



## **BSC 2017 Policy Report**

- Regional cooperation in Eastern and Central Europe and NATO's resilience: the role of B9 Format -

The idea of an annual Conference in Bucharest, addressing the issues of security and defence of NATO's Eastern flank, stemmed from our strong belief that this agenda deserves particular attention and that an effort to discuss our priorities is consequently necessary. As my friend Ioan Mircea Paşcu, the vice-president of the European Parliament, is saying, we, in Eastern Europe, have realized that simply being members of NATO is no longer sufficient to deter a revisionist Russia. It became clear that political membership should be beefed up with strong measures of "strategic reassurance".

This belief represented the starting point for the agenda of the first *Bucharest Security Conference*, in November 2016, and remains important for the way we define our intentions now, for the *Bucharest Security Conference 2017*.

This Policy Report is based on the conclusions of the *Bucharest Security Conference 2016* and on some new studies and analysis of the authors addressing the issues of security and defense of NATO's Eastern flank – focusing on the B9 member states.

The Report underlined once more the necessity to rethink our priorities in relation to the security and defense agenda of the Eastern flank, as the existing security threats affect NATO and EU Member States differently. One of the goals is to identify answers to questions such as how do forward enhanced deployments correlate with national military capabilities and what results could we see on the ground with respect to counteracting an attack until the Alliance's reaction is triggered? Another objective refers to the possibility to start a comparative study able to identify, formulate and operationalize the security risks and threats in the B9 space.

The Report is elaborated using official documents of NATO and the EU, statements of high officials and other relevant policy reports.

Prof. dr. Vasile Secăreş

Founder, Former Rector, SNSPA

## Contents

Part I: The New Security Environment of the Euro-Atlantic Border.....	4
Part II: A New Paradigm for Defending NATO’s Eastern Flank. Making ‘the Bucharest Format’ work.....	19
Military threats and solutions in the B9 Format.....	19
Too much or too little focus on military deterrence? .....	22
Political challenges ahead .....	23
Hybrid threats and steps to counter them at the NATO and EU decision-making level.....	24
Cooperation in intelligence. Developing trust and the necessary solutions among allies.....	26
The challenges of ‘Post-truth’ media reporting.....	28
Cyber security .....	30
Sources of cyber threats and vulnerabilities.....	30
Allied and European contributions to cybersecurity .....	31

## **Part I: The New Security Environment of the Euro-Atlantic Border**

The idea of an annual conference addressing the issues of security and defence of NATO's Eastern flank from the perspective of regional cooperation in the B9 format stemmed from a number of preliminary questions, that constituted the starting point of the agenda of the first *Bucharest Security Conference* in November 2016 and remain highly relevant for the upcoming *Bucharest Security Conference 2017*.

*First of all*, we consider that security issues in Central and Eastern Europe deserve particular attention and that an effort to rethink the priorities of the security and defence agenda of the Eastern flank is consequently necessary. Suddenly, we – in Eastern Europe – sadly, too “familiar “with Russia's behavior, have realized that simply being members of NATO is no longer sufficient to deter a revisionist Russia, determined to win back what she lost at the end of the Cold War. It became very clear that political membership should be beefed up with strong measures of “strategic reassurance”. Even more: with some important steps in order to create a real NATO military presence on the Euro-Atlantic frontier. While reaffirming the core NATO principle of the indivisibility of the security of the Alliance, one cannot overlook a tendency towards the “regionalization” of the European and Euro-Atlantic security space. This concerns not only different perceptions of the current security agenda, but also different security situations, respectively the emergence of "different" security issues on the ground. A *Report* by the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament in 2016 on the implementation of the CSDP<sup>1</sup> stressed that the existing security threats affect EU Member States *differently*. Thus, we need an analysis of this existing or possible “regional” developments in the Euro-Atlantic area, including such differences in Central and Eastern Europe.

*Secondly*, the NATO Warsaw Summit continued the significant change of attitude brought by the Wales Summit after the illegal annexation of Crimea and created a "new focus" of the Alliance's commitment to the Eastern flank. As NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg highlighted, the Alliance

---

<sup>1</sup> Paşcu, Ioan Mircea. *Report: on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy)*, European Parliament official website, 3 November 2016. Accessed on 09/21/2017. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2016-0317&language=EN>

members agreed on „the biggest reinforcement of our collective defence since the end of the Cold War”<sup>2</sup>. He was referring to the forward enhanced deployments decided by NATO: the two multinational brigades – one in the Baltic countries and Poland, and one in Romania. Were these changes enough? How did they strengthen the Alliance's ability to counteract Russia's apparent intentions of a "return" to Central and Eastern Europe or to legitimate a "droit de regard" in the former Soviet space? Could it have been said last autumn, for example, that we have already understood everything that we need to understand about the security situation on the Eastern border of the Euro-Atlantic community and that the necessary rethinking of the defence and deterrence posture on the Eastern flank had taken place?

NATO's military superiority was never in doubt. Our Conference will nevertheless assess how this superiority manifests today in the Euro-Atlantic border region. At present time - and in the future - the Alliance's defensive posture includes those forward deployments "under construction" on the Eastern Flank and national military structures. There are several issues we propose for discussion. Was the current build-up of military power successful in deterring a military confrontation? How do these forward deployments operational correlate with national military capabilities and what results could we see on the ground with respect to counteracting an attack until the Alliance's reaction is triggered?

These questions were substantively approached during the November 2016 *Bucharest Security Conference*, confirming the relevance of a specific approach at the Euro-Atlantic border and the problematique is still in place for *Bucharest Security Conference 2017*.

*The third main topic* – equally valid at the last Conference and now – concerns what we meant by the "Eastern flank" of the North Atlantic Alliance or the Euro-Atlantic community. Because we are referring to the "B9 format", things should be clear, at least as far as the countries belonging to this space are those that participated in the Bucharest Summit in the autumn of 2015, and thus the "region" in connection with which "security and defense issues" would be addressed. At the same time, it is not difficult to notice that there is not yet a proper understanding of the "Eastern flank". When used, the term has a rather generic meaning, not a political and military conceptualization, or a comprehensive and coherent determination from north to south. We could say that at the moment, the meaning and the importance of the "Eastern flank" lay on a "practical" ground, deriving from the pressure that the political and military reality of this period exerts on the agenda of the Euro-Atlantic community: the impact of this "return of geopolitics" with which we have to deal with from the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

---

<sup>2</sup> Stoltenberg, Jens. Opening remarks by NATO Secretary General at the North Atlantic Council meeting at the level of NATO Defence Ministers. Accessed on 09/21/2017. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_132350.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_132350.htm?selectedLocale=en)

More exactly, in concrete terms, with “the growing Russian military strategic assertiveness and concrete actions on the Euro-Atlantic frontier”, which stemmed from Russia’s very clear perception of the expansion to the East and South-East and of NATO and EU policies, as “a strategic challenge”. Ever since the summer of 2008, Russia was signaling to the West that it had passed “a red line” operating in the former Soviet area. As such, for the time being, only “the geopolitical composition” is the one that assures the coherence of the “Eastern flank”, even though, “on the ground”, we can speak about particularities or about different characteristics in the North and in the South-East, or about the fact that we do not truly have links or communications on the North-South direction. Moreover, if the North was / is important in the area of classical threats / actions (see what the two world wars from the last century are telling to us from this point of view), the strategic movements are made in the East and South-East, where the things are fluid and offer Russia the maneuver space for reaffirming its great power claims. The importance of the Syrian dossier, in the context of the geopolitical resettlement of the Middle East, cannot be overlooked, and its linkage with the security situation on the “Eastern flank” has become evident.

