

SECURITY AND POLITICS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPE AFTER THE TRIANON TREATY

CRISTINA VOHN*

Abstract. *In this study, we will focus on the status of the small and middle states in the Peace Conference and after the Trianon Treaty was signed. We consider that the way in which these states were treated during the negotiations of the peace treaties is symptomatic for the status they had in international relations in the interwar period. But more than that, studying the relations between small and middle states and the great victorious power can help to better understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between a great power and a non-power in the international system – a relationship that has been less in the attention of the international relations theorists.*

Keywords: *Trianon Treaty, Paris Peace Conference, great power, little and middle states, Central and Eastern Europe, power in international relations*

Introduction

The Peace Treaty with Hungary, at the end of World War I, was signed a century ago, on June 4, 1920. This was the moment of the official disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the successor of the Habsburg Empire, and the re-crossing of borders in Central and Eastern European space, this treaty following the one signed with Austria, on September 19, 1919, in Saint Germain.

All the states in this area of Europe, including Hungary as the successor state of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, were established based on the new international regulations of the Paris Peace Conference. The map of Central and Eastern Europe was redrawn on the base of the principle of nationality, most of the nations in this area being part of the Habsburg Empire for centuries, in a situation of inferiority to the dominant nations, deprived of rights and freedoms.

The Paris Peace Conference has brought a fundamental shift in the geography of Central and Eastern Europe, with profound implications on the security issue

* Scientific researcher III, PhD, Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Romanian Academy; cristina.vohn@ispri.ro.

in this part of Europe. If until 1914, the security issue was almost exclusively a result of the balance between the great powers/great empires, now enter the equation the small and the middle states for which ensuring security becomes a foundation of their own foreign policies and their own state existence.

In this study, we will focus on the status of small and middle states in the Peace Conference and after the Trianon Treaty was signed. We consider that the way in which these states were treated during the negotiations of the peace treaties is symptomatic for the status they had in international relations in the interwar period. But more than that, studying the relations between small and middle states and the great victorious powers can help to better understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between a great power and a non-power in the international system – a relationship that has been less in the attention of the international relations theorists.

*A “transitional” conference between
the “old” and the “new” international system*

The Trianon Treaty was prepared and negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference, whose works officially began on January 18, 1919. The Peace Conference was going to establish the general conditions of the peace after the Great War and to negotiate the provisions of the peace treaties with the powers defeated in the World War I. It was not an easy task because many states were involved, of the 32 delegates present in the conference, the majority of 27 represented little and middle states and only five states represented the five big powers at that moment.

In human history, representatives of so many countries – from all the continents of the world, with interests, mentalities, cultures so different – had never gathered in an international conference to rethink and restore the geopolitical configuration of the world. “A peace conference on this scale was unprecedented, yet there was the model of the Vienna Congress (1814-1815)”¹ which was on a smaller scale and implied fewer participants. So, “this was a truly rare occasion when such disparate cultures and peoples, such diverse systems of political and social organization came together in one place to shape the future of the civilized world.”² Five of these were the representatives of the great victorious powers – France, United Kingdom, USA, Italy and Japan – and the remaining delegations, in number 27, represented small and middle states of the international system in that time.

The entire organization and conduct of the Conference’s work was analysed from multiple points of view, but less from the perspective of the non-powers of that time. Either in macro-analyses (which relate to changes in the international system as a whole that followed the Conference), or in micro-analyses (which

¹ René Petraš, “Organisational aspects of the Paris Peace Conference (1918-1919)”, in *Central European Papers*, No. III/2, 2015, p. 35.

