

Mineral energy sources and political activities: introduction to mutual dependencies and their selected exemplification¹

Mineralne zasoby energetyczne i działania polityczne: wprowadzenie do wzajemnych zależności i ich wybrana egzemplifikacja

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Abstract

The mineral energy sources, possessed by a certain state or remaining an object of interest for it, may form a basis for political activities, both oriented on usage either of the purely political (non-militarized) or militarized methods. The usage of these sources in the political context may have a natural impact on the essence of sustainable development, especially then if to juxtapose it with previous experiences of the mankind. The natural gas based energy policy seems to be the key factor for the above political activities of states with imperial ambitions, as the contemporary Russia. Referring to the shale gas, the syndrome as such concerns the monopolistic position of the USA in terms of the applied exploitation technologies. The size of coal mining and steel production at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, or oil fields' possession and their usage before and during WW II used to play such a role in the past. In both of these cases there were necessary prerequisites for planning the military campaigns in potential wars (envisaged as successful indeed). Fortunately such an extreme way of conducting political activities is not confirmed today. Following the same trace the policy of the possessed energy sources' usage, or taking over those being in possession of others, might ultimately lead towards maintaining an economic and perhaps political supremacy of ones over others. On the one hand it demonstrates the policy of pressure led by stronger, imperially oriented states against weaker and dependent ones. On the other one, it shows the results of the mutual antagonizing policy of the latter stimulated by the stronger state- and non-state-like entities, having their own interests. Due to some experiences, taken from the most recent past, one can speculate, if the possessed or desired energy sources may be utilized as a tool for unequivocally political decisions, also in the military sphere. It is hard to be optimistic bearing in mind the rule that history tends to repeat itself. Such scepticism is even deeper if we realize that the control over the water reserves remains a source of the future large-scale international conflicts.

Key words: sustainable development, policy/politics, mineral energy sources, political supremacy

Streszczenie

Mineralne zasoby energetyczne, posiadane przez dane państwo lub będące obiektem jego zainteresowania, mogą stanowić podstawę do działań politycznych zorientowanych na użycie tak metod czysto politycznych, jak i zmilitaryzowanych. Wykorzystanie tych zasobów w kontekście politycznym może mieć naturalny wpływ na istotę

¹ The article is a revised and significantly extended version of the presentation delivered by me during the **Club of Rome** Annual Conference, titled *The Power of the Mind*, Bucharest (Romania), September 30-October 2, 2012.

zrównoważonego rozwoju wtedy zwłaszcza, jeśli zestawić to z wcześniejszymi doświadczeniami ludzkości. Polityka energetyczna opierająca się na zasobach gazu wydaje się być czynnikiem kluczowym dla wzmiankowanych powyżej politycznych działań państw z ambicjami imperialnymi, jak współczesna Rosja. W nawiązaniu do gazu łupkowego syndrom taki dotyczy z kolei monopolistycznej pozycji USA w zakresie stosowanych technologii wydobywczych. Poziom wydobycia węgla i produkcja stali na przełomie wieków: XIX i XX lub posiadanie pól naftowych i dysponowanie nimi przed i w trakcie II wojny światowej spełniały taką rolę w przeszłości. W obu tych przypadkach niezbędne okazywały się także przesłanki na rzecz planowania kampanii wojskowych w potencjalnych wojnach (oczywiście przewidywanych jako zwycięskie). Tak ekstremalny sposób politycznego działania nie ma szczęśliwie swojego odzwierciedlenia obecnie. Podążając tym śladem polityka wykorzystania posiadanych zasobów energetycznych, albo przejęcia będących w posiadaniu innych, miała ostatecznie doprowadzić do utrzymania przewagi gospodarczej i przez to politycznej jednych państw nad drugimi. Z jednej strony demonstruje to politykę nacisku prowadzoną przez państwa silniejsze, zorientowane imperialnie przeciwko państwom słabszym i zależnym. Z drugiej wszakże pokazuje, do czego może prowadzić polityka wzajemnego antagonizowania tych ostatnich, stymulowana przez kierujące się własnym interesem silne podmioty państwowe i niepaństwowe. Na kanwie doświadczeń z najnowszej przeszłości można spekulować czy posiadane lub pożądane zasoby energetyczne będą wykorzystywane jako narzędzie do podejmowania działań jednoznacznie politycznych, w tym militarnych. Trudno być optymistą, jeżeli przypomnieć regułę, że historia lubi się powtarzać. Ten sceptycyzm pogłębia się, jeśli przyjąć, że źródłem przyszłych konfliktów międzynarodowych na dużą skalę staje się kontrola nad zasobami wody.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, polityka, mineralne zasoby energetyczne, supremacja polityczna