The necessity to discuss the security and defence agenda on the Eastern flank of NATO in a more comprehensive perspective was underlined over a decade ago, in the context of the discussion about the “Enlarged Area of the Black Sea” and of the conclusions of the NATO Summit in Istanbul, in 2004<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, it did not help us much to understand the significance of the Russo-Georgian war from the summer of 2008 and the “weight” of the consequences caused by the lack of reaction from NATO and the EU in that moment. And this impact was seen sometime later, when we were confronted with the movements of a strategic nature and with the offensive actions of Russia in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

It should be added, in this context, that “the return of geopolitics” urges us again to see the things from a larger perspective. The security and defence agenda of the “Eastern flank” should take into account – as it was rightly underlined in the *Report* published at the beginning of this year by *New Strategy Center* – that the East (the Wider Black Sea Area) and South (the South East Europe) cannot be seen “as distinct entities”: they “have shown... an increasing degree of complementarity” in terms of security<sup>4</sup>. If we consider the security threats and the necessary answers in this region, the Wider Black Sea Area and the South East Europe represent „an interlinked strategic space with several similarities and complementary

---

<sup>3</sup> Istanbul Summit Communiqué, 28 June 2004, Accessed on 09/21/2017, Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm> . See also Secăreș, Vasile, *The new strategic and security landscape of Southeast Europe: the case for a wider black sea area*, Research Paper, NATO Defence College, Rome, No 15, February 2005. Accessed on 09/21/2017, Available at: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/14495/rp\\_15.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/14495/rp_15.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> New Strategy Center Policy Paper, February 2017, p 5, Accessed on 09/21/2017, Available at: <http://newstrategycenter.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-February-Strategic-challenges-in-South-East-Europe-and-the-Black-Sea-area-NSC-and-IRMO.pdf>

elements” and they are “communicating vessels”<sup>5</sup>. And in this context it is important to take into account once again, as Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Vice President of the European Parliament and former minister of defence of Romania, has shown, that when we discuss about the areas of great interest for NATO and EU, the Black Sea is the “joint” between North and South. A *Report* elaborated by Janusz Bugajski and Peter B. Doran in November 2016, under the aegis of CEPA, underlined the fact that the Black Sea region – “a critical frontline for Western society” – is “increasingly subject to turmoil and threat”. Or, an unstable Black Sea region “weakens the alliance and undermines the pursuit of Western interests”<sup>6</sup>. In a recent “Concept Paper” dedicated to the issues of security of the Black Sea region, Magnus Nordenman, director of the Transatlantic Security Initiative from *The Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security of the Atlantic Council* of the US, proposed to SNSPA a project on „Shoring Up Security in Europe: Where the East Meets the South”, able to develop „actionable and policy relevant recommendations on how to enhance security in the Greater Black Sea region within the framework of the EU, NATO and bilateral US engagements”. The strategic consequences of such an approach for NATO are evident. In fact, Russia “is sticking its fingers into our eyes” from this point of view. The EU inclusively is *compelled* to develop a *strategic approach* and a policy towards the Greater Black Sea Region... and not a “synergy”.

This perspective was strengthened in the context of the so called “Three Seas Initiative”, returned in force on the political agenda of the region – after the “timid” launching from 2015 – in the context of the visit of President Trump to Warsaw. Even though this new *Intermarium* – to use the old concept of the interwar period, brought back to light by George Friedman – does not include a security perspective, its consequences in this context are beyond any doubt. In fact, Friedman recently said that this initiative, backed by USA and whose “two foundations... are Poland and Romania, which have developed close military ties”, can give a real cohesion to the Eastern flank and „its purpose would be to contain any potential Russian move to the West”, „forming a line of demarcation between Russia and the rest of Europe”<sup>7</sup>. A last feature of this point of view would be that this security agenda of the “Eastern flank” is not only about what is happening *on* the Euro-Atlantic frontier or about the actions pertaining to the instruments of the “hybrid war” which targets the *member countries* of NATO from this region. It is about the necessity to consider what is happening *beyond* the Euro-Atlantic frontier, in the adjacent areas or in the so-called “neighborhoods” the EU is speaking about, on the Eastern flank (and South-Eastern) of NATO.

---

<sup>5</sup> Idem, pp 5-6

<sup>6</sup> Bugajski, Janusz, and Peter Doran. “Black Sea Imperatives.” *Black Sea Imperatives* / CEPA, 21 Nov. 2016, [cepa.org/reports/black-sea-imperatives](http://cepa.org/reports/black-sea-imperatives).

<sup>7</sup> Friedman, George. *From the Intermarium to the Three Seas*, Geopolitical Futures, 7 July 2017, Accessed on 09/21/2017, Available at: <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/intermarium-three-seas>

A fourth issue that we considered significant for the *Bucharest Security Conference* agenda refers to the *nature of the changes* that the security environment meets in this region. We shared, without doubt, the wide-spread assessment in the last several years regarding the deterioration and volatility of the security situation – for which the key words seem to be „instability, uncertainty and unpredictability” – and with the different character of the threats confronted by the North-Atlantic Alliance in its Eastern neighborhood and to the Southern border. The *Report* cited earlier of the European Parliament's *Committee of Foreign Affairs* regarding the application of the common SDP established that the “European security environment has deteriorated considerably, becoming more and more changing, more complex, more dangerous and less foreseeable”, and underlined that “the threats are both conventional and hybrid, generated by state and non-state actors, originating from the South and from the East, thus affecting the states in a different manner”<sup>8</sup>. Let us add what was saying recently Sorin Ducaru, Assistant Secretary General of NATO, regarding the “current security climate”, which “reunites emerging security risks... in combination with re-emergent risks”. This means an agenda that comprises the “classical” military threats, but also the cyber-attacks, the activities of disinformation and terrorism, in a “hybrid combination” that is extremely important for the NATO approach<sup>9</sup>.

We believe however that to say these things is not enough, even when adding here the forceful return of the military threat in the security landscape from the Euro-Atlantic area. Or if we emphasize – once more – the alert rhythm of these changes and of their continuous character. For us, this was a real problem around and after the first reunion of *Bucharest Security Conference* from November 2016. At least a part of the conclusions that we were considering in that moment were brought into discussion by the evolutions from the autumn of 2016 and then by what has followed.

What we consider that should be underlined in this context is the fact that these “disturbing evolutions” with which we have to deal in the security environment of the Central and Eastern Europe region - and larger in the European space – do not represent “accidents along the way”. They are not random. What is happening in this moment in the realm of security challenges has deeper roots. These changes refer to entering into a new phase of the international relations evolution. It is unequivocally clear that we have to deal with “another world”. The times that we have been used to in the last quarter of century, after the end of the Cold War, have been left behind. It is worth taking into account, in this

---

<sup>8</sup> Pașcu, Ioan Mircea. *Report: on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy)*, European Parliament official website, 3 November 2016. Accessed on 09/21/2017. Available at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2016-0317&language=EN>

<sup>9</sup> Ducaru, Sorin. Interview for Adevărul, 25 February 2017, Accessed on 09/21/2017. Available at:

[http://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/ambasadorul-sorin-ducaru-asistent-secretarului-general-nato-despre-noile-amenintari-securitate-pregatita-estealiantai-romaniao-1\\_58b1304c5ab6550cb8cb72eb/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/ambasadorul-sorin-ducaru-asistent-secretarului-general-nato-despre-noile-amenintari-securitate-pregatita-estealiantai-romaniao-1_58b1304c5ab6550cb8cb72eb/index.html)



context, what the *Munich Security Report* from 2017 considers to be “another world”: a „post-truth, post-West, post-Order” world, that seems to change the way in which the great security crises are taking place and also the conditions in which we confront them now. And for to put things even more clearly, the *Report* underlined that in this “other world” we are dealing with the fact that „some of the most fundamental pillars of the West and the liberal international order are weakening” and –even worse – „the willingness and ability of the Western democracies to shape international affairs and to defend the rule-based liberal order are declining”<sup>10</sup>.

We entered in a new period of “turbulence” – we can name it, reusing an older formula, “the age of turbulence 2.0” – and we see, day by day, that everything is shaking, is put under question. We assist to the events that represent “game changers”. If, after the Cold War, we could have spoken – of course, with some reserve – about a certain “international order”, now we frequently see the assessment that we are witnessing the collapse of any “world order”. It is indeed, happening, if we agree with R. Kagan, „unexpectedly, rapid and violently”. What we see is by no means “the end of history”. We are witnessing a new stage of restructuring, one able to produce massive resettlements at the world level<sup>11</sup>, to confrontations and clashes that we have not considered and for which we have not prepared. And many of these things do not happen “somewhere in the world”, but around us, within the Euro-Atlantic area and at its gates. And on the Euro-Atlantic frontier nothing seems to justify somewhat optimistic predictions. Mr. Sorin Ducaru was, without doubt, right to cite, in his intervention at *Bucharest Security Conference* from November 2016, the former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt, who said, with reference to such circumstances: “Fasten your seat belt!”.

Trying to draw the necessary conclusions at the level of the current security environment and of the security and defence issue in the Central and Eastern European region, we should say that, for a long time, we are in the front of a new phase – tough, marked by enormous threats and risks, of uncertainties that we could hardly imagine some time ago – of *strategic restructuring* meant to settle the new power hierarchies and the geopolitical map of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the realm of power distribution and of power politics the implications can be devastating in our region. It is not hard to see that the present strategic and security landscape on the Euro-Atlantic frontier is profoundly marked by the fact that our countries have already become a target of power competition, of power politics. As we have already said, the Euro-Atlantic community is confronted with a new agenda of security threats. Certainly, the national security of our countries transcends “purely military issues” and has to do with much more things that what we, until now,

---

<sup>10</sup> “Munich Security Report.” *Munich Security Conference*, 12 Sept. 2017, report2017.securityconference.de

<sup>11</sup> Kagan, Robert. “Backing Into World War III.” *Foreign Policy*, 7 Feb. 2017, foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/06/backing-into-world-war-iii-russia-china-trump-obama

understood through defence. But we have to consider what the *priorities* of the current security agenda look like. It is, *on one hand*, about the “provocation from the East”, which brings back into the forefront the military dimension of the security risks – but this means not only the war in Ukraine, but also – or maybe *especially* – the threats that target the member countries from the “Eastern flank” of NATO as a whole in the context of the “hybrid war” that became a reality on the Euro-Atlantic frontier; *on the other hand*, we should consider the new form of the Daesh attack – of the terrorist tide – in Europe, that acquired a polymorphism which cannot possibly not raise concerns.

