate coincidence, the Russian-Georgian conflict took place during France's mandate at the half-year presidency of the European Union. Thus, the communitarian executive also benefited from the contribution of an EU key-state, Nicolas Sarkozy thus having the possibility/mission to naturally involve in the management of the Georgian crisis.

Immediately after the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Georgia, on 7 August 2008, the European diplomacy intervened, asking for a halt in the warfare operations. Nicolas Sarkozy personally went to Moscow and obtained a six points plan for stopping the war, immediately accepted by Georgia. The agreement mediated by Sarkozy was criticized by a part of European states (Poland and the Baltic states) because the retreat of Russian troops was to be accomplished along alignments existing before the conflict, thus recognizing *de facto* the legitimacy of Russian military presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia reinterpreted the peace agreement, speaking about the existence of more versions, the "real" one allowing for the creation of "security zones" on Georgian territory.

This is the context in which the extraordinary European Council took place on 1st September in Brussels. Its results were interpreted in the political and diplomatic circles, according to interest, as a triumph or, on the contrary, as a failure. The defining word of the Summit was "unity", thus avoiding the situation in 2003, when Europe was divided by the war in Iraq. From this point of view, the European Council of 1st September represents a better result than the pessimistic provisions under which it started. In spite of Russia's "attorneys" within the European Council (especially Silvio Berlusconi), the EU Summit has condemned Russia's "disproportionate reaction", has delayed *sine die* the negotiation of a new partnership with the Russian Federation and has criticized the unilateral recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It was not agreed to impose sanctions on Moscow and no solution was found for the "frozen conflicts" recently "warmed-up". In other words, Georgia's integrity is recognized and also the fact that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are parts of the Georgian state, but no solution was identified for re-establishing the sovereignty of the Tbilisi government over the territory of the breakaway republics.

Another visit to Moscow was needed (on 8 September), this time by the trio Nicolas Sarkozy – Jose Barroso – Javier Solana, in order to get a new commitment from Russia concerning the retreat of its troops from Georgia, as well as accepting

a mission of EU observers in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but the issue of Georgia's integrity remained unsolved. On 10 September, though, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, excluded sending of EU observers in the Georgian separatist republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The Russian-Georgian conflict has once again emphasized the fracture lines existing within the European Union regarding relations with the Russian Federation: on one side there are the states preoccupied with the economic benefits they can have as a result of a close bilateral relation with Russia and on the other side are the states preoccupied by the security risks generated by the Russian state, thus opting for a much closer transatlantic relation. Differences of opinions also exist within each state, between different political parties (for example, in Germany, SPD favours an attitude of collaboration with Russia, while CDU has more critical attitude; in Italy, Berlusconi intensely cultivates relations with Russia, while the Democratic Party has a more reticent attitude towards Russian leaders). *Moscow knows about the existence of these differences of interests and contributes to their deepening by applying preferential policies, hoping for an internal block within the European Union.* Sometimes it is successful, other times it fails, and the weaknesses of the EU collective leadership are despised and mocked by the Russian leadership. Thus can be explained the behaviours of Russian leaders related to agreements mediated by EU leaders, initially accepted and then contested, to be ultimately considered risible. It is the typical attitude of elites formed in an imperial climate, with an authoritarian mentality, showing little respect for a neighbour possessing vulnerabilities which are specific to democratic pluralism but which is, nevertheless, necessary to them and therefore they do not risk to confront directly.

e) China

Certainly, the Russian-Georgian war has raised irritation in Beijing, because the Moscow forceful manner somehow shadowed the Olympic competition, for which China made impressive efforts, wishing to convince the world, once more, of the power and invention capacity of the Chinese nation. Being in the middle of an impressive economic development and preoccupied by structural consolidation, China did not politically support Moscow's actions for at least three reasons: i) Chinese leaders do not wish to strain their political relations with the United States and with Europe, as its economic impetus is closely linked with the access on these markets. China's economic growth is still essentially determined not so much by internal consumption, as by exports; ii) the separatism promoted by Russia is dangerous for China, if we think only about the Tibet issue; iii) for China, Russia can be a strategic partner only in moments of tense relations with the West, the two states being systemically incompatible and opposed – Russia is concerned by the advancing Chinese populations in its Far Eastern regions and China is unsettled about the growing Russian power, with an aggressive potential. Therefore, for Chinese leaders, the Russian-Georgian war can