1. A concise introduction to the nature of sustainability and political activities

The sustainable development as generally understood concept refers to such actions to be undertaken which may comply with the needs of the current generation without depriving future generations of their ability to meet their own needs (Brundland, 1987). Thus any responsible debate of how to avoid the crises, understood however on much wider scale than only within the socio-economic sphere, is juxtaposed with the concept of sustainability (Zacher, 2007, p. 141 and further). The assumption as such seems to be entirely natural since the latter *is seen as an idealistic positive state of affairs (including social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance) that we all should aspire to achieve* (Zacher, Marinova, 2007, p. 1). Since I am political scientist the approach to the political aspect of sustainability, but placed within the wider perspective seems to be very inspiring for me in particular. The political activities are not shaped within the vacuum indeed. Thus the considerations to what extend *purely* political decisions depend on the wider context, e.g. motivated by the economic power, but also culturally imperialistic awareness always belonged to one of the most fascinating problems for many intellectuals.

The sustainable development may be perceived as cognitively and analytically perceived tool of how to avoid speculated global disaster. Having in mind the latter there is no doubt the rational argumentation chosen by decision-makers has definitely to overcome the irrational one. This is the way which mankind has to consider now in order to begin with solving their fundamental problems in the future.

In such a way the previously formulated fears, referring to the concept of crisis may be placed as the opposite to sustainability which is perceived here as panacea. Hence the rational arguments on the global scale have to be formulated first, and at least generally approved, and concrete and well-planned steps may follow afterwards. However the consensus here is still far to reach, what is transparently manifested by these scientists' approach, who oppose e.g. global warming². Another interesting fact is, that also the intellectuals who once supported the concept of sustainability still take part in the debate, but represent critical approach to it. The latter is interestingly manifested by e.g. Dennis Meadows, who introduces the concept of *survivable development*. He explained its essence in his presentation during the annual – in 2012 - conference of the Club of Rome in Bucharest on October 2, 2012. He places it as a notion which matters for the future, but refers it to smaller communities like people living in rural communes or blocks of flats, and families. Due to Meadows the survival oriented activities of such small entities may show of how to overcome some challenges in the future, and in more effective way than on the global scale.

The approach to the liberal capitalism remains currently a hot debatable item among many intellectuals. It is expressed frequently by their criticism towards ineffective decision-making process within the democratic state, the misuse of the natural sources, and unreliable financial system. It was directly formulated by *Jørgen Randers*, but is also mentioned by some other authors, to quote *Ugo Bardi* and his recently published book *Der geplün-*

² E.g. Leszek Kuźnicki from the *Poland 2000 plus Prognoses* Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences consequently maintains that global warming is less dangerous than global cooling.

derte Planet (Plundering the Planet) or the contributors to the common book *Money and Sustainability: The Missing Link* written by Bernard Lietaer, Christian Arnsperger, Sally Goerner, and Stefan Brunnhuber. Jørgen Randers together with Meadows is one of the co-authors of the famous *Limits to Growth – a report to the Club of Rome* published firstly in 1972. In 2012 he focused the attention of many readers in the world by publishing his newest book (a subsequent report to the Club of Rome) titled *2052 A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years*. In fact he does not perceive it as a typical forecast. I spoke with him on that during the above conference in Bucharest. He admitted openly (and more or less in provocative way) that his research was concentrated on the endeavours on *that what happens and not on that what may happen*. The book itself is perceived among intellectuals in very diversified, if not critical way. Randers, himself a climatologist, is interested in almost all the fields of human beings activities and their future shape, hence he refers to economies, energy, natural resources, climate, food, politics etc. He is definitely critical to the current significance of the democratic decision making, which is an obstacle for the smoothly arranged governance of divided societies. He seems to be simultaneously fascinated with the growing economic and political role of China. He demonstrated it while in the Bucharest conference by saying in his presentation that *the Communist Party of China is sensitive to the wish of majority to get rich and not sensitive to temptation of dictatorship*. This definitely interesting and outspoken admiration to economic and political pragmatism encourages me to begin with the short introduction to political activities.