² David A. Andelman, *A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today*, Hoboken, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons, 2008, p. 4.

examine the presence and the actions of one state or another in the Conference work – by systematically reporting to the great powers – or any of the specific aspects of the Conference as well as in all the interwar period), the prevailing points of reference are those that present all the international events and phenomena having the great powers in their centrality. The little powers, the middle powers, the regional powers or non-powers³ that participated to the Conference works were and are adjacent subjects of these analyses. This is an aspect characteristic for international policy studies, since “international politics has always been viewed as a game played by the top dogs, a game in which the lesser powers have no substantial say. The great powers have constitutive as well as distributive power: they determine the rules of the game, they fight the wars and they decide who gets what, over the heads of the other powers... Small powers, in turn, are characterized as helpless pawns in the grand schemes of the great powers.”⁴ The small and medium-sized states in Central and Eastern Europe, as they existed in the period between the two world wars, are included in the latter category by theorists. However, these „little pawns“ on the big map of international politics, have their own ambitions, their own interests, their own needs regarding state security and, as has been the case in history, they can, at one time, influence international politics at the systemic level, not only in their specific area of interest.

This Paris Peace Conference can be viewed as a transient one (integrated, in fact, to the entire interwar period), combining elements of the old international system and of the one who was going to replace it and was on the horizon. It is a point of demarcation between the international system characterized by the predominance of the great empires and the system of the national states, which became numerically predominant on the European continent, after 1919. It is a reality of the contemporary world that has progressively developed after World War II, when the maritime empires were broken down, with their former colonies declaring independence and increasing the number of small and medium-sized states in the international system.

The principle of nationalities – a necessity for post-1919 Europe

From the perspective of small and medium-sized states, their international recognition was the most important gain following the Paris Conference. For some of these states, it has been a dream they didn't even think achievable before the outbreak of the First World War. For example, “for most Czechs, an independent Czech state seemed an impossible dream, especially given the assumption on the

³ For a debate regarding the mentioned terminological difference, see Cristina Arvatu Vohn, *Politică externă și securitate în România interbelică (1919-1939)*, Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Publishing House, 2018, subchapter “Teoria statelor mici și mijlocii”, pp. 41-49.

⁴ Tim Sweijs, *The Role of Small Powers in the Outbreak of Great Power War*, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2010, p. 2. https://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/01.12._2010_-_The_Role_of_Small_Powers_.pdf, accessed at 3.04.2019

part of many that the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would result in the incorporation of the Czech lands into the German Reich. As a result, the best course of action for the Czechs prior to 1914 seemed to be continued pressure for greater autonomy within a federalized empire.”⁵

The new small and middle states were created based on the principle of national self-determination announced by the US President in January 1918, a principle about which Woodrow Wilson talked in his famous speech about Central and Eastern Europe. Ion I. C. Brătianu, Prime Minister of Romania, for example, spoke about this principle in a speech in January 1917: “... I am convinced that a great European interest is related to our claims. Only on a settlement of the principle of nationalities can be developed peacefully, can be developed strongly, the lives of the States”⁶. The enunciation of the principle of nationalities was, in fact, a reflection of the reality of Central and Eastern Europe of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the nation’s claiming their right to have their own states formed on national bases. At the same time, it was a representation of the “propulsion of the Modernity project”, specific to Central and Eastern Europe, which marked a “historical-political roadmap”⁷ that culminated in the creation of the national states. Redrawing of the borders in Central and Eastern Europe on the basis of the principle of national self-determination meant the creation of new national states or the completion of the already existing states (but only a few decades old) – Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia – together with defeated countries created on the same principle, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey.

The application of this principle in international politics was one of the pillars of the “New World Order” that Woodrow Wilson had presented and dreamed to see applied after the end of the First World War. This was to be built on the basis of several principles governing international policy from now on: “open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, freedom and non-discrimination in trade, arms limitation, self-determination and the principle of justice to all people and nationalities.”⁸ Some of these failed to be applied even from the first test to which they were subjected, in the negotiations during the Paris Peace Conference: open diplomacy proved to be a kind of “ideal”, impossible to put into practice, just like the principle of justice to all people and nationalities; the arms limitations principle was applied for a limited period of time. But self-determination was the principle that was applied in the reconfiguration of the European map.

⁵ William M. Mahoney, *The History of the Czech Republic and Slovakia*, Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford, Greenwood, 2011, pp. 130-131.

⁶ Ion I. C. Brătianu, *Discursuri*, Dan Dungaci, Stelian Neagoe (eds.), Vol. II, Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Publishing House, 2018, p. 613.