It should be emphasized, that from the end of the ‘90s, we – as citizens of Eastern and Central European countries – lived with the strong belief that the transition had come to an end: the central element of the future world setting – institutionalized West, NATO and the EU – seemed to be in place, everything was already on the new geopolitical map. Even worse: both us, in Eastern Europe, and the West, primarily the US, have come to the conclusion that the political enlargement of NATO – coupled with the enlargement of the EU – would be *sufficient* to deter any potential aggressive move by Russia, herself confronted with huge internal problems... Today, we see that things are not at all like this: this *new stage* of the strategic restructuring surprisingly questions important coordinates of the situation in the “Center” – at the level of the Trans-Atlantic relation and within EU, especially after Brexit – and also on the Euro-Atlantic border. Especially in this region the recent changes in the strategic and security environment have generated a new perception: that our world is falling apart, that nothing is stable. It is not possible to underestimate the impact of Brexit: it seems to announce the end of the existing political arrangements in Europe. With the new Administration in Washington, we are facing a real ambiguity as far as the intentions of the US in Europe are concerned. A very simple question arises in this context: will the US continue to defend their allies against the attempts of the revisionist powers to separate them from the USA, extending their influence over them, or will take the easy line of negotiating directly with those powers, at the expense of their allies? During the CEPA Forum of 2016 it was said that we all need a reminder about the value of the transatlantic alliance and the role of the Americans on the continent<sup>12</sup>. Of course, this is extremely important. But we cannot pretend that things are the same and that we can continue to do business as usual after the exit of Great Britain from the Union, not to mention that the time spent on handling the Brexit (two years?) might have an impact on our capacity to deal with what we should; or after Germany and France announce a multi-speed Union – which raises high question marks especially for us, in Central and Eastern Europe. Are we going back to a political and security framework from old times and we are building a European asymmetric structure, of center-periphery type? and, in the end, after the president of the US, Donald Trump, “shook the foundations of NATO more than any of his

---

<sup>12</sup> “The View at 25.” The View at 25 | CEPA, [cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id\\_plik=2854](http://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id_plik=2854). Accessed Sept. 2016

predecessors”<sup>13</sup>. Are we going towards a different political order than the one we thought 25 years ago? The *Global Trends* Report claims that this new world could be one of “spheres of influence”<sup>14</sup>.

For the Euro-Atlantic political elite, it is not enough to talk about “certain changes” that lead to a “new security environment”. This “final stage” of transition tells us something more: after more than 25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world we live in is completely different; the post-Cold War world, the world of the first decade of our century *does not exist anymore*. More than that, we should also discuss another aspect: just like before the collapse of the postwar order, in the second part of the ‘80s, we are witnessing a serious acceleration of the rhythm of events. It was often said, and rightfully so – concerning the “European elite” – they don’t seem to understand what we face: they believe they have time, they believe they can postpone major decisions... Well, they are starting to run out of time... But that does not tell the whole story. Because, beyond the accelerating speed of the political, economic and military events – a formidable *challenge* per se – the Euro-Atlantic elites are discovering that present times are characterized more and more by *surprise*, by events that are hard to predict and by erratic evolutions. It becomes clear – if we are careful of what *chaos theory* assumes – that there are serious limits of our understanding and our possibility to make predictions about the future. If predictability is a rare phenomenon in the world politics, during transition periods such as the one we are experiencing, then *surprise* will be at the order of the day. We should add here what Edward Lorenz, one of the authors of this theory, used to say: “extremely small changes of the initial conditions can be catastrophic in their consequences”.

We already highlighted the *toughness* of the confrontations this stage is giving rise to. At this moment, on the Euro-Atlantic border, we are dealing with the complex manifestations of what is called “war without limits” or “hybrid war”. Did anybody think that, close to the borders of our nations, we will have to face, again, territorial annexations supported by so-called manifestations of the “will of the people” and by the action of “self-defense groups”; with concentrations of troops and more or less open military threats, also with the presence of “research and diversion” units; with ample subversive and disinformation actions which invoke, for instance, “grave actions” against, against cultural or linguistic minorities, which prepare future collapses or try to manipulate – the fake news phenomenon exploded – the political process of the Euro-Atlantic border countries?

We shouldn’t forget that, in fact, the first action of Russia meant to “mark a frontier” took place before NATO or the EU had taken any real step in Central and Eastern Europe. This was the war on the

---

<sup>13</sup> Pothier, Fabrice, and Alexander Vershbow. “NATO and Trump: The Case for a New Transatlantic Bargain.” *Atlantic Council*, p.1, Accessed May 2017. Available at: [www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/Atlantic\\_Council-NATO\\_and\\_Trump\\_web\\_0523.pdf](http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/Atlantic_Council-NATO_and_Trump_web_0523.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *Global Trends*, p IX-X

Dniester, in 1992, which separated a region of the Republic of Moldova. We then had to face, in Transnistria, the Russian diversion that generated the actions of the “work collectives” and “self-defense collectives”, but also the direct involvement of the 14<sup>th</sup> Russian army who created here, in the East, a *new* Kaliningrad.

As we have highlighted, it is said more and more often that we have to deal with “an unprecedented range of security challenges”, which make the current period even *more dangerous* than the Cold War period. The former foreign minister of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, added that the risk of a new military confrontation is high. Beyond the useful interpretation according to which it is necessary not to let things get out of control – surely, cold blood and diplomacy will come at high price– it is necessary to understand that we face real threats, for which we should be prepared. In order to take a look at this “agenda” from “the other side” too, it is worth quoting here what one of the most important Russian analysts, Sergei Karaganov, said last year: “the world has been in a pre-war state, similar to the one that we had developed by 1914, for seven to eight years”. That is, after the war in Georgia and the debut of the economic crisis.

It is possible that, through the following period – the years to come – we are witnessing a progressive deterioration of the security environment. During the fall of last year, in *The Economist*, a suggestive assessment could be discerned, according to which: “Just when it seems that it cannot get any worse, it does”. To us, the countries on the Euro-Atlantic border, the premise we should uphold can only be that “hard times lie ahead”.

With the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine, we are facing what we might call “the unknown challenge” and we are discovering, surprisingly, that Russia is questioning the political and security arrangements on the continent and is telling us crystal-clear – with field “examples”, on the entire Euro-Atlantic border, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and the Caucasus, or furthermore to the south-east and the Middle East – that, when it comes to the “world order”, we should “reset” it in many regards, and that the geopolitical map must be re-written! When it first had to deal, in 2008, with the war in Caucasus, and then, in the spring of 2014, with the “hybrid war” exercise in Ukraine, the Euro-Atlantic community could have asked itself what are the Russian objectives. Now, things are more than clear. Beyond what was directly claimed in president Putin’s declaration in February 2015, according to whom Russia would never accept the world order established after the collapse of the USSR and that it would act to reestablish its high power status, we should also pay attention to another thing: a complementary dimension. The agenda that “slipped out of the hand” of Mikhail Gorbachev more than 25 years ago – the “sharing” of influence in Central and Eastern Europe or its “finlandization”, and in any case the

maintaining of the geopolitical role of the USSR in the region – seems to be dusted off and brought to the table by president Putin<sup>15</sup>.

We considered – in our debate of the last decade – that we can exclude from the strategic elaborations of NATO the issue of reshaping the geopolitical map on / beyond the Euro-Atlantic border – including within the context of the development of the New Strategic Concept of NATO from 2010. Russia's actions of the last years, but especially from 2014 onwards, on the Euro-Atlantic frontier, in Ukraine and Moldova but also in the Caspian Sea – and we cannot ignore the failure of the Eastern Partnership of the EU, or what is happening even at this moment in the eastern regions of Ukraine or the pressure put upon Moldova, which got onto “the front line” – keeps us with our feet on the ground. The 2008 war in Georgia and especially the military occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea, accompanied by the military destabilization and – as a matter of fact – the war in Eastern Ukraine by Russia have brought back – rather abruptly – the perspective of conventional war in Europe, a possibility strangely denied by both the NATO and the EU strategic documents. We now find out that the military threat – in various forms – is making a real comeback on the scene of European politics, even in the shape of a “hybrid war”.

