



**Joining the dots and making sense of the key geopolitical developments in Europe, Eurasia and MENA**

*By George Vlad NICULESCU, PhD, Head of Research, European Geopolitical Forum*

**Key points:**

- 1) Why Ukraine Needs A (More) Realistic Strategy against Russia.
  - 2) “Geopolitical Storm” on the Black Sea: How Could Georgia, Moldova Survive the Turmoil?
  - 3) Revival of the Iran Nuclear Deal is Becoming “Mission Impossible”: What Now?
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## RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

## Who controls what in Ukraine?

Russia's forces continued their offensive on residential areas in Ukrainian cities and struck Vinnytsia, Kharkiv City and Mykolaiv City says the Institute for the Study of War. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has admonished Moscow for carrying out missile attacks calling it an "act of terrorism" and saying no other country in the world represents a greater terrorist threat than Russia.

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### 1) Why Ukraine needs a (more) realistic strategy against Russia.

Since our previous [Issue 18/February-April 2022](#), the war in Ukraine has been grinding on while no party got closer to a decisive victory. The initial Ukrainian tactics, which paid off during the first month of war, couldn't stop Russian military advances from Mariupol to Kherson, Zaporozhye and Mikolaiv, and over the whole of the Luhansk oblast. Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces have slightly pushed back Russians in the South (Kherson-Mykolaiv area) and in the East (around Kharkov). In late July, international media foresaw an imminent Ukrainian counter-offensive aiming to retake Kherson: *"the attack would be one of the most ambitious and significant military actions of the war. Ukraine is destroying Russian ammunition depots, hitting command posts and targeting supply*

*lines. And Ukrainian troops have liberated 44 towns and villages along the border areas, about 15 percent of the territory, according to local officials".* (<https://nytimes.com> on July 26) The outcomes of that planned counter-offensive might be decisive for shifting the Ukrainian strategy over the next months, although many in the West have been concerned with the growing costs of indefinite hostilities *"ranging from the disastrous local impact on Ukraine itself to severe global economic consequences—particularly in the food and energy sectors—going far beyond Ukraine, and Europe more generally—with the potential to destabilize the international system itself."* (D. Simes on <https://nationalinterest.org>)

As we have forecasted in the previous issue, the New Cold War and the Regional War scenarios are the most likely futures for Eastern Europe, at

present. Meanwhile, Ukraine's hopes to end the war in a pre-2014 territorial configuration has continued to remain mostly wishful thinking.

From a Western perspective, the aims of the war are limited by the current level of ambition shaped by inherent geopolitical, political, economic, and military constraints. As president Biden has put it in an op-ed in New York Times: *"We want to see a democratic, independent, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine with the means to deter and defend itself against further aggression.[...] So long as the United States or our allies are not attacked, we will not be directly engaged in this conflict, either by sending American troops to fight in Ukraine or by attacking Russian forces."* (Joe Biden on <https://nytimes.com>)

And a Belgian scholar has wisely summarised the EU interests at stake: *"a stable international order is a vital EU interest. The EU could not deter Russia from upsetting it, but now it must be made to pay a price for it.[...] Furthermore, an independent Ukraine will de facto remain a buffer state between the EU and Russia: that does serve the EU interest. Finally, the EU has a moral duty to assist Ukraine."* (Sven Biscop on <https://egmontinstitute.be>)

In addition, in the United States, bipartisan support for arming Ukraine is showing some fraying, mostly due to fears that this is turning into a distraction from the great power competition against China. Meanwhile, in Europe, there is growing concern about the long-term economic and security implications of isolating Russia, the potential that NATO could come into direct conflict with Russia if president Putin broadened the war, the influx of Ukrainian refugees, and rising energy prices. (Richard Haass on <https://foreignaffairs.com>)

This is leaving Ukraine do most of the "heavy lifting" in fighting against Russia, while increasingly looking largely out-manned and out-gunned against Russia in spite of generous Western support. However, the last months have not been reassuring that Ukraine would be able to defeat Russia on the battlefield or that Kremlin's will to give in on getting hold of

Ukraine has been bent by Western multi-layered pressure and economic sanctions.

Where does this state of play point Ukraine's strategy in the ongoing war against Russia?

