

POLITICAL-MILITARY DECISIONS WITH MAJOR IMPACT

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Abstract: *The article discusses the political-military decisions related to some important moments in human history, namely: the European crusades in the East, World War I, World War II, the Cuban missile crisis, the agreements between Reagan and Gorbachev.*

Western and Central Europe carried out crusades in the Near East between 1096 and 1270 with the aim of freeing the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem from Muslim occupation. Although it started from religious purposes, the crusades were based on political-military decisions at a strategic level.

The First World War was a military conflict of global proportions. It was a global war started in Europe, which took place between July 28, 1914 and November 11, 1918, and in which more than 70 million soldiers participated, including 60 million mobilized Europeans.

World War II was also a global conflict that took place from 1939 to 1945, although some conflicts associated with it began even earlier. The war involved the vast majority of the world's countries, including all the great powers, who formed two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis.

Last but not least in importance are decisions regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis and the end of the Cold War.

Keywords: *political-military decisions, crusades, World War I, World War II, missile crisis, Reagan-Gorbachev negotiations.*

Numerous specialists, analysts, managers, academics and scientific researchers, all have defined the concept of decision starting from the provisions of dictionaries on various fields and from practical activity. The decision represents "The decision taken following the examination of a problem, a situation, etc. adopted solution (among several possible), resolution. Decision taken by a body of the state administration..."

In the political-military field, the value of the decision-making process decisively determines the evolution of society in general, but also of the military body, and in case of war, the final result.

Political-military phenomena have a special complexity in the 21st century. The increase in complexity is generated by the ever-increasing number of possible solutions, by the weight of predicting the long-term consequences of decisions as a result of increasing the degree of uncertainty, the consequences of errors in decision-making can be unfavorable due to the complexity of operations and the chain reaction that error can generate it.

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In this article, after an extensive study, I address some political-military decisions that influenced the evolution of some states, groups of states, but even of humanity as a whole.

Of course, it is difficult to rank the classification of political-military decisions throughout history according to the impact they had on the evolution of mankind. However, those relating to the two world wars, the Crusades, the start and end of the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the "Arab Spring", the Napoleonic Wars, the Israeli-Arab Wars, the war of the allied troops against Iraq and not lastly the Russian-Ukrainian war. The decisions must be seen as linked not only by some major events but also by the performance of some personalities, namely among others: Alexander Ioan Cuza, Charles I, Hitler, Washington, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, Truman, Mao Zedong, Khrushchev, Reagan, Napoleon, Trajan, Decebal, Brezhnev, Dromihete, Gorbachev, Ferdinand, Antonescu, King Michael, Stephen the Great, Vlad Tepes, Michael the Brave and others.

I will address some of these below. To begin with, I will refer to the crusades which were expeditions of a military nature, undertaken at the instigation of the Catholic Church by the crusaders from Western and Central Europe in the Near East between 1096 and 1270, with the aim of liberating the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem from the occupation Muslims. These military expeditions were organized by Western feudal lords to conquer and colonize areas of the Near East, especially Palestine and Jerusalem. Although it started from religious purposes, the crusades were based on political-military decisions at a strategic level, the decisions being taken at the level of states and groups of states, involving large-scale multinational forces. The religious character of the crusades determined that they were led by the papacy, whose role, internationally, was asserted in the 11th century.

It is perhaps paradoxical to note that the Near East, which included Byzantium, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, was economically and culturally more developed than the West. That is why, at the end of the 11th century, the respective region exerted a strong attraction for the social classes in the western countries of Europe, which at that time were going through a period of crisis, as a result of the end of the process of enslaving the peasantry, the growth the power of principles, the establishment of knightly orders, demographic growth, as well as natural factors: floods, drought, famine, pestilence, etc. Various social categories participated in the crusades: Western knights, townspeople who aimed for new sales and supply markets, but also the peasantry in quite large numbers who hoped for a better life.

The Crusades were also determined by the conquest actions of the Turks in the second part of the 11th century, Byzantium being threatened and as such the Byzantine emperors were forced, several times, to request military aid from the West. This is how the initiative of the papacy appeared to plan expeditions as a result of which the apostolic see would have increased its

sphere of influence, first, by removing the schism, from the year 1054, between the Catholic and Orthodox churches, then, by spreading Catholicism in new territories. In the councils of Piacenza and Clermont in 1095, the crusade call was launched by Pope Urban II who declared "the destruction of the enemies of Christendom and the eternal forgiveness of sins for those who will fight under the sign of the cross". This is how the first crusade that took place in the period 1096–1099 was triggered.

The crowned heads of Europe decided new crusades respectively the Second Crusade (1147–1149), the Third Crusade (1189–1192), the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204), the Fifth Crusade (1217–1221), 6th Crusade (1228–1229), 7th Crusade (1248–1254), 8th Crusade (1270).

