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**The Security Environment in
Central and Eastern Europe: Current Status, Future Prospects**

Georgeta Chirleşan¹

Abstract: The paper aims at presenting the main features of the current security environment within Central and Eastern Europe. It tries to build up on previous approaches regarding the Euro-Atlantic security with a focus on specific security environment in Central and Eastern Europe. It operates with concepts of the European Security Strategy and with the NATO Alliance security principles, which not entirely overlap. The present research is based on deductive and inductive analysis, comparative and case study. The research findings have revealed that European and Euro-Atlantic security are inter-laced. Collective security arrangements are necessary and able to ensure peace and stability in Europe. Still, security is a controversial concept in terms of perception at the level of political elites and public opinion. This paper presents a joint interest to academics and researchers working in this sensitive field of security, providing them the possibility to gain a better knowledge and understanding on the security environment within Central and Eastern Europe. The value of this paper resides on the original approach and on the research methods that have been used in order to deeply analyse the security environment from an inside perspective of an Eastern country.

Keywords: threats; evolutions; Euro-Atlantic; securitization

1. Introduction

Europe is today the scene of major transformations, because of EU enlargement process. Far from being an easy process, the achievement of European unity project became vigorous, especially after the European Union has imposed its statute as a political-economic organization, the most important developments occurring in these areas. However, only political and economic cooperation cannot ensure a robust community of states.

Fundamental rights, parliamentary democracy are also foundations of today's European identity, which tends toward a "community of values" generally accepted, in close liaison with national and regional identities. The idea of a united Europe can be viable only through cooperation. To avoid fragmentation, chaos and conflict of any kind (social, economic, political, ethnic, religious, military) and to achieve sustainable cohesion through cooperation and solidarity, a political, economic, legal, security and defence identity has taken shape.

Compared to previous periods of European history, Europe will cross in proximal future through a period of peace and high stability. The cooperation history of European states with USA and NATO in the field of European security had positive effects in consolidating peace and stability within Europe. Today European and Euro-Atlantic security follow the same principles, applicable in the international environment, aiming for collective defence and the principle of indivisibility of allied security.

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, University of Piteşti, Romania, Address: Târgu din Vale, no. 1, Piteşti-11040, Romania, tel./fax +40248222260, Corresponding author: georgeta.chirlesan@upit.ro.

2. Related Work

To analyse the security environment and to identify its future trends and to forecast potential evolutions, overview of the representative policies and strategies on security as well as on activity of the major security organisations was achieved.

Europe adopted the European Security Strategy in 2003 which supports the thesis that appropriate responses must be provided to the challenges, risks and threats to its security, and expressing its intention to support a strategy on several fronts. The European Security Strategy identifies five threats: 1) terrorism; 2) proliferation of mass destruction weapons; 3) regional conflicts; 4) failed states; 5) organized crime¹.

The analysis of the extremist terrorist phenomenon at international scale reveals ever more, an increasing trend towards terrorism, including the use of violence as a means of promoting and imposing political goals and interests. Intention to understand this phenomenon as a hidden, undeclared war must be implemented through a scientific approach to it, through the conceptualization of terrorist phenomenon, by deciphering its meanings correlated with identity, historical, geographical, psychological landmarks, which define terrorist organizations and criminal operations undertaken. (Andreescu & Radu, 2008, p. 219)

Some vulnerabilities and threats can affect the entire international system, other envisage only the zone and regional levels, but there are some unresolved issues such as the risks that may become threats.

The European concept of security is specified in the "Joint Declaration on European Defence Integration 2004"² that highlights the role of cooperation and consensus in the responsibilities of NATO and EU structures and common plans of capacity-building needed to implement the NATO Response Force and groups EU joint-armed-forces combat groups.

In the new European architecture, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) plays an increasingly important role, aiming to achieve the following objectives³:

- prevention of conflicts and crises management;
- arms control and disarmament;
- increase of trust and security;
- cooperation at economic, cultural, humanitarian and ecological level;
- conceptualization of a new security model in its area of responsibility.

3. Problem Statement

Because today the military intervention of nation-states is not anymore sufficient or necessary for maintaining peace and stability, it was considered that it takes a network of regional collective security arrangements. UN, NATO, EU and OSCE are partisan institutions of such type of security.