The phenomenon of politics in its wide understanding as a fusion of conceptual and practical approaches remains one of the most fascinating and cognitively fertile notions within the humanities and social sciences. In fact the politics itself has many meanings which depend on the individual and cultural experiences and habits. In this respect Bernard Crick's considerations deserve to be mentioned as a relative novelty. His revised perception of politics as *a way of governance over divided societies without needless violence* seems to be entirely idealistic indeed (Crick, 1992). In fact there has always been a place for violence within political activities, which, however, not always yielded fortuitous results. The threat of violence was sufficient to achieve one's aims in very many cases, as with e.g. the infamous 1938 *Munich Agreement* and Czechoslovakia's (coercive) consent to be partitioned. By his approach Crick demonstrates that he refers first and foremost to the political systems which tolerate the opposition. He also suggests in this way that politics in his understanding should be interpreted as a phenomenon that would be mainly applicable in the system of government typical of the liberal democracy traditions. This view is usually well exemplified in prac-

tice, however, it also narrows down the historically verified meaning of the term politics. Thus Crick maintains that politics is a sort of activity which enables to reconcile the interests of various social groups living at an area and subject to one power. These groups are granted the access to the power proportionally to their importance for the survival and well-being of the whole community (Crick, 1992).

However the history of mankind has shown very clearly that militarized political activities, namely in the form of war, are also politics *in extenso*. This claim has in fact a long history – it was made a long time ago by Carl P.G. von Clausewitz. He was a Prussian general and writer, but above all theoretician of war, which he confirmed in his famous book *Vom Kriege [About War]* (Herberg-Rothe, Honig, Moran, 2011; Ryszka, 1975, p. 35-38 and passim). There were some agendas which have been pursued by coercive methods whether they involved coercive persuasion or military activities, which are perceived as an extension of *purely* political activities, namely of non-violent nature.

While observing the socio-political and economic history of Europe its internal solidarity is not noticeable as a long lasting phenomenon, but rather the preferences of individual states, once with powerful aspirations, matter more. In modern times European powers constructed a pattern for such activities (Kennedy, 1994, passim; Kissinger, 1996, passim). Consequently the latter tendency created in many cases a rather unconstructive instead of constructive influence on the states' future cooperation on both scales: bilateral and global one. It still continues in contemporary times and consequently complicates the prognoses for Europe and the rest of the World indeed. Thus I presume the irrational factor's influence on the decision-making process has to be taken into consideration with great attention also now in the *époque* of globalization.

It should be added that the phenomenon called solidarity within Europe or between European states still remains one of the most fertile and often mentioned European myths. Thus some examples of the above phenomenon would last only for shorter periods, e.g. during the Christian wars (crusades) to win back the Holy Land from the Muslims particularly in the 11th and 12th centuries. In fact it was the solidarity among European powers mostly, e.g. after the Congress of Vienna, which lasted until the Crimea war outbreak in 1854 (Kissinger, 1996, p. 82-108), and not with other smaller states or stateless nations. The latter entities' perception might be changed but only due to current geopolitical interests of the continental powers. Let us quote the France interest towards Italian independence movement in the 1850s, and practical lack of it towards the Polish January uprising in 1863 (Zamoyski, 1997, p. 284). This selective approach to the solidarity issue continues until now and depends solely on the superpowers' interests and not

on moral issues at all. Thus it is not a democratic deficit which matters significantly in today's politics of the European Union. With exclusion of the short period after the collapse of Berlin Wall in 1989 it is rather the solidarity deficit which matters most.