The decisions regarding the Crusades had both negative and positive consequences. The negative consequences consisted in the destruction of property and the massacres that took place during the wars, the exploitation of the subject population, and the positive ones consisted in the contact between two civilizations, which influenced each other.

An important stage in human history was constituted by the First World War. In the period leading up to the First World War, but also during it, political-military decisions were made both at the national level and at the level of alliances and coalitions of an unprecedented scale.

The Great War, the War of the Nations, aka World War I, was a military conflict of worldwide proportions. It was a war fought in Europe that took place from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918 and involved over 70 million soldiers, including 60 million mobilized Europeans.

Because the aspirations of the Slavic Christian population of Bosnia were not defended, on June 28, 1914, Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated in Sarajevo. The assassination was considered by many analysts as the immediate reason for the outbreak of the First World War, but the real causes of the war lie further back, in the complex existence of alliances and counterbalances that developed following the defeat of France and the formation of the German state under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck in 1871. There were many political factors that led to the war namely: nationalism, previous unresolved disputes, the system of alliances, fragmented government, lack of operativeness and misunderstandings on the diplomatic line, the arms race, etc.

The main cause of the First World War was the refusal of the empires to grant the populations of the dominated countries the right to self-determination by striking at the national feelings and desires of the population.

From what has been presented so far, it is obvious that the political-military decisions of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century generated the causes of the outbreak of the world war.

Starting with the year 1914, many decisions were adopted that determined the outbreak of the war. At first it was a local war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. But with the involvement of France, Great Britain, Germany and Russia, the war became continental. The war could no longer be limited spatially, spreading as major industrial powers with significant demographic increases engaged in conflict.

A major decision was also the declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire by Russia, Great Britain and France. The Ottoman Empire decided to go to war with the Central Powers.

In 1915, the two camps failed to undertake decisive offensive operations and consequently decided not to carry out attacks and movements, but only to maintain their positions, a situation in which the strategic plans could no longer be realized.

The declaration of war on Austria-Hungary by Italy had a major impact on all the decisions during the conflict.

Romania's participation in the First World War represents the set of measures and actions of a political, diplomatic and military nature undertaken by the Romanian state, alone or together with the allies, between 15/28 July 1914 and 29 October/11 November 1918, in order to achieve the main political goal of participation in the war - the realization of the unitary Romanian national state.

Romania and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were linked by a secret treaty of alliance, from 1883, and chose to declare neutrality at the outbreak of hostilities, in July 1914, relying on the interpretation of the clauses relative to "casus foederis". Romania received an ultimatum in August 1916 asking it to decide whether it wanted to join the Entente "now or never". As a result of the ultimate request, the Romanian government accepts to enter the war on the side of the Entente, although the situation on the battle fronts was not optimistic.

Although it achieved quick tactical victories in Transylvania against the outnumbered Austro-Hungarian forces, the Romanian Army suffered several crushing defeats in the fall of 1916, which will force the state authorities to take refuge in Moldavia, respectively at the Slobozia estate in Zorleni, near Bârlad and then to Iasi.

In the winter of 1916 and the spring of 1917, under the leadership of a new military "leadership" (Generals Prezan, Christescu, Grigorescu, Averescu, Văitoianu, etc.) and with the substantial support of the French Military Mission led by General Henri Berthelot, the Romanian Army was reorganized, equipped and trained on modern bases adapted to the requirements of war.

The battles of the summer of 1917 were very successful, succeeding, in the initial phase, in defeating the troops of the Central Powers in the battles of Mărăști, Oituz and Mărășești. The Romanian military planners intended to

continue to develop this offensive to begin the liberation of the occupied territory, but the outbreak of the revolution in the Russian Empire led to the abandonment of these plans and the transition to strategic defense.

After the end of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was abolished; thus it was possible to form Great Romania through the Union of Banat, Bucovina and Transylvania with Romania. In political life, King Carol I played a key role.

It is worth noting that Queen Maria made an important and recognized contribution, nationally and internationally, to the achievement of Romania's national objectives at the end of the First World War.

The Battle of Mărășești was the largest confrontation in the summer of 1917 on the Romanian front, being the continuation in time and space of the one at Mărăști. It lasted 29 days, 16 of which saw significant military action.

The unfavorable result of the battle of Mărășești forced the Central Powers to give up offensive actions and go on the defensive. The established objectives: removing Romania from the war and reaching the south of Ukraine, could not be achieved, primarily due to the heroic resistance of the Romanian forces.

An important decision was taken by the Entente after the German victory in the Battle of Caporetto. At the Versailles meeting on December 1, 1917, it was decided to establish a Supreme Allied Council to coordinate joint plans and actions. Until then, the armies of France and those of the British Empire operated under different leaderships.