be an excellent opportunity to redefine the ratio of forces at global level, but also a source of concern for the secondary costs such an operation would imply. For Beijing, the Caucasus is an interesting manoeuvre space, but Chinese leaders are not interested in amplifying tensions there in order to foster a change of the global balance, as encouraging secessionism can prove to be a suicidal policy. *China is a strong supporter of the multipolar system – therefore a counterbalance of the USA by Russia satisfy it – but, for this purpose, it is not willing to sacrifice economic growth or to confront centrifugal forces in Tibet or an autonomist tendency generated by the welfare of its coastline Eastern and Southern regions.*

f) International institutions – UN, OSCE

The Georgian crisis, as the Iraqi crisis of 2002-2003, indicated the structural incapacity of institutions created at the end of the Second World War and during the Cold War of finding solutions when a great power that can exercise its veto power is involved in a conflict. The US attempt to pass a resolution of the UN Security Council in the Georgian case was quickly abandoned due to the predictable veto of the Russian Federation. Russia's wish to transform its occupation troops in Georgia, situated in the so-called "security areas" on Georgian territory, into peace-keeping troops under OSCE mandate was not accepted by western states. These observations indicate the fact that *international institutions and the rules governing them are entitled to solve only minor conflicts or to offer judicial cover for conflicting situations around which great power are not in flagrant disagreement; for the rest, the force of law surrenders to the law of force. Such a conclusion can seem cynical from a moral perspective, but it expresses in fact the reality of contemporary relations in an unipolar system.*

II. Scenarios Concerning Changes in the International System

The end of any established order beckons a new era of incertitude or even disorder. The report is based on the thesis that the stage of a unipolar system is structurally obsolete. The perspectives are not at all clear. It is not essentially a crisis of defining objectives (Europe, Russia, China and even a part of the US elite accept and want a multipolar order, more stable in theory), but a misunderstanding regarding the choice of means for achieving the objectives and, consequently, a deadlock about the evaluation and acceptance of costs implied by using the respective instruments. Further we examine a few of the scenarios regarding change of the international system.

a) The (temporary) comeback of unipolarism

Although the Georgian crisis, added to the economic situation in the United States, to the political-military situation in Afghanistan and Iraq and, especially, to global degradation of trust in American symbols, give us reasons to believe we are

facing the end of a cycle in international relations, still, the United States' power is larger compared to that of any other individual competitor. The American economy is much larger than that of China, as well as the economy of the European Union, even with US debt becoming enormous in the last decade. The United States have technologically and quantitatively superior military capabilities compared to Russia and even China. The North American educational and research system is still the one with the best performances. These are only a few arguments which could be used by the US political elites to try to maintain global supremacy.

The awakening of Russian imperialism could be a factor for the rehabilitation of unipolarism. Frightened by the power and aggressive appetite of Russia, the EU would run towards the USA, asking them to remake the European balance and so agreeing to obey them. China, an emerging global power, could rediscover the fact that a *pax americana* is preferable to a Russian hegemony. Keeping in mind the Russian Federation's structural weaknesses (the demographic drop is not at all irrelevant), it is more probable that the EU, as well as China, India, Japan etc. will try to find different solutions for embracing unipolarism.

If we analyze the agendas of US presidential candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, we can conclude that both think in terms of American hegemony. Although the Republican "hawk" intends to continue its unilateral politics for the conservation of unipolarism, the democrat "dove", through a multilateral approach may have bigger chances to maintain American supremacy. *No matter what the results of the American presidential elections are, globalization brings with itself a shift in the map of power poles, so that the world will become multipolar; this does not mean, however, that it will become safer.*