2. Effective and ineffective policy. Selected historical examples

As it was mentioned above, an important reason for getting involved in politics was to fulfil own goals both by political and military means, with the possibility of changing the allies. This naturally brings to mind the rule formulated by sir Henry John Temple, better known worldwide as lord Palmerston, a leader of British Liberal Party and Prime Minister twice: 1855-1858 and 1859-1865 (Brown, 2010). He is well-known for the phrase about the *changing allies but permanent interests* of Great Britain. Literary the proper quotation is as follows: *We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and these interests it is our duty to follow* (Kissinger, 1996, p. 101; *The New Indian Express*, 2011).

The above sentence is the *core prerequisite for effectiveness in political activities*. Simultaneously its approval as a constant and sole rule forms the basis for the cynical treatment of other participants in these activities, which may be understood as *political pragmatism* in its euphemistic form. Winston Churchill seems to be a classic follower of Palmerston, which is reflected in some of the Churchill's political dictums. The most famous one refers to democracy although it does not concern directly Palmerston's axiom. On November 11, 1947, Churchill said that *democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time* (*Democracy and Churchill*, 2003). His cynical and rigid reference to Palmerston's opinion – by some British intellectualists called the Churchill's specific sense of humour, which I personally heard while attending some research conferences - was manifested by him transparently in many other cases. Let us quote two of them. The first one concerns the outbreak of the Irish Civil War in Dublin on June 28, 1922. *While the Four Courts* (Dublin Tribunal – WK) *was burning, Churchill was asked in the House of Commons about its great law library and irreplaceable records and documents* (Cronin, 1980, p. 152-153). His comment was symptomatic: *a State without archives is better than archives without a State* (Cronin, 1980, p. 153). Churchill has been extremely pragmatic also in his statements of the role of Josip Broz Tito's partisan army in the struggle against the Nazi Germany in the Balkans during WW II. General Fitzroy Maclean, the then British emissary working with Tito on behalf of the Churchill, once realized Tito was a Communist. The British Prime Minister replied by saying that neither Maclean nor Churchill will be living in Yugoslavia

after the war (Koseski, 2002, p. 158; *New York Times*, 1996).

Contrary to this sort of cynical, but finally effective political activeness is the *missionary approach* to it, which often ends with futile results. Thus, there are not many examples in history of political effectiveness without cynicism. The foreign policy of Polish-Lithuanian state known as the Commonwealth of Both Nations until the end of the 18th century remains here a special and simultaneously misfortunate example. In order to exemplify it some cases deserve to be mentioned. The first one concerns Hungaro-Polish involvement in the anti-Turkish crusade in 1443-1444, and the second one refers to the mostly Polish involvement in 1683 in the battle which finished the Turkish siege of Vienna. Hungary first (until beginning of the 16th century) and then Poland (until the end of the 17th century) played the role of a rampart of Christendom, *antemurale Christianitatis* in Latin (Davies, 1981, p. 125 and further; Zamoyski, 1997, *passim*), during the Ottoman Turkey expansion in particular. Due to the partitions of Commonwealth – by Russia, Prussia and Austria – its political and military position deteriorated and finally resulted in a loss of its independent status in 1795.

However some 20th century (and early 21st century) examples confirm that ethically oriented political activities might bring successful results for some leaders and the movements led by them. It is well manifested by Mahatma Gandhi's, Nelson Mandela's, Martin Luther King's, the Dalai Lama's, and even Aung San Suu Kyi's – the Burmese democratic opposition leader – philosophy of pacifist political actions. On the other hand, they do not confirm the general rule for effective politics across the centuries, which in most cases is less ethical and more pragmatic and, in fact, deliberately egoistic.

3. The mineral energy sources and a temptation for political supremacy – some cases

The exploration of mutual dependencies between mineral energy sources and political, including military, activities may be exemplified by a very rich tradition confirmed on a broad international scale. In terms of results it is often manifested by a *temptation for political supremacy*. It may also be a proper measure of the effectiveness of political activities. Several cases mentioned below are my own selection and may be supplemented by many others indeed.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries *coal mining industry and steel production* became *the basis for global and militarily verified supremacy*. It was a political issue within the internal realities of the rapidly industrializing European powers and the United States of America. These two spheres formed the hinterland for economic, political and military competition between the II German Reich and Great Britain in particular. The German sources of the iron ore

in Lorraine guaranteed the large scale of steel production and stimulated Berlin's appetites for their usage (Tarle, 1957, p. 16-21). Thus this competition finally became a catalyst for the imperially oriented policy of these two powers, which ultimately led to the outbreak of WW I. The newly born large industrial entities deliberately endorsed and accelerated this competition. The other then powers, excluding France perhaps, belonging to both military blocs, namely Austro-Hungary, Italy, Tsarist Russia, and Ottoman Turkey, were not able to cope with that challenge. They were rather dedicated to their geo-political and colonial ambitions on a large (France, Russia), and regional (Austro-Hungary, Italy) scale (Ferro, 1997, passim; Moczulski, 2000, passim).

