AGAINTS AND FOR THE HIGH SPEED TRAINS' MULTIMPLICATION

Benea Ciprian - Beniamin

Contact address: University of Oradea, Faculty of Economics, International Affairs Department, Universitatii Street, No 1, e-mail: c_benea@uahoo.com, or cbenea@uoradea.ro, Tel.: +40. 259. 40 87 99, or +40. 751. 24 99 75

Baciu Adrian

Contact address: Ministry of Transportation, e-mail: adrianbaciu@email.ro

Abstract: In this exposure we intend to make visible the situation in which global warming is given by road and air transport, how could be revitalized railways, and how high speed trains could become a preferred mode of transport. But there is manifesting an opposition to railway development, nurtured by different interests, ranking from governments themselves, to oil importing countries, oil exporting countries, oil companies with their colligate partners situated along the oil distribution chain. But, there could be identified some voices which could create themselves the possibility to speak lauder in order to promote railway transportation. The greens, NGOs, the epistemic communities, for example, could unite their force to make something in order to provide the framework for rail transportation's development, and for road and air transport reduction, for the benefit of while humankind.

Code words: climate change, epistemic communities, high speed trains, political costs

As one could easy observe, the reduction of road and air transport and the development of railway transport hit diverse private interests borne by private and public actors. The reduction of road and air transport can affect: the airplanes' and automobiles' makers; states, which promote the development of these industries for different reasons (for example: risk of unemployment, taxes collected as a result of fuel consumption in transportation in the case of road transport, people's mobility and distraction of their attention); oil companies and companies which are specialized in oil transportation; oil exporting countries; oil importing countries. That for, the implementing of new (and available) technologies which can be successful introduced in transportation sector are hardly introduced in land (and especially road) transportation. But a greater acceptance can be observed in railway transportation, where there was introduced a modern transport technology – this is the case of high speed trains (or TGV). Now, here are presented the elements which can oppose to railway transportation's development. The *opposition* to railway development can come from different directions.

Automobile factories. They have great negotiation capacity with the governments where they operate. They have a great number of employees, which, if the automobile factory would stop its production, would be transformed in hundreds of thousands of un-employees. For example, General Motors had 750000 employees at the end of '80s.[65] These people could easy constitute (in) social groups which could give birth to real mass movements,[66] susceptible to be influenced by agitation propaganda,[67] which would push them to act in such a manner that they would generate economic and social costs for that state, and political costs for political leadership from that state, too.[68] Furthermore, too constrictive and radical measures adopted by the governments don't mean that they could adamant and quickly determine a specific action to be taken by automakers; the automakers can easy – due to transportation's globalization – relocate their industry in countries ruled by more open and reasonable governments. That for, it is necessary to be taken similar political actions in more countries (and the perfect situation could be met if there would be taken that sort of actions in all countries), in the same time, regarding road transport and automobiles' production. The importance of actions which would be taken by all countries in the world is given by the fact that global warming is not a geographical limited phenomenon, but a global one, and pollution due to transportation in one country affects people and environment everywhere on the Planet. The reduction of opposition from the automobile producers and of the governments regarding the construction of new railways, and the railway transportation's revitalizing could be achieved through automobile producers'

[65] Francis Fukuyama, *Încredere. Virtuțile sociale și crearea prosperității*, Filipeştii de Târg, Editura Antet, 2002, p. 87
[66] William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, London, Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1960, p. 167
[67] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda. The Formation on Men's Attitudes*, New York, Vintage Books, Edition, 1973, p. 72
[68] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York, Free Press Paperbacks, 1997, p. 158

cooptation in new railway projects' building and through the encouragement of these kinds of investment through the powerful leverage given by credit's management.

Colligate industries of automobile's industry (for example: steel industry, synthetic rubber, or cement industry so necessary for road infrastructure building).