⁷ Viorella Manolache, “Ion I. C. Brătianu: Un reper al modernismului românesc *in Statu nascendi*”, in *Revista de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale*, no. 1/2019, p. 7, https://79dd720e-4b65-4316-bb39526d8ea1c51d.filesusr.com/ugd/d1cf60_fd52c95e1dc947408fe82ef173bd46b9.pdf, accessed at 18 October 2019.

⁸ Michael Dockrill, John Fisher, *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919. Peace without Victory?*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, Palgrave Publishers, 2001, p. 159.

*The relationship between Great Powers
and Small powers during the Peace Conference*

The Paris Conference had to cope with challenges that were never encountered in the international system until that time: the end of a world-wide war; the presence, for the first time in such an international meeting, of a significant number of States whose relations had to be regulated for the period of peace, many of which were recently or newly emerging states, eager to assert themselves as state entities on the international stage; the new mentality that manifested itself predominantly in states formed on the ruins of former European empires, emanated from the principle of nationalities and supported by the famous “14 points” of American president Woodrow Wilson; finding solutions for the many problems that were on the agenda of the Conference, in order to sign peace treaties with the defeated states; finding a response to the situation in the former Tsarist Empire, etc.

The organisation and management of the work of a peace conference of such size and complexity was not an easy task, in these circumstances. The large number of participating states, each supporting their own claims, made it difficult for the Conference to work, Kissinger characterising it as “a free-for-all”.⁹ He deplores the situation of the great powers that could not deal with the great problems of international politics because “the leaders in Paris were constantly being diverted by an unending series of sideshows.”¹⁰

France, the host of the meeting, assumed the leading role and, together with the leaders of the great powers, decided to divide the winning states into three categories: states with general interests or “unlimited interests”, as Gh. I. Brătianu¹¹ characterized them – France, United Kingdom, United States, Japan and Italy – which were to attend to all the sessions and commissions of the Conference; states with special interests – Belgium, Brazil, the British Dominions and India, China, Cuba, Greece, Guatemala, Hayti, the Hedjaz, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Siam, the Czecho-Slovak Republic – which were to attend only sessions in which were discussed subjects that interested them; and the third category was that of the states which had broken off diplomatic relations with the defeated states – Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay – which had also the right to attend sessions in which were discussed issues that directly concerned them¹².

The five states in the first category granted themselves the status of great powers of the international multipolar system since the end of the first world conflagration. The Council of the Five – as it was called – later became the

⁹ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore, Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 219, p. 230.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ See Gh. I. Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919 în lumina corespondenței diplomatice a lui Ion I. C. Brătianu*, Bucharest, “Cartea Românească” Publishing House, 1939.

¹² Geo A. Finch, “The Peace Conference of Paris, 1919”, in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Apr., 1919), p. 165, published by Cambridge University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2188076>, accessed la 18 February 2019.

Council of the Four, by withdrawing Japan who did not want to get involved in European affairs, and was later restricted to the Council of the Three, Italy being less involved in all the diversity of issues of the conference.

The decision of the great powers was a predictable one: they imposed rules that would facilitate their own interests, at the expense of small and middle states, even though they had fought alongside them and contributed to collective military success. In fact, this was also the supreme argument by which they argued their decision, the significantly greater contribution (naturally, given their territorial, human and resource dimensions) that they had in the war; France had mobilized more than 8 million soldiers, the United Kingdom about 9 million and the United States around 4 million soldiers, the first two also having the most losses of human lives, France around 1.4 million and the United Kingdom about 900,000 dead soldiers. They did not take into consideration the fact that many of the small and middle countries, such as Romania, Serbia or Belgium, had suffered much greater damage, being occupied and devastated by enemy armies. Thus, some unequal positions for individual states during the negotiations were established, which constituted “a very problematic issue of the conference”¹³.

The difficulty of managing a peace conference with such a large number of participants was also reflected in the conduct of the Conference’s works. “With thirty-two countries participating there were too many delegations for real work to be conducted in all-inclusive plenary sessions. Only six plenary sessions were held before the treaty with Germany was signed and the only topic of substance discussed was the creation of the League of Nations.”¹⁴ Instead, informal negotiations predominated, such as meetings between heads of state of the great powers with those of small and middle states, meetings that took place, usually, separately. It thus depended on each small or middle state, on their ability to negotiate and influence the decisions of the great powers, to include provisions in the peace treaties that were more or less favourable to each of them.