In the first place, it is hard to imagine that president V. Zelensky would be ready to accept a peace deal allowing Russian control of Ukrainian territory that was under Kyiv's control before February 2022. That would mean publicly acknowledging he was wrong when rejecting the implementation of the Minsk 2 agreements prior to the Russian invasion. On the other hand, despite Western help, very few still believe that Ukraine might be able to restore the *status quo* before last February, let aside the one that existed before 2014: *"Ukraine likely lacks the combat power to expel Russia from all of its territory, and the momentum on the battlefield is shifting in Russia's favour. [...] Transatlantic unity is starting to fray, with France, Germany, Italy and other allies uneasy about the prospect of a prolonged war— especially against the backdrop of rising inflation and the looming energy crisis in Europe"*(C. Kupchan on <https://foreignaffairs.com>).

No wonder that the choir asking to review Ukraine's and Western strategies on Russia -to include sound diplomacy aimed at mitigating differences, exploring new paths to settlement, and mitigating collateral damages- is growing: *"Ukraine's leaders and its backers speak as if victory is just around the corner. But that view increasingly appears to be a fantasy. Ukraine and the West should therefore reconsider their ambitions and shift from a strategy of winning the war toward a more realistic approach: finding a diplomatic compromise that ends the fighting.* (Barry Posen on <https://foreignaffairs.com>) Or *"the United States and Europe need a strategy for managing an open-ended conflict. [...] What the West can do, however, is maintain and selectively ramp up its support to Ukraine, abide by the limits on its own direct military involvement, and increase the economic pressure on Russia. That would amount to a policy*

*designed to deal with, rather than end, the war.”* (R. Haass on <https://foreignaffairs.com>). Or even a bolder view recalling the deal suggested by the Istanbul Communique of March 29, 2022 *“for geopolitical rivals to guarantee Ukraine’s long-term security jointly, outside of an alliance structure—and to do so despite one of the rivals’ ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.”* (S. Charap on <https://foreignaffairs.com>). The grain exports deal, mediated by the U.N. and Turkiye, could be a good starting point for a more realistic Ukrainian approach against Russia.

In conclusion, where might be this war going in practice on a shorter term? Beyond the largely deadlocked military situation, the economic (and hybrid) war might also play a crucial role in its outcomes. For now, the economic war doesn’t seem going in favour of the West. Third parties did not support the West (and implicitly Ukraine) but have dodged the embargoes, and have exploited them to their own benefit. Neither were those embargoes, particularly on energy, well thought and prepared, especially in Europe. The argument that by cutting the Russian energy exports to Europe as a means to cut the flow of money in Moscow’s coffers was completely flawed, as alternative solutions did not match the EU states’ energy needs. The looming energy crisis risks throwing Europe into economic recession and the generosity of European support to Ukraine is most likely to die out accordingly. The U.S. is also seeing itself drawn to other directions, in particular in the Asia-Pacific and to the Middle East. A global anti-American coalition is also shaping up behind the China-Russia-Iran triangle. Neither military nor economic warfare are going well. It’s probably high time for Ukraine (and the West) to adjust its war strategy against Russia. For example, more realistic goals and objectives should be planned against the available resources and people’s readiness to support this war. For those reasons, at the latest by fall, a ceasefire is likely (pending also on the

outcomes of the Ukrainian Southern campaign), although it might be too early to speak of negotiating a genuine peace deal. A frozen conflict (similar to what we saw from 2015 to 2022, although along a different frontline) might remain in place at least until spring 2023. That would be the best case scenario, since in the worst case war might expand beyond Ukraine’s borders towards Moldova, Belarus, and maybe even to Poland, Romania and the Baltic states. That would be very dangerous as Europe, America and Russia might get bogged down into renewed nuclear confrontation, if not in all-out war.

## 2) “Geopolitical Storm” on the Black Sea: How Could Georgia and Moldova Survive the Turmoil?



In our [issue for December 2020/ January 2021](#) we had been wondering whether, after four years of Trumpian neglect, the Black Sea region was going to become a platform for U.S. strategic re-engagement with Eastern Europe and the Middle East. One and a half year later, everyone would concede that this is where we are now. Nevertheless, the geopolitical circumstances tipped the balance mostly towards geopolitical and military re-engagement. This new American engagement and the galvanizing of Western Europe within NATO might have alarmed

president V. Putin of Russia, who eventually expanded the “frozen” war in Donbas into a wider war over Ukraine.

Over the last months, NATO and the E.U. have strongly reacted against the Russian “special operation” in Ukraine. So far, this has resulted in strengthening NATO’s military posture on the Eastern flank, and re-writing the NATO Strategic Concept to enhance Allied deterrence and defence policies, plans, and capabilities to counter possible Russian aggression against Baltic and Black Sea allies. The E.U. have also agreed upon, and started implementing, seven rounds of sanctions against Russia, and have granted candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, while conditionally promising a similar status to Georgia.