The temptation to reach supremacy does not necessarily refer to the endeavours of the main political players, namely, the global powers. It may also serve as a *temporarily applied blackmailing tool* of nominally weaker entities towards the stronger ones and is manifested as a sort of regional solidarity against the common enemy's supporters. Such a decision was announced by the Arab members of the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), including Egypt, Syria and Tunisia, in October of 1973. They forced the oil companies to increase the oil prices to an enormously high level. It was their reaction to the USA decision to supply weapons and other logistic supplies to Israel during the Yom Kippur war. The embargo continued until March of 1974 (*OPEC states...*, 1973; Horton, 1973; *OPEC Oil Embargo*, 1974).

The possession of energy sources may also form a *basis for pro-independence activities*, as well as a *guarantee of stable statehood in the future*. This special case fits neatly endeavours and argumentation of the Scottish National Party (SNP) towards Scottish independence. The discovery of oil fields in the North Sea off the coast of Scotland created an economically and politically fertile ground for such argumentation. During the 1970s the slogan *It's Scotland's oil* became part of it and is currently used in the pre-referendum campaign for Scottish independence (Kaczorowska, 2009, p. 297; SNP, 2013).

The policy of large regional powers towards non-militarily manifested supremacy over weaker states in the region has been for some time manifested by Russia and her natural gas based political activities versus Poland and Ukraine in particular (Opiola, Omelan, 2012, p. 7 and passim; *Russia/Ukraine: Gazprom...*, 2012). Thus the traditional Russian expansionism accompanied by the authoritative political culture and imperial past is frequently recalled here as a phenomenon still in existence (Whist, 2008, p. 22-25). It is fair to say that also the USA natural gas based policy is often identified as monopolistic, however, America is perceived almost uncritically in Poland, in contrast with Russia.

Let us put aside the criticism of Russia's rigid energy policy, which in fact is a cognitively interesting

proof of the linkage between the Russian Gazprom's desire to make profit and Russian government's to use the dominating position of the former. Paradoxically such a policy may be perceived as a potentially positive factor for the Central-East European countries' regional identity, but in fact it is not. It might be also dangerous for Russia in her former temporary financial troubles, as it was shown sometimes at the Moscow stock exchange in particular. In one aspect it verifies negatively the (non)existence of the already mentioned solidarity within the region and also within the EU common space. In official statements Germany's pro-Nord Stream policy with Russia as a partner was oriented on economic gains only, hence from the purely economic viewpoint it is a reasonable venture, but it is short sighted in terms of mutual confidence of the states in the region, not to mention the ecological risks (*Nord Stream...*, 2013). The other verification of this solidarity deficit came from Norway, a country which is not interested in delivering its gas for preferential prices to these countries, which feel uncomfortable with one supplier only, namely Russia (Opiola, Omelan, 2012, p. 9-10). Such a gesture would not cost Norway too much and above all may have a positive impact on the spirit of cooperation. At the same time, the once presented Swedish or Finnish readiness to criticize the Nord Stream issue did not appear to be a strategic approach, but rather a tactical action with some military and ecological concerns in mind (Whist, 2008: 30-35). It may be called a one-sided approach. Poland's critical attitude towards the Nord Stream does not seem to be sincere either, particularly given the fact that Poland has become too dependent on the American military technologies on the one hand and constantly suspicious towards Russian policy intentions on the other.