The unfolding of the war's events was marked by Germany's decision to initiate total submarine warfare at the beginning of 1917. This fact led to the complete severance of US relations with the Central Powers, and the declaration of the destruction of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

From the analysis of the sequence of events, before and during the First World War, it follows that there were a lot of strategic-level political-military decisions, some of which were based on thorough analyzes of one's own fighting capacity, the opponent, the terrain and other factors that influence the results of military actions. At the same time there were some debatable and even wrong in both camps.

World War II was a global conflict that took place from 1939 to 1945, although some conflicts associated with it began even earlier. The war involved the vast majority of the world's countries, including all the great powers, who formed two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis.

After the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles further amplified the disputes between the victors and the vanquished. Fascist regimes were immediately installed in Hungary (March 1, 1920), Italy (October 28, 1922), Bulgaria (June 9, 1923).

An important moment before the war was the invasion of Austria by Germany in March 1938.

For Romania, the peak of Nazi pressure took place between March 15-23, 1939, when the Hitlerite and Horthist troops occupied positions at the borders of our country. The threats to our country forced the Romanian government to sign the treaty on the promotion of economic relations between the Kingdom of Romania and the German Reich.

The guarantees of Great Britain and France given to Poland, Romania, Turkey and Greece had no effect on the aggressive actions of Germany.

Related to this broad confrontation, political-military decisions will be presented, mainly those of a strategic level.

The first decision that constituted the main cause of the outbreak of the Second World War is the invasion of Poland by Germany, on September 1, 1939, resulting in the defeat of Poland. This operation took place after an alleged "Polish attack" on August 31, 1939, which later proved to be a German staging. About 1,500 German aircraft entered Polish airspace and large armored columns entered by land. The governments of England and France declared war on the Hitlerite state on September 3 and thus the Second World War began with immense human, spiritual and material losses.

Following the successes of the German troops, on September 17, the Polish ambassador in Moscow was informed that since "Poland has turned into a threat to the U.S.S.R. the Soviet government can no longer maintain a neutral attitude towards these facts and therefore, "instructed the High Command of the Red Army to order troops to cross the border and take the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus under their protection."

Another major decision that led to the escalation of the world war was the engagement of armed conflicts between Japan and China and Japan's attack on the United States (attack on the Pearl Harbor base) on the morning of December 7, 1941. The surprise attack of the Imperial Japanese Navy on Pearl Harbor had a special role in how the war was fought, the entry of the U.S. in this conflict and subsequent actions changed history.

The states in conflict mobilized their entire population and economy, but pursuing the same goal. More than 60 million people were employed at the front, and those who remained at home, including women, were used to work in factories, arsenals or construction sites.

Another political-military strategic decision was the launch of the German offensive in Western Europe on May 10, 1940, when Belgium, the Netherlands and France were attacked with strong forces (motorized and aviation) and as a result of the rapid successes, Paris was occupied on June 14.

Hitler's aggressive spirit determined the decision of the German attempt to invade Great Britain through the "Sea Lion" operation, an action that failed in the summer of the same year, due to the resistance of the British

military aviation. The troops of the Reich and its allies attacked the Soviet Union, as part of Operation Barbarossa, on June 22, 1941. Although vast territories were conquered, the failure of the "lightning war" was obvious, because no matter how great the efforts were, Leningrad and Moscow could not be conquered.

On the night of June 21 to 22, 1941, at 02:00, the Romanian Army received, from General Ion Antonescu, the legendary order: "Soldiers, I order you to cross the Prut!" The moment delimits two tragedies that definitively marked the history of the Romanian people: the losses territories not recovered even to this day (Bessarabia, North Bucovina and Herța land) and Romania's participation in the Holocaust.

Romania thus entered the Second World War against the USSR, alongside Germany, on the night of June 21 to 22, 1941. General Ion Antonescu's order spoke about the liberation of Bessarabia and referred to the recovery of Northern Transylvania.

Another decision in the conduct of the war was that of the Anglo-American landing in Morocco and Algeria (November 1942), which allowed the destruction of the German-Italian forces and ended the war in Africa (May 1943), after heavy battles, fought mainly on the territory of Tunisia. On September 8, 1943, Italy officially capitulated, and the Italian government pledged to cease military operations against the Allies, to make available to them the airports and naval war bases. On October 13, Italy declared war on its former ally – Germany, and under these circumstances, England, the United States of America and the USSR recognized it as a co-belligerent country in the war against Germany.

Also as a result of a strategic decision, on June 6, 1944, a date also known as "D-Day", a new front was opened in Europe. The Allies provided a bridgehead for the success of Operation Overlord, led by American General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Normandy was only the first stage of a large-scale offensive on the new front in western Europe. Allied troops subsequently liberated France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, breaking into the heart of Germany a few months later.

