

**T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER BİLİM DALI**

THE MILITARY EVOLUTION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

(SECURITY CHALLENGES 2004-2017)

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

IULIANA OPREA

KOCAELİ 2018

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ABSTRACT

THE MILITARY EVOLUTION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

SECURITY CHALLENGES 2004-2017

The study will focus on the evolution of the military factor from the Black Sea region starting with 2004. After this date two more countries from the Black Sea region, Romania and Bulgaria became NATO members and together with Turkey and Russia contribute to the military activity from the region. This research will analyze the military evolution and the military balance from the Black Sea region for a period of thirteen years. All the alliances, partnerships, projects, collaborations along with disputes and tensioned moments will be presented in detail in this study. There will be paid a special importance to the 2014 moment when Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine. Moreover, there will be evidenced the geostrategic importance of the Black Sea together with the Russian – NATO dispute over the region.

Keywords: Black Sea, military, geostrategic, Russia, evolution, NATO

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP: National Annual Program of Ukraine

AKP: Justice and Development Party (Turkey)

BA: Bachelor Degree

BBCIC: Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Center

BDI: Border Defence Institute

BLACKSEAFOR: Black Sea Naval Task Force

BSEC: Black Sea Economic Cooperation

BTA: Bulgarian Telegraph Agency

BTS: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

CSAT: Supreme Defense Council of the Country (Romania)

DCI: Drum Corps International

DIM: Military Intelligence Directorate

ENP: European Neighbourhood Policy

En-En Strategy: Engagement and Enlargement Strategy

ESDP: European Security and Defense Policy

EU: European Union

GAO: Government Accountability Office

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

IAR: Romanian Aeronautic Industry

IFOR: Implementation Force

IMF: International Monetary Fund

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force

IS: Islamic State

JSF: Joint Strike Fighter

KFOR: Kosovo Forces

LANDCOM: Allied Land Command

MAP: Membership Action Plan

MAPN: Ministry of National Defense (Romania)

MEDIAFAX: Romanian Media Company

MIG: Mikoian-Gurevici (Soviet Aircraft)

Mov Con MILU: The Multinational Integrated Logistic Unit for Movement Control

NAC: The North Atlantic Council

NACC: North Atlantic Cooperation Council

NATINADS: NATO Integrated Nationwide Defense System

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCS: NATO Command Structures

NFS: NATO Force Structure

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NSIP: NATO Security Investment Program

NUC: NATO Ukraine Commission

OBSH: Operation Black Sea Harmony

OPEC: Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

PARP: Partnership Asses and Review Process

PCC: Prague Capability Commitment

PDSR: Romanian Party of Social Democracy

PfP: Partnership for Peace Program

PG: Partnership Goals

PPBES: Planning, Programming, Budgeting Evaluation System

SECI: South East European Cooperation Initiative

SFOR: The Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina

SP MAGTF-CR: Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crises Response

SRI: Romanian Information Service

START: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

UN: United Nations

USA: United States of America

US: United States



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INTRODUCTION

This work attempts to unravel the military evolution from the Black Sea region. The research focuses on the geostrategic importance of the Black Sea region for its neighbors for a period of 13 years, from 2004 until 2017. The Black Sea region represents a bridge between Europe and the Middle East, from the Eastern Balkans to the South Caucasus. The nowadays geopolitical environment focuses on disputes between Russia and the West. In the past years, Western policymakers considerably neglected the strategies in the region, a chance well used by Russia for imposing its dominant strategy. This situation can be changed with the NATO member states' collective defense. Countries such as Romania and Turkey are directly involved in the NATO strategic approaches from the Black Sea region.

The study aims to present the geopolitical and geostrategic situation from the Black Sea region. It will be stressed the importance of the region and of its most important actors. Turkey and Russia, the old powers from the Black Sea region with the later joined NATO plus its relative new members, Romania and Bulgaria, will be presented distinctively in the following chapters. This work can be included in the International Relations and Political Science studies. More particularly, it can also be part of studies referring to the regional politics, security, military, and geopolitics as it covers these areas as well.

From a methodological perspective, it can be said that in the cause-effect context, some of the Black Sea regional states' desire for power domination represents the cause of all the military changes that had happened during the time since even the Cold War and the effect is participation to military alliance for collective security and defense. Moreover, following the same idea, the dependent variable is represented by the continuous change in developing the military of few countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Russia, and Ukraine) due to the changes in political regimes that occurred once the Soviet Union broke up. The independent variable is represented by the NATO enlargement and its policies applied to the region, more specifically, to some ex-Soviet countries.

