

PROSPECTIVE STUDIES AND THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS: SCENARIOS FOR A MID-LONG TERM EVOLUTION

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*Abstract: Prospective analysis is an important component of strategic long term planning. There is a set of applied methodologies, techniques or models applied in the field, at the international level, with uneven results. The international experience underlines the **difficulty of making predictions** in a highly unstable period, when we can note the end of the holiday offered by the post-cold war period and the renewal of the fight for a better posture, given by the new economic and military capacities of the global players and the multiplicity of those players. The big challenge is how **to elaborate prospective scenarios (and not predictions) in the middle of evolving crisis**, and that is the subject we lay upon.*

*Our paper is the result of a research study developed under the finances of Black Sea Trust of the German Marshall Found and establishes a **method** – soon to become a methodology registered as such, **in prospective studies**. Besides the methodological approach, the study looks into the evolution of **the situation in Ukraine** and applies the method to the crisis developed in Ukraine, presenting the evolution of the possible scenarios in that area.*

Keywords: *Prospective studies, plausible tomorrows, alternative futures, “Stop and go” solutions, frozen conflict.*

I. Prospective studies. A methodology

Alternative theoretical approaches

Tuomo Kuosa talks about foresight, meaning long term, at least 10 years, and about Alternative Futures¹. Kuosa introduces a type of order or a collection of concepts beginning with **Fully-fledged foresight** - policy networking and long term analysis in order to influence existing decisions; **Participatory foresight** with strategic alternatives bottom-up, with concerns of the citizens and NGOs but promoting wishful thinking or the so-called „preferred version” of the future; **Futurology** a type of long term societal policy, trying to promote a pro-active bottom-up approach in order to change things the right way; **La Prospective** a pro-active and visionary approach of the future in a specific field; **Future studies** focussed on different alternatives but aiming at describing in a pro-active manner the visions and own images of the future to come, focussing more on explaining the possible consequences of the decisions we are taking now for the life of the citizens of the future. But foresight is directly linked with strategic thinking and strategic planning in order to contribute to plans and development of a period of 3-15 years.

The Futures domain is a combination of **foresight, futures studies** and other elements and is aimed at offering better knowledge of the future, preventing or limiting strategic surprise. It is using three levels: rational, scenarios and empirical, top down or bottom up. In the field of thinking anticipation and prediction, guessing play an important role.

¹ Tuomo Kuosa, “The evolution of Strategic Foresight. Navigating Public Policy Making”, Gower, July 2012.

Prognosis uses statistics, but also approaches like normative-desirable futures, explorative-scenario based of possible, probable evolution and the pro-active approach, anticipation, assuming and action, as a modality to „change” or „direct” the future, „choose” the desirable scenario.

Critical Future Studies (CFS) is a post-modern approach based on Habermas and Wilber, aimed at overcoming dogmatism constraints and domination and to identify the basic oppressive social structures. The method used is called **Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)** and is related to four levels of analysis: litany, social causes, cultural beliefs and myths, and the aim is to find the episteme and alternative discourses. **The Vision** is a way of making subjective statements with a convincing argumentation on a favourable or preferred future. The **weak signal** is another subjective construct dealing with observing a strange idea that someone considers to have a special value in the prognosis. The most well known project is the EU iKnow.

Factors of change is another concept that includes all kinds of knowledge of the future as: trend, driver, weak signals, anomaly, emerging problems, tipping points, wild cards, visions, values, predictions, prognosis, turbulences, beliefs, imagination, strategies, road maps, plans and scenarios (normative or explorative ones) and grand challenges.