b) The rebirth of the Cold War

There is much talk about the start of a new Cold War. This is wrong. The Cold War was unfolded between two blocs constituted on the basis of opposed ideologies. As far as it is concerned, today's world – or at least its leading actors – is based on an ideological backbone which is largely common. The Olympic Games in Beijing have proven that even China is no longer communist in the Marxist-Leninist meaning of the term. Although in the political field real democracies differ – America, the EU, Russia, Japan etc. offer the image of a system with variable geometry, putting together conservative, liberal and controlled, plebiscitary, representative and direct, pluralist and one-party etc. democracies – the ideological debate is no longer confrontational and does not concern principles, but is a matter of nuances. In a population that has objectively reached globalization, the laws of the market have triumphed – also in the form of social market economy – and have imposed a minimum of freedom, transparency and pluralism to the political establishment of society. The complete or massive separation between society and politics has become impossible. This makes a Cold War like the one in 1964-1989, impossible.

Cold War, as a bipolar conflict, is impossible, also, because after 1989 the formation of regional power poles has accelerated: China has become a true global competitor and India aspires to the same status. Even European states, reunited in the European Union, at one time closely linked to the USA, aspire to become global actors.

In a strongly interconnected world a global Cold War is no longer possible but regional conflicts that take certain element from the classical Cold War are foreseeable.

c) Warm conflict

According to certain considerations, post-unipolar disorder will concentrate into a warm conflagration, opposing the main global and regional actors: especially the US and Russia. This is highly unlikely. If the Cold War, as well as the two world wars that came before, left an important intellectual legacy then this legacy refers to the conviction of great powers that they should avoid direct confrontation. This conviction is part of today's political culture. War is not out of the question except for the one between the main operators of world order – or disorder. Smaller actors can quarrel because they know that the guardians, unable to let anyone of the parties to be excluded from the power game and the global balance mechanism, will not allow complete annihilation. No matter how harsh the rhetoric confrontation may be, the US and Russia will try to maintain the balance between them; a dynamic balance, it's true, but a balance nonetheless. Caught between Euro-Atlantic requirements and Euro-Asian challenges, the EU will refuse to let itself be involved in the confrontational obsessions of some of its eastern members, inspired by an unfortunate Russophobia which, it's true, has been suggested to them by the blade of the bayonet and impregnated into their souls by the caterpillars of Soviet tanks. The emerging superpowers, such as China, know that their historic chance is not in the increase of military spending, but in the increase of economic power which, in its turn, depends on avoiding war.

It is equally true, though, that if we examine defence budgets of the United States, Russia and China, we will find out they have increased constantly during the last decade. The governments of the respective countries have invested a large part of their economic growth in military technology and the US, furthermore, in its campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. *Even though military power is not used directly to enhance the wealth of these great powers or for a direct solution of their conflicts, the "hard power" component remains an important factor for the negotiation of strategic economical contracts or for insuring the favourable psychological conditions of an intense economic activity. The absence or presence of a significant "hard power" component determines if an international actor/state is perceived as being weak or strong, capable or incapable to defend its interests and promote its priorities in the world, sensitive or insensitive to certain challenges, threats or opportunities, active, reactive or passive in its relationships with others. Despite the low probability of witnessing a warm*

conflict of large proportions, military power will remain an essential test in establishing the hierarchy of global roles and symmetry of power between global actors will influence the stability of global order, including the nature, volume and evolution of marginal military confrontations.

In as much as the balance of military power means peace stability, the aggregation of this power raises the danger of war but, on the other hand, has an impact over the general development and, consequently, over the power of societies with increased resource spending for military security as opposed to those reserved for economic and social security. On the long term some of today's power poles may decline because of this reason. Understanding this evolution has led and will lead to a negotiation for disarmament, limiting of weapons and non-proliferation, which will decrease, in the end, the risk of a new warm conflict on a global scale. This is why we believe that structuring post-unipolar disorder will not lead to warm conflicts.

