



# CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND ITS SPECIFIC FEATURES IN THE AREA OF INTEREST OF ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** This article is a brief analysis of the main features of the current international security environment, which is already marked by powerful geopolitical and geostrategic transformations. The international security environment is experiencing a significant deterioration, mainly caused by the amplification of the conventional threats and risks, as well as by the hybrid ones.

In my analysis I am also referring to the main features of the security environment specific to the Romania's area of interest and to the strategic opportunities for our country.

**Keywords:** security; security environment; interests; security interests; risks; threats; vulnerabilities.

## Preamble

The followers of the realistic current of the theory of international relations show that the primary reason of the states' existence is the one to exercise their power. They say that power gives states the opportunity to protect and promote their interests, to obtain success in situations of negotiation and to shape or influence the governing rules of the international system. They tend to see power as a political phenomenon, evidenced by the highlighting limitation of an actor's capacity, on the political scene, to persuade another actor to do what it normally wouldn't do without this intervention. Therefore, politics is seen as the exercising of influence aimed to control and dominate others. Understanding power as an instrument of control, it is only reasonable to wonder who is the most powerful and who is the weakest and to find out who will fulfill its interests and who would have to make concessions<sup>1</sup>.

History has demonstrated and has showed us countless times that source of power has always been given by the disparities between states. To talk about rights has a meaning only between equals.

<sup>1</sup> Teodor Frunzeti, *Geostrategie*, Army Tehnic-Editorial Center Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 42.

Unequally, the right of the strongest and the laws of power only put the powerful one into the most favorable positions. It is precisely these laws that govern the relations between states since the dawn of the state system, because inequalities regarding territory, population, material and spiritual development, natural resources<sup>2</sup> have been created between states, which cause that type of power without material expression and which cannot be quantified, being noticeable and visible anywhere, at any time within the global security architecture.

On the other hand, the force that generates the states' power consists of numerous quantitative components, measurable using statistics and mathematical methods, and also qualitative elements which can only be estimated. These qualitative and quantitative elements shape up what we can call *the power potential*, in other words, that possibility for the states to impose their will and their interests in the international system.

## The contemporary security environment - features

Judging by the multiple power manifestations of the states, the international system is currently in full effervescence, with numerous crises and conflicts. Regarding the conflicts, it is simply

<sup>2</sup> Corneliu Bogdan, Eugen Preda, *Sferele de influență*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986, pp. 16-17.

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enough to point out to what is currently happening in Ukraine, in Syria and in Iraq (the aggressive actions of the Islamic State), and regarding the crises, we can only think about the Middle East or the South China Sea area.

Today, at global level, we are in a period full of dynamism, uncertainties and controversies, in which human conflictuality may result in a systemic crisis, also enhanced by the lack of will of the great powers to find a solution for the international relations system after the end of bipolarity and the United States of America failure in adjusting the operating mechanisms of the world as a single hegemon.

In contemporary politology it is considered that these crises and conflicts, frequent in the past few years, have a massive impact on the international relations and that they will determine the changing of the international order.

The current security environment is the result of the major changes at the end of the XX century and at the beginning of the XXI century: the disintegration of the USSR and the disappearance of the bipolar system, the fall of communism and of the Iron Curtain, the extension to the east of the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations and, last but not least, the imposition of the US as unique hegemon.

On the other hand, the unique hegemon status of the US is on its way down, under the circumstances in which the United States no longer have the force required to solve the major problems faced by the whole world, while their contenders are more and more visible, desiring to impose a multipolar system for ruling the world.

As a whole, the multipolarity flag remains enthusiastically raised by the most of those who take part in the debate on foreign affairs. The formula in itself has become a figure of speech, automatically adopted by everyone. Multipolarity seems to be an almost absolute asset, but no one seems to take into account the contradictions and challenges which it involves.

It is often emphasized that, in fact, unipolarity is nothing but a myth or even an illusion, and the changing of the current international system is inevitable. This idea starts from the fact that despite their power the United States are no longer able to manage problems at the global level without the massive involvement of other important actors. Furthermore, the trends of economic growth can

be used to estimate a relative strengthening of the competitors of the USA, which increases their influence to counter that of the Americans.

