



Ελληνική Εταιρεία Γεωγραφικών Μελετών
«Ο Στράβων»

LATE SUMMER DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS

Beyond the inconclusive results of the legislative elections in France, we register the following major developments over summer:

- The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran (August 6).
- The exiting of President Joe Biden from the electoral race in the US and the nomination of Vice President Kamala Harris, as the candidate of the Democratic Party for the supreme office in America.
- The daring and foolhardy incursion of Ukrainian forces, amply supported by the UK and US, into Russian sovereign territory in the region of Kursk,
- The failure of sustained diplomatic efforts to arrive at a cessation of hostilities and the human tragedy in Gaza.

The above said, with the spectre of war still looming over Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, Stravon thinks that Iran far from engaging in an all-out war of revenge, as time passes by, has been embracing a strategy of prolonged psychological attrition of Israel, holding the Damocles sword, threatening with it, but not lowering it.

We are sceptical as to the chances of success of the Ukrainian bravado into Russia. Moscow calls the bluff and does not draw forces from Donbass to transfer them to Kursk oblast. Russians continue their slow advance in the western part of Donetsk oblast, even at a more intense pace, while enveloping Ukrainian contingents within Kursk area. War will continue, as the insistence of President Putin to claim full Russian sovereignty over the entire Donbass, along with Zaporizhya and Cherson oblasts is not acceptable.

France and Germany are for different reasons in a political tailspin. Yet, France, having at last a Prime Minister, bolsters its position in the Western Balkans through the deal to provide a squadron of Rafal air fighters to Serbia, while Germany is puzzled as details emerge about Ukrainian involvement in the explosion of Nord Stream gas pipelines in September 2022.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt finds itself between hammer and anvil; uncertainty prevails in its western border, General Haftar trying to reassert his positions to the southwest of Libya, ready to accept Turkey's role even in Cyrenaica, while the problems with Ethiopia over the Nile waters persist

unabated. Egypt, a regional stability partner of Greece, strives to find a balance with a Turkey that - no matter worries of overstretch - seeks a permanent military presence in Somalia and the entrance of the Red Sea. Thus, Egypt faces, besides Libya, three external challenges, not of her making, Ethiopia, Gaza war and repercussions in the Red Sea, the cereals supply from Russia and Ukraine. Egypt, as it was clear before Wednesday's visit of President Al Sisi to Ankara, will try to find a common ground with Turkey in various domains, more so as Gaza is a festering wound for all and both countries entertain ties with Russia and China. Yet Cairo will not accept the Turkish reading of maritime and security issues in the Mediterranean, even if Erdogan satisfies all Egyptian worries with regard to the Moslem Brotherhood.

As time passes by, it is realized that, even after the optimism sparked with the advent of Kamala Harris, Donald Trump remains a formidable combatant in view of the November US elections. All things global are turning around the November 05 milestone.

In Ukraine, the time of truth is approaching. Zelensky needs urgently a parachute. Escalation would be a recipe for disaster of larger magnitude.

The fact that Turkey ponders to seek admission into the BRICS is not just another trick to pressurize West. After all, several friends of the West are already part of the bloc; India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Ethiopia. It reflects the changing structure of Turkey's economic transactions, and its overall orientation to Eurasia for geopolitical, geo-economic and cultural reasons, as STRAVON time and again has pointed. This tilt by Turkey, if indeed materializes, will put pressure upon countries like Bulgaria and Greece to adjust themselves. Turkey would be thus spearheading Eurasia into the soft underbelly of maritime powers in the Mediterranean.

To put the move by Turkey in a broader context, it is to be stressed that this country has embarked upon an opening of "*grande envergure*" into Africa, where it fields more than 40 embassies, slightly less than China, the patron saint of the poor African nations.

That said, STRAVON repeats its long held position that it is illusory for the West to seek to thwart the rise of wise China, which in any case shows signs of fatigue and exhaustion of its dynamics. Instead, the West, both North America and Europe, should tackle their internal problems, the simmering, internecine in a way antagonism between the Atlantic partners, aggravated by the manner the question of Ukraine was handled even before the Russian invasion. Expecting that in the aftermath of November 5 elections, civic peace in the US will be maintained, it is high time for the collective West, in particular for the EU countries, to cope most urgently with the cacophonous, disruptive anti-national ideologies and address seriously the question of unregulated alien immigration.

“Der Untergang des Abendlandes” (the sunset of the West) prophesied by Oswald Spengler (1921) might still be averted.

***Stravon of Amaseia,
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