Collective security is based on the premise that threats can arise from inside, not necessarily from the outside, and avoiding the risk is at least as critical as responding to the threats through own capabilities. Views of the majority are focused on the idea that investing in non-state collective mechanisms to restore and maintain security will create strong partners for states and alliances in this period of searches of the post-hegemonic security. Although historically and geographically Europe was the crucible in which both World Wars were "dough" and the place where they sprung out and the area where numerous armed conflicts have developed, Europe can become a model of extended, functional and sustainable stability and security. (Duță, Purcărea & Cordoneanu, 2008) The current Euro-Atlantic security architecture reflects the essential features of the geopolitical environment in

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

² *Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership, Joint Declaration on European Defense Integration*, August, 19, 2004.

³ According to *Helsinki Final Act*, 1975.

which it takes place, namely: the transition to the multi-polar international system; the competition between the Euro-Atlantic powers for the redistribution of roles; deepening EU integration; Russian attempts to maintain high status power in the world arena and to occupy key positions in European security structures. Security is based on both political stability and military stability, they being complementary conditions. A mobile system of European security can be built only if the two components are consolidated. Analysis of risks and threats to security has led to a new perception of security status and a new focus in the field of defence. Both Romania and other European countries have understood that in the current conditions of the international environment given by the complexity and fluidity of political-strategic environment they can ensure their security by integrating own efforts within the actions performed by the European and Euro-Atlantic security organisations.

4. Analysis of Results

Since the beginning of 21st century, security and states' concerns on ensuring security hold a central place in determining the world evolution and in setting the new world order. The current security environment was reinforced by the political decisions of the NATO summit in Prague (2002) and the EU summit in Copenhagen (2002), decisions which aimed at the re-evaluating of the security environment and at adapting to new threats of the current world situation.

The NATO Summit in Bucharest (April 2008) was a major contribution to the development and strengthening of the security environment, through the results obtained. Alliance decided to expand further and invited Albania and Croatia to begin accession talks. The subject of Afghanistan was also discussed at length, and twelve partners were convinced by the USA to further support the fight against terrorism. The summit contribution to strengthening the security environment was also increased by the organisation of the NATO-Russia Council summit meeting, which took place in a climate of tense relations between the West and Moscow, with a sensitive context in the Balkans, where Kosovo had declared its independence, on which there was no unanimous support among NATO members, and Russia, that had suspended its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, wants to be the main advocate of the cause of Serbia¹. The Missile Treaty remains at least in the short or even medium term, the lynchpin of the US/NATO-Russia relationship. If for successive administrations, Bush Jr. and Obama, the purpose of the shield was the protection of the allies against Iran and the Pyongyang regime, for Russia it is only a new episode in Washington's endless Drang nach Osten².

¹ Signed in Paris on November 19, 1990, Arms Reduction Treaty in Europe has as signatories the NATO states and the Warsaw Pact states. Subsequently, the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was amended in 1999 to take account of new post-Soviet realities. According to the second version, the Treaty called for Russia to withdraw its troops and armaments from Moldavia and Georgia. Russia signed the Treaty but has not fulfilled its promises. In response, the European countries will not ratify it. The expansion of NATO and the EU in 2004-2007, through the revived Russian nationalism, Putin administration has decided to withdraw his country from the CFE. Kremlin spokesman Dimitri Peskov and Pravda newspaper have motivated Western hypocrisy, trying to catch Russia within the strings of an instrument that would hinder its security. US, NATO 'disappointed' at Russian pullout of arms treaty, War and Peace, 15.07.07, <http://www.warandpeace.ru/en/news/view/13228/>; *CFE Treaty – Time to end the hypocrisy*, Pravda, 15.07.2007, <http://english.pravda.ru/opinion/columnists/15-07-2007/94943-cfetreaty-0/>, *Kremlin tears up arms pact with NATO* Luke Harding, *Russia's relations with West hit a new low point*, The Guardian, 15 July 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jul/15/russia.nato>; Slobodan Lekic, *Suspension of CFE Treaty is a 'step in the wrong direction,' NATO says*, The Independent, 16 July 2007; <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/suspension-of-cfe-treaty-is-a-step-in-the-wrong-direction-nato-says-457413.html> (accessed on 3 February 2011)