The dichotomy "unipolarity versus multipolarity" is nowadays more like a typical feature of the Russian rhetoric on foreign affairs which may be compared, taking into account a trademark analogy, to a well-sold consumer product, especially in academic circles and less in the political - military ones of the great powers of the world. An analysis on a higher intellectual level would use slightly different concepts to capture the special features of the contemporary world and of its international political agenda. At this level, questions gain depth, which means that the answers to them will not come easy in these times of systemic crisis, which can be labeled as a return to the one that took place during the Cold War, if not even more serious.

The future could replace multipolarity with a new bipolarity, whose key actors would be the United States and the People's Republic of China. Optimistically looking at things, Russia would have such an opportunity to play a decisive role in helping to maintain the equilibrium between these two actors, which would determine them to consider it as a partner of primary importance. Pessimists are concluding that Russia would have no choice but to accept the task of a less important partner of one or another of poles.

The complexity of the contemporary security environment is given by mutual interconnection and influencing of a number of phenomena with a disturbing character on the states' and individuals security. This is a fundamental feature of the current security environment, taking into account that threats, until recently considered classics, have increased their efficiency by making complex connections with asymmetrical phenomena/events or with unconventional ones. For instance, the terrorism threat is patented by the expansion of religious extremism, especially in states in which their national governments have failed in the attempt to control the population on their whole territory. On the background of the security vacuum created by the lack of state control, organized crime has flourished, exporting insecurity to adjacent or remote areas.

In the current context, a significant deterioration occurred in the international security environment,



mainly caused by the amplification of the conventional and hybrid threats and risks. The phenomena of major intensification of the existing crisis are considered to be sources of major danger, of possible outbreak of frozen or latent conflicts and the recourse to military means, in order to promote national interests. All these represent major challenges to the international community and to its ability to efficiently administer political crises with the diplomatic, military and economic means at its disposal.

The tendency of overlapping traditional forms of risks and threats (generated by conventional military confrontations, terrorism, organized crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) with new forms (cybernetic attacks) is more and more accentuated, potentiated by the scientific and technical progress and by the effects of generalized use of IT&C in the modern society.

At the same time, the restructuring of the international relations system is based on the expression of some political, economic and military developments that constitute themselves as the dominant of the contemporary security situation:

- the increase of the relevance of some new major state players at global level - countries which are part of the BRICS forum for cooperation and dialog;

- divergent manifestations of some European states and trends of their dissociation in approaching major problems at the European Union level (example: crisis in Greece);

- the current context, in which the Russian Federation has made recourse to the use of means of force for supporting geopolitical interests at global level, with major effects at regional level, changes the paradigm of Euro-Atlantic security constituting the main challenge to the allies and, at the same time, a fast conversion requirement of NATO, in order to adapt to the new realities.

- the enhance of the terrorist phenomenon on the background of geopolitical instability in the MENA area; the unprecedented rise of terrorist groups with claims to state organization (the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant - ISIL);

- the increase of immigration flows from the conflict areas to the states of Europe and the intensification of this problem for developed countries in Europe;

- the existence of frozen conflicts with potential

of reactivation and export of instability.

### **Features of the security environment in Romania's area of interest**

By carefully analyzing everything that happened within the international system in the past few years and the moves of the world's major powers on "the great chessboard", it appears that Russia, through its movements, surprised, at some extent, the West, which seemed not ready for that. But it is more unlikely to witness today a strategic surprise, as we witnessed during the Cold War. On the other hand, is Russia really ready, despite its plans, to be the banner of the world changing or is it just a "joker" in the "king's" hand, pursuing the harvesting of fruits? Does it have the required skills to carry out what it has started or it will collapse under its own weakness, letting the silent ones take advantage out of this? Future generations will have the opportunity to find the answers to these questions, as today's world has become extremely unpredictable.

