

Mediterranean and scenarios of international relations

Summary. *The report presents a model of the strategic matrix permitting to simulate both perspective and retrospective dynamics of countries, regions, and corporations. Forecast studies of 50 countries worldwide as well as a number of regional conflicts have been performed based on this model and the Strategic Matrix software system. This article addresses the general overview of the model, key scenarios of international relations, preliminary considerations evaluating a strategic potential of selected Mediterranean countries.*

1. Strategies and philosophy of history

Human haughty arrogance is sometimes vindicated by the fact that their individual fates become a success. However, it is hard to fail to note that against the background of fundamental evolutionary processes our lives do frequently appear to be shaky bungalows hit by tsunami. Highly refined as the policies or politics are, they are bound to be wiped off the scene of life owing to most ruthless force majeure circumstances of insuperable force. That said, one cannot but wonder at the mind-boggling set of the accomplished successful strategies in behavior involving individuals, peoples, and organizations. Some of them consider their achievements to be a stroke of luck; some were wise in realizing how things stand, and were live with lightning in meeting their objectives in most thoughtful way.

The circumstances of insuperable force prove unpredictable and unyielding to control. Yet history makers would vary in their ability to take into account the force majeure-laden risks. The core component of this riskology is the awareness of: 1) the cyclical nature of historical evolution of the relevant social systems; 2) their “dependence on the once chosen way”; 3) the spectrum of eventual paths of evolution.

Of paramount importance is the need to identify the long-term dynamics of the order of the day – a concentrated manifestation of the fact that a ruling elite became aware of strategic challenges faced by a country or, in a broader sense, by a civilization viewed as a socionatural system. It is no coincidence that A. Toynbee once observed about the key reason behind the collapse of many an empire, which is the inadequate perception of pragmatic reality of life by their ascendant elites.

For all the specific nature of challenges emerging in different eras, in the course of their inventory we can find virtually the whole spectrum of challenges that exist either through history, or arise from time to time, just sometimes, or one-time only. The challenges per se stand as tensions (conflicts) owing to the external or internal dynamics of a socionatural system. It is the governing subsystems, including the self-organization mechanics, that would provide answers to the cited problems. These are timely and effective answers, but sometimes inadequate or unsuccessful.

The subject of perception and estimation of challenges, and efforts to form the strategy of providing an appropriate answer to it, will always represent a fusion (network). The evolution of a historical subject, and of social systems at large, is in effect the formation, reformation and disintegration of diverse coalitions.

In terms of dynamics a coalition represents the interdependent activity subsets to be combined as a result of human decisions and further unfolding of what can be described as

circumstantial logic. The networks are designed to perceive the effects of benefits provided by joint activity (synergy).

We resort to strategies either in response to the external environment alternations, or in order to forestall them. However, these responses are stipulated by a set of rules (restrictions), say, like in game of chess. By far the most important class of restrictions is given in theoretical studies as archetypes. The archetype is a structural principle of the collective unconscious, the a priori pre-empirical form of behavior. The archetype represents the probing characteristics of the social matter and is manifested in human behavior, mode of thinking, decisions made, and attitude to the pragmatic reality of life. Strategies are the process of search for the paths of transition from one structure of fusions (system states) to another. In this doing, the strategies may correspond to the civilization archetypes, or contradict them. As a rule, the former type strategies prove more successful. All the systems tend to a situation where negligible changes are more likely to come than the large-scale ones, while a total disintegration of a subject is less likely than disintegration of its parts taken separately. Besides, the scale of evolutionary changes will depend on the scope of fusions involved in a change (variation). Accordingly, there can arise the dimentionalities of fusions that would be perceived within the limits of a teacher's audience alone, whereas there are fusions fraught with risk of a global cataclysm.

What is known as the specific nature of a civilization is a set of regulations (archetypes) that would prevent one from roaming throughout the space of decisions and trajectories (paths), and would assign – acceptable in the given system – a corridor of innovative imaginations specific to representatives of this or that civilization.

Strategic decisions are aimed at getting the systems transformed into a qualitatively new state. Targeted as the subject of the strategic decisions can be either internal or external parameters of a system, yet they are always dependent on preferences of those who make decisions, their efficiency in perceiving and interpreting the interests of the present-day and anticipated fusion.

Depending on the algorithms and due regard for the interests of members of a network, the decisions could be either selfish or mutually beneficial. If game players follow a line dictated by selfish motives, interests of the other players could be infringed. Their response is likely to block not only the bringing in of benefits but the implementation of the decisions that have already been taken. It should be noted that such a situation is characteristic of the modern global sociodynamics. A special class of decisions concerns symbolic stories (topics) associated with the players' self-identification manifested in religion, science, art, and collective (mass) consciousness.

Not infrequently, the choice of an evolutionary path would be made as an attempt of a fusion leader to divine the trend of evolutionary processes. Only afterwards the leader would try and substantiate it in order to make choice. The problem will be to what extent the conscious choice of the soughtafter path would comply with the inherent trends of a system, what efforts would have to be made to get the system to reach the target path and target state, and whether the external environment tempo and that of the system under discussion could coincide. We do know a great many attempts to force evolution of a society, contrary to natural laws of development. Therefore the studies into the special features of each civilization are crucially important today since there have been conceived theories which try to substantiate the world unification of different civilizations. In the meantime, some global players' technological, economic and political potential is likely to provoke their selfish, rather than mutually beneficial, behavior.

2. The strategic matrix model

We have identified nine key factors of historical evolution, which are the population, territory, natural resources, economics, science and education, culture and religion, armed forces, foreign policy (geopolitical positioning), and management factor. We performed the careful analysis of mutual relations and interferences of all mentioned factors, their relevance and completeness (see fig. 1).

Each of the nine factors will be considered in keeping with the four-digit topological scale of fuzzy sets whose numerical values are over the range from 1 to 10. These scores permit to determine the integral power of the state from a small country to a super power with intermediary statuses of a regional state and a great power. These indicators are purely support and constitute a comparative evaluation of 9 parameters of the model. Furthermore, these statuses take due account of the historical situation. One thing is a super power of the Roman Empire period and the other, for instance, a super power of the 20th century. However, resultant cliometric data are taking shape.

This set of variables has evolved from the bottom-end metamodel of strategic management. It should also be kept in mind that the variables-based matrix of history as a nonequilibrium socionatural system will have both the relatively consistent and more dynamic in behavior variables. Both these types will represent the civilization-related peculiarity of different systems. The specified parameters can be correlated with an ancient Chinese multiple-factor model. In their turn, all the factors are represented via a system of indicators. Based on this model we devised the “Strategic Matrix” program complex enabling one to simulate the things in all perspectives, by using an unlimited data array, the past and the future of a country.