A question arises: if the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as during the Cold War, will make a global conflict less likely, taking into account the threat of mutual destruction? Even if it were so, under the nuclear threat umbrella a proliferation of economic conflicts (prohibitive customs, nationalizations, blackmail on economic operators in other states and so on) is still possible. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that *the destabilizing effects of the "balance of terror" were possible in a relatively rational world in which ideological confrontation was not doubled by a cultural confrontation. In other words, both ideological blocs belonged to the same type of culture and considered life to be the fundamental value; this type of culture is characterized by the respect it has for life or, at least, the fear it feels towards death. The "balance of terror" is functional only if the self censorship mechanism is functional. Or, as a consequence of the increase of nuclear weapons holders, of which some are part of cultures exalting the primacy of death over life, the "nuclear discipline" in the past seems to be questionable in the future. Either way, this does not deny the improbability of a (pseudo) "order" based on warm conflict because a nuclear conflagration leads to the end of any order or chaos at the same time, sending us back to the primordial chaos, in conclusion, outside of history. History will end but in different terms than those imagined by Fukuyama.*

d) Concert of powers

Going back to a bipolar world would mean going back to a balance of terror. Going back to unipolarism would mean going back to the chaos of an arbitrary, asymmetric world. Going back to the "concert of nations (powers)" system that guaranteed the political status quo and the global power balance between 1815 and 1914, through a mechanism of Conventions, Conferences and Alliances (the Vienna Convention – 1815, the Paris Conference – 1856, the Berlin Convention – 1878, the Bucharest Conference – 1913, and also the Holy Alliance, the Entente, the Triple Alliance) has become impossible for two main reasons:

globalization and democratization (of international relations). History – a politically built reality – has truly become universal. *The few European powers, Euro-Atlantic or Euro-Asian, cannot control the political, economic and social processes of a crowded humankind fragmented into several sovereign states of different sizes, independent and interdependent, all at the same time. Not to mention the incapacity of individual states or even coalitions of states in trying to discipline movements of global non-state actors – organized crime, trans-national societies' oligarchy, financial institutions and their autonomous bureaucracy, international mass media and its abuse of freedom of speech. Political geography is no longer Euro-centric or Atlantic-centred. Peace conferences can no longer simply reshape borders, according to the major players' imagination, associated according to balance of power needs. On the other hand, imperialism itself has become democratic; this is the base for its internal cohesion and external appeal.*

e) Non-polarism or asymmetric (non-conventional / trans-national) multipolarism

Following the Georgian crisis the international system can be characterized as an unstable non-polarism, because it is not tied to rules. It refers not only to the absence of functional and codified rules of international law, but also to that set of operating mechanisms in the international system, determined by the reality of dispersed and co-dependent power. If in the first part of the 20th century we had a multipolar distribution of power, followed by the rise of an international relations system dominated by two superpowers, the main characteristic of international relations in the 21st century is non-polarity: a world dominated not by one, two or more states, but by tens of actors of variable power.

At first sight, today's world seems multipolar. The main powers (China, the European Union, India, Japan, Russia and the United States), combined, reunite about half of the global population, 75% of global GDP and 80% of defence spending. Still, appearances are misleading. Today's world is substantially different to what we call a classical multipolar system because we can see a dispersion of power without precedent among the numerous power centres of which only a small part are states. The authority and power of states is today shared with the main actors of globalization: global and regional organizations, NGOs, international corporations.

Non-polar world is also a consequence of globalization. It consolidates non-polarity in two ways: a large part of cross-border exchanges are outside of sovereign government control and, most of the time, outside of their knowledge and are thus diluting the influence of the great powers. Equally, globalization increases the power of non-state actors: energy exporters, terrorist organizations, multinational companies but also the media or the bureaucracy of international organizations. It is more and more obvious that *in today's world, to be the strongest state is not the same with having a monopoly, even a relative one, over political and military power. It is very simple for individuals or private groups to*

accumulate or exert a substantial power. The human rights doctrine, as well as the one regarding minorities (the latter is an expression of the failure of the nation states' political project regarding the building of a political superstructure on a foundation unaffected by identity segregation, but also a cause for the failure through fragmentation of such states) have given birth to certain non-state subjects of international law that frequently – including through the mobilization and manipulation of public opinion – influence dramatic evolutions on a global scale (the recent history of the Western Balkans is one example).

