



**RUSSIA, NATO, THE ATTEMPTED COUP AGAINST ERDOGAN, AND  
THE ASYMMETRIC ECCLESIASTICAL WARFARE BETWEEN  
MOSCOW AND CONSTANTINOPLE:  
GEOSTRATEGY, NOOPOLITICS, AND FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY**

**By**  
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*1. Russia settles a score with NATO after the crises in Ukraine and Syria:* Russia seeks revenge for the fact that, in February 2014, the US and the EU assisted in the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich's government in Ukraine and attempted to isolate Russia from Ukraine, even though Kiev is the historical cradle of the Russian Empire and the Russian Orthodox Church, and even though Russia is significantly dependent on and has made significant investments in Ukrainian industries.

*2. The weak links in NATO's geopolitical chain:* Greece and Turkey, each for different reasons, are culturally alien (if not opposite) to the Carolingian Europe, and, therefore, the domination of Carolingian elites in NATO (especially regarding NATO's policy in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, and especially from the 1990s onward) contributes decisively to the gradual alienation of Greece and Turkey from NATO. Thus, both Greece and Turkey, namely, the pillars of NATO's Southeastern flank, are naturally the weak links in the geopolitical chain of the Carolingian dominated Euroatlantic institutions.

*3. A significant political opportunity for Russia:* Russia, seeking revenge for the aforementioned (and other) reasons and, more broadly, competing geostrategically with NATO, realized that it can take advantage of Greece's and Turkey's peculiarities and discontentment within NATO in order, in line with the broader strategic plans of the BRICS, to destabilize NATO's Southeastern flank and, generally, to decisively contain and weaken NATO's power. However, Putin's Russia has not articulated a neo-Byzantine strategic policy capable of reclaiming Romanity and luring Balkan states, including Greece, into a neo-Byzantine geopolitical arc. Putin's policy is dictated by

Continental Europe's and Henry Kissinger's legacy of Realpolitik, his KGB training, and Russia's energy deals. Therefore, given that Russia has neither a neo-Byzantine strategy nor any decisive "soft power" in Greece (the cradle of Eastern Romanity), the only option that Putin has in order to compete with NATO and form an alternative geostrategic bloc depends on the manipulation of Erdogan's regime in Turkey and on the BRICS. In this context, Russia seeks to exploit the failed and, indeed, suspiciously ill-designed coup against the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which was attempted on July 15, 2016, Erdogan's psychological mixture of insecurity and megalomania, as well as the recent friction between the US and Turkey.

The authoritative veteran Indian diplomat Ambassador M. K. Bhadrakumar has written the following: "Russian President Vladimir Putin did on Sunday what no major Western leader from the NATO member countries cared to do when he telephoned his Turkish counterpart Recep Erdogan to convey his sympathy, goodwill and best wishes for the latter's success in restoring constitutional order and stability as soon as possible after the attempted coup Friday night. (Kremlin website)" (source: M. K. Bhadrakumar, "There's More to Turkey's Failed Coup than Meets the Eye," *Indian Punchline*, July 18, 2016, online: <http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2016/07/18/theres-more-to-turkeys-failed-coup-than-meets-the-eye/>). Indeed, the failed coup against Erdogan's regime seems to have been attempted by pro-NATO Kemalist Turkish officers, advocates of Muhammed Fethullah Gülen (a Turkish preacher, former imam, writer, and political activist), and possibly plotters related to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia (Ibid), who were used as "useful idiots" by Erdogan's regime and Russia, which managed to anticipate, hijack, and manipulate the attempted coup in order to achieve their own goals: Erdogan found an excuse in order to launch a pogrom against his political opponents and pursue his neosultanistic plans, and Russia found a great opportunity in order to increase its strategic influence on Turkey by 'saving' and supporting Erdogan against his opponents. In the aftermath of the bizarre attempted coup against Erdogan, which deteriorated Turkey's relations with the US and the EU, Russia promotes itself as the ultimate and most trustworthy savior of Erdogan's regime. In particular, Russia aims at hitting three targets with one shot: first, to destabilize NATO's Southeastern flank; secondly, to convince or, if necessary, force Erdogan's regime to comply with key geostrategic plans of Russia and the BRICS; and, thirdly, to castigate NATO for its policy in Ukraine and elsewhere as well as Turkey for shooting down a Russian warplane on its border with Syria on November 24, 2015.

NATO is, indeed, in a weak position, mainly because of three reasons: first, it has lost the moral superiority that it was enjoying throughout the Cold War as the guardian of the "Free World" against the totalitarian regimes, and it has been submitted to a selfish and corrupt cartel of arms dealers; secondly, it has failed to take account of, respect, and accommodate the Byzantine Europe, but, instead, it has been dominated by obsessive opponents of the Eastern Roman Empire's legacy; thirdly, it is being threatened and weakened by the rising economic, political, and military power of the BRICS. Regarding Turkey, in particular, after the attempted coup against Erdogan and the deterioration of the relations between the US and Erdogan's regime, Russia and China emerged as Erdogan's necessary geostrategic and economic safety net, and,

therefore, Russia's energy policy and China's "New Silk Road strategy" will be, directly and/or indirectly, reinforced by the policy of Erdogan's regime.