Models and practical application

How is the fields structured? First, it has a collection of concepts, far from really being structured in a comprehensive manner. **Foresight, Alternative futures, Prognosis, probabilities, prospective approach**, all are there. The most important and circulated ones, the most popular in fact, are far from a scientific basis but still they are a way to value the experience of individuals in the field and to approach the evolution of a strictly (but subjective) expert way. There's the case of Stratfor Company (Strategic Foresight) and its creator George Friedman – Stratfor, a partner of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Center. The basic theory that sits on the work of George Friedman² is the **methods of the historical cycles** (Kondratyev, 1925, Joseph Shumpeter, 1939) claiming that the change of industry and the crisis are provoking the change in the power equilibrium and the new wave of changes and wars to match those resources and the situation in the international arena.

Some of the projects reached only private support, in some cases the state finances the research, in other cases state institutions or international organisations are making this effort trying to deal with foresight, prognosis, or prospective studies in general. This is the case of the Swiss experience on Horiyon Scanning in Government³ together with the American and British or NATO experience.

The most famous is the Global Trends exercise, of the National Intelligence Commission, the last one, NIC - Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds⁴ being realised with

² George Friedman, *The Next Decade: Where we've been and where we're going*, USA Doubleday, 2011; George Friedman, *The next 100 years. A forecast for the 21-st Century*, New York, Anchor Books, 2009.

³ Beat Habegger, *Horizon Scanning in Government (Concept, Country Experiences, and Models for Switzerland)*, Center for Security Studies, ETH, Zurich, 2009.

⁴*** *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, National Intelligence Committee – NIC, Washington DC, December, 2012.

the contribution of international partners. The famous part comes from George Tenet's Global Trends 2015 (June 2001) that predicted both the Al Qaeda Attack on 9/11 and Bin Laden as the major threat to the US and in its most probable crisis until 2015, the Russian-Ukrainian war was there with the dispute on Crimea.

The methodology used is identifying critical trends and possible discontinuities, making a difference between megatrends (components most probable to appear in a scenario), game-changers (critical values with an uncertain trajectory, but which are changing fundamentally the evolutions of the trends, if they occur). The last such exercise proposes alternative worlds and black swan⁵ events with a great impact.

Atlantic Council - Strategic Foresight Initiative at the Brent Center on International Security⁶ takes the basics of the NIC Global Trends 2030 and applies those findings to NATO and the Euro-Atlantic relation, proposing recommendations to the US in that area. ACUS – Atlantic Council of the US - assumes that the US is still the hegemon and great power of the world for the next 15 years and that it has to assume this situation in spite of the decline of the American power.

The aim is to maintain NATO as an instrument, the US as the major superpower and **to change the future** from the world characterised by political volatility, vast economy, ecological catastrophes and nationalism on the rise into a world based on rules, with diminishing poverty and human progress.

NATO: Multiple Futures Project – Findings and Recommendations⁷ creates alternative scenarios for the next two decades considering predictable threats. The study has been realised by SACT-Supreme Allied Command on Transformation from Norfolk. The aim of the study is to inform and sustain strategic dialogue on challenges that the Alliance will face and their implications at the civilian and military level offering to NATO ideas and information for strategic planning.

Another exercise is the one called **Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World: renewing the Transatlantic Partnership**⁸, a research aimed at explaining the complexity of threats, the evolution of capabilities and the analysis of deficiencies in the existing institutions in order to conclude that no state is able to manage by itself the existing and future challenges to security and therefore the need for a strategic integrated allied strategy that includes civilian and military capabilities alike. We are talking once again about a programmatic paper that presumes or wishes to create and maintain a leading role to the transatlantic relation and the existence of NATO.

⁵ Nicholas Nassim Taleb, *Black Swan. The impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2-nd Edition, Random House Trade Paperbacks, New York, 2010.

⁶****Envisioning 2030; US Strategy for a Post-Western World*, Atlantic Council, A report of the Strategic Foresight Initiative at the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, Robert A. Manning principal drafter, Washington DC, 2012, http://ddata.over-blog.com/xxxxyy/2/48/17/48/Fichiers-pdf/Communaute-transatlantique/Envisioning2030_web.pdf.pdf.