² Sieff M. (UPI Senior News Analyst), *Why Russia Fears Ballistic Missile Defense*, Spacewar, Feb 15, 2007, http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Why_Russia_Fears_Ballistic_Missile_Defense_999.html; Luttwak E., *Georgia conflict: Moscow has blown away soft power*, The Telegraph, Aug 16, 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/georgia/2571274/Georgia-conflict-Moscow-has-blown-away-soft-power.html>; *Missile threat shifts to Black Sea*, The Diplomat, Bucharest, November 2009 <http://www.thediplomat.ro/articol.php?id=554>; Rozoff R., *US, NATO Intensify War Games Around Russia's Perimeter*, Geopolitical Monitor, Mar 07, 2010, <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/us-nato-intensify-war-games-around-russias-perimeter-1> (accessed on 3 February 2011)

Among the outstanding results of the summit, which will significantly influence the security environment, it is worth mentioning here the U.S. agreement with its partners in NATO on a plan to build a missile defence shield in Eastern Europe, which combines U.S. and NATO elements, in order to assure the protection of the whole of Europe, energy security and protection against cyber attacks. The European security environment reflects the complexity of factors, conditions and existing relationships at some point at political, military, economic, social, environmental, cultural level; however it does not appear as a whole, but highlights some particularities depending on region and geographical area, it bears some influence from regional and zone security environments, sometimes even from local environments. Some of these influences are positive, while others have a negative impact on the current security environment in Central and Eastern Europe. In the first category is the Euro-Atlantic security environment created by European members of NATO with the USA and Canada, as well as the regional environment in Western Europe, determined by the nature and quality of relationships and institutions among EU states. In the second category fall the developments in the region of South East Europe, in particular the Western Balkans, but also in Eastern Europe and even Central Europe. After acceptance into NATO of Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Baltic States, there have been fundamental changes in terms of security in this European area. Trouble spots still remain in Macedonia and especially in Serbia, following the dispute over the status of Kosovo region.

Realities of the current European security environment suggestively highlight the interdependencies and correlations between developments within internal and international environment. The future is likely to be marked by the same strong interdependencies, forecasting future trends in the evolution of the global security environment having a major stake in ensuring a climate of peace and security worldwide. Political analysts and experts working in international relations studies estimate major changes of security environment for the next 15 to 20 years, changes that will lead to a reconfiguration that will depend on the type, number and level of participation of key stakeholders and international actors who will play a role in it. In a context regarding the future security environment (2015-2020 and beyond), the analysis of the phenomenon of de-securitization vs. re-securitization of Romania brings new items of interest. This is what we tried to do within the following lines.

4.1. The Army and Defence Industry

Securitization, reflective voice action, maintains a state of affairs just by using those means created to respond to threats¹. De-polarization of Central and Eastern Europe did not necessarily mean normalized relations between liberal and post-communist states. Trained to be obedient to Moscow in a *cordon sanitaire* against NATO, they had to play the opposite role after 1991. "Metabolizing" them by the West was a process with anxieties, which maybe today is continuing. There were two stages that transformed the former communist states, in terms of security: first, the removal of the old structures and mentalities inherited from communism and second, their conjugation with Western standards. On a larger scale one may talk about a post-modernization – from the national state, sovereign, Westphalian defended by large armies, to a post-Westphalian state with new, technical, professional armies, adapted to Revolution in Military Affairs - RMA. In the case of Romania, the adaptation process involved reducing military forces and industrial complex on which they relied, also due to lack of funds.

Romanian army before 1989, with a staff of about 300-350,000 - 400,000 soldiers experienced successive waves of reduction to the current number of about 90,000 personnel (out of which 75,000

¹ Even if initially the function creates the organ, then organ is the one that maintains the function or it seeks for new functions. The danger of using security as a justification for military, police or coercive actions is approached in many studies on security. See in this respect also (Odiorne, *Armata ca birocratie - Capcana hiperactivitatii/The Army as bureaucracy – Trap of hyperactivity*, pp. 122-135 in (Sava, Tibil &, Zulean, 1998). In the case of communist states, the myth of besieged city, hermetic, reluctant nationalism made it difficult to accommodate public opinions of ex-communist states with Western requirements.