Unfortunately, until now, Russia, in essence, replicates NATO's mentality and power politics, by seeking to win geostrategic chess games against NATO without proposing an alternative, better architecture for the world order. Thus, the Byzantine Europe, which can offer new perspectives and new hopes to Europe, contain Asian powers, and counter the onslaught of aggressive Islam remains geostrategically marginalized, because the West is dominated by obsessively anti-Byzantine Carolingian elites, and because Russia remains unable to understand and utilize the spiritual essence and the political significance of Romanity. I have highlighted the need for a new world society model, and I have proposed an alternative type of man, that is, an alternative civilization, in my book *Methexiology: Philosophical Theology and Theological Philosophy for the Deification of Humanity*, Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016 (ISBN 13: 978-1-4982-3385-9); please, see the following links:

<http://wipfandstock.com/methexiology.html>

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4. *Faith-Based Diplomacy*: The Russian President Vladimir Putin's pious participation in the Russian Orthodox Church during his first Easter as Russian ruler had several elements of a farce. In particular, the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya (1958–2006), in her book *Putin's Russia*, writes the following: "At the beginning of the Great Matins service there stood, shoulder to shoulder with Putin as if at a military parade, Prime Minister Fradkov and Dmitry Medvedev, the Kremlin's new éminence grise, head of the president's office, a man of diminutive stature with a large head. The three men clumsily and clownishly crossed themselves, Medvedev making his crosses by touching his hands to his forehead and then to his genitals. It was risible" (quoted in S. Mitsotakis, "KGB's 'Christians': Putin, Stalin, and the KGB's History of Manipulating the Orthodox Church," *Breitbart*, January 11, 2016; online: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/01/11/kgb-christians-putin-stalin-kgbs-history-manipulating-orthodox-church/>). However, this was not a farce; it was deep psychological operation, given that, after World War II, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was reconstituted as an instrument of the Russian state.

In fact, in the late 1940s—after the then US President Harry S. Truman and the then Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople agreed that the latter would use his authority and influence in order to undermine the Soviet regime through the Orthodox Christian Church and faith (Patriarch Athenagoras I ascended to the ecclesiastical throne of Constantinople in 1948 with the assistance of the then US President, having previously served as the Greek-Orthodox archbishop in North America and having also participated in the plot to dethrone the then canonical Patriarch Maximus V of Constantinople)—the then Soviet leader Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin became aware of Patriarch Athenagoras's secret anti-Soviet agenda, and he decided to 'rediscover' the

merits of Russian Orthodoxy. In particular, Stalin ceased his monstrous pogrom against the Russian Orthodox Christians, and he reconstituted the ROC in general and the Patriarchate of Moscow in particular as a religious apparatus of the Soviet regime's system of intelligence and counter-intelligence.

The Russian Orthodox Patriarch at the time of President Putin's public debut in the ROC's life was Patriarch Aleksii II, who died on December 5, 2008. Ion Mihai Pacepa, a former three-star general in the Securitate, the secret police of Communist Romania, who defected to the United States in July 1978, writes of Aleksii II the following: "The KGB had carried him under the codename 'DROZDOV' and awarded him its Certificate of Honor, as was learned from a KGB archive accidentally left behind in Estonia" (Ibid). Similar information is contained in original KGB documents known as the "Mitrokhin Archive" (described by the FBI as the most complete and extensive intelligence ever received from any source) and in the Politburo documents released by Father Gleb Yakunin, vice chairman of a Russian parliamentary commission that investigated the KGB's manipulation of the church.

Patriarch Kirill (born 20 November 1946) became Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus' and Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church on February 1, 2009. Prior to becoming Patriarch, Kirill was Archbishop (later Metropolitan) of Smolensk and Kaliningrad beginning on 26 December 1984, and also Chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church's Department for External Church Relations and a permanent member of the Holy Synod beginning in 1989. Additionally, worked for the KGB under the code name "MIKHAYLOV" (Ibid).

Patriarch Kirill/"MIKHAYLOV" of Moscow and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople collided with each other regarding several ecclesiastical affairs, including the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Churches that took place in June 2016 in a way that reflected a rather authoritarian and anti-patristic agenda on behalf of Patriarch Bartholomew I. The new clash between the Churches of Moscow and Constantinople is, more or less, a déjà vu: a Patriarch of Constantinople who is strongly tied to the US government versus a Patriarch of Moscow who acts, in essence, as a state intelligence officer and a nationalist. Of course, in both cases, the great victim is the institution of the Orthodox Church per se. Furthermore, the Russian establishment decided to intervene in the clash between Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople by using KGB methods; specifically, on July 21, 2016, the Russian informative website "rusvesna.su" published an article (entitled, in Russian, "Константинопольский Патриарх Варфоломей отказывается возвращаться в Турцию, его подозревают в связях с путчистами") accusing Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople of having direct ties to the plotters of the attempted coup against the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The relevant link is the following:

<http://rusvesna.su/news/1469088486>

The aforementioned article is not only an asymmetric attack against the Patriarchate of Constantinople by the Russian establishment, but it also puts Patriarch Bartholomew's life in danger, since it foments the criminal passions of Turkish pro-Erdogan thugs.

Unfortunately, both the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Patriarchate of Constantinople have distanced themselves from the genuine ethos of Orthodox Christianity, and, far from understanding Church as Mystery, they have succumbed to secularization and politicization. Unfortunately, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople can be validly criticized on several theological grounds; but the use of asymmetric threats and attacks that are appropriate for secret agents and insurgents have no place in the genuine Orthodox Church. I have proposed a new spiritual formula for the resacralization of humanity and the cosmos (without, however, restoring defunct totems, without using tales as “cheap” substitutes for the lack of a life-giving myth, and without negating history) as well as a creative interpretation of patristic theology in my book *Methexiology: Philosophical Theology and Theological Philosophy for the Deification of Humanity*, Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016 (ISBN 13: 978-1-4982-3385-9); please, see the following links:

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<http://phibetaiota.net/2016/07/nicolas-laos-byzantine-failures-russia-nato-and-the-attempted-coup-against-erdogan-in-turkey/>