Global disorder needs to be structured because, left to its own tendencies, a non-polar world will become chaotic. According to the law of entropy, systems that are composed of a large number of actors have a natural tendency towards disorder, in the absence of outside intervention. Consequently, identifying or constructing world's poles becomes imperative. They are, however, irradiance poles and not constraining ones. These poles (of regional action or global vision) base their power on the offer – on the solidarity they can guarantee and not on cohesion – on the resources they can confiscate. Furthermore, they need to be characterized by a double balance: the inter-polar balance regarding the resources they can mobilize and control and the intra-polar balance between regional obligations they each assume and the rights they can gain. From past experiences we can synthesize a model of a multipolar global order characterized by symmetry of poles, acting as a mechanism of global solidarity and subsidiarity.

One can inquire if the mix of conventional and unconventional factors that influence present global evolutions will or will not have an impact on the character and importance of alliances? In the past, alliances were essential for determining and conserving the balance of power and, consequently, for the stability and security of the world. It is to be imagined that, as of now, under the double action of globalization and glocalization – and respectively of the competition received from supranational and local structures of power – they will lose some of their present importance and will alter the way in which they function. With so many variables at play, following diverse sensibilities and reasons, circumscribed by the intersection of asymmetries, predictability of challenges, anticipating the sheer content and preserving rationales that motivate solidarity, traditionally a fundamental argument for long lasting alliances, will all be placed under scrutiny. Beyond this process, capable of affecting the confidence without which no coalition can be formed or made functional, the idea of inter-state ententes will be discouraged by the incapacity of national actors to insure an efficient trans-national government. The relationships between states will, consequently, be more and more selective and arbitrary. It will be difficult to make rigorous classifications of types of states that are allied or opposed; we will have situations in which some states will cooperate and moments when they may find each other on opposite sides. The importance of consultations is on the rise, but foremost it is important to have the ability to build flexible coalitions, contextual coalitions.

From this perspective, *the objective of international actors (of the European Union, as far as we are concerned) should be the handling of dynamic macro-balances through flexible policies that concentrate resources with the purpose of ordering the action of state and non-state, political and apolitical actors. A redefinition of the concepts “balance” and “resources” is necessary. Balance can no longer be conceived in terms of statistics but in dynamics, a mechanism of preserving macro-proportions and taking into account the permanent change of the values placed in the balance. Consequently, the value of the resources will be measured by how they meet the adaptability needs of a changing environment. Because, though, without coherence and predictability there is no trust and without trust there is no cooperation and security, it will be essential to answer questions such as: “how can we be flexible and remain coherent?” as well as “how can we be dynamic and adaptable still remaining predictable?”. The solution seems to be, considering the impossibility of appealing to the old philosophy of traditional alliances, building trans-national democracies capable of synchronizing geography and history (on a regional level) and reconciling globalization and glocalization, at the same time saving what is positive in the national experience. The alliances with variable geometry of these relatively symmetric power poles or, in any case, with global competitive capacity, will create a counterbalance mechanism that can guarantee universal balance, security and stability. Once this path has been taken, fundamental changes are going to be possible in the perception of security and defence policies.*

III. Searching for Solutions

a) The need for rational solutions

Peace cannot be defined as the mere absence of war. Disorder following unipolarism is not a form of peace. It is a chaotic set of geopolitical confrontations at a global level that take place between asymmetric power centres and with fluctuating identity, in an unregulated international environment (because old international law, even though it does not have a death certificate, is in clinical death) in which different types of unilateralism come into conflict. Searching for balance is the natural tendency for any entity. Finding it naturally, in a world with asymmetric structures, entails trials and multiple, painful reiterations, the final success reuniting the sum of tragic failures. The alternative is a negotiated and assisted political process that involves, at each of its levels, all global, regional and local actors interested.

Identifying solutions is a complex and difficult process because it implies challenges of an axiological order, conceptual and, no less important, of the realism of proposals. Rearranging the international system must be undertaken, in our perspective, starting from the values we wish to defend. The post-unipolar international system must insure as much prosperity as possible for as many

people as possible, stability and predictability, the avoidance of war. Furthermore, the set of *effective rules* that should govern the international system must insure the conservation of the environmental balance, because starting on the irreversible road of global warming will find states completely lacking the defence mechanisms for the consequences of a global rise in temperature by four degrees Celsius, for example (desertification of large areas, decrease of the space for a habitat, new diseases, famine and massive migration, conflict generators).

