

QUESTION1: Since the 17th century Russia has tried to have an access to the Mediterranean Sea. With the help of Syria and more or less Turkey and eventually the war in Ukraine, it has succeeded in making a sure way. Should we think that these facts could lead Russia to stop the invasion of Ukraine or should we fear a never ending aggression policy ?

Strictly speaking, Russia is not an Eastern Mediterranean country. It does not have direct access to the Mediterranean Sea; its most important strategic and economic interests belong to other parts of the world, such as the North Atlantic or East Asia. However, for a long time Russia has been trying to make its presence in the region visible; this continuous interest goes back to the 17th century and it results from a variety of geopolitical, economic, strategic, religious and cultural reasons. Today Moscow arguably enjoys more visibility here than even the Soviet Union did at the peak of its global outreach. Moreover, Vladimir Putin can present the Kremlin's presence in the Eastern Mediterranean as one of the most spectacular and unquestionable personal foreign policy accomplishments.

Now, sustaining an approach that Russia may have comprehensive strategic approach to the region would be a challenging task for a number of reasons.

First, the Eastern Mediterranean is simply too large and too diverse to have a 'one size fits all' pattern to multiple crises and conflicts here. The resistance and difficulties that Russia is facing in Ukraine are a good illustration.

Second, Russia's capabilities in the region—especially in the economic domain and in soft power tools—are quite limited and do not allow Moscow to pursue a long-term strategy guided by a compelling comprehensive vision of the region's future. Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia has no social and economic model that it could offer nations of the region to follow and imitate.

Third, Russia's approaches to specific countries in the Eastern Mediterranean reflect a complex interaction of various political, economic and other group interests in Moscow; the exact balance of these interests may fluctuate from one country to another and from one stage of the Russian engagement to another.

*Keeping all these factors in mind, one could conclude that instead of trying to articulate an all-inclusive 'Putin doctrine' for the region, it would be appropriate to look at the Russian policy as an attempt to balance a number of diverging principles, goals, priorities and modes of engagement in the Eastern Mediterranean. **349 words***

QUESTION2: « Hoods make not monks » (W. Shakespeare). The E.U. has just opened a new era on an economical point of view with Mrs Lagarde for the Covid 19 budget for the vaccine and then on a military level with a large support to the Ukrainian army.

Would you say it can bring a decisive direction towards a true « Unified Europe » ?

In March 2021, Élie Cohen and Richard Robert published The European Waltz in which they illustrate the "three-beat waltz" of the European Union when it comes to reacting to crises. First, the EU disappoints, then it recovers before perpetuating its action and giving it a scope commensurate with its means. The authors mention the eurozone crisis, the Brexit and Covid-19 as recent examples.

With regard to the war in Ukraine, the European Union has not experienced any phase of torpor between the different aspirations of its member states. The shock the conflict caused helped forge a rapid consensus among the 27 member states. The EU was even surprised by its ability to act quickly. Supported by its public union, the EU showed unity in its perception of the threat. Since then, European leaders have sought to maintain this unity while laying the groundwork for future decisions on, for instance, energy and defense.

However, the consequences of this united opposition to Russia are increasingly heavy to bear and, worse, they weigh unequally on countries according to their degree of dependence on Russia. In this sense, the perpetuation of sanctions and their economic impact may well put European unity to a severe stress test. People, originally supportive, are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact on their wallets, especially in winter. Insensibly, a turnaround is emerging in national polls, notably in Germany, Austria (which has never been in the Soviet orbit) and the Czech Republic, where movements hostile to the sanctions against Moscow have appeared.

Moreover, it seems that solidarity with Ukraine may become a bargaining chip. An EU agreement including a minimum tax on multinationals and 18 billion euros in macro-financial assistance for Ukraine was momentarily blocked in December 2022 by Poland. It must be said that political tensions are high within the EU. The conservative regimes in Poland and Hungary are under pressure from the European institutions for their infringements of the rule of law. So far, agreements have always eventually been reached. But differences over policy towards Russia may also weaken the cohesion of the Union.