The events and situations disputed are presented from a theoretical, descriptive, analytic and a historical perspective. The period of time presented is generally focused on the events that had happened since the beginning of the 21st century, until 2017, stressing on the moment when Crimea was illegally annexed in 2014 by Russia. This work is written from a historical perspective, a short introduction of the past events will be presented as well. Moreover, in order to make us understand the events that have happened in this period of thirteen years, a short introduction with the most important events from the past centuries will be presented as well. The geostrategic factor was also used for determine the main actors' direct involvement in the Black Sea region's politics. This research mainly focuses on the Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Turkish, Russian and NATO's participation in the Black Sea region's geopolitics. Short ideas about Caucasus and Middle East regions will be found too, these regions being included in the work only for linking some ideas to the main topic.

This research is written using the realism theory's principles. Since the beginning of theoretical concerns in international relations' field, the fundamental debate opposed the realism theory to the liberal (idealistic) theory and, of course, to all the other theories that have had the same theoretic basis as this (e.g. internationalist idealism). This division used by most researches in the field, includes all the other theoretical alternatives that have emerged within this discipline. The debate between the two schools or traditions has marked the last four centuries and continues today as animated as ever. However, discussing the theories of international relations today only through this dichotomy will not satisfy the entire current conceptual effort, but will only highlight the existing cleavage lines.

Applying this vision to the reality of our century, the realism sees the national-states as the main actors on the international political arena because they do not obey any other political authority. Moreover, the conflict of interests between these international actors is understood as inevitable. The realism underlines the way the realities of the international politics rules the options of those who establishes the states' foreign policies in rational perspective. The states are the fundamental actors of the world's arena. The aim of the state structures is assuring national survival in a hostile environment. According to this, the most important aim is getting the power.

Also, there is no principle as valid as the *self-help* one – securing the state's independence through its own resources for defense purposes and for exclusive promotion of its interests.

The state sovereignty is the fundamental element of the international relations and law, offering the head of state the freedom and in the same time the responsibility to do whatever is necessary for promoting the state's interests. Taking into considerations the moral principle is a harmful interference for the *rational* approach of the related matters to the nation's interest and power. For those supporting the realism, the interference of different ideologies' values in the manner of creation a state policy cannot be accepted. The ideological values and preferences of a state cannot be good or bad, all that matters is the fact that they serve or not the state's own interests. According to this vision, the international politics arena is dominated by anarchical actors that are permanently fighting for power.

Following this idea, Thomas Hobbes said that the international politics is a permanent struggle for power, a war of all against all. According to realism, there is no human sin more relevant and permanent than the one linked to the desire for power and domination over the others. In realism, the fundamental duty of any state that evolves in international arena is to promote the *national interest* through achieving power. Moreover, the same theory says that the anarchic nature of the international system impose military capabilities development to rejection and discouragement level of any potential enemy. The economy is less relevant than the military power from the national security's perspective but it plays a significant role for the national prestige and power. At the same time, the allies can increase the capacity of state defence, but their loyalty and availability – credibility - should not be overestimated.

The concept of power in international relations is used in this research. Therefore, it is known that political power is a subsystem of the social power with a determinant role in the regulation and functioning of social life, representing the ability of some groups of people to impose their will in the organization and overall leadership of society. Whether it is defined as a global power exerted within the community in order to organize, maintain and defend it, or it as a form of social energy mobilization for social purposes, political power represents a decision-making and

control capacity at the society level. Political decisions ensure the functioning of society and the balance of its various fields.

G.Burdeau argues that the function of political power is to determine a common good. Every nation in every stage of its evolution has its own common good that corresponds to its structure, its needs and its maturity degree. In his opinion, justice and order are some constants of the common good that does not change. R. Dahl says that political power is a ratio between actors, one of which has the ability to force the other to do certain things they would not otherwise do. Power implies factual inequality. The actors are equal, but they are actually unequal. He argues that in practice equality does not exist, because the actors tend to face one who is stronger than them. H. Lasswell and M. Kaplan believe that power is a special case of exerting influence. The meaning that the two authors together with Dahl give the term power is *coercion*. Fear of sanctions plays an important role in obedience to power.

Over the last few years, international relations in the wider Black Sea region have become particularly complex and sensitive. The recent and classical literature has constantly brought the Black Sea to the forefront of research and its geopolitical relevance. I consider that the topic of this work is important for the nowadays political context from the Black Sea region. Taking into the consideration the involvement of more regional actors, the present work can be perceived as a possible addition to the Black Sea regional studies.