If the scope of a matrix becomes increased or reduced, this means that the total vector of evolution tends to develop or destroy a system (civilization). Accordingly, when a transition to a new state of the socionatural system is a success (the strategy implementation is successful), then our system is harmonized or extended. If the transition is a failure, the system becomes chaotic, oversimplified, archaic and more barbaric in character. It must be said that the system enters these transitional states from time to time; that is the comparatively stable states would alternate with excesses in dynamics and periods of appreciable imbalance. It is also noteworthy that not only quantitative characteristics of the matrix will undergo certain periodic changes, but the qualitative leaps of its development as well. If we succeed in tracing the recurrence of the cited states, this does warrant making conclusions, first about the cyclical nature of the system’s evolution and about the corridor of future evolutions. For more vivid representation of strategies character realized during centuries, we generated the multifactorial model (enniagram) of the most important objects of strategic decisions. From multitude of the circumstances influencing dynamics of historical process, nine the most important have been chosen. As a matter of fact, there is nothing new in such a set, all historians mention these factors anyhow.

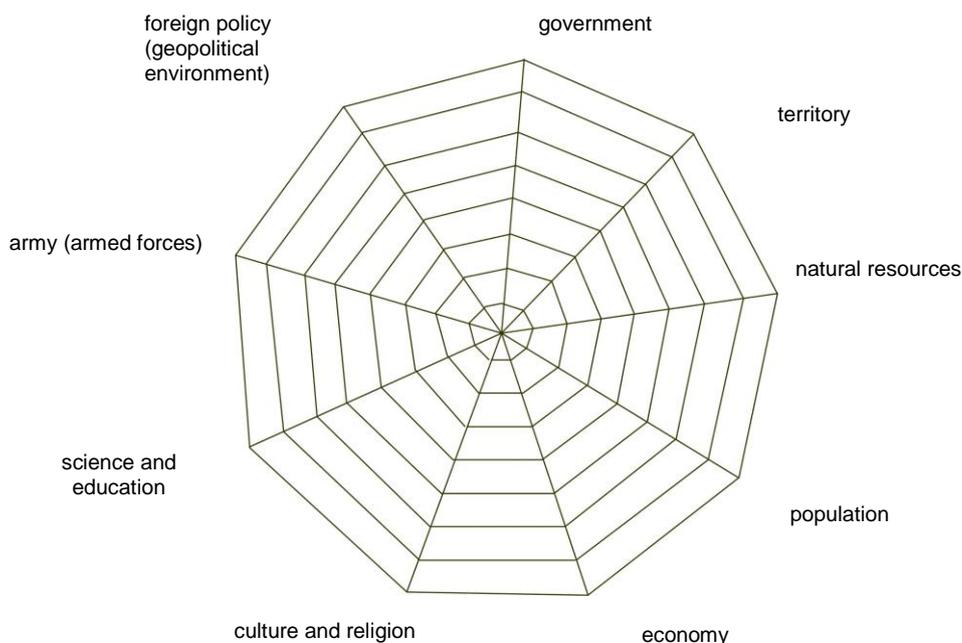


Figure 1. Parameters of ‘Country’ strategic matrix

3. The strategic simulation results for Russia

In the course of its recent two millennia Russia, being a civilization system, has been demonstrating cyclical fluctuations in its relative integral power, as illustrated in Fig 1.

Judging by its disaggregative format, the country offers quite a dramatic, complex, multivectoral, multidirectional pattern of the dynamics of social system.

By following up the historical dynamics of Russia from the early I century A. D., we can see that in the new era there can be traced in it five scopeful superlong strategic cycles, each about four-hundred years long.

Of course, historical characters, eventful social life or freak of chance are all unique in their unpredictability, but subsequent upon making the events free from the nuances of time, place and the characters we can clearly discern typical configurations of the challenges and pseudochallenges facing the ascendant elites of a country. In its turn, each superlong four-hundred year wave would comprise five intervals of about eighty years each.

Interestingly, this particular variable of the long strategic cycle was obtained by not only rather conservative physical estimations of sociodynamics that takes into account the size of a territory, population, economics, climate, social system stability, but also the well-known demographic viewpoint concerning the law of three successive generations, as well as empirical correlation of the frequency of the state-formation events in Russian history. Some of the evolutionary periods account for the greatest amplitude in fluctuations of all the social system variables (parameters). This means the rise in crisis-related phenomena and the fact that attempts to solve problems are becoming more intensified. Such crisis-related intervals will get different cycles separated. These are long and superlong strategic cycles.

Preliminary analyses of strategic cycles observed in the USA, China and France indicated that they tend to show a sixty-year pace. Thus, throughout many centuries we can see that Russia is intrinsically and consistently notable for quite different cycles in the way it had to accept the challenges and to respond to them. The spurt-type evolution of Russia, which its several heroic generations had to endure and were destined to live through their “fatal hour”, can be accounted for the accumulation – within 2 to 3 smaller cycles – of appreciable lag and backwardness in technological and institutional evolution as compared to the countries that had economic, military and cultural links with Russia. Weakening of Russia because of lag in the setting up of the “order of the day” and in fashioning the development strategy will, as a rule, provoke the external players for a series of diverse attempts to subdue the weakened and strategically disoriented player. And anyone knows what next. Once again, by paying the heaviest price for the enormous and heroic efforts, the country is restoring its civilization status. Thus, there is one most important civilization feature in archetypes and design of the fusions of the subjects in Russia, which is vividly expressed not only in theory, but also in popular sayings. So, a relatively protracted pace of strategic evolution here is referred to as “Slow and steady wins the race”.