The world is in a completely new situation, in which a transfer from a unipolar order should be made the least costly as possible, with no precedent in history for peaceful organization of such a process. Epistemological dilemmas are meaningful because the majority of concepts that the international relations theory works with have been constructed during the Cold War. The old legal concepts will have to be adapted to these new realities.

The most important of the dilemmas and the one that should be resolved as quick as possible is, however, the following: we want the road to such a necessary new order to be guided by our actions or by our political will, by our emotional reaction to history's challenges or by our actions led by reason? If the future of this generation will be again one of conflict or one of ordered construction and divided profit, it all depends on the answer to this question.

Through this report, the "Ovidiu Sincai" Institute is trying to underline the importance of the global transformations that have taken place during the last decades and to draw the attention of political decision-makers on certain proposals, leaving for the legal decision-makers the task of solution implementation.

b) Short-term proposals

When, at the end of the 60s of the last century, after the Six Days War and Prague Spring experiences, the Cold War opposing blocs realized that they cannot perfectly control internal dissidences and cannot efficiently support dissidences in the other camp, it was concluded that enemies must meet to negotiate, if not the peace, at least a quasi-truce, as well as the rules of the battle, so that each could pursue its proposed gains without existentially menacing the other's existence and projects. A cold peace was preferable to a Cold War. That is how the Helsinki Final Act occurred and also what we call "détente". It was a complex mechanism to guarantee the safeguard of the universal balance of opposing powers, as each one's dynamic in promoting specific interests was not stopped. (Similar experiences have been known in history, the Peace of Westphalia that ended the religious conflicts promoting the principle *Cujus regio ejus religio* and set the basis for the modern principle of the equality of sovereign states or the French-British agreements that set the guidelines for the colonization of Africa before the First World War or those about dividing the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire before this war, to name but a few examples.)

The experience of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe should inspire those who seek today, with realism and responsibility, to turn the new “primordial soup” represented by the disorder following failed unipolarism into a new global order. Because everything must have a beginning and keeping in mind the fact that grand initiatives risk to succumb in their starting stages, we can imagine a “pilot-conference” limited to the South Caucasus or one that looks towards a Europe from Vancouver to Vladivostok (gathered today, without much efficiency, in OSCE). No matter the option, inviting all permanent members of the Security Council of the UN – to insure participation of China – is mandatory.

Such an international conference should redefine the fundamental principles of international law and international relations, because those found in the UN Charter, universal treaties and the Helsinki Final Act are no longer functional. Sovereign equality, non-involvement in internal affairs, not resorting to force and the proportional response towards threats or aggression have been undermined: through the acknowledgement of non-state entities (persons or communities – title holders for “human rights” or “minorities rights”) as subjects of international law, also sovereign; through the affirmation of a right of intervention (not only with humanitarian purposes but also for reasons of security, regarding the nature of certain political regimes); formulating neo-conservative doctrines like the one about “preventive strike” etc. The right to self-determination, exclusively recognized before as the people’s right has been extended to minorities and communities of questionable civic and cultural identity. Nuclear security is no longer being defended by the closed character of the club of powers entitled to own nuclear weapons; progress and technological globalization have made it possible for states outside this club and even private persons to use this type of weapon. Faced with these evolutions, the return to the post-war laws and bipolar order is no longer a realistic solution. Keeping the rules and practices imposed by unipolarism, especially in the absence of a recognized, respected, enlightened, democratic and responsible local guardian (something impossible to find) is also not admissible.

The international conference for security and cooperation in a post-unipolar order should review the role, competences, resources, procedures and instruments of international organizations. Also, it would have to update or complete procedures to be followed in the relations between the political actors of the world and it should establish a new system of guarantees of security and regional and global stability.

Before the conference itself takes place groups of experts should be formed – as part of strictly technical reunions – to identify the main problems and possible solutions to be negotiated and agreed upon at political level.

d) Medium and long term objectives (5-10 years)

The essential matter for the European Union is to find solutions for the stabilization and security of global order through the political structuring of non-polarism.