Meanwhile, Russian forces have expanded their control over Donbas, and over parts of Southern Ukraine, and are threatening to expand their occupation across the whole Northern shore of the Black Sea to establish a land bridge to Transnistria, the Eastern separatist province of Moldova. Those most recent Russian and Western strategic moves across the Northern and Western Black Sea shores, respectively, have added to setting-up a Russian-Turkish condominium over the South Caucasus/Eastern Wider Black Sea, in the wake of the 44 days war over Nagorno-Karabakh. Consequently, the Wider Black Sea regional balance of power is currently in flux with the Northern seashore largely controlled by Russia (partly on land, and the rest from the sea), while NATO is bolstering its positions in the West. Turkiye is in the South and controls the Straits, while Russia and Turkiye share power in the South Caucasus.

Within this “geopolitical storm”, smaller actors - Georgia and Moldova- are struggling to adjust their policies to the changing regional distribution of power. How could Georgia and Moldova survive the current Wider Black Sea turmoil?

Georgia has taken so far a particularly prudent attitude towards the war in Ukraine, while

continuing to strongly claim its Euro-Atlantic and European aspirations. For example, in early February, just before the launch of the war in Ukraine, the Georgian Parliament adopted a resolution in support of Ukraine that fell short of mentioning Russia. Opposition parties demanded a revision to the text that would explicitly name Russia as the culprit and aggressor. But the ruling Georgian Dream party refused to amend the document. Georgian experts claimed that there are two competing philosophies within the Georgian society: *“One of them [supporters of Georgian Dream] is frightened by the 2008 Russian invasion, does not believe in the ability of the West to protect the post-Soviet states from Russian aggression, and tries to act on the Georgian proverb ‘caress the bear to keep it from growing angry’.* Whereas, *“the second part of society believes in the irreversibility of the collapse of the [Soviet] empire and the loyalty of the West to its declared values”.* (<https://jamestown.org>) Moreover, after the start of the war in Ukraine, Georgia eschewed imposing sanctions against Russia. And Prime Minister I. Garibashvili said that his country *“will never again fight against the Russian Federation”* (<https://www.kommersant.ru>). Consequently, in the June 2022 NATO Summit Declaration, Georgia was lumped together with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Moldova rather than having its place next to Ukraine, as it had been the case in previous NATO summit declarations. Nevertheless, the new NATO Strategic Concept recalled the decision taken at the 2008 Bucharest Summit, and subsequently repeated by every NATO ministerial or summit declarations, with respect to Georgia’s (and Ukraine’s) NATO membership.

The E.U. has also differentiated between Georgia and Associated Trio fellows, Ukraine and Moldova, by recommending the former should gain a “European perspective” and be admitted as a formal candidate for European Union membership once it fulfilled certain conditions, such as reducing

political polarization, strengthening the independence of the judicial system, and bolstering anti-corruption. (<https://eurasianet.org>) However, seasoned observers of Georgian politics are skeptical about that: *“Wherever you look the picture is bad: poor conduct of elections, the politicization of the judiciary, the way the authorities failed to prevent violence against journalists and Gay Pride organizers in Tbilisi, revelations about surveillance of EU diplomats. All of this maps onto Georgia’s long-running political malady, polarization.”* (Thomas De Waal on <https://carnegieeurope.eu>)

Those recent developments are leaving Georgia in a regional balancing play mimicking (though at a much smaller scale) Ankara’s “walk on a tight rope between the West and Russia”. The Russo-Turkish informal understanding over the geopolitical picture of the South Caucasus, the long-term conflict with Russia over its separatist regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the lack of any Western security guarantees are pointing at *strategic prudence* as Tbilisi’s safest choice. In such circumstances, continuing to cultivate close economic and security relations with neighboring Türkiye might actually provide the best security guarantees. This might be crucial for preserving Georgia’s widely popular Euro-Atlantic and European aspirations in the middle of the “geopolitical storm” ravaging the Wider Black Sea region. Most likely, this might also be the safest option for maintaining Georgia’s key transit role in ensuring European energy security, as long as the E.U. is facing energy shortages while struggling to free itself from Russian energy dependence.