A recent study of the *Center for Eastern Studies* in Poland shows that this is not simply about Crimea: „Moscow is seeking to revive the post-Cold War world order: to force the EU and the US to recognize Russia's right to restrict the sovereignty of its neighbors (former Soviet republics), both in terms of their foreign and their domestic policy”<sup>16</sup>. And this is not only through political and economic pressure, but also by military means. As far as we are concerned, we believe this is not only about “former Soviet republics”. The “hybrid war” that Russia is undertaking on the Eastern Euro-Atlantic frontier is clearly targeting Poland, as well as Romania.

There is a very important aspect in this context: the continuing US presence in Europe. To us, in Eastern Europe, an area traditionally “squeezed” between the Western European powers and Russia, this presence is not only a security guarantee against Russia's current aggressiveness, but also a guarantee that Europe's old style politics of interacting with Russia above our heads and at our cost will not be revived. That is why the decisions of the US to continue to sustain the current system of alliances are crucial. It goes without saying that Russia wants the US to leave Europe, especially Eastern Europe, to reinstate her influence over her former “allies” and is waiting for that to happen, trying to find out the “schedule“ by probing their frontiers. Hence, her strong negative reaction to the US MD deployments in Romania and

---

<sup>15</sup> See the meeting of Gorbachev with the Trilateral Commission in February 1989

<sup>16</sup> “The View at 25.” The View at 25 | CEPA, [cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id\\_plik=2854](http://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id_plik=2854). Accessed Sept. 2016

Poland, given the fact that they indicate a longer-term US strategic in this area, postponing the moment of her return...

From a strategic-military point of view, *the current situation is* about Crimea. After the annexation of Crimea, the balance of power in the Black Sea is changing in Russia's favor. Moscow seeks supremacy in the Black Sea (by enhancing its naval forces) in order to expand its capability to control ports and sea lanes and to project power toward all littoral states, as well as toward the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East<sup>17</sup>. This Russian move dramatically *changed* the geostrategic situation in the Black Sea region, seemingly turning us back in time to the old situation of the USSR military deployments. Russia clearly acquired new operational possibilities in the Black Sea: its capacity to land on the west coast of the Black Sea, as well as its capacity to hit targets in depth, has increased.

We should also add an extremely important point from a military perspective. Namely, from the perspective of a *new wave* – that we seem to witness – of the RMA. As a CEPA Report highlighted, the war in Eastern Ukraine is „providing ground for new (Russian) strategies, tactics and weapons”. In this context, if the emerging trends from the so-called „test-bed conflict” in Eastern Ukraine hold true, then „the 21st century European battle space is going to be an exceptionally dangerous one”. Even worse, this report underlines the fact that the present doctrines, capabilities and force postures of NATO's armies „are unprepared for the new challenges of land warfare”<sup>18</sup>. Of course, we must maintain a balanced approach. General Mercier (SACT) underlined, during the *Berlin Security Conference* in 2016 that NATO acts efficiently “to maintain its military edge”. Anyway, the key question to us, here, on the Euro-Atlantic border, becomes understanding the real coordinates of our security environment and especially: what kind of real threats we might anticipate – and deter?

*The fifth matter* that we took into account concerning the *Bucharest Security Conference* agenda has, as a starting point, a question as natural as possible, considering our intention to focus on the security problems of the Eastern border of NATO. Can we speak about the existence – in Central and Eastern Europe, on the Eastern flank – of a common understanding or of a common description of the security agenda, of the security threats and risks we are facing? We must admit that the answer is rather negative. It is true that we are dealing with a situation that seems to be more general at the level of the Euro-Atlantic community. There are significant differences in perception – concerning the defining of the “enemy” nowadays, as a starting point to our contingency plans, in connection with the Russian actions, terrorism and everything that might be the next stage in its general evolution (urban guerilla?) or the present wave of

---

<sup>17</sup> See Janusz Bugajski and Peter B. Doran, *Black Sea Imperatives. Strategic Report Number 3*, CEPA, November, 2016

<sup>18</sup> Doran, Peter. “Land Warfare in Europe. Lessons and Recommendations from the War in Ukraine.” *Land Warfare in Europe | CEPA*, Nov. 2016, [cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id\\_plik=2991](http://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id_plik=2991)

immigration; the role of NATO and of the US in Europe or on what we call “European defense” – between the USA and its main European allies; between France, Germany and Great Britain; and also between the “old” and the “new” Europe.

We are rather concerned that we do not have a common perspective in Central and Eastern Europe. There is, probably, a relatively similar perception - though with some differences - among Poland, Romania, and the Baltic States, but at a regional level things become more complicated. Beyond some objective conditions of this difference of perception regarding the contemporary security agenda, we should not disregard the outcome of the “active measures” and of the policy of “differentiation” adopted by Russia in Central and Eastern Europe. Just as General Pavel emphasized at the *Berlin Security Conference 2016*, we need a “common understanding” regarding the security threats. We may say that this is the mandatory starting point for our efforts to act together and to strengthen the cooperation in the B9 format. It is not an easy thing to do. Mr. Danjean drew attention, also at Berlin, to our difficulties “to come to an agreement”, to establish together what priorities we have and what common operational policies we are ready to put in practice.

In this context, we believe is worth getting to the realization of one proposal made at the debates of *Bucharest Security Conference* from November 2016. Namely, to start a comparative study which aims to identify, formulate and operationalize the security risks and threats in the B9 space. This study would include NATO and each state of the region in the model, identifying the risks and threats within their defense (and security) policies, the manner in which they are approached with regard to military planning and the edification of the necessary military capacities, as well as - significantly - the gaps in the national and collective defense, areas that are not covered neither by the national level, nor the collective one. This idea could have as a complement the creation of a network of experts from the national defense/security structures (Group A), which will deal with circulating information regarding the relevant actions tackling the security issues on the Euro-Atlantic border (part of the hybrid war) and their interpretation in real time. Periodically, this information could be debated within an informal network of experts from the academic field (Group B) as an alternative interpretation, which can avoid the *group thinking* effects or *wishful thinking*.

*The sixth matter* we took into account in the context of creating the *Bucharest Security Conference* agenda is concerning NATO – EU (the CSDP) relation. It is clear –from many perspectives – that we cannot discuss about the security agenda of the Euro-Atlantic community just from NATO’s perspective. It is necessary to take into account where does EU place itself in relation to the Eastern border and, also, NATO – EU collaboration.

The *Paşcu Report* of the Commission of Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament from November 2016 emphasized that “*NATO and EU share the same strategic interests and are dealing with the same challenges in East and South*” and considers that “*the cornerstone of a close and effective cooperation between EU and NATO is the complementarity and compatibility of their missions, and thus of their range of instruments*”. The Report was “*taking note of the importance of the reciprocal defense clause, article 42, paragraph (7), for the EU member states, regardless they are NATO members or not*”. We believe this is the perspective from which we should begin addressing the problems of the Eastern flank. Moreover, the joint declaration signed by EU and NATO in Warsaw may be considered an important step for the development of their collaboration regarding defense and security. But this does not mean we have no other further problems to deal with. Especially that, as the *Report* is showing, Warsaw Declaration rather reiterates/ describes “*well established informal practices*” and does not address “*the requirement of raising the cooperation between EU and NATO to a whole new level.*”

Thus, *EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy* talks about the objective of an appropriate level of *strategic autonomy* for EU. It is hard to say what exactly this means in practical terms, especially from the perspective of the Eastern flank agenda. The *Paşcu Report* was highlighting that the “*strategic autonomy*” of EU “*should reinforce Europe’s capacity to promote security inside and outside its borders.*” If this means that *EU should be able to protect, with its own means and at the same measure, the EU member states that are not part of NATO*, we should keep in mind, additionally, the necessity of this *strategic autonomy* to consolidate the *partnership with NATO and the Transatlantic relations*. In this context, *CSDP should be in complete accordance with NATO*, also because – as advised by the *Paşcu Report* – “*NATO is best equipped for the deterrence and defense and it is prepared to put in practice the collective defense (Article 5 from the Washington Treaty) in case of an aggression against one of its members...*”

The main problem that we are dealing in this context is related to the lack of a common approach, and, in some cases, to the existence of some very different interpretations regarding the agenda and security priorities, including the Euro-Atlantic frontier. We believe the idea advanced by *Paşcu Report* is highly important: *that of a common analysis of the strategic environment of Europe* according to which the threats will be evaluated together, periodically, by all the parts, measure that would impose respect for the individual concerns and would ensure the support of common capacities and actions.