There is a converse relationship between efficiency and credibility. The more efficient an operator is the more credible he will be and vice versa. There is also a dialectic of internal and external efficiency. In order to be able to promote its external action, as a regional actor with global influence, the European Union must become more efficient and believable on the inside and outside of its borders. This can be achieved by:

- ***Strengthening political leadership.*** The Treaty of Lisbon does not insure the most efficient institutional mechanisms for the governance of the European Union, but is a step forward compared to the Nice Treaty. Consequently, the immediate objective is getting beyond the failure of the referendum trial in Ireland to be able to reach the next step, consistent international actions. The final destination for this project is, however, the creation of a trans-national European democracy in the form of the “United States of Europe”.
- ***The increase in the capacity of military reaction/intervention.*** The profile of the EU as a “soft power” is not the result of superior moral attitude as much as the expression of continuing military dependency on the United States, dating from the period of the Cold War. Of course, the partnership with America through NATO should be continued and strengthened; however Europe needs a discouragingly large component of “hard power” in order for its diplomacy to rely on military capabilities. The shift from a unipolar system to a multipolar one (with a non-polar chaos as intermediate) does not naturally bring more security; this must be won or imposed and the diplomacy of words is worth little without the argument of weaponry while other powers see no difficulty in using even a limited amount of military force.
- ***The reduction of energy dependence.*** Solutions to this problem are widely known (increasing the efficiency of energy consumption, energy production from renewable and nuclear sources, constructing alternate energy corridors to those controlled by Russia and so on), and they are mentioned in more and more official documents of the European Union. From now on the European political leadership should try, through solidarity, to carry out the engagements undertaken at a community level. Therefore, a common European policy is necessary in the energy field (regarding the European energy policy as well as the common external European policy in the energy field), just like the existing agricultural common policy.

- ***Making European solidarity a legal obligation in the face of external threats and aggressions.*** This entails the conception and bringing into effect of a common external and security policy.

Along with its efforts of strengthening its identity, efficiency and credibility, the European Union has to solve the following dilemma: does it want Russia as an integrated pole of the northern hemisphere subsystem or of the subsystem called the Shanghai Group? This means Russia would have to give up: i) warming out previously frozen conflicts to gain control of energy resources; ii) using energy blackmail against European consumers; iii) the military intervention doctrine in the case of sovereign states under the pretext of “protecting Russian citizens” and, subsequently, changing borders recognized by the international community. What Russia may receive in exchange: stable and mutually convenient economic relations, as well as the end of the isolation policy assumed by western states, as a result of Russian political elites’ unpredictability. Perhaps Russian elites perceive these gains as very little but they shouldn’t forget the fact that as far as most of European public opinions are concerned, as demonstrated in a recent German Marshall Fund report, such guarantees are seen as “giving in to blackmail”. Otherwise, Russia may find, sooner rather than later, that the threat of the West depending on energy from Russia is a double-edged weapon, as the Russian state trades 60% of its goods with the European Union. Furthermore, in spite of appearances, Russia needs financial and technological resources in order to renew its oil industry, as well as for the transport of hydrocarbon resources to Europe and China. A few words should be introduced as soon as possible into Moscow’s dictionary: “co-dependence”, “interdependence”, “common vicinity”.

Through its political integration and the rise of its power (including the military), the EU can bring an essential contribution to a transatlantic symmetry of power, being the fundamental piece of a co-federal Euro-Atlantic structure. Through a good cooperation with Russia, the EU can support its economic development and political evolution so that it can achieve a Euro-Asian symmetry able to fundament a special strategic partnership characterized by economic integration and political association. At the same time and in the same spirit, the EU will be able to use its economic assets to contribute to the building, together with China and maybe India, of a trans-Asian symmetry. The model can be extended to Latin America. Using these symmetries as a starting point, it will be possible, on the one hand, through intelligent partnerships, to insure a first level of global balance of power and, on the other hand, to design (including reform, redesigning and integrating new projects of current international organizations) a trans-national global governing mechanism capable of disciplining non-state operators through proper political instruments.