Moldova has taken a more active, though moderately prudent, stance against the war in neighboring Ukraine. *“Moldova condemned the Russian invasion of our neighbour. Our country respects the international financial sanctions on Russia, and we voted to cast it out of several international forums. We also welcomed almost half a million refugees crossing our border as they fled*

*the war.”* (dputy PM Nicu Popescu on <https://economist.com>) Unlike Georgia, Moldova has declared constitutional neutrality, while actively pursuing European integration and eventual E.U. membership.

Moldovan politics is also split over the geopolitical orientation of the country, but, unlike in Georgia, the pro-Russian, Ukraine-neutral parties are in the opposition. The former Socialist president of Moldova, I. Dodon (2016-2020), stated in May that Moldova *“is a neutral country and in no way can or should participate in a military conflict between Russia and Ukraine.”* He countered the Speaker of the Parliament, I. Grosu: *“Neither deminer units nor any other kinds of military aid, which, according to Ukraine’s Rada speaker, the Moldovan speaker promised to provide, should come from Moldova.”* (<https://tass.com>)

According to Moldovan experts *“As a neighbour of Ukraine and with its own breakaway region [n.a. Transnistria], Moldova finds itself in a changed security context where it must rethink its neutrality.”* (Dionis Cenusă on <https://www.ipn.md>)

For example, a recent British offer to help the tiny Moldovan armed forces raise their interoperability with NATO triggered negative reactions from the opposition parties who argued that, in line with the stated neutrality of the country, the government should reject that offer for it would risk drawing it into the war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the Moldovan government kept mum on its plans for cooperation with NATO, which risks creating favorable conditions to Russian mis- and dis-information.

As a matter of fact, Moscow has strong leverage on Chisinau due to its client relations with the separatist regime of Transnistria backed-up by a Russian “peacekeeping” contingent. Whenever Chisinau had attempted to take measures perceived in Moscow as pro-European or anti-Russian, the separatist regime in Tiraspol reacted negatively. Latest example was the July 21 statement of the foreign minister of the unrecognized Transnistrian

republic, V. Ignatyev: *“Having received the status of a candidate for EU membership, Moldova has thus crossed a certain Rubicon. It put an end to the issue of building political relations within certain common spaces, because this decision was made solely by the Moldovan leadership, it was not taken collectively.”* (<https://euronews.com>) He recalled a referendum held in 2006 which would have supported the independence of Transnistria, and commented that joining the Russian Federation might be possible after due political consideration and preparations. This means that every pro-European/pro-Western move of Chisinau is likely to be matched by a pro-Russian counter-move of Tiraspol (so-called capital of Transnistria). Moreover, establishing a land-bridge from Western Russia to Transnistria across Southern Ukraine seems to be a key current military objective for Russia. According to Russian Brigadier General R. Minnekayev, the acting commander of Russia’s Central Military District, the Russian army planned to take Ukraine’s Donbas region, then create land corridors to both Crimea and Transnistria. (<https://www.intellinews.com>)

This is why Moldova is geopolitically caught between the indispensable need of European/Western financial and economic aid to help it keep the economy afloat throughout the ongoing energy, economic, humanitarian, and security crises, and Russian geopolitical manipulation of the Transnistrian regime. In such harsh circumstances, the outcomes of the Ukraine war might be decisive for the continued existence and the geopolitical orientation of the Republic of Moldova. To maintain the sovereignty and independence of the state, as well as to keep alive its European integration aspirations, Moldova might need to navigate in-between the conflicting interests of regional powers the E.U., Russia, and Turkiye. This would require lots of pragmatism and minimum of illusive/ impulsive reactions. Eventually, more or less like Georgia, Moldova must also extensively practice *strategic*

*prudence* and a careful “walk on a tight rope between the E.U. and Russia”. It might also anchor its energy and economic security to neighboring Romania with which it is sharing the bulk of history, language and culture. Ultimately, since constitutional neutrality and a very small army cannot secure national security at times of geopolitical turmoil, Chisinau might also cautiously seek security arrangements with interested countries.

### 3) Revival of the Iran Nuclear Deal Is Becoming “Mission Impossible”: What Now?

On June 30, 2022, in Doha (Qatar), another round of the U.S.-Iran negotiations on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan for Action (JCPOA), also known as “Iran nuclear deal”, has ended in failure. A U.S. senior official has told Reuters that: *“The prospects for a deal after Doha are worse than they were before Doha and they will be getting worse by the day.[...] You could describe Doha at best as treading water, at worst as moving backwards. But at this point treading water is for all practical purposes moving backwards.”*([www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com))