There are few research centers focused on studying the Black Sea region, interested in the future on the regions' politics. The *International Center for Black Sea Studies* is one of them and it was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organization (International Centre for Black Sea Studies). It is presented as being an independent research and training institution focused on the Black Sea region and a part of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (International Centre for Black Sea Studies). Other institutions interested in the same field are *Competence Center for Black Sea Region Studies*, *International Black Sea University Centers*, *Center for Black Sea Region Geopolitical Research* and *International Centre for Black Sea Studies*. All of them elaborate researches about the Black Sea Region's geopolitics and organize conferences on different subjects.

The sources of information used for creating this work are by their nature qualitative. They were selected according to the topic approached in this research from a wide range of other possibilities. Moreover, the sources were chosen as well due to their suitability and reliability of data. According to the actual subject presented in this work, there were used primary resources provided by conference proceedings or declarations, but secondary resources were the dominant sources used to elaborate this work. Between them I can mention journal articles, PhD thesis, articles, reports and articles in periodicals, all of them being purchased from the internet. The events were presented in evolution; firstly presenting them from a historical perspective, then passing to recent situations that were important for the politics of the Black Sea region. For elaborating this research, there were used only free (not classified) written sources, most of them from web sites with political content. The work is written from a historical perspective with a descriptive and thematic analysis.

Catalin Iulian Balog presents in his study named *Security and balance in the wider Black Sea Region* the main political issues from the region. Although his work covers the whole Black Sea region, there are presented some important ideas about Turkey, Romania, NATO and Russia. I found his work interesting and original because points of view such as “political actors from the Black Sea region expand their issues to a regional level in order to transform them into crisis of their neighbors too” and “Russian efforts to keep its influence in the region” cannot be found in any other study. The author is an expert in issues regarding the national security in Romanian Ministry of Defense. His sources of information include official documents and conference proceedings (primary sources) and some other secondary sources from articles regarding the same topic. This work is a very accessible lecture for those interested in the politics from the Black Sea region and it provides important information and an original way to analyze the issues.

Mitat Çelikpala presented in the work named *Security in the Black Sea Region* the characteristics of the security related questions in the Black Sea. The ideas important for this work target the Turkish position in the Black Sea region having NATO by its side and Russia against them. The subject is presented in an original manner because it offers some ideas about possible tensioned moments as a result of competition between the non-regional actors. The work also presents the BLACKSEAFOR and

Turkish role played inside of this initiative. The study successfully reached its aims and it represents an important work for the regional studies. Unfortunately, the research might not be that easy for a person without knowledge in this field. There is a lack of providing the sources of information used for the report.

F. Stephen Larrabee and Stephen J. Flanagan focused mainly of the Russia presence and its ambitions in the Black Sea region in their article named *The Growing Importance of the Black Sea Security*. I could not find in their work so much originality, their ideas and events presented could be found easily in some other sources. Besides this, the article provides important information regarding the Russian intentions for growing its military presence in the region. Although the text provided only little important information, it followed a logic course of presenting the topic. The sources of information used are not exposed in this case as well.

In his PhD thesis, Rosu Marius approaches the geopolitical considerations concerning the wider Black Sea region. His research contains a wide range of issues present in the region but important for my work were the Russian changes in the regional security paradigm. I consider that this idea is presented in a very original and direct way, being very useful for the other researchers in developing their studies about the same topic. The work contributes to the studies about geopolitics and security in the Black Sea region and it is addressed to all those interested to improve their knowledge in this area. The author successfully conducted the research in a logic and very clear way. The sources of information varies from primary to secondary including books, articles, reports and some other studies written on the same topic.

In the article *Importance of the Black Sea Region: A Brief History*, Boris Toucas presents historical events that are important for understanding the recent situation in the Black Sea region. Generally, the author focuses on the relation between Turkey and Russia and their disputes in the region in the past centuries. Although this article seems that it has no originality due to all the historical information that can be found in some other sources, the originality is actually given by the way the author connects the past with the present trying to understand the origins of the recent issues. I consider that the article is very well written, following the theoretical perspectives in a logic manner. The text is accessible to all kind of readers but is

addressed especially to those who want to learn more things about this topic. The sources of information are however, unknown.

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CHAPTER I

1. GEOPOLITICS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The determinant character of the Black Sea region for the European security has given it the name of the new Border of Europe. The new border defines new geostrategic dimensions: NATO member countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey) to the west and south, and the states of the CIS to the north and east. The extended Black Sea area includes the three Caucasian countries: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, determined by the region's existence of the Eurasian energy corridor linking Central Asia with the Euro-Atlantic community. There are also the natural commercial corridors: the Danube, the Dniester and the Dnieper, which connect the associated territories to the region.