combat personnel and 15,000 civilian personnel affiliated to the Army)¹. In 1998, during the Constantinescu administration, similar with other layoffs, from military forces (especially land forces) 11,000 personnel have left, out of which 94% voluntarily. (Sava, Tibil & Zulean, 1998, pp. 44) Along with thinning of the military body a reduction of capacities was also made - from 2850 to 1375 tanks; armoured vehicles from 3102 to 2100; artillery pieces from 3789 to 1475; the Air Force from 505 to 430 aircraft and helicopters². Above and beyond the numbers, the professionalization of the troops also required an effective process of [re]learning, of internalizing democratic norms, of accepting parliamentary control and understanding NATO action patterns.

Arms industry also went through a similar process of thinning. In 1989 in the arms industry worked 200,000 persons. In 2009 - twenty years later - this number fell to one third: 60,000 people³. Gabriel Năstase and Mihai Micador say that at least for the period 1990-2004, three are Romanian defence industry characteristics:

- 1) insufficient number of demands;
- 2) obsolete equipment;
- 3) disintegration of research structures⁴ (in 2007 it was considered that 85% of military equipment is old, dating from the '70s).

In 2001 in the defence industry operated 42 economic agents. CN ROMARM S.A. Bucharest was the main operator in the structure of which there were 6 branches with legal status and 16 branches without legal status. In 2004, the number of defence firms was 38 including 23 state-owned, 7 under the authority of Ministry of Economy and Commerce and 15 companies with private capital.

4.2. Perception of Security: Elites and Society

If we confuse security with structures designed to defend it, in a modern state the legitimacy of any action is given by the public opinion. The elites come from it and the public opinion is again the one that needs to be taken into account, one way or another (whether the state is plural or absolutist). As we mentioned above the theme of besieged fortress specific to Ceausescu propaganda from the '80s, is interesting to see how elites and society in Romania have changed the perception of international dynamics. We will begin with society as a whole to continue with the elites.

Thus, a study produced by Paul Lazarsfeld Society in Vienna in 1992 and 1996 discovered the Romanians' obsession regarding the external threats. In 1992 Romanian audience feared: Russian

¹ In 2001/2002 it was considered that the Romanian military personnel were of 103,000 people out of which: 59,000 infantry; navy 10,200; 18,000 aircraft. Infantry had a reserve of 400,000 persons and marine and aviation 30-40000 people each. *Armies of the world. Romania*, <http://topgun.rin.ru/cgi-bin/texts.pl?category=state&mode=show&unit=6075&lng=eng,2002>, accessed on 2 January 2010. For 2006 other sources give: infantry 97,200 people of which: land troops 66,000; marine 7,200 and aviation 14,000. Romania: *National Security*, Mongbay.com, 2006, http://www.mongabay.com/reference/new_profiles/414.html, (accessed on 2 January 2010) See also (Lieutenant-Colonel Laurențiu-Cristian Dumitru, *An overview of the Romanian armed forces reform (199-2008)*, pp. 10-18 in *Monitor Strategic, Revistă de Studii de securitate și apărare/Strategic Monitor, Review for Security and Defense Studies*, Year IX, No. 3-4/2008, p. 10-11.

² *Ibidem*, p. 39. In 2005 some sources consider that the Romanian land troops possessed tanks 1258; 4 vehicles for recognition; 177 armored vehicles; 1583 armored personnel carriers; 1,238 artillery pieces; 663 anti-aircraft guns; 849 anti-tank weapons.

³ *România își distruge industria de armament/Romania destroys its armament industry*, *Gândul/The Thought*, 23 October 2007, <http://www.gandul.info/armata/romania-isi-distruge-industria-armament-965032>, (accessed on 25 January 2011).