Nevertheless, Iranian Foreign Minister H. Amir-Abdollahian said he believed the talks had been “positive” and a deal could still be reached: *“We are determined to continue negotiating until a realistic agreement is reached.[...] An accord is achievable if the United States is realistic.”* ([www.france24.com](http://www.france24.com))

As Iranian oil and gas could substitute the sanctioned Russian exports to Europe, the E.U. mediators are making huge efforts to move the process forward. However, the negotiation strategies of both the U.S. and Iran have become increasingly transparent against the backdrop of the renewed geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East: Iran is buying time to advance its nuclear program, is strengthening ties with Russia and China, and expanding its regional influence towards the South Caucasus and Central Asia. To avoid annoying European allies the U.S. would prefer not to be seen as the show-breaker, but it has engaged in re-building regional alliances in the

Middle East. The most likely conclusion is that the Iran nuclear deal is getting closer to a “mission impossible”, while conflicting parties are already undertaking next steps beyond it.

The current situation was predictable in the wake of the failure of former Iranian president H.Rouhani to sign on the revival of the Iran nuclear deal before the end of his tenure, in June 2021. In our [issue of August-October 2021](#) we argued that the new Iranian president E. Raisi would not rush into reviving the nuclear deal, abandoned in 2018 by the former U.S. president D. Trump, and that he would rather make negotiations more difficult, if not useless. We had also concluded that irrespective of the outcome of the nuclear negotiations, the overall U.S.-Iran relationship would become more combustible due to the harshly contrasting ideological and geopolitical perspectives in Teheran and in Washington. Recent events supported our predictions on both accounts.

Since the end of the talks in Vienna in March 2022, Tehran has accelerated its nuclear program. When the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported Iran was failing to cooperate with inspectors, the government further curtailed IAEA monitoring of its nuclear program and announced new underground advanced enrichment facilities (<https://foreignaffairs.com>). Moreover, on July 17, K. Karrazi, a senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah A. Khamenei, said that Iran was days away from acquiring the capability to enrich uranium up to 60-percent, and that it could easily produce 90-percent enriched uranium. In other words he admitted that Iran would have the technical abilities to produce a nuclear bomb although there has been no decision to build one yet. This statement proved, on the one hand, that the JCPOA (which was placing a 3.67 percent threshold on Iran’s uranium enrichment) is largely overcome by new realities. On the other hand, for Israel, this statement could pour oil onto the fire, given its well-known threats to attack Iran's nuclear sites if the nuclear programme was not contained through diplomacy. Moreover,

President J. Biden has recently admitted he would be prepared to authorise military action against Iran as last resort to stop it obtain nuclear weapons. ([www.intellinews.com](http://www.intellinews.com)) Furthermore, Iran-experts M. Fantappie and V. Nasr have recently claimed that Iranian officials would actually believe that if Israel managed to draw Tehran into a larger conflict, the Biden administration would be compelled to intervene militarily. Furthermore, mounting hostilities would increase the probability that more Arab states would side with Israel against Iran. (<https://foreignaffairs.com>)

Indeed, during his mid-July tour to the Middle East president J. Biden’s reassured the leaders of Israel, Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that the U.S. “*will not walk away*” from the region, and would not renege on America’s regional responsibilities to the benefit of China, Russia, and Iran. Besides, the aim of creating a new regional realignment in the Middle East whereby a coalition of Israel and the Arab states (built on the back of the Abraham Accords and their follow ups) should stand up against Iranian nuclear and regional provocations was high on the agenda of president Biden’s tour. He advocated integrating the air defenses of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf monarchies to defend against the threat of ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial systems launched by Iran and its proxies in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. He has also underscored the U.S. commitment to ensuring that Iran would never be able to acquire nuclear weapons —a key element incentivizing this long-sought defense cooperation. (<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org>) By offering integrated military support to regional allies president Biden might also hope to win support for America’s great power competition with China and Russia. Biden’s trip might have also meant to counter the regional perception that the United States was focused on other parts of the world and at home, with little appetite for resolving regional disputes and leading regional allies in the Middle East.



(<https://www.brookings.edu>)

The American president's tour was preceded by a meeting of Russian foreign minister S. Lavrov with his counterparts from the GCC, end May, where he argued for maintaining OPEC+ joint positions on global energy markets, and he offered Russia's mediation services on building trust and reshaping the strained Arab-Iranian relations. Lavrov seized on the opportunity to meet GCC countries' desire to create intraregional coalitions and to look for an external security provider in the wake of the perceived U.S. withdrawal from the Middle East. He delivered the message that Russia was there, ready to take up the relay, while being better positioned than the U.S. to influence Tehran's regional behaviour and limit the dangers Iran might pose to its neighbours. Russian foreign minister has also proposed the creation of a new collective security system in the Gulf. It remains to be seen how much traction could gain his proposals among the Arab states in the wake of the likely failure of the JCPOA to limit Iran's nuclear capabilities. Israel, for one, might reject unconditional sitting at the same table on collective security with Iran, while Tehran might take a similar position against Tel Aviv/Jerusalem, as long as bilateral relations remained unsettled.