⁷****Multiple Futures Project. Navigating towards 2030*, NATO Allied Command on Transformation Findings and Recommendations, April 2009, http://www.iris-france.org/docs/pdf/up_docs_bdd/20090511-112315.pdf.

⁸****Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World. Renewing Transatlantic Partnership*, Noaber Foundation, Lunteren, 2007, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/events/080110_grand_strategy.pdf.

The methodology sits on the trend analysis of the challenges and specific threats, in a global context. It screens the efficiency of the national institutions and NATO and their strategies and proposes ways to adapt and improve those rules and trends in order to meet the new and future security needs and requirements. It assesses the ideas on the type of strategy to be embraced and suggests how this strategy can be implemented.

Prospective studies in Romania

The instruments in our hands are the ones offered by the models in prospective studies. In an article that I've published⁹ I made the assessment of the existing techniques, models and methodologies on the international level and the developments of those studies made in Romania. The basic studies in Romania are kept at the level of scenario building and trend assessments.

We've had several preoccupations in the field beginning with our dissertation „**Discontinuity method** in the foreign affairs analysis”¹⁰ where we took Rene Thom's „Theory of catastrophes”¹¹ and identified the „catastrophic leaps” that could lead to unexpected and highly consequential events, trying to get back to the discontinuities superposed that are leading to this major „leap”. This theory has been applied, at that time, in the case of the Transnistria Conflict. But it was proved that this approach is a *modus tollens* one, meaning that we can imagine catastrophe scenarios and then come back to the events that could lead to this, and not the other way around, meaning to predict the approach of the catastrophic event.

The problem of identifying alternative scenarios for an event that proves to be a crisis has also been approached in the methodology that we've developed for the analysis of **Romania's strategic decision in international affairs** that sits at the bases of the Bulletin of analysis of the strategic decision, a weekly product of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Center I founded 12 years ago. The bulletin entered its 8-th year of life and reached 150 pages weekly, covering crisis and major conflicts that are happening not only in places where Romania has a strategic interest, according to its own level of ambition, but also covering evolutions of major crisis that could have a global impact on the whole world.

The methodology is **following trends in the evolution of ongoing crises** on the short term, and is considering events, context, the significance of the major events and evolutions, the approach from the point of view of Romania, the risks and trends of evolution, as well as recommendations¹². The basic scientific background is Crismart (Crisis Management Research and Training program of the Swedish Defence University) methodology of

⁹ Iulian Chifu, *Analiză prospectivă. Experiența internațională și o abordare românească* (Prospective analysis. International experience and a Romanian approach), *Revista Română de Studii de Intelligence*, no. 10, December 2013, Bucharest, ISSN 2067-3353, pp. 167 – 186.

¹⁰ Iulian Chifu, *Metoda discontinuităților în analiza de politică externă* (dissertation paper) SNSPA 1999, Scientific Coordinator Cornel Codiță.

¹¹ Rene Thom, *Teoria Catastrofelor*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986.

¹² The model is original, belongs to us, it uses several elements of content analysis on public sources, as could be seen in Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis. An introduction to its Methodology*, second edition, Sage Publications, London-New Delhi, 2004.

analysing decision making in crisis, a methodology¹³ I've learnt¹⁴ and used in an extensive way in Romania¹⁵. It is also the bases of my course at the National University for Political and Administrative Studies Bucharest for the last 10 years.

So considering the basics of the decision making in crisis analysis, we've developed the **methodology for analysing ongoing crises** and make prospective studies for short term periods, focus specifically on trends and evolutions and to major risks that some evolution could create on the short run. Our methodology turns more specifically to the approach that sees the crisis more as a major event that influences the decision and is quality based on the urgency and the pressure, the lack of information and uncertainty, the threat to basic values that such a crisis is demanding to the decision maker to solve in a short time.