Aeronautics industry, due to the fact that railway transportation's development for people transport means the falling down of demand for air transport services, TGV being a viable, and in the same time, a feared competitor for regional (continental) airway transport of persons, especially on medium continental distances. Passengers' reorientation from airplanes to railways when they travel over a continuous land mass, which could be crossed by train in the same condition means incomes' falling down for airway transport companies, and for airplanes' makers, which are economic colossus, in many cases. Of course, intercontinental travel and linking among countries situated on different continents will be provided by planes, but the demand's reduction for airway transport over the continents (where can be found the most prosperous societies) will influence the airways companies' incomes, in a negative fashion.

Airway colligate industries, because a little demand for airway passenger transport services means the reduction of the demand from the airway companies' side, and of products and services provided by those colligate industries. *Each state* has special interests *vis-à-vis* aeronautic industry – due to special military interests – and none can afford to reduce too much this activity, because national security could be very affected.

Countries which import oil, which are in most cases very industrialized countries, with major interests in oil producing countries and areas. The connection given by oil have given birth to political and diplomatic relations with *special character* and the reduction on oil import, due to the reduction of demand of fuel for transportation, could dramatically influence the evolution of these relations, moment which could be seized by *other states* with special interests in those states (areas).

Countries which export oil. The reduction of oil export means a dramatic reduction of their foreign currency incomes. Some oil exporting countries depend in a crucial manner of this product's selling on global oil market and the oil export's stinting would deprive those economies of the money through which their governments can still rein a discontented population (as we can find for example in Central Asian states[69]). And when petro-states stop selling oil, social and political instability had already entered the arena, and domestic social movements, and the wars on the international stage can manifest with a force which cannot be reined. Of course, this destabilization would hurt the gigantic oil companies' interests,[70] and as such, it could be an element which could contribute to the identification of some common interests regarding the perpetuation of road and airway modes of transport. The demand for oil from these two economic sectors is based on common interests, too, from the automobile makers' side, importing and exporting oil countries' side, and financial institutions which lend credit to oil exporting countries – because as they sell oil, they can pay for their borrowings and interests imposed upon those borrowings – and oil companies, which had invested a lot in their drilling and transportation pipelines facilities.

Oil companies, which can be pushed into a desperate situation, because, if the demand for oil is reduced, they wouldn't recover in an optimum period of time their investments in drilling and extraction facilities and transportation pipelines. The oil demand's retrenchment could be compensate by a rising in oil prices, but this is a measure which can succeed over a short and medium period of time, at it can help in the same time oil exporting countries which could have a hostile attitude regarding other states.[71]

Maritime carriers, which are specialized in oil transportation and its derived products. This is an important aspect when the most part of world maritime fleet (approximate 38% of total maritime fleet's tonnage[72] is destined for oil products' transportation). The surplus of maritime transport capacity is an element which is politicized very quickly, and it could generate tensions among different states with special maritime interests, taking account that

[69] Terry Linn Karl, "Crude Calculations: OPEC Lessons for the Caspian Region", in Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon (eds.), *Energy and Conflict in Central Asian and the Caucasus*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000, pp. 29-33

[70] Jill Shankleman, *Oil, Profits, and Peace. Does Business Have a Role in Peacemaking?* Washington DC., USIP Press, 2006, pp 40-49

[71] Lutz Kleveman, *The New Great Game. Blood and Oil in Central Asia*, New York, Grove Press, 2003, p. 123

[72] Gheorghe Caraiani şi Mihai Serescu, *Transporturile maritime*, Bucureşti, Editura Lumina Lex, 1998, p. 72-73

they wish to preserve their national maritime capabilities in a very competitive environment, specific to maritime transport.[73]

The governments where there could be fulfilled a project which focalizes upon high speed railway infrastructure's building. The building of such a railway project means enormous sum of money, a big investment project, which needs a very long time for its amortization, and the effort which a government makes can produce effects only in the long run. And as usually, we find each government preoccupied by *immediate* benefits of its actions and not by activities which bring benefits in the long run, the political leadership itself could be reticent in the adoption of measures which would have the finality in the railway infrastructure's construction/or development. The great economic costs (and even the social costs) generate by such a project can be transformed in political costs for the governments and the party/parties which promote that project, because those people which are taxed in order to finance that project's fulfilling might not be among the people which would benefit by that project advantages, and this is due to the long period of time needed for such a project's realization. This means a too great waiting in order to obtain a too much postponed benefit, in detriment of a big *present cost* – this perception found in public opinion spirit could easy be transformed in political capital loosing, for the benefit of the opposition, which can successful seize the moment to gain power.