Other sources give 16,544 workers in defense industry in 2004, meaning 17% from the number in 1990. (Năstase & Micador 2006, p. 215) This means either that the sources collide or, that between 2006 and present we talk of a recovery in the defense industry, even if it is only about the number of workers.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 216-217. See also Stroescu C., *Fără armament nou, România nu poate îndeplini misiunile NATO*, 25 March 2009, http://www.financiarul.com/articol_23970/fara-armament-nou-romania-nu-poate-indeplini-misiunile-nato-.html, (accessed on 25 January 2011)

danger (60% of the population), war with a neighbouring country (67%), the threat of national minorities perceived as disloyal (60%). In 1996 public relaxation was visible, the only threat remained constant, unchanged at the level of perception was that the Russian threat (55%). (Zulean, pp. 27-55 in (Ghica, 2007, p. 40)

Even more interesting are the results of a study published in October 2005. Entitled *Public Perceptions on Foreign Affairs in Romania*, the study is based on multiple questionnaires, simultaneously addressed to public opinion and to a number of 33 key figures in Romanian politics (18 leading politicians) including: President and his closest advisers, Prime Minister and the body of its experts, Minister of National Defence, Minister of European Integration with chiefs of intelligence services. Sample selected for public opinion polling was of 1050 people over 18 years of age, selected from 18 areas of Romania. The study took place from August 29 to September 9, 2005. (Voinescu & Dobre, October 2005) Results showed both complementarities and differences between the Romanian elites and public opinion. Both elites and public opinion are Euro-Atlanticists and believe that the United States and Europe must work together without competing. Both samples have a good opinion of the European Union (60% -70%). However 51% of Romanian believe that the politics from 1990 to 2005 was poor and only 35% believe it was better - a contradiction, if we think that in the early 90s and especially after meeting in Snagov (August 1995) the road of Romania was assumed towards the West.

Another contrast is in terms of national security threats. 67% of Romanian do not think there is any real danger to national security, while 21% believe that there are serious threats - of these 21%, 80% indicated terrorism as the main threat. In turn, elites are more pessimistic than the Romanians in the street and indicate terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as the main threats. We see contrast at the level of citizens regarding Romania's participation in international military missions. If elites are pro-intervention in an overwhelming majority, only 49% of the Romanians believe it and 42% oppose. Of the 49% respondents, 81% believe that Romanian troops would be sent to feed the victims of war, 69% to prevent a civil war and 60% to defend a NATO state that is attacked (p. 25). To the adjacent question: "Do you agree with the Romanian military presence in Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan?" just little over 40% declared the agreement (p. 26)

An interesting answer is provided by Romanians to the questions: "Do you think the presence of U.S. military bases on Romanian territory has any impact?" and "What do you think is it?" (question with multiple choice options and multiple answers). More than half of Romanian believes that the presence of U.S. military bases has a clear impact on Romania (p.11 and 23), and it is seen by: increasing threat from foreign attack (61%), increasing U.S. investments in Romania (59%), increasing Romania's security; U.S. enemies will become enemies of Romania (35%)! (p.24)

Another question, coupled with the two above mentioned, refers to the responsibility / cause of instability in the world. The contrast between elites and citizens is even greater. In case of elites, 1 of 18 respondents have indicated U.S., most saying that no country is guiltier than the other (so, a systemic approach on the International Relations and not a reductionist one). Instead, 43% of the public indicated the United States as the main destabilizing factor to the world peace, the second Arab states (28%), Israel (6%) and Russia (1%) (p. 43). The picture of the last three questions is contradictory at the level of public opinion. We see that the Romanians (overall, elites and citizens) believe in NATO and in a U.S.-EU cooperation within NATO. However, there are few that understand the obligations deriving from membership in the Atlantic Alliance. We see that fear of a number of Romanian is linked to terrorism (which would seem to indicate that Romanians support U.S. policy in the Bush II years) but also they fear the United States as the main destabilizing factor. Even more amazing seems the answer if we connect it with two questions about the effects of American military presence on national soil. Most respondents are worried about potential attacks and un-friendship derived from the alliance with Washington, but they also believe that this alliance can bring foreign investments.

Thus we see a Euro-Atlantic public opinion, legalistic, pacifist that is willing to accompany its elites on the road towards the West but more from economic considerations (the desire to live better, more

decent) than strategic-military! One can speak here of a *free-riders* mentality: for the statistical average Romanian it seems that the relationship with NATO and USA means maximizing certain economic gains. One can see here a moral incoherence combined with a Wilsonian feeling - *Yes, America destabilizes the international system / A "wiser" America joined to a EU which to be military stronger is desirable, but at the same time, if there is no other way, Romania should be with global hegemonic and not oppose to it* (bandwagoning vs. balancing).

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