This fragmentation at the level of assessments and attitudes present within EU goes much further. It intervenes clearly in at least *three directions* significant for approaching the security problems in Central and Eastern Europe. *First*, the assessment of Russia’s actions on the Euro-Atlantic frontier. This brings a different set up of our priorities regarding security, and even the consideration of Russia as our ally, in the



field of counter-terrorism. *Second*, we are dealing with different attitudes regarding the objective of the EU to increase its autonomy in the field of oil and gas and regarding Russia's offer (North Stream). *Finally*, it is about the economic ties with Russia, context in which, in this domain, not at all surprising, we can notice a variation of different countries' attitudes towards the sanctions, not only at the political level, but also among the big companies (German or Austrian and not only).

Of course, there is a very complicated mix of interests, objective and subjective factors, and last but not least, the results of Russia's "differentiation policy" in relation to the EU member states. Though, we should add that, for us, in Central and Eastern Europe, the security agenda includes— maybe more strongly than ever – another component. That is, the attitude towards the *periphery* of EU, that is currently expressed by the manner in which a number of EU member states are reacting to the recent proposals of the president of the European Commission regarding the strengthening of EU cohesion after Brexit, through the extension of Eurozone but also the accession of Romania and Bulgaria into Schengen. Not to mention that, in this context, the "unhappy" example of Greece was brought up in a superior, even arrogant manner.

It is becoming more apparent that we are dealing - if we remember the assessment regarding how money is spent in these countries – with a specific approach to Southern and Eastern periphery of the EU, which could create big problems in the future, because it puts into question fundamental landmarks of the European construction and cohesion.

From this perspective, the approach of the security agenda of the Eastern flank of the Alliance proves to be a complex activity, with numerous problems that have to be solved.

There is no doubt that allies on both sides of the Atlantic should elaborate a coherent understanding of the new strategic and security environment of the Euro-Atlantic community, of the existing risks and emerging challenges, risks and threats, including an aggressive, revanchist Russia, with its new forms of hybrid war, the new international terrorism, the mass migration due to violent and destructive conflicts in the countries of origin. This is not an easy task, because the objective of this effort is a very clear list of priorities and of the necessary and urgent steps – common and national – able to address the most pressing concerns: for instance, the remilitarization of NATO's security challenges or the rapid evolution and the polymorphism of the terrorist threat in Europe.

The allies should commit to maintaining the present effort to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence posture in Europe, to developing the necessary solutions in order to enter a new stage of cooperation between NATO and the EU, and to moving forward with the EU plans to adjust its *Common Security and Defence Policy* to the present threats. In this context we need a more complex approach of this new reality on the Euro-Atlantic frontier: the deployment of multinational battle groups of NATO. The Alliance moved troops and equipments in a different environment (the "new Europe") not necessarily

prepared for all the Western standards we need in order to get the maximum operational efficiency. A new agenda is developing and we have to take into consideration some real requirements of new ideas or solutions, discussions, training and drills on the ground; including part-time jobs for civilian experts in IT or supporting civilian forces

The general consensus is that all these specific security concerns we named above are territorial in nature, in the sense that they originate in an identifiable geographic space in the East and South-East and they target identifiable geographic regions in the Euro-Atlantic area and especially on the Euro-Atlantic frontier. They are also cyber savvy, taking full advantage of the international cyberspace. Especially Russia and ISIS are very successful in recruiting, planning, cyber-attacks and propaganda operations. And they come with a strong psychological warfare component in the context of the so-called “active measures” of manipulation, disinformation, diversion and subversion, using an increasing amount of “fake news”. These days *disruption* seems to be more important than *destruction*, representing an essential dimension of the present operations of the hybrid war on the Euro-Atlantic frontier.

These concerns are on the agenda of both national governments and international security organizations such as NATO. Their specialized security agencies and the political decision-makers are investing efforts and resources in collecting information, analyzing the situation and predicting the developments in the realm of these concerns. As they do with all other security risks and threats they properly identify. And, of course, the governments are formulating policies, are taking position and action to counter these threats and to develop the “resilience” of our nations.

The territorial nature of terrorism, mass migration and Russian behavior make the Eastern and Southern Allied countries a common singular place of interest for the entire NATO; and for the European Union, of course.

The intentions of this *Report* and those of the *Bucharest Security Conference* itself to discuss the security agenda of NATO’s Eastern flank have the merit that may ask questions the governments never ask and may debate topics the governments never deal with.

Developing the first round of the *Bucharest Security Conference*, we were successful in assembling a community of high officials, experts, professors, researchers and practitioners on security domain. We intend to continue this effort in 2017.

## **Part II: A New Paradigm for Defending NATO's Eastern Flank. Making 'the Bucharest Format' work**

As we have underlined, the agenda that we took – and we take – into consideration in the context of *Bucharest Security Conference* is going to emphasize the *evolutions* and *tendencies* that we can discover in the current security environment – especially on the Euro-Atlantic frontier, on the Eastern flank of NATO. We are concerned to understand, a moment earlier, how is the future security agenda – the new risks and threats – crystallizing for the B9 countries? We took – and we take – into consideration especially: what kind of definition is suitable for the present hybrid war? How are, on the ground, its different manifestations, and on the entire Euro-Atlantic border? And, we will add, what is the meaning, in this context, of the so-called “zero” moment of the “hybrid war” manifestations, a moment when the national and the allied reaction is required?

Considering the objective we propose as a possible result of BSC 2017 – a comparative study of the security perceptions in the region – it is clear that we have to explore profoundly the elements that encompass what we will call “Strategic documents” (national security or military strategies, cyber security strategies), official statements and documents, recent events and facts, databases and other documents related to our field of interest – the security environment on the Euro-Atlantic frontier.

### **Military threats and solutions in the B9 Format**

The second half of 2016 brought a series of significant strategic documents of NATO and the EU meant to offer tailor made responses to the evolving security challenges. In June 2016 EU Global Strategy was issued and in July 2016 the Warsaw Summit of NATO adopted its important decisions. Even though the Warsaw Summit represented a continuation of the decisions taken at the Wales Summit, in the view of many experts the 2016 Summit offered a reinterpretation of NATO's strategic approach which occurred in a critical moment for regional security on its Eastern borders, after the occupation of Crimea by Russia and its actions in Ukraine, the Russian violations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and other multiple threats in the Black Sea Region. The Warsaw Summit managed to integrate the defense dimensions: Aerial, Maritime (Black Sea) and Territorial.

During our first *Bucharest Security Conference* in November 2016, many experts underlined the need to project NATO security beyond its borders, but highlighted at the same time the need for cooperation with Russian Federation in order to restore predictability. The present configuration of the international environment is similar with the Cold War situation from three dimensions - the actions of Russian Federation (military actions and exercises), the radicalized political movements in Europe (far right extremism) and renewed tensions in the Black Sea Region. In order to address those pressing aspects, the Bucharest format (B9) was designed for strengthening the cooperation and increasing resilience among the NATO members of the Eastern flank.

Prior to the Warsaw Summit, *Romania* had initiated a format intended to step up NATO's presence in the Black Sea region in the form of a multinational brigade and a Black Sea fleet. Romania has not been guaranteed the establishment of a NATO Black Sea fleet; it has instead been promised that the prospect of strengthening the maritime and air presence of NATO in the Black Sea region will be analysed. Moreover, following the decisions made at the Warsaw Summit, Romania formed the South-East Multinational Brigade, based on the Romanian 'Rovine' Second Infantry Brigade from Craiova, which took part in the Saber Guardian 2017 international military drills. The brigade will be under the command of the Headquarters of a Multinational Division Southeast in Bucharest, which is integrated into the NATO command structure. It may therefore be expected that NATO will extend the participation of the allied ships in exercises at the Black Sea and of the allied fighter jets in strengthening of the air policing in Romania and Bulgaria. Consequently, NATO's military presence will gradually increase in the Black Sea region and Romania will play a fundamental role in this new paradigm. It is a substantial change given the differences in perceiving the challenges and threats among the states of NATO's southern and eastern flanks and divergences among NATO members regarding the formation of policy towards Russia. The last two years have witnessed a shift from a focus on 'reassurance' (2014) to 'deterrence' (2016).

The decisions made at the NATO Summit in Warsaw mark a paradigm shift in the policy of strengthening the alliance's presence on its Eastern flank. NATO is shifting from a policy of reassuring its allies (which was agreed upon in 2014 at the Wales Summit) to taking its first steps in a policy of deterrence towards Russia.