At the moment it is hard to predict how the shale gas may influence the position of those states which have their natural gas fields. However there is only one state, which has an evident supremacy in the shale exploitation technologies, namely the USA. Therefore further progress in shale gas mining may undermine Russia's natural gas monopoly in the Central-Eastern Europe. On the other hand there is a large criticism from the ecological organizations towards any undertakings in this matter worldwide (*Energy in Depth...*, 2013). The critical approach towards the US such practices became an object of interest among the film makers either, to quote *Promised Land*, the Gus Van Sant and Matt Damon movie, shown in recent 2013 Berlin Festival (*Berlin Film Festival...*, 2013).

The last case study here, not so well known, but fascinating cognitively and analytically, refers to the Gran Chaco War of 1932-1935. Therefore it is analyzed in greater detail than the ones above. This conflict serves as one of the most transparent proofs of the powers' and large-scale corporate entities' intrigues resulting in the military conflict between less

powerful and manipulated states³. The key prerequisites for this war were the *approximate oil-fields exploitation* together with *large-scale corporate entities & states' interests*, and *intra-continental states' competition*. The Gran Chaco area is located in the South-American interior and comprises *a large steppe plain, triangular in shape, 150 000 sq miles in area, embracing part of Bolivia, Paraguay and north-western Argentina* (Mroziewicz, Rómmel, 1973, p. 57). The object of the long lasting dispute between the two first mentioned states was part of Argentina called Chaco Boreal. For decades its main attraction were woods rich in the species of a tree called quebracho (Rómmel, 1972, p. 96), which provided sought after tanning extract. In the colonial times this area belonged to the Caracas Province, which later became the independent Bolivia. The latter state had more rights to it according to the rule *uti possidetis juris* what means that the Latin American states have the right to own the areas of the former colonial administration from which they come (Rómmel, Mroziewicz, 1973, p. 58). Paraguay, on the other hand, kept recalling the rule that already in the late 18th century the governor of the province ordered to build defensive forts on the right bank of the river Paraguay. It was motivated by the fact that the access to Chaco Boreal was easier from Paraguay than from Bolivia. Consequently, in the early 20th century, the Paraguayan government granted concessions to the foreign capital to exploit the forests. Simultaneously the attempts at settling the dispute were taken mainly by Bolivia.

In the late 1920s the dispute about Chaco Boreal went much further than just the conflict of interests of the two states. In 1926, disregarding Argentinean pressure, the government of Bolivia granted the American petroleum company, Standard Oil, a licence to work at the disputed area (ca 23 million of acres, Rómmel, Mroziewicz, 1973, p. 60). The company *carried on considerable development work, drilling and refining. But there was no outlet for this oil except through Paraguay, Brazil, or Argentina. Brazil (...) generously offered a port on the Parana, but Paraguay, controlled by Argentina, thereupon refused to let the oil come through except under conditions Bolivia would not meet* (Beals, 1940, p. 340). Standard Oil was checkmated. Argentina itself represented indirectly the interests of another petroleum company, the British-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell. So finally Paraguay and Bolivia went to open war in 1932, although the first armed incidents had begun already in 1928. It is quite obvious that both states, but Paraguay to a greater extent, were victims of Argentina's scheming and imperial ambitions. Thus the bitter comment of the latter made by journalist, Hubert Herring that *the chief sinner is Argentina (...), deliberately egging Paraguay on in order to weaken*

Bolivia and to give Argentina the chance to extend her economic thrust seems particularly acute (Beals, 1940, p. 342).

The direct struggle ended with a ceasefire agreement in June of 1935, and the final peace treaty was signed in Buenos Aires on July 28, 1938. Fierce fighting took place in uninhabited, covered with the jungle, often deprived of water, areas. Paraguay gained the military victory, but at the price of 50 thousand of lost soldiers and officers. The losses of Bolivia were still greater, reaching 70 thousand (Mroziewicz, Rómmel, 1973, p. 61).

This war remains an example of a conflict in which not the victorious army but the instigators, scheming behind the backs of the fighting sides, gain the most. This also concerned the profits obtained from providing weapons to the parties in conflict. The cynical attitude of Great Britain, which provided ammunition and weapons both to Bolivia and Paraguay came prominently to the fore (Beals, 1940, p. 125). The Italian military mission operated in Paraguay at the end of the war. It is also worth to know that Paraguay obtained weapons from Japan (Beals, 1940, p. 42).