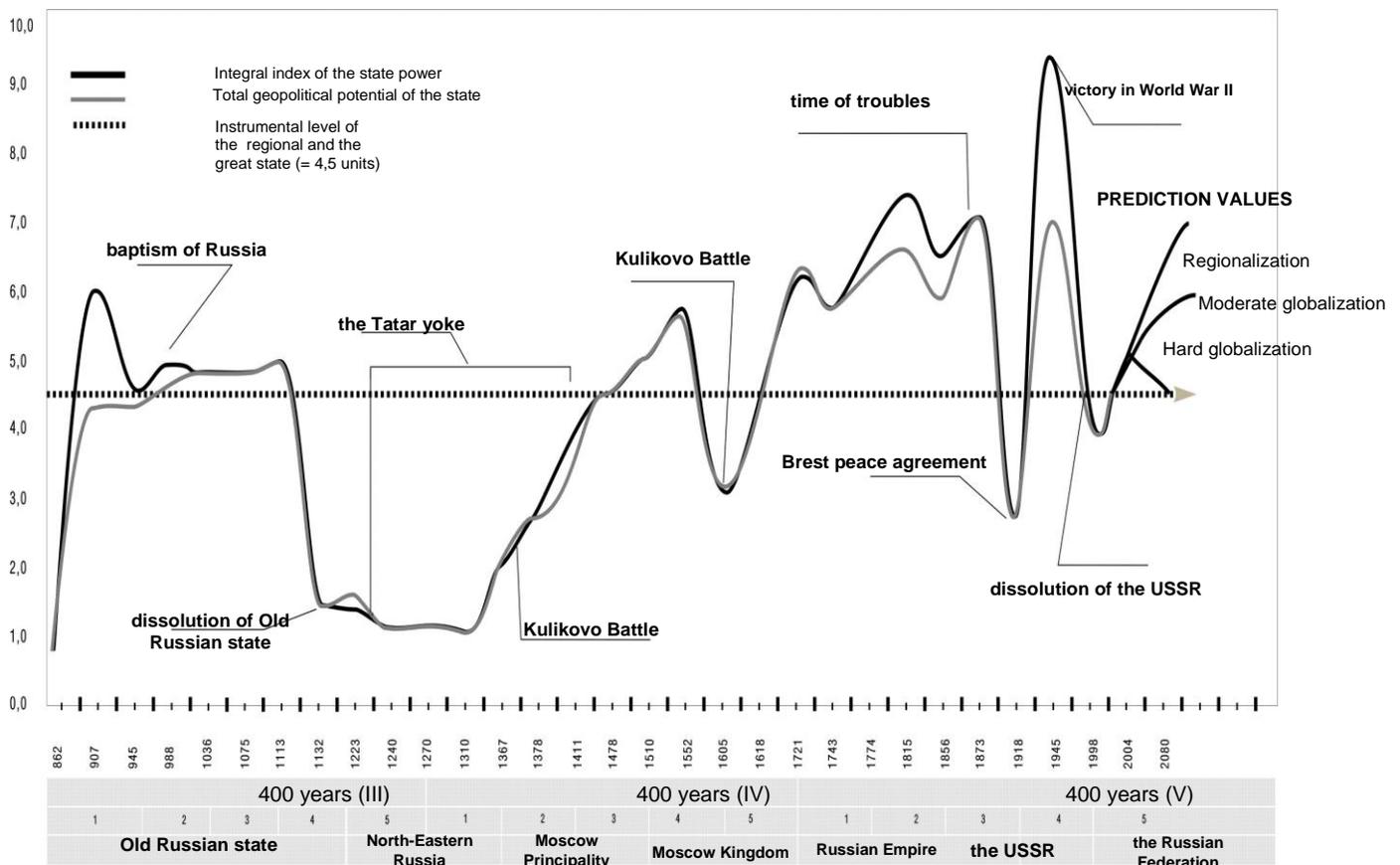
In a sense, the country is regularly settling the accounts of the generations of the ascendant elites who has got conceited about their grandeur, who are ignoring painstaking and tireless efforts to be made for bringing the system targets in accordance with its potentialities. Moreover, those people would allow severe deviations from the natural course of events. Nature and the course of things are facing the management system with problems, challenges, while the managers who are supposed to adequately accept them, give priorities and mobilize resources, would not rise to the occasion.

Since there can be no rigid determinancy of further evolution, Russia has several paths the eventual evolution could follow, of which only one will inevitably become the dominant one in the years to come. These paths vary in their driving social forces, in methods of interaction with external environment, their potentials, and the effects of their development.

Based on what we’ve discovered as the total duration of a strategic cycle of Russia’s development (approximately 80 years), it is most confidently expected that the culmination of its social energy is

going to fall on the years between 2020 and 2040, while the relaxation phase following this new transformation wave will occur from 2060 till 2070. Furthermore, the current cycle of the superlong wave of four hundred years will involve the more scopeful social, technological, scientific and cultural positive developments. A historical analog of the forthcoming rise in the social energy of Russia could be the period of the reigning Rurikovich dynasty crisis and the foundation of the new, Romanovs dynasty. In this very period we can also see the stabilization of the government, the strengthening of religious principles and a fairly harmonious development of Russia in the years 1620 to 1640s.

Figure 2. Change of integral factor of power of the Russian State



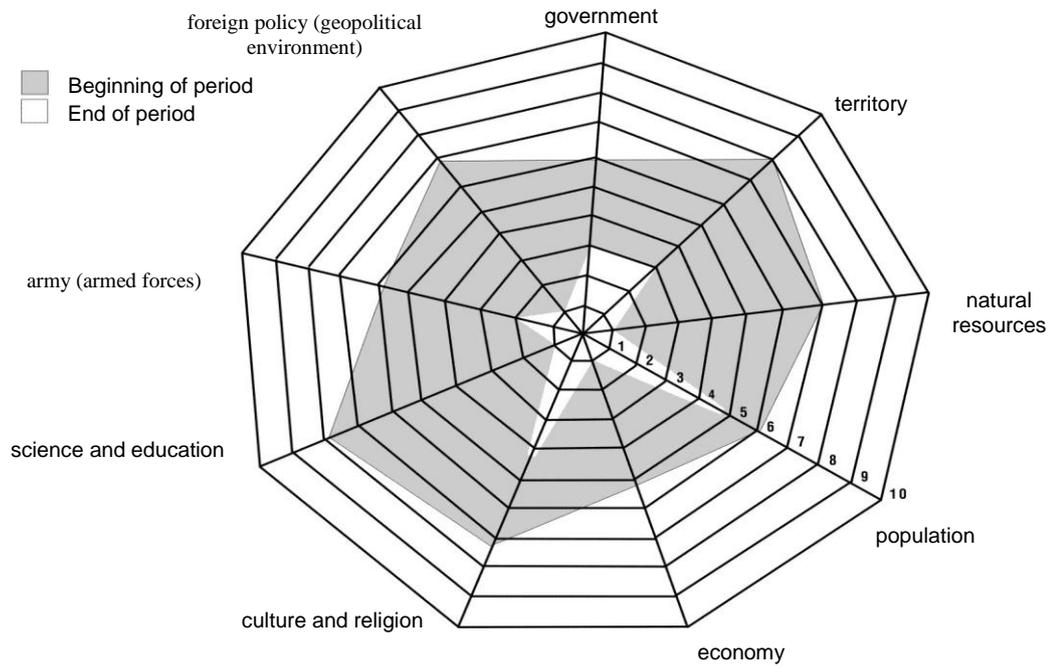


Figure 3. Example: Strategic matrix of the Russian empire (1837–1917)