The NATO summit in Wales (2014) was held several months after the annexation of Crimea. The decisions made there were above all aimed at assuring eastern NATO member states of the alliance's solidarity. The agreed strengthening of NATO's presence on its eastern flank was, however, not of great military significance. It allowed for a rotational presence of NATO small company-sized units (approximately 150 troops) in terms of exercises and training and an increased participation in exercises of land, air and maritime forces. No agreement was reached within NATO over an enhanced military presence

on its eastern flank. In the last two years, NATO focused on reforming its support forces by conducting education and training programs aimed to increase the effectiveness and interoperability of the multinational forces. Moreover, these instruments were used by NATO in order to assist the partner countries in their reform processes and contributed to the peace building and stability of some areas.

The decisions made at the NATO Summit in Warsaw (2016) have changed the nature of the Alliance's involvement on its Eastern Flank. With regard to Russia's aggressive policy, NATO's members have deemed it necessary to ensure a larger presence of NATO forces suited for combat, not exercises. There has not been an agreement within NATO to permanently station allied forces; this would run contrary to the NATO-Russia Founding Act according to Germany (among other countries). Despite that it has been agreed that four battalion-sized battle-groups (totalling approximately 1,000 troops), fully armed and provided with military equipment, will be deployed on a persistent rotational basis beginning in the first quarter of 2017. Battalion-sized battle-groups are not the forces which will ensure the defence of Poland or the Baltic States in the face of Russia's potential aggression since this would require the deployment of several NATO brigades in the region at least. It is assumed that the four battle-groups aim to deter the Kremlin from undertaking aggressive actions.

During the *Bucharest Security Conference 2016*, the main discussions evolved around the idea that the Warsaw Summit brought to the forefront of strategic decisions the agenda of '*NATO's Eastern Flank*' which includes the countries members in the 'Bucharest Format' established through the high-level meeting of the heads of states and Government carried out in November 2016. The *Bucharest Format* was aimed at providing an inter-allied consultation for promoting mutual approaches of the allied states that are participating, to the benefit of the Euro-Atlantic community, taking into account the special interest of Central and Eastern European countries for ensuring security, stability and prosperity from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and to develop regional cooperation for supporting the NATO objectives, in the context of the security developments in the Eastern and Southern Vicinity. This approach relies on seeing the Russian foreign policy goals as a threat to the Euro-Atlantic security. In the context of our *Bucharest Security Conference 2016*, some participants underlined the fact that Russia seems to have six main objectives: 1. changing the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, aiming at a political equal / equivalent status between Russia and NATO / USA; 2. undermining the cohesion of NATO; 3. reducing the American influence in Europe; 4. ending of NATO's enlargement process; 5. setting a buffer zone between Russia and the West; 6. the military parity with NATO. The arguments brought in supporting this interpretation regard the military measures recently taken by Russia in this region, but not only: massive (up to 80,000 troops involved), strategic bombers that reach even the Portugal coast, the increased militarization of the Black Sea and the Crimea peninsula (warships and submarines, A2AD system, expeditionary force, an

airborne regiment and the intention to deploy Iskander missiles in Crimea, etc.).

The core element of the B9 format is based on the observation that Poland, the Baltic States and Romania are for the moment strongly connected because they have a similar perception of Russia and have demanded an increased NATO presence in their territories. A problematic aspect is that Poland has a contrasting view on this matter compared to its partners from the Visegrad Group. In contrast, they do not perceive a direct threat from Russia and are not demanding the deployment of NATO forces in their countries. However, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary supported Poland, the Baltic States and Romania during the Warsaw Summit in their efforts to step up the presence of NATO forces.

### **Too much or too little focus on military deterrence?**

A clear message was sent during the last two years – that NATO’s presence in the Black Sea region will be gradually extended. In this regards, it was highlighted that following the Warsaw Summit it will be essential to take a series of measures which will enable effective co-operation between all the elements in the NATO chain of military response. But there are several obstacles to this situation. There is a need to take into account also the factors that explain the resistance or the negative reaction of several NATO and EU member states to this paradigm shift, such as the aversion to the so-called ‘militarisation’ of the Black Sea region (considered as inefficient or an anachronism) and the economic ties with Russia that influence some countries’ positions on this matter.

As for NATO’s policy of deterrence, it is important to point that Germany’s position is problematic, resulting in many diverging voices in the ruling elites regarding the shape of our policy towards Russia. Certain differences can be also seen at this level between Bulgaria and Romania. One of the elements of NATO’s entire deterrence strategy consists in the decisions to deploy battalion-sized battle groups in Poland and the Baltic states. It was underlined that *in the autumn of 2016* negotiations were underway over the location of NATO centre for intelligence and reconnaissance in Poland. Additionally, under the American European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) a US division headquarters and the main components of the US heavy-armoured brigade will start exercises in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria in 2017. Beyond these evolutions at the military level, politics comes in the way. The credibility of NATO’s deterrence strategy has been already challenged by certain statements made by representatives of a number of member states. Regarding the relation between deterrence and offensive posture, two thoughtful questions were brought into forefront: “How much is enough?” and “How much is too much?”

## Political challenges ahead

In the months after the Warsaw Summit, NATO states are expected to be committed to implementing the decisions, as adopted in the Joint EU-NATO Declaration (regarded as an important achievement of the summit)<sup>19</sup>, adjusting military structures and political processes in order to create a cohesive and reliable deterrence strategy. But there is the expectation that NATO states will be confronted with challenges, mainly of a political nature. Prior to the Warsaw Summit, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, had criticised large-scale military exercises on NATO's Eastern flank (despite the fact that they included the Bundeswehr) based on the collective defence scenario. Moreover, during the Warsaw summit itself, François Hollande, the president of France, stated that for France Russia is a partner, not a threat, which is contradictory to the rhetoric of the Warsaw Summit Communiqué. The picture becomes even more complicated if we add to it some contradictory ideas of the new American president Donald Trump, in connection with a possible reset of relations between the US and Russia, that were already interpreted by some worried analysts as a declining US support for NATO's deterrence strategy and for the US presence on NATO's Eastern flank. But during his visit to Warsaw, this summer, Donald Trump made some very positive and reassuring statements on the American attitude and actions on the Euro-Atlantic frontier.

One of the political events that is expected to bring an important shift in the Eastern flank dynamic is the campaign ahead of the parliamentary election in Germany (to be held in September 2017) which could bring to the forefront two opposite discourses - 'peace and dialogue' vs confrontation with Russia. Germany's policymakers could raise demands to strengthen the policy of dialogue and co-operation with Russia together with possible demands for a revision of the decisions of the Warsaw summit. Another potential political shift could be an increasing engagement of NATO member states in crises and conflicts in Europe's southern neighbourhood combined with insufficient funding for the military which could limit the demand for NATO's presence on its eastern flank.

To sum up, there are five main ideas to consider in this context. First of all, in the last couple of years, the security environment in the region seriously deteriorated as compared to the general situation of the post-Cold War era.

Secondly, Russia represents a challenger for the international order and is heavily militarizing its border with NATO member countries and the Black Sea as well. Russia deployed troops in large scale

---

<sup>19</sup> Hujerová, Jana. *Success of the NATO Warsaw Summit but what will follow?*, The Association for International Affairs (AMO), Briefing Paper 31, November 2016, p. 4. Available at: [https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/AMO\\_success-of-the-NATO-Warsaw-Summit-but-what-will-follow.pdf](https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/AMO_success-of-the-NATO-Warsaw-Summit-but-what-will-follow.pdf)

military exercises in the region, as well as Iskander ballistic missiles in Crimea, capable to reach targets from Romania, and developed A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) capabilities at the Black Sea. Another proof of this new Russian military behavior on NATO's Eastern flank is given by the repeatedly war planes flights above the Baltic region

Thirdly, NATO should resist Russia's intimidation policies by increasing its military capacities in the region and developing new concepts and strategies to manage its relations with Russia. In the same time, NATO should encourage Russia to renounce or eliminate its militaristic approach to the international affairs.

Fourthly, NATO member states, and in particular those at its Eastern flank, should dedicate more energies in implementing the decisions taken unanimously to prove their solidarity. In order to fulfil these goals, Romania has assumed an important contribution in the region, by hosting the Multinational Brigade from Craiova, as an effort to contribute to the overarching goal of the Alliance, to enhance the security and defence posture on the Eastern and Southern flanks. And finally, last but not least, our countries should develop the necessary solutions in order to counteract the present "active measures" of the expanding hybrid war on the Euro-Atlantic Frontier.