That for, it is important that similar actions to be taken by political leadership from more states, aiming at railway transport's revitalizing and modernizing, because in each state they will face the same problems, generally speaking. A similar action taken simultaneously in more countries could reduce political risks to which that states' governments are exposed – all of them have the common interest to remain in power and all of them face the fear of being thrown in opposition. The opposition regarding oil consumption's reduction is based upon economical-financial motivations, and political and social interests, too. Notwithstanding, imminent dangers which the world will face, if there aren't take specific actions regarding the reduction of pollution with CO_2 due to road and airway transport activities, could constitute determinant factors regarding the conception of a strategy which would focalize on the reduction of road and airway transportation, without affecting the *mobility* of goods and people, and regarding from this angle, the only viable and realistic alternative is *the railway*. The lobby for railway's development and construction could come from different groups.

The *nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)* which are focalized on environment's preservation and protection, on water and air cleanness, which in the last decades are strongly felt on global arena, due to the using of modern means of communication (as the Internet), which facilitates their "voice" to be spread anywhere in the world. The connections among NGOs could give birth to the premises of o collective action, regarding the acceptance of railway by the spirit of public opinion.

The *greens*, which achieved visibility in some European states due to their effervescent actions, and due to the necessity for providing a sustainable development, in a clean medium.

Epistemic communities. For the science and knowledge to create a impact upon states' actions (and in order to push those states to take some specific actions), they have to enjoy a great acceptance among political leaders in key-positions,[74] there have to be a common understanding regarding the nature of problem which would be solved through the cooperation facilitated by the governing rules, and the adequate means for that aim's attaining.[75] The epistemic communities – those "networks of experienced and recognized professionals in a specific area, which enjoy a great authority *vis-à-vis* the relevant knowledge in political arena, in a specific field"[76] – have a crucial importance, constituting themselves in thoroughly canals through which *new ideas* flow from society to the government, and from one country to another.[77] It is noteworthy to mention that the science and knowledge provided by epistemic community have a great *impact* upon international cooperation, if at the political level, there would be perceived a high degree of incertitude, if in the epistemic community there could be identified consensus regarding the debated problem, and if there is identified a (high) degree of institutionalization of counsels given by scientists. The climate changing poses a real challenge for political leadership, regarding the

[73] Mark W. Zacher and Brent A. Sutton, *Governing Global Networks. International Regimes for Transportation and Communications*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 38

[74] Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables", in Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 19

[75] Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 149

[76] Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination", in Peter M. Haas (ed.), "Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination", Special Issue on *International Organization* 46, no. 1, 1992, p. 3

[77] Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *op. cit*., p. 149

causes which generate this phenomenon, and regarding the right measures which should be taken. The institutionalization of epistemic community's actions – which can easy spread and share knowledge at the global level, due to modern means of communication – could play a crucial role in *political innovation*, because the epistemic community can shape in this way the framework and the form of the subjects which would be debated in collective multilateral talks. The Nobel Prize's conferring in 2007 to a renowned member of epistemic community could be regarded as a good example for those mentioned above.

Having in consideration these elements, the realization by the scientists of the *importance of railway revitalizing* and of the development of railway transportations (especially TGV), and the focalization of their attention upon this aim, could constitute a vital premise for this objective's attaining. The pressure which could generate a united voice of the epistemic community from all UE member states upon a political leadership, looking hopeless for viable solutions with impact in economic, social, and political fields, regarding the adoption of specific measures for the railway transport's development, could have the so much desired effect: the reduction of oil dependency, of pollution, of congestion and road accidents, providing in the same time a high degree of mobility for people at European level, on "steel roads", which could ensure the healthy development for the *European political body*.