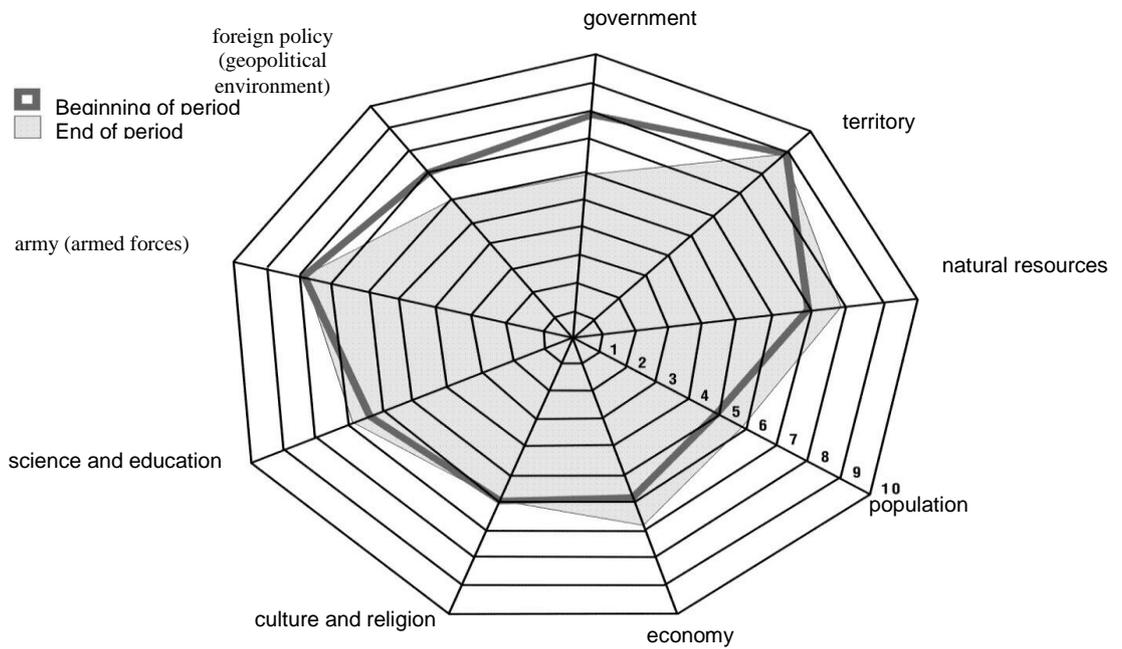


Figure 4. Example: Strategic matrix of the Soviet Union for the period from the end of World War II to “stagnation period” 4-V (1945-1973)

4. Forecast scenarios of international relations

By far the most important element of the strategic matrix model is the factor of geopolitical positioning. Its estimation is supposed to analyze the perspectives of changing external environment for a given system (civilization). From the global standpoint the whole set of interactions between the key strategic players (both the governmental and nongovernmental, but capable of representing main civilization archetypes) may be viewed as a set of their efforts to form an effective fusion of activities, interests and subjects. To make the wording more precise, here “effective” is given according to the players’ perceptions that are far from coinciding with one another, and this fusion, probably, would be motivated both on selfish and mutually beneficial basis.

Once these suppositions have been superimposed on the present-day arrangement of potentialities and on the practically substantiated strategies of leading fusions of global players, we can have five long-term scenarios of the international relations evolution in the XXI century. These are: the “hard globalization”, “soft globalization”, “regionalization” of “positive” and “negative” options, and the “chaos” scenario. Each of the cited scenarios will be optional. Yet the practical development of a situation is likely to have features specific to several scenarios.

4.1. Hard globalization scenario

Hard globalization scenario is based on the supposition that the main centers of the Euroatlantic association economic power (the USA and/or EU) would come out as a unified fusion when the international relations system and world economic system are getting transformed.

In fact, this scenario will stand for the construction of the one-pole model with a rigid hierarchy among its main players.

In the event the present scenario is implemented, it is quite likely that the Western community would launch a coordinated policy against the China economic strategy, and would regulate competition with other nonwestern economic centers in trying to limit the development of various national economics in the high-tech field.

In the military field, the gap between the USA and Western countries on the one hand, and countries of the rest of the world on the other in what is called military technology, will be sharply expanded. There is every likelihood that there will be lifted the remaining restrictions to use military force in order to ensure the interests of the USA and the North Atlantic community as a whole.

A system created on the model of rigid hierarchy by virtue of specific features of its functioning, would require that political and economic activity of all subjects of international relations be standardized. In all likelihood, this could provoke stagnation in the development of not only the system of international relations, but of the world economics at large.

Implementation of the rigid globalization scenario becomes feasible notably against the background of crisis-driven development of international situation. To maintain its leadership, it is most likely that the United States will have to bolster a constant tension in the world using the system of “controllable conflicts”.

The central weakness of the scenario is as follows: even though it can – in short-term perspective – bring about a certain stabilization in international situation, nevertheless the critical mass of discontent in the nonwestern world is likely to grow. At a certain stage this could cause a collapse of unforeseeable consequences in the world. The difficulties of holding events within such scenario are clearly obvious citing Iraq.

4.2. Soft globalization scenario

This scenario is based on the assumption that relative military strength of the USA is likely to gradually decline. If world developments take this course, the European Union is likely to adopt a position of one of the leading economic centers of the world, and to approach the USA in terms of military technologies.

It is the European Union, not China, which is most likely to rank the second world pole of force.

After studying into prospects for the formation of major centers of force it has become evident that only EU and China, and under more favorable conditions – Japan, India and Russia will be able to pursue independent geopolitical strategy.

In its relations with Russia, China is, for the time being, the least interested in its further weakening. Yet we cannot rule out aggravation of contradictions between both the countries as they show greater economic might and military potential.

The present period could be characterized as a strategic pause, where none of potential geopolitical rivals of the USA is not yet ready to challenge its military and political hegemony, although there is growing a discontent with American domination.

Open struggle against the US autocracy in the nearest future can be started solely on hypothetical basis provided a coalition of several potential centers of force is formed (e. g. EU and Russia; Russia and China, BRIC, other coalitions). Such a scenario could be implemented only if toughness of Washington's foreign policy exceeds a certain level.