### **Hybrid threats and steps to counter them at the NATO and EU decision-making level**

Generally, characteristics associated with hybrid warfare and hybrid threats are the asymmetric nature of the military means employed, the fact that it has a multidimensional and transnational character and it often presupposes the existence of crime networks and diaspora communities, as well as foreign and non-state actors.<sup>20</sup> A more specific definition of hybrid warfare is provided by Frank Hoffman, who notes that "Hybrid Wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder" and most of the times they imply a rapid evolution of tactical means (suicide bombings, for example) and innovation in terms of armaments employed (IED, improvised explosive devices, for example). According to Hoffman, cyberspace is increasingly becoming a favored terrain in terms of hybrid threats – as internet provides a battleground for terrorists and insurgents, who use it for propaganda and recruitment purposes.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Josef Schroefl and Stuart J. Kaufman, "Hybrid Actors, Tactical Variety: Rethinking Asymmetric and Hybrid War", in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37:10, 862-880, 2014, p. 865

<sup>21</sup> Frank G. Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars", Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007, p. 14



Until recently associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>22</sup> and the ISIL “war” in Europe, the term of ‘hybrid threats’ is now used to refer to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and to different Russian actions on the Euro-Atlantic frontier in general (see Moldova) and more recently to a series of “new emerging threats” in the Baltic republics, Poland and Romania.

What steps have been taken, at the level of NATO and EU structures, in order to counter these types of threats? Starting with 2010, the collocation ‘hybrid threats’ was defined in NATO’s Capstone Concept, as “those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives”<sup>23</sup>, with a commitment to adapt the Alliance’s strategy, structure and capabilities to counter them, an aim that was re-stated during the Wales Summit in 2014.

*"We will ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats, where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design." from the NATO Wales Summit Declaration (2014).*<sup>24</sup>

At the EU level, the Commission and the High Representative committed to continue and strengthen efforts to combat these threats through the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, the Strategic Communication task force – whose main task is to “monitor and counter illegal online content and propaganda”, while also working to enhance capabilities of third countries and work more closely with NATO.<sup>25</sup> The basis of this commitment is represented by an informal meeting that was held in Riga in 2015 and the subsequent formulation of a discussion paper on ‘Countering Hybrid threats’ circulated by the European External Action Service (EEAS), with a focus on building more resilience in order to counter hybrid threats.<sup>26</sup>

During the first reunion of the *Bucharest Security Conference*, in November 2016, the hybrid war was in important chapter on our agenda. Just two months before the conference, in September 2016, a *Report* of the CEPA Forum was mentioning the fact that an essential instrument of the hybrid war – “Russia’s information warfare offensive against the West and its allies” – is a “sophisticated, ubiquitous and increasingly effective “tool. We are facing two very important challenges in this context: *the first one*

---

<sup>22</sup> Josef Schroebl and Stuart J. Kaufam, “Hybrid Actors, Tactical Variety: Rethinking Asymmetric and Hybrid War”, in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37:10, 862-880, 2014

<sup>23</sup> NATO, Bi-SC Input to a New NATO Capstone Concept for the Military Contribution to Countering Hybrid Threats, available online at [http://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/events/2010/20100826\\_bi-sc\\_cht.pdf](http://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/events/2010/20100826_bi-sc_cht.pdf), 2010, p. 2

<sup>24</sup> NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, 2014, available online at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, Press Release, Brussels 2015, available online at [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-2064\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2064_en.htm)

<sup>26</sup> European Parliament, Understanding Hybrid Threats, June 2015, available online at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/564355/EPRS\\_ATA\(2015\)564355\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/564355/EPRS_ATA(2015)564355_EN.pdf)

is to identify the real components of this “information warfare offensive” and of the hybrid war in general; and *second*, to discuss what kind of legal, regulatory and social decisions / actions could counteract or constrain hostile and subversive media – and especially the increasing amount of fake news – or the targeted propaganda.

A critical dimension of the complex system of hybrid war is represented by the narrative developed by Russia on its role as the defender of the “compatriots” abroad and the guarantor of the rights. The Ukrainian crisis – the war in the Eastern part of this country – has proven that Moscow can use the presence of a Russian-speaking minority as a pretext for military intervention aimed at the “protection of ethnic Russians” abroad<sup>27</sup>. Let us mention that the Russian Law of 1999 has a very large and confusing definition of the so-called “compatriots” (even Poles and Finns could become “compatriots”).

Another aspect refers to the influence of Russian media not only in the “near abroad”, but also in the NATO’s member countries on the Euro-Atlantic frontier. According to a *Romanian Report*, we are witnessing an “increasing number of negative narratives as well as a diversification and adaptation to the Romanian context”. There is a connection between anti-NATO’s negative narratives and the Russian agenda. A category of the public (the youth) seems to become more vulnerable to the narratives that undermine the credibility of Western institution<sup>28</sup>. Social media – online media – represent the channels most used in the current information war<sup>29</sup>.

### **Cooperation in intelligence. Developing trust and the necessary solutions among allies**

The consequences of the political evolutions in the US (after president Trump took office) and in the electoral campaign in Germany as well as developments in the UK (about the Brexit) bring multiple challenges to the credibility of NATO’s deterrence policy in the post-Warsaw Summit period. In this context, it is expected that the implementation of the Summit’s decisions, adjustment of structures and processes may be confronted with domestic political challenges and with the results of the Russian “active measures” on the Euro-Atlantic Frontier. In this context, our cooperation in the field of intelligence represents an important dimension of our security agenda. Even more, this cooperation is not really an intelligence issue, but a political one.

For intelligence products to be successful there is a need for both domestic and foreign cooperation between intelligence institutions. As far as Romania is concerned, we should enhance our cooperation and

---

<sup>27</sup> See Arthur Kacprzyk, *Detering Russia after Ukraine...*, Policy Paper number 13(96), July 2017, p1

<sup>28</sup> See Center for Civic Participation and Democracy, SNSPA, “SABER GUARDIAN 2017, How NATO’s display of force was reflected in Romanian online media”, 30 Aug 2017

<sup>29</sup> See Center for Civic Participation and Democracy, SNSPA, “West vs. East in Romania’s online media”, May 2017

should promote more dialogue between the members of the intelligence community, because their relations and problems in their communication may impact cooperation with allies. A warning was also sent regarding the fact that intelligence cooperation in multinational formats may be less efficient than bilateral one, but NATO surely needs more cooperation at this level between its members.

The reality on the ground often shows that at NATO level some countries offer more, and others less in terms of intelligence cooperation, but all contributions are valuable. A great asset of the Baltic states and of Romania is the good quality of their intelligence products focused on the Eastern flank. This should be considered as a great asset of our secret services and continued in the future, as it is highly appreciated at the NATO level. The emerging concept of “network analysis” was highlighted as a new development in intelligence cooperation, between national structures, partner country’s structures and NATO to provide a comprehensive final intelligence product, especially in the case of common operations or exercises.

An important idea in this context is the need for Romania to have some lessons learnt from our long history of intelligence cooperation and focus our efforts on preserving loyalty to our allies even in times of crises. It was stressed that an important topic on the Eastern flank’s agenda should also be the enhanced social cooperation. A great threat at this point may also be the widening gap between social trust in intelligence structures and the perceived lack of transparency that is criticised by the Romanian civil society. This has raised another big challenge for intelligence professionals, in terms of possible diversions that try to influence public opinion by exaggerating a country’s vulnerabilities. This practice is very much used in the present war of disinformation, and it targets national intelligence structures and their image in public space.

The discussion on this subject during our *Bucharest Security Conference 2017* should underline the need for a new level of cooperation in intelligence in the new security context. It was said that in the present conditions the academic debates offer the benefit of developing new paradigms and concepts, example the concept of “smart intelligence”, as a reflection of “smart defence”, by referring to capability sharing.

In the field of intelligence, the main aim of cooperation is not only the cooperation with counterparts from other states, but also the cooperation between the national intelligence structures. The volatility of the international environment is expected to discourage the cooperation on the international level and to make the internal cooperation an important and urgent necessity.

On one hand, many experts remain skeptical regarding the utility of the multilateral cooperation formats. On the other hand, much more efficient seem to be the so called “cooperation clusters”, in which the states cooperate for addressing some particular problems. The states can group for various reasons, but

it is expected that cooperation will develop in bilateral formats or among neighboring countries, whereas the multilateral formats will stagnate, or even decline.

The debate of *Bucharest Security Conference 2017* should concentrate on the interdependence that the allied institutional structures have with their national counterparts. In this regard, it is important to notice that the multinational institutional formats do not have their own intelligence collecting capacities, but they depend in this sense on the member states' inputs. The experience indicates a variable contribution from the member states, some of them being more inclined than others to put in common in NATO format the obtained intelligence. Despite of the reluctance of some states, the multilateral cooperation is a fact, and every input, no matter how minor, helps to delineate a common vision for the Alliance.

The historical experiences indicate the fact that the decision to cooperate is based on the perspective of mutual benefits, which orientates the cooperation on pragmatic bases and explains why sometimes there is cooperation on some issues between the competitors as well.