So the **prospective part of this model** and methodology is aimed at limiting the strategic surprise and at preparing the flexible instruments adaptable to react in the case that such events happen, the crisis, studying an alternative of preventing this event from happening, creating systems of early warning before the event occurs and preparing the decision maker to intervene, based on past experiences, studies, lessons learnt and crises of the same type that already took place. The basic assumption is that 80% of the crises that we are going to face, we've already faced them or our neighbours did.

I. Prospective studies: project Ukraine

But the basic problem that we do have is how to make **prospective studies** in a crisis that is on the way, and the „depth” of these predictions to cover **6 months-1 year, 3-5 years, 10-15 years**. This challenge we've tried to answer in a project related to prospective studies for the Ukrainian Crisis, financed by the GMF in April 2014¹⁶.

The way to address prospective studies on 3-5 years mid term has been developed as a technique in non public context, for internal purpose of the intelligence institutions. We looked into these experiences and tried to propose a model of analysis of our own, that could be tested and transformed in time in a registered methodology. The original aim of the project was to have suitable tools in order to anticipate the action and the capacity to launch the

¹³ Eric Stern, *Crisis Decisionmaking*, Stockholm University Press, 2001; Iulian Chifu, Britta Ramberg, *Crisis Management in transitional societies*, Publishing House SNDC CRISMART, Stockholm, 2007; Iulian Chifu, Britta Ramberg, *Managementul Crizelor în societățile în tranziție*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007.

¹⁴ *Crisis management in transitional societies*, International Conference “Crisis Management and Civil Emergency Planning”, Swedish National Defense College, Stockholm, Dec 4-8, 2006; *Crisis Management in Transitional Societies: The Romanian Case*, Conference “Crisis Management in the EU” organized by Swedish National Defense College, Stockholm, 22-24 February 2007; Försvarshögskolan – Swedish National Defence College, conference held, “Crisis management and conflict resolution in the Wider Black Sea Region”, Stockholm, June 11, 2013.

¹⁵ It is the result of several international project and books: Iulian Chifu, Oazu Nantoi, Oleksandr Sushko, *The Russian-Georgian War. A cognitive institutional approach of the crisis decisionmaking*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009; Iulian Chifu, Oazu Nantoi, Oleksandr Sushko, „*The Breakthrough Crisis*” of a quick solution in Transnistria, a cognitive institutional approach of the crisis decisionmaking, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008; Iulian Chifu, Oazu Nantoi, Oleksandr Sushko, *The Russian-Ukrainian Gas Crisis* – Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Kyiv, http://www.cpc-ew.ro/pdfs/gaz_book.pdf; Iulian Chifu, Monica Oproiu, Narciz Bălășoiu, *Războiul ruso-georgian. Reacțiile decidenților în criză*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010. It is also the core of the course of Crisis Management that I am presenting to the Master degree of Conflict Analysis I founded in 2006 at the National University of Political and Administrative Studies Bucharest.

¹⁶ GMF BST Project “Ukraine. A prospective approach”.

warning as early as possible. The target is to make prospective studies and not to predict the future (that's also our approach). The design is used for a mid term evolution, 3-5 years.

The original **technique used** is based on a two session work, a creativity session – a type of professional brainstorming – that identifies all the factors that could influence the existing situation, then selecting, also in an expert framework, the key factors, filtering the plausibility and relevance, but also the impact and level of consequences, and finally selecting between all the combination a limited number of scenarios to be played – usually 8, meaning strong signals for 3-6 scenarios, weak signals for 3-6 scenarios, and „wild cards” – elements of major change, that are changing our way of thinking, plausible, consistent but rare in terms of probability.

In applying the technique, the trickiest part is the way to select from the enormous number of factors that could influence a process, the ones called **key variables**. In working to make this selection, practitioners used relative certainties (aspects that could most probably be materialised), **crucial uncertainties** (crucial aspects but unpredictable in what concerns the evolution and the impact): and „**tipping points**” (events with a major impact on the issue but with minor chances to be materialised, for which there are no indicators for the moment being but if they are materialised, they would modify fundamentally the basic paradigm). Looking into this screen would offer the possibility to select the **key variables**. It is an expert view, usually one developed behind close doors.