In such an atmosphere, the provisions of the peace treaties, including that of Trianon, were negotiated and the small and medium-sized states of Central and Eastern Europe, which had fought in the victors’ camp, were forced to carry out a new diplomatic battle, this time for their international recognition and for the protection of their specific interests, the most important ones being those of their state security.

Central and Eastern Europe after the Trianon Treaty

There is a whole literature that analyses the power vacuum created in Central and Eastern Europe after the empires’ collapse and the creation of national states. “The power vacuum to the east was filled with the weak states of Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and what would eventually become

¹³ René Petraš, “Organisational aspects of the Paris Peace Conference (1918-1919)”, in *Central European Papers*, No. III/2, 2015, p. 36.

¹⁴ Erik Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlement, 1919-1925*, London and New York, Routledge, 2013, pp. 9-10.

Yugoslavia.”¹⁵ The new created states were considered to be “little barrier against the day when an expansionist German government might begin to flex its muscles” and a “fertile territory for Bolshevism”¹⁶.

This conception is specific for international relations until the 19th century. The creation of national states was a necessity demanded by millions of people whose rights and freedoms were not recognized within the multinational empires. We can say that the moment 1919-1920 was one in which the wishes of so many people of different nationalities met with the political will of the great winning powers in the war. It is a process started from the base, from the requirements of individuals who wished to be the citizens of their own states, which intersected with and was fulfilled by decisions taken by the political people at the Paris Peace Conference.

Central and Eastern Europe has become an area where the new national states were pursuing their new state identity and wanted to secure this identity in the plan of international relations. This interest could be of a conflictual nature with other states, most often neighbour states (former enemies or former allies), from the same area (see the divergences between Hungary and its neighbours¹⁷ or those between Poland and Czechoslovakia). This was a somewhat predictable situation, in the situation where “when a state major structure, which has existed for centuries, is suddenly erased from the world map, it is quite natural that a high number of nostalgic voices appear afterwards.”¹⁸

The formulas found by these states to overcome this conflictual situation were generally collaborative through alliances (see Little Entente, Balkan Entente). But these formulas were restricted (see the failure of the Little Entente project with five states), not exceeding some rivalry (see Poland and Czechoslovakia) and having a pronounced ideological component, based on an anti-revisionism characteristic as democratic camp states opposed the revisionism that began to be promoted by the defeated States immediately after the Treaty of Trianon was signed. Here we can say that the democratic states of Central and Eastern Europe have considered their security strategies considering their own capabilities. They allied to oppose the small or medium states that promoted revisionism, and from this point of view the report was unequal, with opposing forces (economic, military, etc.) obviously unbalanced (see Little Entente versus Hungary).

At the same time, the small and medium-sized states in this area, located between the potential expansion areas of Germany and the Soviet Union, correctly identified the biggest threats to their own security in the two big neighbouring powers. But, in the context of the interwar period, considering their level of development and their capabilities, they understood that, even in the case of

¹⁵ See, for example, T. C. W. Blanning, *The Oxford History of the Modern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 162.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ For the relations between Hungary and Romania after the Trianon Treaty see Lucian Leuştean, *România și Ungaria în cadrul Noii Europe. 1920-1923*, Iași, Polirom, 2003.

¹⁸ Lucian Leuştean, “The Late Start of the Little Entente. Regional Cooperation within East-Central Europe in Times of Adversity”, in Wilfried Loth, Nicolae Păun (eds.), *Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe. 1919-post-1989*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014, p. 31.

alliances with other similar states, they would not be able to cope with any aggression by either Germany or the Soviet Union. This is the reason why they avoided assuming responsibilities, in the treaties and signed conventions, in case of aggression by either of the two great powers (see the bilateral treaties signed, or the treaties that were the basis of the Little Entente). The only real guarantee for their own security in the case of a threat from Germany or the USSR was the one that could come from the two great victorious democratic powers in World War I, France and the United Kingdom.