The war in Ukraine has also grown geopolitical divides between Iran and the U.S.. Iranian President E. Raisi told Russian president V. Putin that *"NATO's expansion eastward creates tension and is a serious threat to the stability and security of independent states in various areas"*, while the secretary-general of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council tweeted that *"when the West seeks to strike at the national security of nations in various ways, it is in fact directly responsible for the wars and crises that are formed in order to resist the West's strategy."*

(<https://nationalinterest.org>) Both statements reflected Russian-inspired Iranian perceptions on the war in Ukraine that were openly conflicting with relevant U.S. policies and narratives. Moreover, the outcomes of the war in Ukraine so far might have

encouraged Tehran to undertake an ever tougher position in the nuclear negotiations, while Washington's restraint in supporting Kyiv might have been taken as sign of weakness. That sense might have also created hopes in Tehran for getting a better nuclear deal. At the same time, by backing Russian positions on the war in Ukraine, Tehran might feel it was building stronger economic and security ties with Moscow, in line with president Raisi's "Looking to the East" strategy.

It might be also relevant to note here Turkish efforts to match growing Russian influence in the Middle East with mending tense relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and to balance growing Iranian and Russian influence in Syria. However, we'd leave this discussion for one of our next issues.

In conclusion, while the revival of the JCPOA is largely moribund, negotiating a new, more comprehensive, U.S.- Iran regional security agreement might be on the agenda of Western optimists. This is being trumped by attempts at building a new balance of power in the Middle East featuring U.S. regional allies, on the one hand, and Russia, Iran and its proxies, on the other hand. Creating new regional security arrangements could make geopolitical sense in the wake of the failure of reviving the Iranian nuclear deal and the clustering of U.S. regional allies and adversaries. The role, format and modalities of such a regional initiative are still to be developed. However, if it succeeded, it might become a key building block of the new world order. Alternatively, a regional footprint of the great power competition is in the making, and drawing the Middle East towards renewed regional confrontation between Iran and its adversaries.



### About EGF

The European Geopolitical Forum (EGF) was established in early 2010 by several independently minded practitioners of European geopolitics, who saw a certain vacuum in the information flow leading into the European geopolitical discussion. EGF is dedicated, therefore, towards the promotion of an objective, Pan-European geopolitical debate incorporating the views of Wider-European opinion shapers rather than simply those from the mainstream European Union (EU) member states. EGF seeks to elaborate upon European decision makers' and other relevant stakeholders' appreciation of European geopolitics by encouraging and effectively expanding the information flow from east to west, from south to north. In order to achieve these objectives, the European Geopolitical Forum was established as an independent internet-based resource, a web-portal which aims to serve as a knowledge hub on Pan-European geopolitics. EGF's strength is in its unique ability to gather a wide range of affiliated experts, the majority of whom originate from the countries in the EU's external neighbourhood, to examine and debate core issues in the Wider-European geopolitical context. Exchange of positions and interactivity between east and west, south and north, is at the heart of the EGF project. Please visit our website for further information at [www.gpf-europe.com](http://www.gpf-europe.com).

### About the Author

Dr George Vlad Niculescu is originally from Bucharest, Romania, and is currently the Head of Research of the European Geopolitical Forum. He is also a co-Chair of the Regional Stability in the South Caucasus Study Group of the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes (PfPC). In October 2019, he has successfully defended his PhD thesis on "SECURITY SCENARIOS PLANNING IN THE GEOPOLITICAL AREA FROM THE BALTIC SEA TO THE WIDER BLACK SEA (INTER-MARIUM)" at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (NSPSA) Bucharest and received his PhD degree in June 2021. He has also academic experience as a member of several other PfPC working groups, as well as assistant professor and/or visiting lecturer at the NSPSA, "Dimitrie Cantemir" University, NATO Studies Centre, and the PfP Training Centre from Bucharest (1997-2004). Dr Niculescu has been involved in several international research projects sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation), the European Commission (HiQSTEP Project), and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. His full CV and list of publications could be found [here](#).

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