The challenges generated, in the last period, by the Russian Federation question a major feature of the current security environment, until recently fully accepted by analysts in the field, the one represented by the lack of a major conflict between the main powers of the contemporary world. The intervention of the Russian Federation in Ukraine and Moscow's use of military operations for the purpose of a wide force demonstration, in order to show it has enough power to successfully make use of the force of weapons in order to preserve its interests, make us re-evaluate the possibility of occurrence of a major global confrontation.

The new developments in the Extended Black Sea Area emphasize important transnational and global threats, representing the main challenge for the allies and, at the same time, a requirement for fast and deep transformation of the security structures of the states in the eastern flank of the Alliance in order to reduce vulnerabilities and to protect themselves against the hybrid threat that has occurred in the new context. Thus, we can say that, in the Extended Black Sea Area, two main types of threats to the European continent are currently articulated: the Russian Federation actions for recovering its status of a big power and the extremist actions potentiated by the emergent Islamic radicalism.

The Russian Federation is aggressively building and affirming its national security objectives,



having to resist the attempts by some actors of international environment to counteract its plans of transformation into a global power, whose actions to be directed toward the maintaining of strategic stability and of the mutually beneficial partnership relations, in a multipolar world, to keep them from fulfilling its national interests, of weakening its positions in Europe, Middle East, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, as well as into the Asia-Pacific region. Practically, we are witnessing and, unfortunately, just watching a complex game, with many important actors, multiple interests and variables, some of them not at all predictable.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Russian Federation has taken several measures ever since the beginning of the 90s such as: reinforcing the economic and political domination over an area that came out under its influence after the fall of USSR by the creation of a counterbalance to the advantages of European integration: Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan have signed the Agreement for the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union; the penetration of western economies with oligarchs created by the "national will", to whom clear assignments were established; the quick volume increase of foreign investments through companies and banks with Russian capital; the attraction of Western capital to the Russian market and its representatives transformation in pressure groups against Western governments prepared to take diplomatic measures or even sanctions against Russia; the developing of energy dependency of the European Union economy of the resources originating in Russia; the creation of some zonal and European Union tensions; the development of "economic race horses" with global vocation, prepared to influence economic policies at international level, and with skills of generating (at order) sectoral crisis with negative implications on western economies: Rosneft, Gazprom, Lukoil (the events in Romania which had into attention problems in the middle of the Lukoil company would be expected to take into account a reconsideration of economic construction in our country, especially of the activity in the energy sector, where a strong vulnerability in the past twenty-five years has been developed); the attraction of China in the "energy trap" by strengthening the partnership with it, in important issues of global policy, but also in economic ones. Chinese economy has a chronic deficit of energy and will pretty much depend on

deliveries of Russian natural gas.

The Euro-Atlantic countries are becoming more and more worried about the Russian military potential, which would jeopardize safety, but, at the same time, Europe is dependent on the energy resources of Russia, and the energy policy of the latter is still extending geographically through the launching of new energy projects, the South Stream, North Stream and Blue Stream.

The new geopolitical realities are imposing to Moscow several aspects on which the Kremlin leaders do not agree. These include issues related to installing of the American antimissile shield on the European territory (some of its components will be installed in Romania, at Deveselu), the American military bases on the Black Sea in Bulgaria and Romania, the pro-West orientation of Georgia and Ukraine and the increasing influence of the United States in the Caucasus area. It is expected that, in the near future, the Russian Federation will try the destabilization of the Baltic Countries and Moldavia, with the contribution of the Russian ethnic population, after the model patented in Ukraine.

A lack of real cooperation between the United States and the European Union, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand, for the purpose of seeking solutions to solve the Ukrainian problem may lead, in several specialists' opinion, to a new arms race, which seems to be more and more likely, in accordance with the conditions in which Russia is developing programmes for weapons and technologies of the fifth and even sixth generation. It is to be expected that, together with this eventual arms race, a new Cold War between the West and Russia might appear. It is obvious that the great powers will be those to take advantage of it, and the smaller countries would be the ones to take the "blame".

Referring to interests, Russia has its own interests in the former Soviet republics, in Asia, as well as in the Muslim and Arab world, in the economic, commercial and security fields. Its ambition of being a great power determines it to strengthen its positions in these regions.