A possible threat is that NATO's Eastern Flank is not united. EU and US are opened for subversion activities, political influence (hybrid warfare), but EU is more affected and more vulnerable than the US. As a solution to this complex set of challenges experts propose more cohesion, unity, adaptability, in order for NATO countries to engage productively with the necessary instruments.

### **The challenges of 'Post-truth' media reporting**

During our previous conference experts addressed also the difficulties which the press correspondents are encountering in the process of getting the information in the field of defense. The lack of information, as well as the information gathered from other states, was placed in the larger context of the hybrid war. We need to continue this analysis.

In the context of the hybrid war two schools of thought, which contain the informational operations can be identified: namely the Western and the Russian one. The Western one is based on a classic action format, which implies, post event, the existence of a spokesman who gives preliminary information, multimedia materials which come at different periods of time, but quite late in accordance to the event. Due to this reason, the information transmitted this way are less influent, because of their low quality (in the case in which they are send in short periods of time without a background of materials), or because they are distant of the moment the event happened (in the case in which the auxiliary materials are expected).

Regarding the way in which the Russian media apparatus operates, there can be identified certain similarities, which, even without the belongingness to doctrines, manage to create paradigms. Therefore, in

the wake of an event, the media has at its disposal almost simultaneously, a complex set of info containing the official message and high-quality multimedia elements. A series of emerging threats were named as relevant for the time to come, such as: re-emerging hybrid threats, disinformation, propaganda, economic dependency backed by new strategies, backstage tactics, stealthy actions, subversive tactics, anti-establishment and anti-globalization manifestations, climate change, disruptive technologies and their applications.

It is important to notice, in this context, that there are different types of audience targeted by these post-truth media reports and it was argued that the public evolves in concentric circles, starting with the Russian one, ex-Soviet one, and ending with the one outside this space, the impact decreasing in accordance with the geographical distance.

To sum up, *three main ideas* should be discussed during our BSC 2017. *First*, in order to create the necessary conditions for success in this domain, both domestic and foreign cooperation between intelligence institutions is needed. In this line, Romania should enhance its cooperation and should promote more dialogue between its members of the intelligence community. Also, even though multinational cooperation seems to be less efficient than the bilateral one, NATO needs more cooperation between its members.

*Second*, in reality some NATO members offer more, while others offer less in terms of intelligence cooperation, but all contributions are valuable. It is notable the good quality of intelligence products focused on the Eastern flank provided by the Baltic states and Romania, which should be considered an important asset. The emerging concept of “network analysis” was highlighted as a new development in intelligence cooperation, between national structures, partner country’s structures and NATO to provide a comprehensive final intelligence product, especially in the case of common operations or exercises.

*Third*, Romania needs to learn some lessons from its long history of intelligence cooperation and focus our efforts on preserving loyalty to its allies, even in times of crises. It was stressed that an important topic on the Eastern flank’s agenda should also be the enhanced social cooperation. A great threat at this point may also be the widening gap between social trust in intelligence structures and the perceived lack of transparency that is criticised by the Romanian civil society. This has raised another big challenge for intelligence professionals, in terms of possible diversions that try to influence public opinion by exaggerating a country’s vulnerabilities. This practice is very much used in the present war of disinformation, and it targets national intelligence structures and their image in public space.

## **Cyber security**

The realm of cyber security is a distinct operational space, and we need to discuss the agenda during BSC 2017, in order to assess the new cyber threats and offer new solutions.

The cyber attacks are regarded as the cheapest and easiest ways to damage on the large scale the economy of a state, or every target, as a consequence of communication technology development. As a consequence, the cyber space is threatened by terrorism or ideological extremism, the threats being on the rise. As far as Romania is concerned, it is very clear that we face cyber threats, but attacks such in Ukraine were not launched yet. Therefore, Romania should concentrate on national security, from which the consolidation of civilian entities and structures is needed.

The experts in the field underline the need for more cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic area, as the cyber realm has to be protected commonly, by all the actors involved. On the other hand, they emphasized the fact that not all the actors or companies are willing to cooperate, as in the case of France, for the reason of protection and security of their internal data, mentioning that cooperation is more fruitful than individual efforts. There is a minimum cooperation between actors, but in the end there is a matter of competition between actors.

There is a difference between military and civilian realms. In the military sector there is more discipline regarding the information sharing and protection, while in the civilian realm protection is maximum extended to the commercial data. To determine some rules of conduct is a difficult task, as the civilians, in contrast with the militaries, maintain a different vision regarding online activity and information sharing, which is less restricted in the former case. In the end, information creates problems in our societies, a matter that is often beyond our capabilities of reaction.

### **Sources of cyber threats and vulnerabilities**

An important number of cyber threats, have their origins in IT, and other developing fields, such as industrial robotics, artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing and bioinformatics. Apart from the other fields, the IT is fairly under control, compared with the developing fields. The realm of fabrication raised the issue of producing plastic armament, which can be transported by plane undetected, while bioinformatics helped to create mosquito prototypes with a \$2000 DNA synthetizer. The threats will take another dimension as the working force will be replaced by robotic labor. In conclusion, the control systems are not very reliable.

Political military analysts are mentioning the hybrid war, which defines, among others, the undercover Russian operations in Ukraine, emphasizing the fact that the concept is not a new one, since similar methods were used in Vietnam or Afghanistan by the Soviet Special Forces. The main innovation in Crimea was determined by the attack instruments used by the Russian military forces, as other instruments were introduced, besides the military dimension, such as political, economic, intelligence, mass media and cyber warfare. Ukraine faced simultaneously a conventional war, combined with guerilla, cyber and intelligence, as in 2008, in Georgia. The main goal was territorial control and vulnerability exploitation, combined with the weakening of the government and the main institutions.

It is notable the example of the first cyber attack, from 1982, when the United States determined a large explosion to a gas pipe in the USSR, by cyber contamination. The pipe was brought by the Soviets from a Canadian company and was programmed to determine an explosion after fulfillment of some conditions.

A very important agenda is connected to the vulnerabilities faced by the banks, arguing for a public-private partnership, as the banking and public systems cannot deal with the threats on their own. The problem in the banking system with cyber security is the fact that the banks take note of the attacks from the banks they cooperate with and from here the need to help other banks that are not involved in institutional relations. Another problem is related to the fact that many people who are speaking about cyber security do not have the will to take the steps towards the right direction. A notable example is the unwillingness of some services providers who did not assume any responsibility. Thus, in order to deal with a multitude of difficult issues, there is a need for collaboration and to push forward.

### **Allied and European contributions to cybersecurity**

As all of us are beneficiaries from the security provided by the NATO membership, we also have to bring our contribution. Since we share the same threats, it is natural to cooperate with our allies. The cyber attacks should not be underestimated and therefore we have to react to innovation with innovation. We should learn from the EU, where the support for research, development and innovation is essential. We need a legal framework to deal with the issue of defending the people on the internet and to define exactly the fields of operation

The preoccupation for cyber security in Romania started in 2006, while from 2013 there is a national cyber security strategy, which stipulated the need for a cyber security law. The great problems in Romania are related to the lack of education on cyber security, low security culture, low rate of specialists training and skill improvement in the field. Regarding the training of the specialists, the greatest role is

reserved to private companies, which provide the cyber security software and have to assure the preparation of the personnel.

In July 2016, the Allies reaffirmed NATO's defensive mandate and recognised cyberspace as a domain of operations. NATO has affirmed that international law applies in cyberspace and cyber defence is part of NATO's core task of collective defence, under the incidence of the 5<sup>th</sup> Article.

Until this moment there were no cyber attacks on Romania but the strengthening of national entities and structures is however desirable having in mind the defence of critical infrastructure against an invisible enemy that wants to gain access to classified information.

There are over 40 civilian and governmental organisations collaborating with the Romanian Intelligence Service in order to develop cooperation agreements in this area. The authorities want the best possible management of the situation in case of a cyberattack and invest in identifying and counteracting potential cyber attacks too. They seek to establish partnerships with the private sector as well so as to create centres of excellence where specialists in the field can be trained taking into consideration the fact that there is a shortage of experts in the field of cybersecurity.

In addition, some rules should be established at an individual level for Internet users so as to raise awareness on this matter. Beside cyber threats that target computers and computer networks, other four new areas should be highlighted: industrial robotics, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics and additive manufacturing. Inter-institutional partnerships and the education of the population are required in order to assure an effective defence system against cyber-attacks.

Authors:

Coordinator: Prof. dr. Vasile Secăreş

Prof. dr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, Dr. Sergiu Vintilă, Lect. dr. Miruna Troncotă, Dr. Octavia Moise

With the support of NATO Partnership Studies Center volunteers Dragoş Vetrescu, Adrian Preda and Oana Mihalache