

## **Some preliminary geopolitical reflections at the inception of 2021**

Stravo, beyond the geopolitics of pandemic (which was among the factors that costed Donald Trump re-election and helped show the ability of Russia to come out with a vaccine of her own), would like to point to some medium and long-term trends.

- China by the Belt and Road Initiative, in particular through the railway Beijing-Moscow-Paris is rejuvenating the hitherto sleepy Eurasian landmass. The heartland of Halford Mackinder becomes a tangible reality. His nightmare might come true.
- In contrary, the inner crescent or rimland of Nicholas Spykman is being diluted. It is reminded that this concept, of erecting a huge wall stretching from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific was devised in an effort to contain the ocean bound pressures coming from the Eurasian heartland to the coastal periphery. Persia/Iran was entrusted with a central role in this barrier. As Pakistan's dependence on China grows, Iran from a Western perspective is lost and Turkey plays her ambivalent game, the notion of a rimland at odds with the heartland is being progressively eroded. Heartland and Rimland do not oppose each other but they rather complement each other. The pressure on India intensifies. The space covered by Azerbaijan is important for Turkey, Russia, Iran, and Israel.
- Centripetal forces will be exercised upon the major power in Europe, Germany, by a muscle flexing Eurasia. The Atlantic relationship will be severely tested. The unthinkable might happen. Greece as a quintessentially maritime country will feel the pressure of forces originating in the heartland.
- It becomes a euphemism to say that Turkey is just a revisionist regional power. While alienating herself from Europe and the West at large, it is an authoritarian democracy methodically pursuing ambitious, imperial designs, beyond Caucasus and the Middle East; it eyes the Adriatic, Red Sea and the Gulf, as well as the uranium rich Sahel countries, soft underbelly of France in Africa. Libya is not only a coveted prize but also a launching pad.
- Ukraine feverishly supplies arms and military technology to Turkey and with its cargo planes facilitates Turkey's inroads to Africa. Kiev is thus competing in a weird beauty contest with Moscow for the favour of Ankara. This support of Ukraine to Turkey cannot be entirely ignored by the Greek speaking Orthodox churches, as they consider building up ties with the new ecclesiastical structure there, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.
- In view of all the above, it is intriguing how Turkey will unfold her undertakings in the Balkans, a traditional though frequently unrewarding field of attention by the Turkish policy makers, given that currently they have been shifting focus to the east and south.

**Stravo of Amaseia**

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