On the whole, according to the moderate globalization scenario new vistas will open up for China to independently establish itself as a center of economic and military power to match those of the USA and EU. Along with its allies and partners from the CIS countries, Russia – in implementing this scenario – also can strengthen its position among the world economic and military leaders. This might come true only if it can take the role of the consolidating center of integration processes in the post-Soviet territories.

4.3. The enhanced regional role scenario

The enhanced regional role scenario will be based on the assumption that the overriding trend in furthering the system of international relations will become the formation of the competitive trade-and-economic areas. The largest of them are going to be the North-American and Asia-Pacific areas, as well as the EU. As their economic might becomes increasingly equalized, competitiveness between them is bound to step up. They will struggle for new markets, disputed territories and natural resources. The rationale behind the implementation of such a scenario is the exacerbation of trade wars and inefficiency of the WTO mechanics.

On the whole, the feasibility of its implementation is not very great, since it tends to set up self-sustained and closed economic systems whose interaction on the interunit level is restricted, which contradicts the modern trends in the development of the world economy.

That said, the likelihood of implementation of this scenario is not high, but we cannot completely eliminate this possibility.

In this case Russia will have to form its own area of economic influence in the post-Soviet territory. If this country fails to do that, it would become either the arena of free expansion on the part of regional opposing groups, or would join one of them. Therefore, within the framework of this scenario we are actually considering two scenarios involving positive and negative regionalization.

4.3.1. Positive regionalization

The implementation of this scenario may include the events as follows: enhanced dynamics of unification of Russia and Belorussia into a unified Union state; the GDP rise to reach the year 1990 level, formation of efficient supranational agencies within the framework of the European Economic Area (EEA). According to this scenario, after the year 2009 there will come a deepening of trade contradictions between the USA, EU, China, Russia along with its partners under EEA. As a result, by 2011 to 2016 this will lead to alternations in the WTO functioning format – a shift from the interstate economic regulation to largely the interbloc one.

Further on, integration processes will be enhanced inside the major economic regional groups (SST, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, ES, China-centered free-trade area in EEA, ATR in the post-Soviet territories), with the globalization structures' influence showing a decline.

4.3.2 Negative regionalization

Risks associated with implementation of the enhanced regional role scenario are fairly high, so it is likely to take the course of the negative regionalization line. The negative regionalization scenario could follow a variation of probable events which resembles the rigid globalization scenario in many ways. Thus, it involves a refusal on the part of European CIS countries to carry out integration plans together with Russia; assertion of the largely pro-Western orientation of Ukraine and a refusal of Belorussia to create the Union state with Russia in 2007-2008. Scenario of negative regionalization also envisages the WTO disintegration, fragmentation of the world currency system, establishment of mega-regional areas closed for a free flow of capital, labor and commodities. The performance of such scenario includes that appears unbelievable now the development of regional system of Internet unlike its today's global version.

4.4. The “Chaos” scenario

In essence, this particular scenario combines a few scenarios of catastrophic development likely to be provoked by a variety of factors. By way of example let us consider the possibility of terrorist activity (terrorist attacks against the nuclear and chemical industry plants, terrorists have a free access to the production of weapons of mass destruction) being intensified on such a scale that economics of the largest centers of the world would get collapsed. The terrorist network would stretch to many a country.

Other factors set to provoke development of events like that could be natural anomalies (when the worst scenarios of greenhouse effect come to life, out-of-space catastrophe, a series of disastrous earthquakes and eruptions of volcanoes, etc.), the world-wide financial collapse, and a large-scale military conflict.

It is totally impossible to forecast how, following this scenario, the configuration of the main centers of economic and military might would be altered.

The behavior of each factor in the strategic matrix has a spectrum of its own. As an example to illustrate the case please see in the supplement the charts related to the behavior of such factors as “territory”, “population”, “economics”, “management” and “foreign policy”.

6. Some behavior simulation results for the Mediterranean countries

As of today the Mediterranean is a meta-region in the borderline state. A direct cross-civilizational contact between representatives of the Euro-Atlantic community – countries of the EU and NATO – is maintained here on the one hand and the Middle-East states of the Arabic and Islamic world on the other. The world of the Mediterranean is patchy in all referred areas. In the economic sphere the Mediterranean Sea still remains one of the most promising transport communications development areas for a flow of hydrocarbons from the countries of the Middle East, Russia and other post-Soviet states.

In the political sphere the Mediterranean is the area of conflicts with a high potential of escalation. This first of all refers to Kosovo and Arabic-Israeli conflict. While the dominance of the NATO is obvious in the military sphere both by land and sea, however the features of the leading-edge technologies make the region extremely vulnerable to non-conventional means of war.

In the humanitarian sphere the Mediterranean is an area of intensive interaction among civilizations.

The major countries of the regions are ranked among great and reliably regional powers (figures 4-7) – Italy, Spain, France, and Turkey. The USA and Russia has not all along concurring interests in the meta-region (figures 8 and 9).