It does not leave and does not turn its back to the West for that it is needed, but, in exchange, it takes advantage of the weakening of the American positions, in order to strengthen its own. The current tensions in Russia's relations with western countries strengthen in the Kremlin leaders the idea



to redirect to Asia (see contacts undertaken lately by Russia with countries of this area of the world, such as: China, Turkey and India, with converging interests in certain economic and military sectors) and, in a lesser extent, to the Muslim and Arab world as alternatives for it. Its multiple initiatives did not have the expected results. As for the speech on its contribution to the dialog between civilizations, its credibility is greatly reduced by the fact that it does not appear in the big current files as a credible security supplier, the proven brutality in Chechnya, the Georgia folder, Ukrainian folder, the Transnistrian one and the annexation of Crimea.

At the level of strategic interests, Russia is considering a change in the situation of the Heartland, by the strategic re-organizing of all spaces surrounding the country, in order to have direct access to vital geographical objectives, especially to ports, warm seas and resources. It is also taken into account the decrease of American influence in these areas, the prevention of construction of American military bases in these territories and the prevention of integration in NATO of some of the countries which were once part of USSR and who have expressed their desire to embrace Euro-Atlantic values (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia).

Economic constraints and the sanctions imposed by the Euro-Atlantic community weigh much on the ambition Russian leaders. These make Russia not a great self-sufficient power, with a weight in the world, but a mid-range power, which needs the outer world to diversify and modernize its economy and whose interest is to establish international positions relying on reliable partners. What is happening in Russia, as a consequence of the measures taken by the West against it in cases like Crimea and Ukraine, could make the Russian President Vladimir Putin modify the current trajectory, but the internal support, which he still has, is helping him to maintain his position. Regarding the problem of the Republic of Moldova and its integration into Romania, it is stated the idea that *as long as the Romanian state is a NATO member and it is a part of the "sanitary belt", built by atlantists against Heartland, such integration will not be possible, as it brings prejudice to Russia's strategic interests*<sup>3</sup>. Practically, Russia acts to neutralize the integration

of Moldova in Romania using multiple means. Parliamentary elections at the end of November 2014 have shown massive Moscow support for the political pro-Russian groups on the left bank of the Prut River.

Is it only ideal, or may it be a reality as well, that Romania expresses and makes viable its security interests in a geopolitical environment near or beyond its national borders, an environment of interests for NATO, for the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union, Turkey and the People's Republic of China? The answer may be affirmative, but to do this, what we call 'national will' has to behave in such a way as to be possible to build an Intermarium zone of stability, peace and prosperity, an area in which Romania to become a major player.

### Conclusions

As much as the symptoms of the factors forming the security environment have a higher degree of interconnectivity, its complexity increases, causing the main security challenge of the contemporary world.

The strategic opportunities which Romania has at its disposal in order to make viable its interests in the geopolitical environments where it manifests, may be: to promote and encourage regional cooperation; re-updating the dialog concerning the NATO/EU strategy on the Extended Black Sea Area; to promote the country's interests in the decision-making processes of the North Atlantic Alliance in respect of the present challenges of regional security environment; participation to the conceptual and operational development of policy of common security and defense of the EU; development of strategic partnerships; involvement in the process of deployment and development of NATO and EU policies in the Balkan area, in Caucasus, in Central Asia and in the Middle East; development of some energy projects of both European and even global interest in the Extended Black Sea Area; involvement in consolidation of interests of the states in the Black Sea area in the development of some regional security mechanisms and support in the field of reform of security; defining and explicit assumption of strategic objectives of the national security on the segment of its military operationalization and affirmation.

<sup>3</sup> Aleksandr Dughin, *Teoria lumii multipolare. Compendiu*, translation and foreword by Iurie Roșca, Popular University, Chișinău, 2014, p. 193.



### Acknowledgement:

This work was possible with the financial support of the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013, co-financed by the European Social Fund, under the project number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/138822 with the title **"Transnational network of integrated management of intelligent doctoral and postdoctoral research in the fields of Military Science, Security and Intelligence, Public order and National Security – Continuous formation programme for elite researchers – "SmartSPODAS"."**

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