

2014/6/4 Abstract: Ukraine between the gravitation centres Russian Federation and EU/NATO - the dispute over spheres of influence in Eastern Europe

Heinz Brill

In the assessment of international situations, geopolitical thinking and acting are permanently increasing. This tendency is especially prevailing in world and super powers, but in numerous regional powers as well. At the moment, nearly in every international discussion the geopolitical relevance of both Ukraine and Turkey are emphasized. Because of the mutated space-powers-constellation, for both nations geopolitics has become a central criterion in their new assessment of the situation: Turkey, due to its position on the interface of geopolitical areas, as a rising power striving for becoming the geopolitical pivot in Eurasia, and Ukraine, due to its national system conversion and its consequences for the rearrangement of the post-Soviet area, striving for re-defining its international position. Whereas Turkey's subject function is increasingly finding acceptance in international politics, Ukraine tries to avoid the Russian sphere of influence, threatened by the break-up of the state. So far the future of the post-Soviet area has not been discussed sufficiently by the EU, NATO and Russia, and the Russian suggestions have not been reviewed, neither. For this reason, the analysis at hand is supposed to expose the new national and international dynamics of politics; further on answer the question which chances and threats resulting from the rapid shifts of power and fields of conflict indirectly and directly affect both foreign and security policy of Ukraine, and last, but not least, the central question which geopolitical options will be open for Ukraine if it develops from an object to a subject of international politics. Here, some geopolitical factors will have to be taken into account. In the present security political situation of Europe, "Inter-Europe" - and here especially Ukraine - is in the danger of becoming a (permanent) conflict zone, where a confrontation of EU/NATO with the Russian federation is possible. This scenario was described by Winfried Schneider-Deters already years ago. He, however, also saw the possibility of a balance of interest for both sides, "in which Ukraine's own decision will be operative." In the course of his induction in February 2010, the Ukrainian president Viktor Janukowitsch delivered a very respected keynote address: Ukraine is supposed to become the „bridge“ between East and West; - cooperation with NATO without membership; - association treaty with the EU, but at the same time approach to Moscow's "Eurasian Economic Area"; - creating a Ukrainian-European-Russian consortium for monitoring and modernizing the Ukrainian gas pipelines; - and last but not least, Ukraine was to become a "European and unconfederated state" under his leadership, a nation fostering equal and ambilaterally profitable relationships with the Russian Federation, the EU, the USA, and other states. With these core issues Janukowitsch tried to pursue „multivectoral“ international politics in the framework of strategic balance.