*The Franco-British Alliance and Central
and Eastern Europe after WWI*

The role of the great powers in any international system is an essential one, if they have the necessary means to influence the system. This is what happened after the First World War. In the conditions of the US withdrawal in its “splendid isolation” and of the events in Russia that transformed the Russian empire into the first communist state in the world, France and England remained the only major victorious powers able to handle the new political situation on the Old Continent.

The two great powers, France and the United Kingdom, soon proved to have differing views and interests in European policy and security. “The relationship between Britain and France after the Great War has been described not unfairly as a *mésentente cordiale*. In the early 1920s the two powers diverged radically over the basis of European security and the place of Germany in the post-war world order. In the late 1920s the relationship was further strained by differences over commercial policy, the operation of the gold standard, war debts, disarmament and a host of other issues.”¹⁹ Great Britain continued to think about its role in European politics in the terms of the 19th century, considering that it must maintain the balance of power between France and Germany on the old continent – hence the conciliatory policy promoted toward the old enemy – while France considered that Germany had to be “kneeled down” fully and by any means – economic, political, etc. As Margaret Lamb and Nicholas Tarling pointed out “The British continued to think in terms of establishing a balance of power and the French looked for specific security provisions in the form of reparations, the establishment of potential allies in Eastern Europe and an Anglo-American guarantee, while the Americans were swayed by the consideration of their own economic advantage.”²⁰

Divergences between the great powers also existed regarding the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. “The various Allied Powers each had their own objectives in this region. France, as a Continental power was looking to lay the

¹⁹ Robert Boyce, “Behind the Façade of the *Entente Cordiale* after the Great War”, in Antoine Capet (editor), *Britain, France and the Entente Cordiale since 1904*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, MacMillan Palgrave, 2006, p. 41.

²⁰ Margaret Lamb, Nicholas Tarling, *From Versailles to Pearl Harbor. The Origins of the Second World War in Europe and Asia*, New York, Palgrave, 2001, p. 34.

foundations of a new alliance among the emergent states as the basis for future security... The aim of such an alliance would be twofold; first, to act a restraint on Germany and second, to provide a buffer against Soviet Russia. The United States had less direct interest in the region, though Wilson saw it as a proving ground for the efficacy of his ideas on national self-determination. Britain's chief concern was to avoid an unstable Eastern Europe whose problems would have a dangerous ripple effect upon the stability of Western Europe, where Britain's primary security interests were to be found."²¹

France was the great power that had the most interest in Central and Eastern Europe. "France wanted to see stronger states emerge in this region to counterbalance Germany."²² The vast majority of French leaders, along with other Western statesmen, believed that the new states created here could play a more active role in ensuring continental security than the old Habsburg Empire: "some Western statesmen and diplomats who thought the successor states were a better anti-Bolshevik "sanitary cordon" and a more effective obstacle in the way of the natural German domination upon the Central and Eastern Europe than the Habsburg Empire could have been."²³

But between desire and reality, there turned out to be a huge gap. France overestimated its capabilities to influence the international system, as Seaman pointed out: "Unfortunately the dominating position which France now appeared to occupy in Europe was not the achievement of her own unaided skill and resolution as had been her achievements in the remote Bourbon past. The state system of Europe in 1920, apparently dedicated to a French hegemony, existed thanks to the superior resources and manpower of the British Empire and the United States; it existed also because Lenin and Trotsky had caused Russia to turn her back on Europe at Brest-Litovsk. In resources and manpower, France, when Versailles was really the capital of Europe and not merely the title of a peace treaty, had been the largest civilized state in the western world. Now she was not. The gravest weakness of the Versailles Settlement is therefore that it created a state system which depended exclusively on France to maintain it; for France was not strong enough."²⁴

The weakness of France was also evident in its relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Although France began to conclude bilateral treaties and conventions with states in this area from the early years of the interwar decade (1921 – Political Agreement between France and Poland, 1924 – Franco-Czech Alliance, 1925 – Treaty of Mutual Guarantee between France and Poland 1926 – Treaty of Alliance between France and Romania, 1927 – Treaty of Understanding between France and Yugoslavia etc.), they did not offer security guarantees to these countries. These guarantees came when parts of these states

²¹ Erik Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²³ Lucian Leustean, "The Late Start of the Little Entente. Regional Cooperation within East-Central Europe in Times of Adversity", in Wilfried Loth, Nicolae Păun (eds.), *Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe. 1919-post-1989*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014, p. 32.