Annex

The radiography of a frozen conflict *Chronologic reference points*

16th July 1989 – Violent riots of the Abkhazian population at Sokhumi for gaining their independence from Georgian SSR

10th November 1989 – The proclamation of unification between South Ossetia and North Ossetia, autonomous republic within Russian SFSR; violent intervention of Georgian troops and the annulment of the decision by the central Soviet institutions

20th September 1990 – Proclamation of independence of the Soviet Democratic Republic of South Ossetia; the abolition of South Ossetia's autonomy by Tbilisi

5th January 1991 – Entry of Georgian troops in South Ossetia; 100.000 South Ossetian take refuge in the North Osetia republic of the Russian Federation

17th March 1991 – Referendum for maintaining the Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia as part of the Soviet Union, boycotted by the Georgian population (98,6% in favour)

31st March 1991 – Referendum for the declaration of Georgia's independence, boycotted by non-Georgian population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

9th April 1991 – Georgian declaration of independence

20th December 1991 – Coup d'état against the government in Tbilisi; the beginning of the civil war

6th January 1992 – Georgia becomes a full member of the Commonwealth of Independent States

14th July 1992 – Ceasefire agreement between Georgian and South Ossetian troops, backed by Russian troops; division of the region into areas controlled by the parts involved in the conflict

23rd July 1992 – Abkhazian declaration of independence issued by the Supreme Council of the Abkhaz ASSR, in the absence of Georgian representatives; Georgian troops' military intervention

6th November 1992 – Establishment of the OSCE Mission for peacekeeping operations in South Ossetia

27th July 1993 – Treaty regarding the ceasefire between Georgian and Abkhaz troops under the patronage of the UN; the establishment of the UN Observation Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)

27th September 1993 – Abkhaz troops, backed by Russian troops, conquer the city of Sokhumi; around 250.000 Georgian civilians take refuge (50% of Abkhazia's population)

31st December 1993 – The repression of internal Georgian insurgents after the intervention of Russian troops, together with contingents from Armenia and Azerbaijan, under mandate from the CIS

14th May 1994 – The signing of a ceasefire agreement between Georgian and Abkhaz troops in Moscow

10th October 1997 – The establishment, with American support, of the GUAM Consultative Forum (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova)

19th November 1999 – OSCE Summit in Istanbul establishes the evacuation of Russian troops from Georgian territories before 2001

2000 – The release of tourist passports for Abkhaz citizens by the Russian Federation

7th June 2001 – The signing of the Charter of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development GUAM

8th October 2001 – the knock-down of a UNOMIG helicopter over Abkhazia

2002 – The sending of Special Operations troops by the US in order to train Georgian troops (GTEP programme)

23rd November 2003 – The “Orange revolution” ends with the replacing of President Edvard Shevardnadze by his former collaborator Mikhail Saakashvili (elected in 2004 and re-elected in 2008)

29th October 2004 – The signing of the Action Plan for Individual Partnership, between Georgia and NATO.

14th February 2005 – The appointment of a Partnership for Peace liaison officer in Tbilisi

10th May 2005 – The signing of a financial assistance agreement (The Millennium Challenge Compact Convention) and a military assistance agreement (IMET) between the US and Georgia

28th May 2006 – The inauguration of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline

2nd October 2006 – Georgia and the EU sign a Common Action Plan

2nd-9th November 2007 – anti-governmental rallies in Tbilisi

2nd-4th April 2008 – NATO Summit in Bucharest; Georgia does not become a member of NATO

April 2008 – the knock-down of a Georgian reconnaissance airplane over Abkhazia by Russian peacekeeping troops

15th May 2008 – UN General Assembly resolution in favour of the return of all refugees to Abkhazia

7/8th August 2008 – Georgian troops enter South Ossetia; Georgian troops are attacked by Russian peacekeeping forces

9th August 2008 – Abkhaz forces launch the attack on Georgian forces in the Kodori Valley

12th August 2008 – Ceasefire between Georgian and Russian troops, mediated by the European Union

26th August 2008 – The President of the Russian Federation recognizes independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

3rd September 2008 – Nicaragua recognizes South Ossetia's independence

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