The model has some visible gaps: first, it is done only at an expert level, an added value but also, since developed in groups of the same level of knowledge and way of thinking, **exposed to groupthink** and limited ideas or arguments. Second, the technique leaves it up to the experts to find ways of selecting the key variables. Giving the compositions and framework, there's a big possibility that those key variables are staying at a large respect in a mainstream of the group, and **rejects the less credible, „implausible”, unaccepted scenarios**.

Third, there is the **gap of selection**. Once we have the **key variables**, there's a third selection made in the same framework, involving the scenarios. In order to avoid playing some thousands scenarios that the combination of all the factors is offering or some hundreds offered by the key variables, there is a selection of the most probable, in this three tiers framework. But even limitation leaves aside some important scenarios and different from the ones played in mainstream.

Forth, why selecting 3-6, for strong and week signals, and 2-3 for tipping points, **numbers established in a very aleatory way**. In a turbulent world, one would be inclined to play more the weak signals and tipping points, since they could offer more grounds in avoiding surprises than the strong signals, which could lead to very common and obvious scenarios. Those two points are the most challenging from the point of view of the scientific support of the methodology, as well as the limitation imposed to the number of scenarios.

Our project¹⁷ was less ambitious in terms of proposing and working with PLATO or prospective studies. It was a test case on **bridging the gaps** and **solving the variables on the technique**, in order to identify what is needed in order **to elaborate a real methodology** in a

¹⁷ GMF BST Project „Ukraine. A prospective approach”.

future project. Moreover, we had to also solve the fact that we are not beginning with an event well known and assessed, with a common approach assumed, but with a „moving target”, an event in an unstable and unpredictable situation, a real turmoil, with huge debates about the outcome of that evolution: a crisis in evolution. For **avoiding groupthink**, the project has been developed involving NGO representatives, think tanks, academia and students, using only open sources. So the advantage is to avoid groupthink and have inputs with ideas from different specialised milieus, even though we did work only on the basis of common knowledge on the given crisis, Ukrainian crisis.

The method consists of **two successive iterations** of the same methodology, at a difference of some 45 days, this endeavour being designed in order to limit the effects of the original assessment. By **repeating the assessment twice**, the result of prospective scenarios can be deprived by the variables that the current situation and instability are infringing to the process of scenario building.

Each iteration consists of an **assessment of the current situation** at the beginning of the analysis, then on an expert evaluation of variables and factors that could influence the evolution of the subject. In order to avoid the random collection of items and factors that are influencing the issue, the future of the Ukrainian crisis, we've created **a system of assessing factors of influence** in three clusters, short term 6 month-1 year, mid term 3-5 years, long term 10-15 years. Then, we've selected global level, regional level and local (Ukrainian) level, each with political, military, social and economic factors. With this cluster we've undertaken the general table of the factors that could influence the matter.

At the end of the day, we were confronted with the major issue of **how to select the key variables**, in the PLATO technique, in order to offer a scientific format and one that aims at having all important scenarios different in between themselves in a way that they are worth being considered and developed as such. We've selected so the **essential indicators** based on two successive processes:

- The first consists in giving the responses to the **most important and obvious problems** related to the Russian-Ukrainian war: here we select how the border between Ukraine and Russia, or the West and the Russian World will look like – spiritualised, meaning with transit spaces with double influence, or enforced border, containment type, with weapons on each side, a defended and strong border, with very consistent spaces behind those lines; then which way Ukraine is going to go: West, East or in the middle, a nationalistic or undecided or anarchic Ukraine; and third, how much of Ukraine is there going to be left: full Ukraine, without Crimea, without the East, without Novorossia (the eight eastern and southern regions claimed to be offered in time, during the history, by Russia).
- Then, we looked at all the other factors in order to select **those which are consistent with the previous ones** and could give added value and different scenarios. We've obtain some 8 new essential indicators, each of them being able to be combined with the first three and offering added value. Then we undertook the endeavour to keep the ones that are offering us the minimalist system with different scenarios. Here we used the epistemological approach to the Theory, how to build a theory based on a

minimum range of axioms, that have to be un-contradictorial and complete in the sense of explaining the space covered.