And our country contributed to the faster defeat of Germany through the decision of August 23, when Romania returned its weapons, joining the United Nations, causing a massive breach in the German defensive system. The Romanian military, together with the Soviet ones, quickly overcame the alignment of the Carpathian Mountains, starting the liberation of northwestern Romania, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia. On October 25, 1944, the entire territory of Romania was completely freed from fascist occupation. According to the opinion of some specialists, through the approach of the Romanian political-military leadership, the duration of the war was shortened by approximately six months.

On May 7, 1945, at 02:41, the first act of unconditional surrender of Germany was signed, in the French city of Reims, which stipulated that hostilities would end on May 8.

As a result of the dissatisfaction of the Soviet leader Joseph V. Stalin, who had wanted a capitulation in the capital of the defeated and occupied Reich by the Red Army, the surrender process of Germany was resumed on the night of May 8 to 9, 1945, at 00:16.

The Second World War ended, in its entirety, on September 2, 1945, on the deck of the battleship Missouri, where the armistice regarding the surrender of Japan took place, following the American nuclear bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Many decisions of global importance were adopted in Tehran and later in Malta.

The Paris Peace Conference (July 29 – October 15, 1946) was followed by the Paris Peace Treaties signed on February 10, 1947 between the Allies and the Axis powers, following World War II.

A particularly serious moment in human history was the Cuban Missile Crisis (English Cuban Missile Crisis, French Crise des missiles de Cuba), which represented a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States regarding the Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba.

The crisis took place between October 14, 1962 and November 20, 1962, lasting 38 days. The crisis marked the moment when the Cold War was on the verge of leading to a nuclear war and leading to World War III.

US President John F. Kennedy, in a televised speech of unprecedented gravity, announced to the American people that US U-2 spy planes had discovered Soviet SS-4 Sandal missile launch sites in Cuba. The missiles, having nuclear warheads, represented a major imminent danger because, having an average range of 2,000 km, according to some technical data, they were capable of hitting the U.S. territory. and in particular a large number of very important American cities, including the capital Washington. In this way, Soviet missiles could reach American territory, threatening to call into question the American nuclear doctrine of that time, namely massive retaliation.

The proposal for an airstrike to exterminate the missile bases was rejected. On the night of October 22, Kennedy announced his decision on national television. During the next 6 days, the crisis escalated to the point where a nuclear war between the two superpowers was on the verge of breaking out.

On October 23, the naval blockade of Cuba became operational, but Kennedy decided to give Nikita Khrushchev time to think about US action by moving the blockade boundary line back 500 miles. By October 24, Soviet ships bound for Cuba, capable of carrying military cargo, had slowed down or altered their route.

At the request of more than 40 non-combatant countries, UN Secretary-General General U. Thant sent appeals to Kennedy and his Soviet counterpart, insisting that their governments "refrain from any action that could aggravate the situation and brings the risk of war".

On October 27, President Kennedy received the message from Khrushchev: "The USSR will withdraw its missiles from Cuba if the United States in turn withdraws its missiles from Turkey." On October 28, the Soviet President announced his government's intention to dismantle and remove all offensive weapons from Cuba. On November 8, the Pentagon announced that all known Russian missile bases had been dismantled. The Cuban Missile Crisis was over. On November 20, Kennedy lifted the naval blockade. By the end of the year, all offensive missiles were withdrawn from Cuba. The US then secretly withdrew its missiles from Turkey.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the USSR began massive nuclear development. In the late 1960s, the USSR reached nuclear parity with the US and built intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of surviving a pre-emptive nuclear strike and being rapidly launched against any US target.

It is appreciated that the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis constituted the most dangerous moment of the Cold War, when humanity was closest to an all-out nuclear war. As a consequence, a direct telephone line (so-called "red line") was established between the Kremlin and the White House to avoid an unwanted war.

It is obvious that in October-November 1962 the two superpowers were put in a position to adopt political-military decisions of unprecedented gravity and importance.

Of course, the position of Reagan and Gorbachev in the second part of the 20th century cannot be neglected. The decisions of the two leaders led to the relaxation of the international situation and the end of the Cold War

Conclusions

In this article I have referred to the politico-military decisions related only to these important moments in human history, although they were much more numerous, over time and with different consequences.

Analyzing the current situation worldwide, many questions are asked regarding the possible political-military decisions regarding some future events. Thus, the decisions that will be adopted regarding: the development and ending of the war in Ukraine can be taken into account; the evolution of the China-Taiwan relationship; the evolution of BRICS; tensions in the Red Sea; Israeli-Palestinian relations; the situation in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan; the situation in the Korean peninsula; the participation of different states in the exploitation of reserves in the Arctic Ocean; the struggle for access to water reserves; the act signed by the Kremlin leader that provides for the registration and legal protection of Russian properties located outside the

country's borders (including Alaska); tensions in northern South America and others.



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