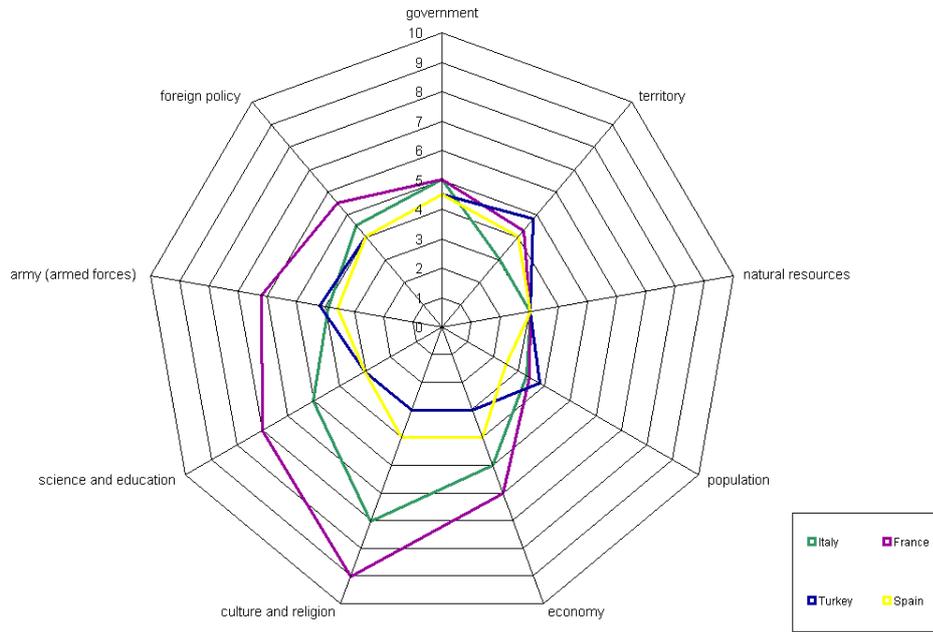


Figure 4. Comparison of strategic matrices of Spain, Italy, France and Turkey

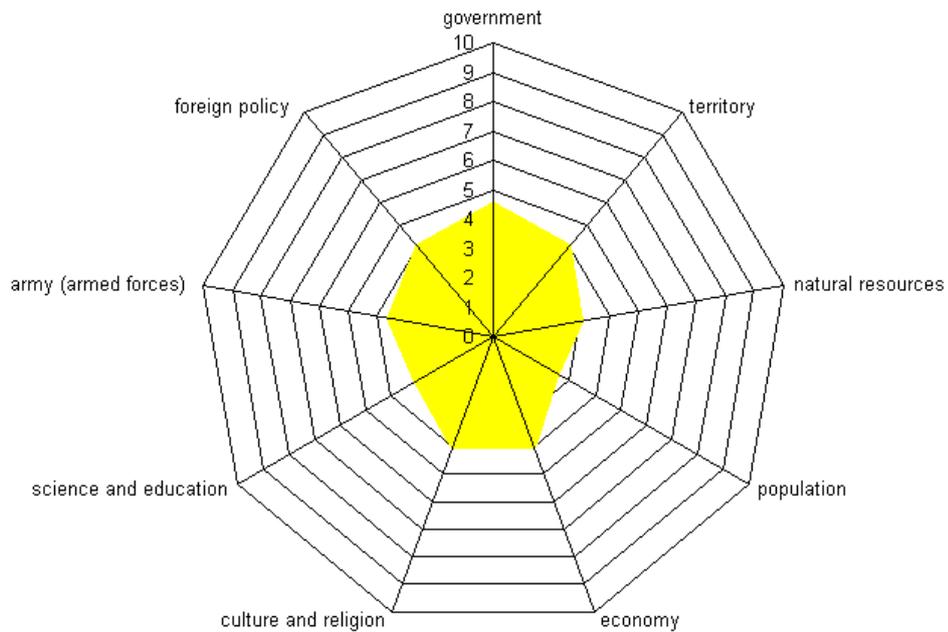


Figure 5. Strategic Matrix of Spain

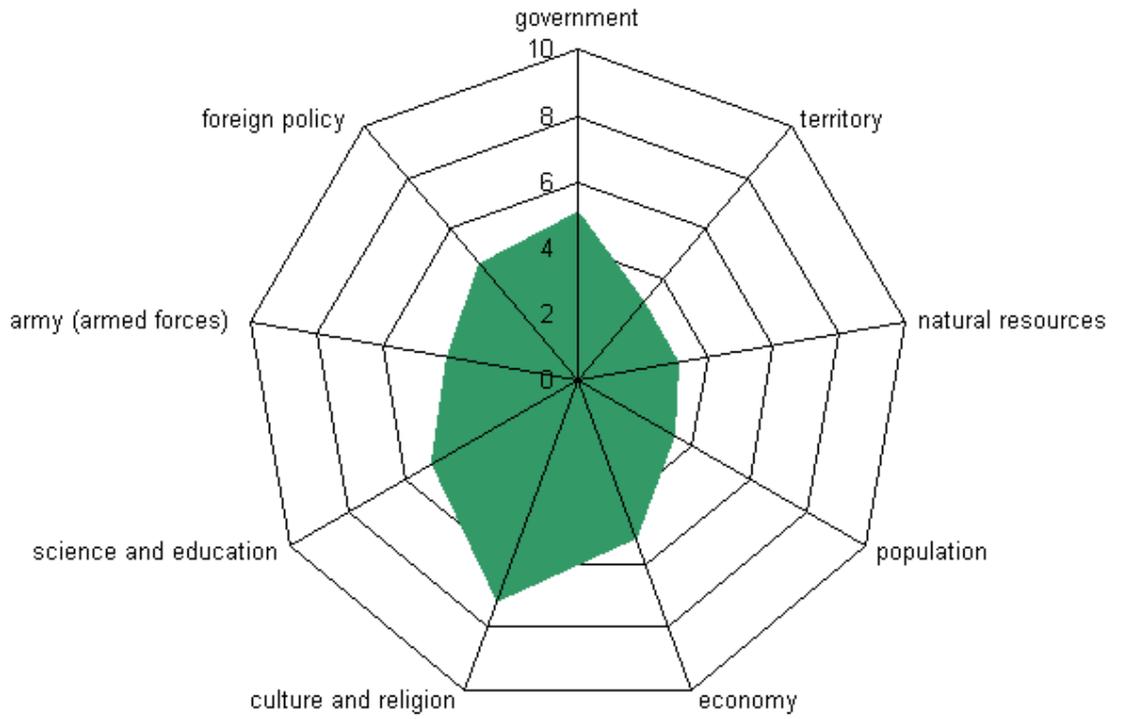


Figure 6. Strategic matrix of Italy