The technique exists in the logic of mathematic tools and we've succeed in using this technique in order to obtain the last two **essential indicators**: what type of Russia are we going to have – a revisionist Russia or a Russia returning to the basic principles of the international system (and claiming that Crimea was just a „special case”, but that Moscow still respects the international law). And second, what type of relation are we going to have between Russia and the US: a competitive-conflictual one or a negotiation-big bargain type. After the process, we've let aside propositions related to NATO or the EU, or China, for instance, since their influence could not change the basic scenarios that could be made.

So with those 5 essential indicators, but which have more than 2 values (one with 5 values – which way Ukraine goes, another with 4 values – how much of Ukraine is left), we have a space of possible combination of scenarios that reaches 160. Now the process went into narrowing those possibilities and to maintaining only the really different scenarios. Moreover, we did not rule out any scenario that would give us added value, so we avoided the 3-5/3-5/2-3 artificial split.

So we obtained the following scheme: **7 scenarios of continuity** (based on strong signals, as the technique would put it), **5 scenarios of weak signals**, existing evolutions but which could become in the future relevant and with an important impact, and **6 scenarios of black swan events** (low probability, but with huge impact if they occur). Moreover, for the long run, we just elaborated on the existing scenarios developed on the mid term in a **trend development**. In developing the scenarios, we used all the factors that could influence Ukraine's evolution already identified in the first phase of the method.

A. Continuity scenarios

1. **Ukraine going West**: as a unitary state without Crimea or with another portion of its territory going West, with an enforced border with Russia and eventually going to EU and NATO on the long run.
2. **Transnistriation, federalisation under Russian Control** (the Eastern part involved). Limiting Ukraine's policies of any kind due to the Russian control in Eastern Ukraine and a Transnistria type reintegration system, or a federation with a veto of the Eastern territory.
3. **„Stop and Go”**. The anarchy and lack of power of the state still continues, as well as the Russian involvement. Ukrainian citizens are leaving the east, and the level of support for moving to Russia raises in those two regions, as the propaganda goes on in a different region – Zaporozje, Kerson or Odessa. Then, in 6 months, one year, when the Crimean annexation will be absorbed, Russia takes Ukraine's East and begins the destabilisation in another region. And so on. Russia takes slices of Ukraine to reach the Novorossia plan, to link its border to Transnistria and the Danube, and deny Ukraine any littoral at the Black Sea.
4. **Abandon**. Russia does not succeed in its plans with Ukraine and abandons, keeping just Crimea, but Ukraine does not go either towards the East, but embraces a rather

nationalistic and ambiguous position, balancing between going West and avoiding commitments, due to several social or economic reasons.

5. **Finlandisation of Ukraine.** Ukraine develops its political and economic life in a pro-Western manner but accepting the non-bloc/neutrality policy and control of its security by Russia.
6. **Transnistria singularity.** Troops and volunteers from the separatist region of Republic of Moldova, under Russian control, together with Russian paratroopers and Kozakhs are entering from Transnistria in the Odessa Region in order to destabilise and create the link with Crimea. Ukraine decides, with or without Chisinau's knowledge or consent, to enter Transnistria and sterilise the enemy troops behind their back.
7. **International con-dominium on Ukraine.** The balance of power on Ukraine is fragile, Ukraine cannot deal with its own issues, neither the pro-Russian separatists in the East or other region can prevail, so the Geneva type (EU, US, Russia) of international con-dominium is established in the region. As a result, each time when there is a problem on a third space or somebody wants a bigger share in Ukraine's influence, it creates problems and instability through proxies in Ukraine and is negotiating the issue directly or in a package with other files of interest.