International public opinion which could be mobilized for the limiting of the risks which the pollution's rising has upon human beings, animals' and plants' health, upon climate changing, with all negative elements which these triggers with it: the rising number of (infectious) diseases, the appearance of extreme meteorological phenomenon (torrential rains, strong storms and winds, hard frosts, prolonged droughts), the disappearance of some kind of plants and animals, disappearance of drinking water in some parts of the globe, the reduction of agricultural production, with famine which it would trigger with it, the rising sea water's level (due to ice melting on the seas which before were frozen), and other events which couldn't be foreseen and controlled.

The shortage of food and water, and the rising of the sea water level immediately would trigger with them *social phenomenon* as *massive emigrations*, which would create social, economic, and political destabilization in great parts of the Planet. In that moment, the massive migration pressed by the great desire of *survival* could constitute the reason for the war, initiated by despaired people, with all negative consequences trigger by this. If we add to famine, the drought, diseases, and the war, we could ask the following question: *Could we live anymore on this ravaged Planet?* The answer is an alarming one and worrisome, too.

The redirection of automobile makers' and road infrastructure builders' interests from road interests to railways and railway transportation, respectively to co-opt these business men to support the construction of railways for high speed trains is an crucial element in order to reduce the pressure which they could pose for the continuity of road transport development, and for the facilitation of railway transportation development, generally speaking, and TGV, especially. The levers as preferential *credit* loans for railways infrastructure builders and as taxes imposed upon the users of a *specific* type of infrastructure, could promote the development of railway transport and, in the same time, to the reduction of road transport.

During history, the desire of people was the "building" of some elements which could provide them the means for the creation of a sole human family (in the geographical space which was known in different historical periods), constructing for this purpose great projects in the civilization's field, and the means employed for this purpose are different from one historical period to the other, nowadays the *communications* can make this dream become a reality.

The first try regarding the demonstration of collective human force is linked to Shinear Land, where took place, as the old writings mentioned, the appearance of different languages spoken by different *people* – cultures' and identities' sources. There were employed different instruments from the political and religious arsenal in order to construct a *universal state*, which brought together people which spoke different languages and had the same religious beliefs, but all these tried measures fallen the test of time. Now, there appears the possibility to make this dream to become a reality: the technical means, working for the welfare of the humankind, providing this frail being to survive in a peaceful world, in a world in which people could perceive themselves as beings which travel *together* on the Earth, brothers which could now see themselves that they are true brothers.[78]

If the projects in transportation field posses these general characteristics, to these we can add in the case of railway transportation projects some peculiar characteristics, which confers this type of transport something specific elements, something unique. A person who can find in a given geographical area electrical cables and

[78] Archibald McLeish, citat în Mark W. Zacher, "The Decaying Pillars of the Westphalian Temple: Implications for International Order and Governance", in James N. Rosenau & Ernst-Otto Czempiel (eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 101

railways, can say that the society in that area is a civilized one. The appearance of these "lines" in the nineteenth century marked the entrance of humankind in the modernity era. In that moment states could enjoy their available resources – transportations providing the movement of wealth, and the transformation of this wealth in some different products. *In that moment, the humankind could prove itself that its destiny wasn't established once and for all*.

The development of railway transportation – and taking account of the fact that technical innovations support the construction of infrastructures which could provide the high speed trains' displacement – as an alternative to road and airway modes of transport, is given by the necessity to provide the moving of people and goods, in situation in which a limit imposed upon transportation would pose real threats upon economic, social and political actions. As we can see, there appears the necessity to create a viable alternative for road and air modes of transport. These two types of transport are the two which have been registering the most spectacular rising during last three decades, although they pollute very much the environment. The alarming events registered last years (for example hurricanes and droughts) indicate in a tough manner the necessity to do something regarding the development of railway transportation.