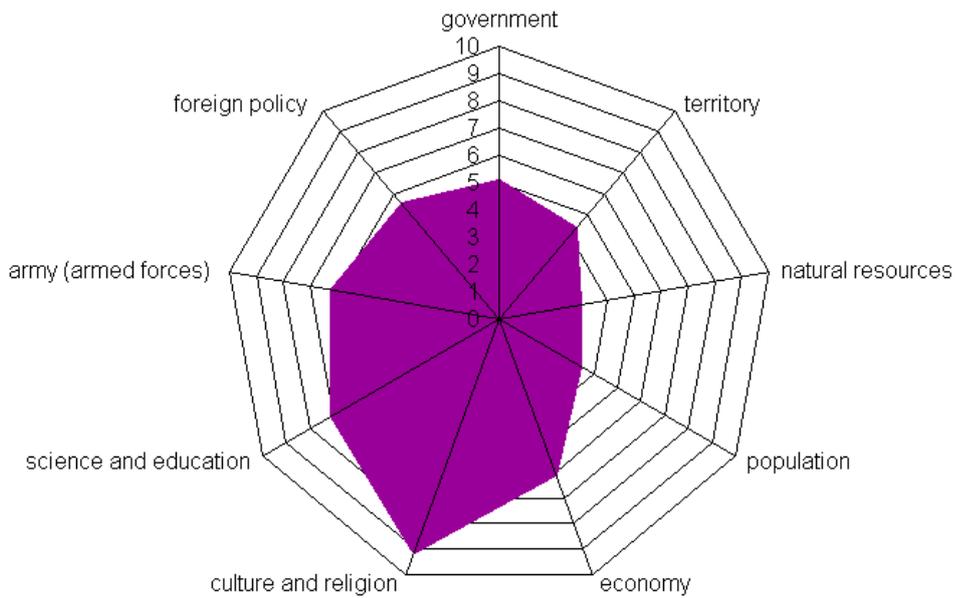


Figure 7. Strategic matrix of France

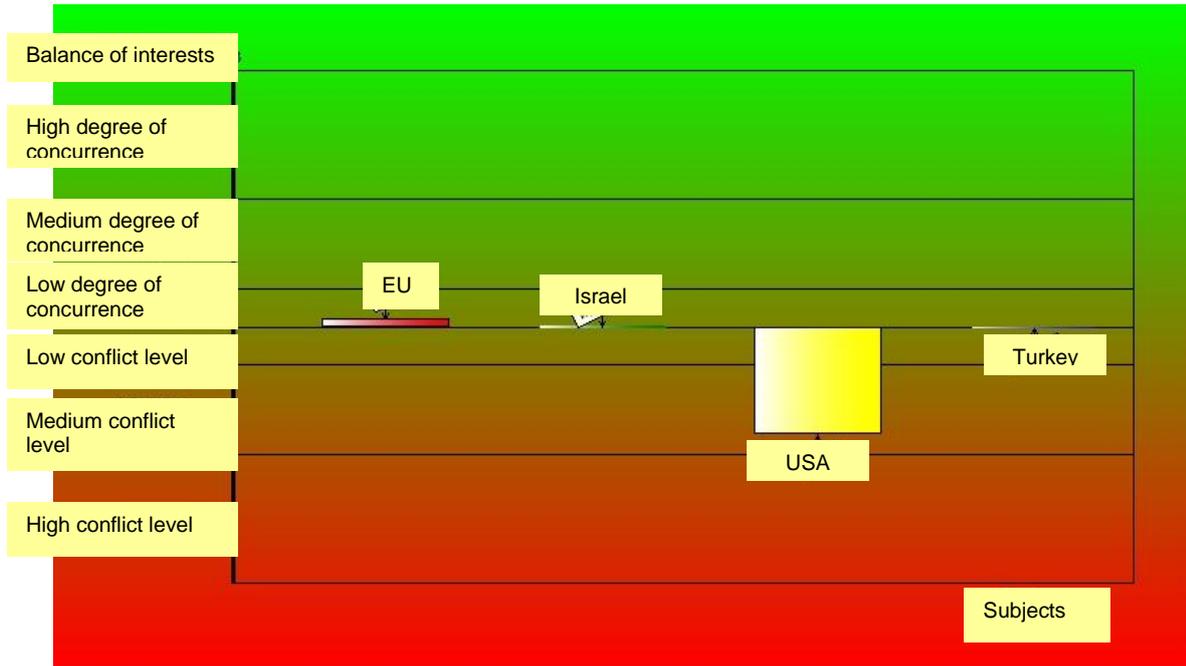


Figure 8. Outputs of researches into the balance of interests. Russia

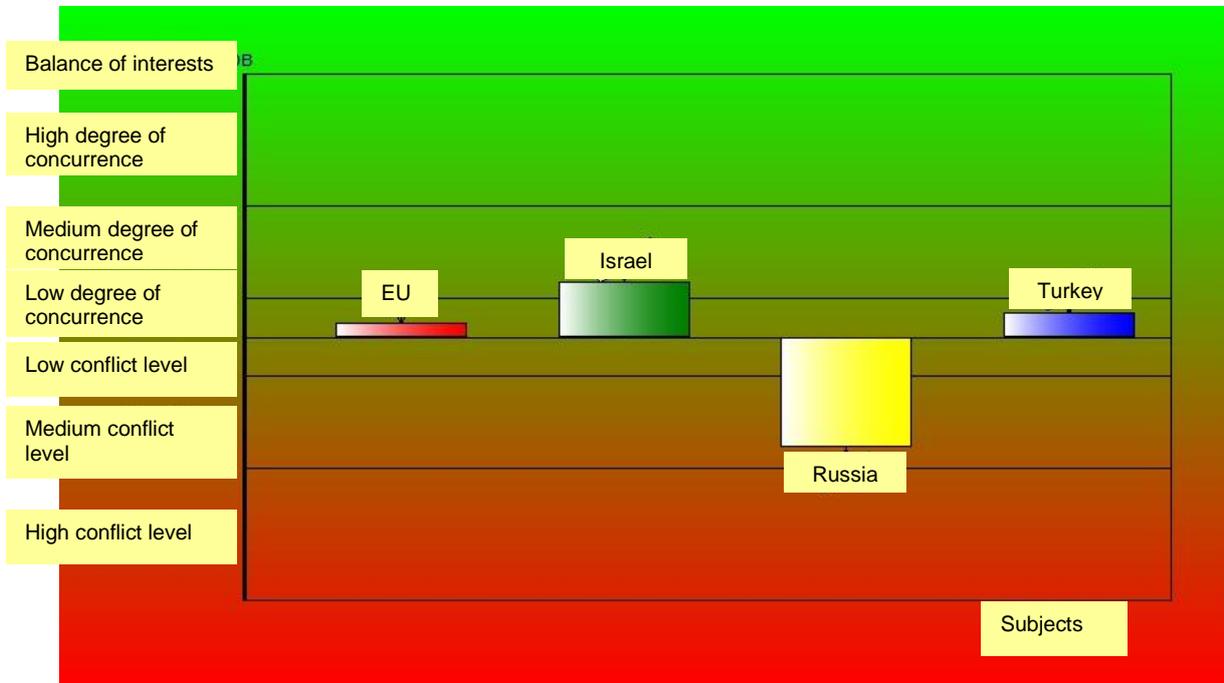


Figure 9. Outputs of researches into the balance of interests. USA