²⁴ L. C. B. Seaman, *From Vienna to Versailles*, London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 205.

no longer existed, in 1939, when both France and the United Kingdom granted security guarantees for Romania and Poland. Under the international conditions of 1939, these guarantees had no value anymore, in September 1939 Germany attacking Poland and triggering World War II.

France was also a supporter of the creation of the Little Entente, which she believed could play the role of “sanitary cordon” in the path of Bolshevik expansion in Europe. But even in the case of this organization, the French state did not make sufficient efforts to create the Small Extended Entente (according to the initial Romanian project that included Poland and Greece), for example by finding solutions for solving the conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was satisfied with the concretization of the Little Entente made up of three states, which could not represent a guarantee for European security in the case of a major threat from either Germany or the Soviet Union. It was indeed only effective against revisionist Hungary, which did not pose a real threat to the European security.

*The relations between the Great Powers
and the Small and Middle States. One note*

Ever since the Paris Peace Conference the great victorious powers in the World War I have shown an attitude of superiority over the small and middle states that had been their allies in the war. It was the only “solution“ they identified in relation to their former allied states, which had “restricted“ interests. From this point of view, it can be argued that as the great powers were not prepared for a conflict of the magnitude of the one that had already ended, they did not know how to handle the new peace situation, with a large number of new states arising from the disintegration of the great European empires on the base on the principle of national self-determination.

The failure to manage this situation can be attributed to both the mentality that has manifested itself at the level of the leaders of great powers that did not seem to properly assess the new international reality, maintaining the old dogmas by which they led their policies till the World War I; and the weakness that victorious European powers were beginning to show in international politics. A sign of this weakness was exactly the policies they promoted in relation to these new states on the European stage, many of which were even allies.

L. C. B. Seaman highlights a less discussed feature of the European political and security system set up after the Paris Peace Conference: “The real weakness of the Versailles system, however, lies not in the creation of the small states to the east and south of the Germans, but in the absence of any effective means of maintaining and defending their existence.”²⁵ Thus, these small and middle states in Central and Eastern Europe were not helped to develop their own capabilities in order to cope with a potential aggression that would endanger their state existence and, less so, to be a guarantee factor for European security. France, the

²⁵ L. C. B. Seaman, *From Vienna to Versailles*, London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 204.

major power with major interests in this area, was not able to help these states to develop their own capabilities and ensure their own security, which is an indicator of the weakness of the real power of the French state during the interwar period.

The relationship between France and the small and middle allied states in Central and Eastern Europe after the First World War provides us with guidelines for understanding the general relationship between a great power of the international system and a non-allied power. This relationship can provide clues to the real power that a great power has at one time, but also to the kind of extended strategy that a great power can develop in relation to the allied states.

Thus, we can argue that a great democratic power needs strong allies to cope with any major aggressions that may occur in the international system. For this, any great power must support allied states to develop and to create their own security defence capabilities. It is for the own benefit of any great power to have strong allies it can count on in case of necessity. Of course, this development of allied states does not have to transform them into states that become competitors for the great power; that is to say, they have no pretensions to access the high-power status. In other words, the support of a great power can extend to the point where that state can become a threat to the great power, which can turn it from an ally into an enemy.

Instead, lack of support for the development of allied states is an indication of the weakening of the real power of the great power. The interest of a great power is to have strong allied states that can be based on symmetrical or asymmetric threats/confrontations. A developed and powerful ally state brings benefits – direct and/or indirect – including to the great powers with which it allies. It is the lesson that the United States of America learned after the World War II, when they helped from all points of view the restoration of the states of Western Europe, which they needed as an ally in the confrontation with the Soviet Union.

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