But the great merit of railways resides in the fact that, once they are built, they provide a *permanent link* among different geographical points crossed by that railway. Although the vessels, the aviation and the roads could provide the connections among those geographical points, the railways posses a greater impact, in comparison with those means of transport. Even the negotiations carried on for the fulfilling of railways' projects which would cross different states' territories have a great degree of complexity; for example, there must be discussed the gauge, the electrical tension which would be used by locomotive's electrical engine, the type of the system of railway telecommunication, the technical characteristics of the lines which provide the train's carriage with a specific length, mass, and speed, and other things, which rise the complexity of these negotiations. If the vessels and airplanes could relatively easy change their routes and the geographical points to which they provide connection, furnishing to a state the possibility to change rapidly its connections, and for the people (and society if that state) to re-orientate easy on the global arena, providing *mobility for the foreign policy of that state*, and if the road infrastructure, once it was built provide some stability in that state's foreign policy, ***the railways***, once they are built, connect much strongly the states which territories are crossed by that railway. The force of the link is given by the "steel" force, and the railways' capacity of transport is superior to the capacity of roads. Once these railways are constructed, they push the building states to a *common orientation* in the future, and even there could take place a change in the governments of those states – due to elections – the next government couldn't ignore the preexistent link. Airplanes and vessels could be easy reoriented from the airports and ports situated in a state with which the flag state hasn't the best relations, but the railways, once they are constructed, cannot be "removed", limiting in this way the "freedom of movement" of a government.

The high speed railways provide a great mobility for people, in *safety conditions*, and without the necessity of traveling from the airport to the urban center served by that airport. But as the traveling intensify, people could know and better understand the people from other cultures, and at social level there could birth convergent expectations, which, in the long run could give birth to social institutions which would work independently. It would be hard for a government elected in a democratic manner to look for dramatic changes in the foreign policy, when at social level – due to connections created because the existence of transportations facilities – the trend of public opinion oppose to this orientation. A political action which would be deviated from the used trend cannot succeed, because the customs, and human minds don't change so rapidly as the changing which we could identify at political and ideological level.[79]

A hostile position regarding a government, together with which a specific country constructed a railway could be very hard be sustained by that country's government, because that action will not be regarded as legitimate by that country's public. And if this kind of "railway" would connect the different states' territories, their (political) *integration* and the establishment of some convergent (and common) actions would be very much facilitated.

References:

1. Andric, Ivo, *The Bridge on the Drina*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1977
2. Caraiani, Gheorghe, şi Serescu, Mihai, *Transporturile maritime*, Bucureşti, Editura Lumina Lex, 1998;

[79] Ivo Andric, *The Bridge on the Drina*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p. 7

3. Ebel, Robert and Menon, Rajan (eds.), *Energy and Conflict in Central Asian and the Caucasus*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000;
4. Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda. The Formation on Men's Attitudes*, New York, Vintage Books, Edition, 1973;
5. Fukuyama, Francis, *Încredere. Virtuțile sociale şi crearea prosperității*, Filipeştii de Târg, Editura Antet, 2002;
6. Haas, Peter M., "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination", in Haas, Peter M., (ed.), "Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination", Special Issue on *International Organization* 46;
7. Hasenclever, Andreas, Mayer, Peter and Rittberger, Volker, *Theories of International Regimes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001;
8. Karl, Terry Linn "Crude Calculations: OPEC Lessons for the Caspian Region", in Ebel, Robert and Menon, Rajan (eds.), *Energy and Conflict in Central Asian and the Caucasus*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000;
9. Kleveman, Lutz, *The New Great Game. Blood and Oil in Central Asia*, New York, Grove Press, 2003;
10. Kornhauser, William, *The Politics of Mass Society*, London, Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1960;
11. Krasner, Stephen D., "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables", in Krasner, Stephen D., (ed.), *International Regimes*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1983;
12. Krasner, Stephen D. (ed.), *International Regimes*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1983;
13. Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, New York, Free Press Paperbacks, 1997;
14. McLeish, Archibald, citat în Zacher, Mark W., "The Decaying Pillars of the Westphalian Temple: Implications for International Order and Governance", in Rosenau, James N. & Czempiel, Ernst-Otto, (eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992;
15. Rosenau, James N. & Czempiel, Ernst-Otto, (eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992;
16. Shankleman, Jill, *Oil, Profits, and Peace. Does Business Have a Role in Peacemaking?* Washington DC., USIP Press, 2006;
17. Zacher, Mark W. and Sutton, Brent A., Governing Global Networks. International Regimes for Transportation and Communications, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.