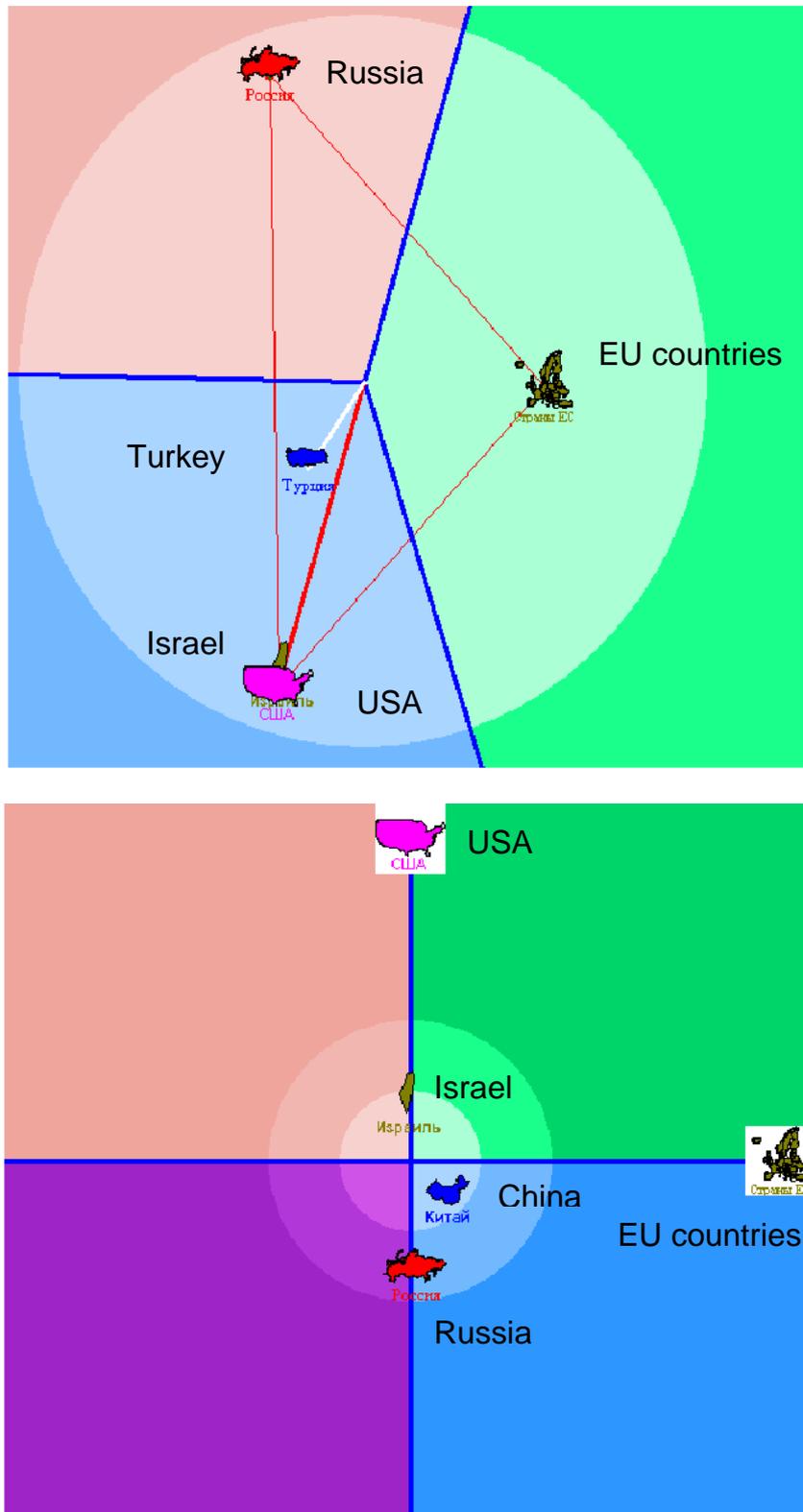


Figure 10. Identification results of coalitions between subjects. Evaluation of prospects for building coalitions

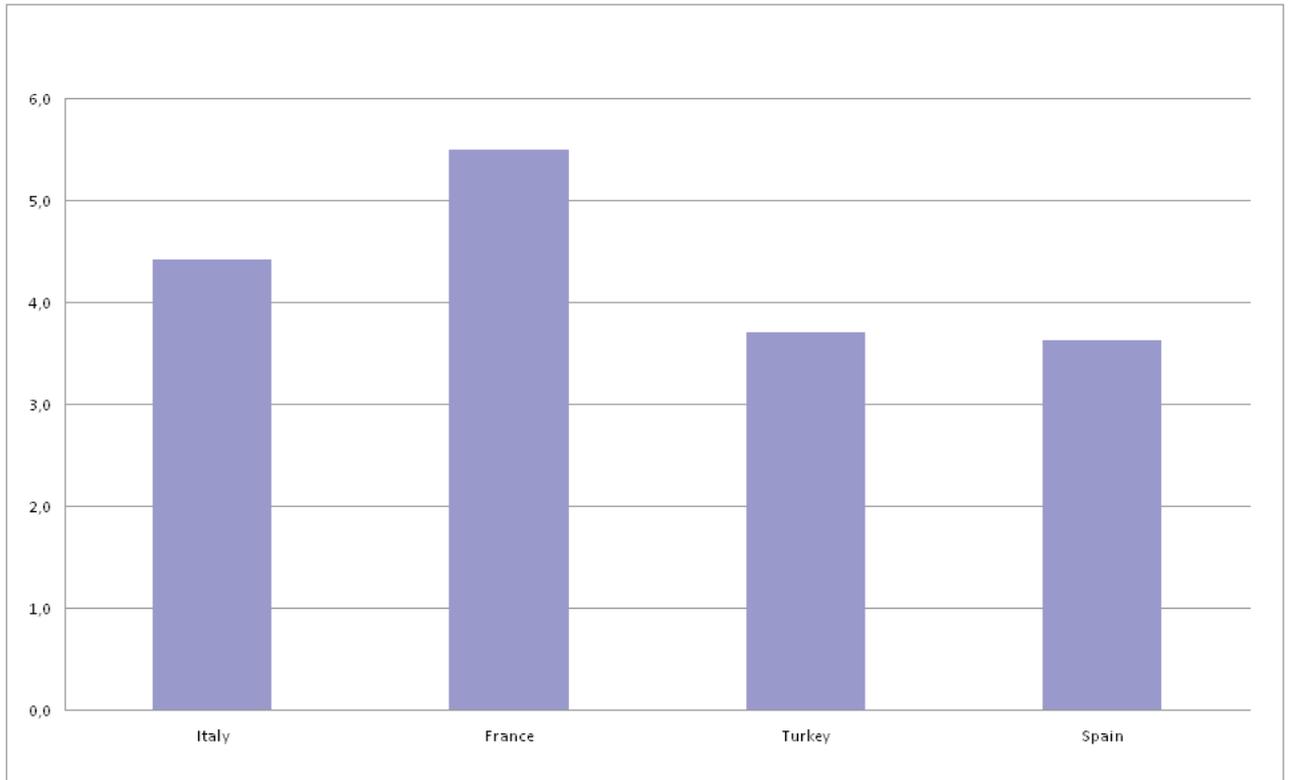


Figure 11. Integral power of certain Mediterranean states