Differences of emphasis remain, inevitable in a club of democracies. But the speed and determination Europe initially acted with startled many in Brussels. Even the bloc's response to covid-19 had taken months for the union to work effectively. The sight of Russian bombs slaughtering civilians on the bloc's doorstep shocked a united EU into action. Given that neither America nor Europe is willing to intervene

*militarily, the EU has no choice but unity, even if « true unification » in Europe will remain as fragile as it has always been. **434 words***

QUESTION3: Our modern armies usually include Air force, Marine... and cyber defense, space command...What, in your opinion, is the weight of intelligence nowadays

How should it be shaped in the near future in Western countries and particularly in ours ?

If the persistence of the necessity of intelligence networks in the history of security and defense is not to be questioned, Intelligence is now faced with new challenges when the world order is changing. What are these challenges in the contemporary globalized world?

First of all, it is the very scale of intelligence services that needs to be rethought today. The world order since the Treaty of Westphalia and until the Cold War was based on a hierarchy and tensions between nations. However, the globalized world has led to a certain number of regionalization processes, resulting in delegation of sovereignty and therefore of competences in various domains to the supranational level. As a result, intelligence must also adapt to the regional scale of new cooperation. In this way, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization set up several intelligence cells common to the member states but independent from national services, including the civilian intelligence committee and the military intelligence committee. One can also cite the example of "intelligence Europe" which was built progressively and in parallel with the construction of the European community.

*The club of Berne (1971), the Trevi group (1976) and Vienna (1979) mainly fought against terrorism and today three main bodies participate in maintaining security in Europe: the police agency Europol created in 1999, the Anti-Terrorist Group (ATG) created in 2001 and the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU **INTCEN**) in 2012. Finally, this supra-state cooperation in intelligence has become global within the framework of Interpol. This global organization is not a UN agency but brings together the 194 states that are members.*

For long, intelligence services enjoyed their own legality, which allowed them to keep their actions secret, but today, the secret dimension of their work is undermined by the growing demand for transparency from civil society. The Wikileaks affair during which official documents on the war in Afghanistan or the war in Iraq were revealed, embodies this desire to lift secrecy on what governments intend to hide.

Last, technological progress and cyberspace are also major challenges for intelligence services. On the one hand, the storage of data presents a significant source of information and therefore intelligence on anyone and any potential threat. In the fight against Daesh, the "third front" was this cyberspace. Conversely, cybersecurity is an important issue for intelligence networks which, like all administrative and governmental services, can in turn be threatened by potential

enemies. On the other hand, the web constitutes a privileged support for the dissemination of fake news and is a favorable ground for disinformation.

*This list reveals the complexity of the reforms needed for the various intelligence agencies to be tools adapted to the new global geostrategic order. Despite these challenges, intelligence services remain effective levers of action and are widely used by states in the resolution of international investigations or conflicts. **471 words***

QUESTION4: The FED said the Central Bank would continue to forcefully combat inflation and acknowledge that rising rates would be painful. In the perspective of midterm elections, is it necessary, unuseful or something else in your opinion?

Central bankers are facing the age-old dilemma: whether to use their powers over a currency to guard against inflation or boost the economy. These past years, the FED has favored growth as price stability seemed to be a given. Since inflation started to rise again in recent months, the American Federal Central Bank has decided to take radical measures to combat inflation. Even if one can understand that the memory of a lingering high inflation in the 80's prompts the Central Banks to react quickly today, the measures that the FED has been taking for months are more and more unpopular and can not only have consequences on the way of life of citizens but also on the radical reactions they may have during elections for example, letting themselves tempted, as they have already been, by populist movements.

Savers are seeing their portfolios melt away (the Nasdaq, which is rich in tech companies, has been down by a third, the S&P 500 has been down by a quarter, and Treasury bonds have been down by more than 15%); households are suffering from the doubling of mortgage rates and are preparing for a real estate crash; Wall Street is worried about possible financial accidents, such as the failure of an over-indebted private investor; and the United States' partners are suffering from the surge in the value of the US dollar and are no longer able to finance themselves, as is the case with the UK.

*The FED's reaction has therefore clearly been too strong for many and could well, if it persists, cause a recession in the USA, when growth has already been negative in the first two quarters of 2022. In a country where polarization has become a real challenge for national institutions, the prospect of social protests and economic recession is probably not what the United States needs now. **312 words***