Paraguay was granted almost three quarters of the disputed area, embracing ca 250 thousand square kilometres (Mroziewicz, Rómmel, 1973, p. 62). This favourable for Paraguay decision was inspired by Great Britain. Paraguay was the second, besides Argentina, true beneficiary of the military conflict. Despite that, in the course of time the influence of Great Britain gradually decreased in favour of the USA. It deserves to be mentioned that over almost 80 years which followed, no commercial amounts of oil were discovered in the part of the Chaco awarded to Paraguay, which is a sort of a tragic irony. As late as on November 26, 2012, Paraguayan President, Federico Franco announced the finding of oil reserves in the area.

Instead of summing-up

There is no doubt that the owners of mineral energy resources will be tempted to utilize them as a tool in their strictly political plans in the future. On the other hand, however, the experiences in that issue gained so far, sometimes very dangerous for the mankind, may also show the necessity for much deeper reflection here.

Thus in order to minimize a potential for future conflict based on the possession of mineral energy sources it is necessary to prepare and shape a new and rational energy policy on a European and world scale, at least in collaboration with the intellectuals as the main participants and contributors. Three steps are crucial here:

³ The Gran Chaco War was analyzed in details in: W. Konarski, Isolationism, Dependency and Clientelism as

Traditional Features of the Paraguayan Foreign Policy, in: *Politeja* no 2(12) 2009.

1. *Drawing up a protocol of divergences in all the visions of energy policy of all the countries now and in predictable future;*
2. *Finding a commonly accepted ground for the implementation of such a policy;*
3. *Perceiving solidarity as a real, and not only declared, value for such a policy for the common benefit of all its participants, instead of economic and political selfishness.*

In the context of the historical experiences it is entirely idealistic to believe that these steps might ever materialize. History shows that international conflicts, involving many states, including devastating wars, have always been the result of the *unbearable burden of egoism*, if to rephrase the title of Milan Kundera's famous book. On the other hand, we are *homo sapiens* and not *homo insipiens*, who live in globalized space, where no one is the sole winner, but many can lose a lot. Thus a generally understood energy policy should serve as a tool for the creation of a socio-political stability and not for elaborating a new version of economic and political supremacy. It is perhaps a sign of naivety, but as history shows even brief intervals of internal solidarity on a global scale can help to reach the long-lasting stability. Thus the policy-making today (including that for the energy sector), must heed the Palmerston's axiom, if only because its interpretation is beneficial for common interests, and not only those of the most powerful states. It is a complicated puzzle indeed, but we have to pursue our efforts in this direction. The revitalization of the UN activities in this sphere seems to be one of necessary prerequisites to accelerate the above processes. In this context the growing role of the Pacific powers' phenomenon has to be taken into consideration either.

The latter is recognized by the **Club of Rome**. Since this Club is mentioned at the beginning of this article I will close the above considerations with remarks referring to the current and future activities of this organization. There exists a concrete challenge for the Club of Rome in the nearest future as far as the energy policy is concerned. The Club should serve not only as a *source of analyses and warnings* and a *catalyst for emergency actions* for national and global leaders (and as a *kick to the societies* due to the literary expression of Randers) as it has been noticeable so far. What seems to be particularly important is to endorse its position as the *intellectually effective and seriously perceived adviser* in the world decision making processes. The Club's activities may be more known and particularly influential due to the growing interest towards them from China and Indonesia either. Thus the Club of Rome itself may be a real and not speculated tool for *overcoming plutocracy by meritocracy*, hence the idea of sustainability may be revitalised as well. From the one side my approach here seems to be again idealistic, if to juxtapose it with the logic of current capitalistic development. However from the other side the idealism

itself has always been an asset in the intellectuals' hand. It may lead to more influential debate on the world scale, and be perceived as a sort of pressure from this special group on the towards world and national leaders. For our common sake *political decisions and science have to be in fundamental relationship*, as Mugur Isărescu, the President of the National Bank of Romania said during the Club of Rome Conference in Bucharest. Perhaps it is reasonable here to change slightly the sentence of almost entirely forgotten Angela Davis who once said: *what this country needs is more unemployed politicians into what the World needs is more unemployed politicians* (*Inspiring Quotes*, 2013). Then these who keep their job will be more empathic.

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