B. Weak signals

1. **Changing Putin.** The system of power in the Kremlin is deciding to change Putin from its forefront position. This change does not happen over night, and neither in the period that the crisis is raging, but just after calming down. The sanctions applied to Russia's establishment and first ring of Putin's close friends are the ones driving the change, in order for a different figure to be able to cut a deal with the West on a different path, not the aggressive one already embraced. The change comes also with the split of Russia on the long run and the European-NATO integration of Western Russia.
2. **Cold War.** A new period of cold war type is appearing between Russia and the Western World, at a smaller scale, but that leads to a containment of Russia at a regional and international level and a physical containment by enforcing and heavily arming the frontline states in NATO-EU and a military support for Ukraine for weapons and military organisation in order to enforce this border.
3. **Anarchy without rules.** Ukraine becomes a weak state, Poroshenko and the central authorities lose their credibility and capacity to manage the situation in the regions, a whole system of local groupings and militias are taking over due to the lack of authority, Ukraine moves to an anarchic global village with improvised local security forces.
4. **Revisionist Alliance.** At the international level, Russia succeeds to impose and find allies for its revisionist agenda, putting in question borders and international rules. Hungary becomes the first partner, and other dependent states are joining the ad-hoc non-institutionalised alliance (Bulgaria, Serbia).

5. **Ukraine occupied.** In sequences and in time, step by step or in a window of opportunity, Russia occupies Ukraine, imposes its Governance and integrates it in the institution that it created. Putin fulfils its plan for recreating the Historical Greater Russia in the post-Soviet Space

C. **„Black swan events” type of scenarios**

1. **„Putin’s suicide”** (figurative) – The sudden disappearance of Putin from the forefront of the system. It is different as scenario than the one related to the change of Putin since it means a sudden change, a crisis of succession and a rivalry between different groups. But it also means to let Ukraine choose its path and evolution since no capacity to maintain the pressure is possible in this scenario.
2. **Unfinished business in Ukraine.** We are talking about a singular Event in a remote region, like the atomic bomb exploded in South Korea or Japan as a result of an accident in North Korea on their first exercise with the atomic bomb launch from a missile. We can accept any other type of event that moves suddenly all the attention and resources of all the global players – Russia, the US, the EU – in a remote region like south-east Asia, leaving Ukraine on its own, with all the issues on the ground, since nobody is interested any more to allocate resources. No funds from the EU, IMF, no weapons from NATO or the US, no support for the separatists from Moscow, Ukraine is left with the whole mess and without support to deal with the issue the way it is.
3. **The West Abdicated.** EU and/or NATO pass the responsibility for a solution at the Eastern border to Central and Eastern Europe. NATO is split between the US and European allies that do not invest, and do not take responsibility in their neighbourhood, Europe is split between Western Europe, more inclined to deal with Northern Africa and immigration, as well as with further integration and a Schengen 2.0 grouping and Central-Eastern Europe, concerned with the Eastern border. CEE acquires self consciences and tries to deal with the East, with the assistance of the US, or realises that it is no longer in the paradigm of old and new Europe Rumsfeld times, but a region with differences within on the way of addressing its neighbourhood – countries dependent on Russia’s gas, inclined to take the Russia first approach, and countries concerned with their own security and considering Russia a threat. CEE has to join forces with Ukraine and to make a type of minimum resistance to those threats.
4. **Coup d’etat in Ukraine.** The Right Sector or a federate armed group in Ukraine, but one from the revolution side, the nationalist part, kills Poroshenko and leaves Ukraine without a proper power. If this happens before the new Parliament is elected, but with the Verhovna Rada already dissolved, this creates a mess, but with a new leader coming from the “good side”, the pro-Western forces, but also one that is less able to be frequented, since its nationalist and militarist approaches, xenophobic and unacceptable are to be rejected. The West cannot help this power, and Russia has the arguments of “the fascists”, “the Nazis” that could enable them to make a strong point and obtain the return of Ukraine in their orbit, in its integrative structures on the long run.

5. **Turkey takes Crimea.** On the base of the conflict of Ukraine and Russia, in a moment when Russia is weakened by Western sanctions and with an economy and military in disarray, without capacity of maintaining the pro-Russian establishment in Crimea, with an even weaker Ukraine, at the request of a strong discriminated Tartar community, at its request, Turkey invades Crimea and takes over, appointing the Tartar community in the forefront of the administration of Crimea.
6. **Big Bargain for Crimea.** Russia accepts the stabilisation of Ukraine, but tries to have a quasi-official recognition of its ownership on Crimea. This is not formally possible but informally it could have this approach by a big bargain that would involve a de facto recognition of Crimea as part of Russia but with a deal US-Syria, the replacement of Bashar al Assad but the conservation of the territory it controls under allawit control and in exchange the removal of Tartus and Russia's control in the arms selling in Syria. This means Crimea for the eviction of Russia from Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Ukraine is left with more Russian influence, but Russia loses its only support and presence in Eastern Mediterranean Sea.
7. **Ukraine Wants back its nuclear capability.** The challenge to the guarantees of security obtained by Ukraine in 1994, in Budapest, when entering the Non Proliferation Treaty, when renouncing its nuclear capabilities inherited after the fall of the Soviet Union, could be a good legitimacy to fight back for re-nuclearization. Once the territorial integrity of Ukraine has been put under question by one of its guarantors from 1994, Russia, who proceeded to annex Crimea and challenged the stability in Eastern Ukraine, a nationalist government, who could arrive in office in the current (autumn) or the next general elections could try to use subtle and underground networks in order to get back its capability, claiming that deterrence and its own security proved not to be granted neither by the EU, nor by NATO, but by its own deterrence nuclear capability.

Our endeavour, at this point, reached the level of **transforming the technique into a model with far more solid theoretical grounds** and scientific background, even though we cannot talk yet about a methodology. The results have been tested in different environments, expert, academic, NGO, think tank and also specialised institutional environments.

The feedbacks have been used and absorbed during our second iteration of the model. Then, the final result benefited from **a revision** by two referent experts that did not take part in the exercise, and by two others involved in the testing part. As a result, we have a model that has just the limit of involving only citizens from Romania, even if they come with **ideas from a large spectrum of readings**. But this is a fair Romanian approach.

Moreover, it opens the possibilities for testing the model on a number of crises/issues, revisited several times at different timeframes, a way to **refine the model** so that, in a next stage of development, we could have a **real methodology for prospective studies**.

Finally, we do want to underline that this is **still just an exercise**, with solid grounds, but with a model that does not have yet a **clear analysis of the magnitude of errors**. This is an approach to **prospective studies**, with huge added value, but **not a prediction**, and we do not refer to the possibility for something to happen more than the precious scenario. Even the

numbers and presentation of the scenarios does not imply any ratings in terms of probability, but just covering the spectrum of possibilities and different scenarios.

Moreover, this is a warning that **false predictions** are far more costly than **recognizing the limits** of making such scenarios for the future. The **overconfidence** of the system can lead to strategic surprise easier than accepting the limits and maintaining awareness that an exceptional event can happen at any moment. So this model and the future methodology for prospective studies is offering us a better understanding and helps preparedness and prevention, but **does not offer us certainties on the future**. It could better be used in drafting plans in order **to move to a wishful future or to avoid negative developments** in a pro-active manner, preparing to use opportunities and bridge vulnerabilities then knowing the future.

Moreover, it is better to embrace the option of **creating capabilities with enough strategic agility** and capacity of adaptation to the realities in evolutions, with a possibility of a prompt reaction in the case of an event of great magnitude, than to use resources for excessively elaborate formulas of strategic planning that could depend too much on predictions.