As the Black Sea is the border of Europe, the security of this continent cannot be achieved as long as the Black Sea region remains unstable. It must be taken into consideration the fact that the region identifies itself with the Eurasian energy corridor, which allows the transfer of oil and gas reserves from the Caspian Sea and the Central Asian states to the Western states. The existing local conflicts, as well as the external threats, can endanger the security and stability of the region. Foreign threats can come from international terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, organized crime, human trafficking, drugs, and illegal migration. There is a high load of tensions and unrelated relationships in the region, accumulated in time and space. Improving relations can only be achieved in the context of modernizing and democratizing riparian states, respecting the values and principles of democracy, human rights and the internationalization of the Black Sea.

The neighbourhood of the EU and NATO will boost the expansion of the market economy and the values of democracy throughout the analyzed space. Many analysts

concerned with the geopolitics of the Black Sea believe that this space is characterized by a series of vulnerabilities. According to them, one of the main issues is the inequality between the regional countries (Helene, 1993, p. 53). This involves besides the various cultural and political aspects specific to the region, the contrast of development steps taken in the studied countries. This aspect is very important because all these developmental differences can affect in a negative way the process these countries' integration to NATO and EU.

The main threats found in the region are those belonging to states passing from totalitarianism to democracy. The old regimes have deep roots in these countries' history (Helene, 1993, p. 53) and in the following there will be given few examples of the main vulnerabilities of the region.

- The former Communist states found themselves falling in a “geostrategic vacuum,” a situation they tried to get out from by following an internal and external transition process. (Cristina, 2008).
- Not finalizing this process in social, economic or political fields. Economic analyzes (Apud AKINCI, 2004, pp. 57-64) show that people's life quality is way worse than the period when they were governed by the Soviets
- The significant differences of religion, cultures and ethnicity of the region. (Helene, 1993, p. 53)An example for this case is represented by Turkey's old tensioned links with Georgia and Abkhazia.
- The legal incapability of standing and fighting against corruption and organized crime. (Helene, 1993, p. 53)
- The presence of some regional governments that have not finished their process of applying to EU or NATO integration (Moldavian and Ukrininan example (Cristina, 2008)
- The presence of some interest in the region that aims to re-establish Russian influence in the region, competing with the regional countries' desires for EU and NATO integration. (Helene, 1993, p. 53)

- The countries unwished dependence on the natural resources coming from Russia. (Vladimir, 2006, p. 9).

Following these ideas, it can be seen that the administration from the Black Sea area is a sensitive aspect. This situation can be understood by the concern showed by the most powerful international security organizations to the states from this region. However, there is a possibility creating separation lines through the simultaneity of two processes that are taking place in the Black Sea region: on the one hand, the integration of the regional countries in NATO and the EU, and on the other hand, Russia's pressure for integration of the former Soviet States in the CIS (Helene, 1993, pp. 47-75). In this context, good governance must be the main aspiration of the countries in the region. Its realization is only possible by completing the transition from totalitarianism to the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, through joint projects promoting liberalization, the privatization of markets and the creation of an attractive investment environment and, last but not least, the initiation of some programs and projects aimed at accelerating the integration of states into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, improving strategies to prevent and combat new risks and threats to the region.

The Concept of Wider Black Sea Region was initiated in a work by researchers Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson in 2004 (Ronald D. & Bruce P., 2004, p. 11). The geopolitical and geostrategic position that the region occupies in relation to the major the great powers that are structuring the international relations structure and the European security circumstances – like the interests of the European Union states in easy access to Caspian energy resources, the demand to create a balanced and intelligible security habitat in the immediate vicinity of the Common European Space borders, the need of the United States and its allies within the international anti-terrorist coalition to use this region as a support point in anti-terrorist campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan – is strongly imposed on the international security agenda (Ronald D. & Bruce P., 2004, p. 11).

The region has also a number of vulnerabilities coming from ethno-religious rivalries; local territorial disputes; post-1990 local conflicts (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh); Russian-Ukrainian tensions, Kurdish-

Turkish tensions. On a socio-political level, the societies from the region have experienced different modernization rates: higher rates in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, Russia maintains a traditionalist footprint, Ukraine faces problems resulting from the East-West antagonisms, Turkey includes an important component of the Muslim type society and the Orange revolution in Ukraine have not led to the democratization process (Cristina, 2008).

In a era in which fuel represented mainly by oil supplies 40 percent of the global energy and over 90 percent of combustible carriage, the regional foreign affairs of oil controls the interest of the world authorities and is manifested in different ways, starting with partnerships, investment in the field, technical support, economic and financial aids, privatizations, preferential conditions, to forms that recall geostrategic, being ruled by the army, manifest and even equipped assaults. (Ronald D. & Bruce P., 2004, p. 20) The nowadays situation presents so unexpected political constructions: the anti-terrorist coalition, where the reasons surrounding the participants are weak, and where each one perceives in different way the *terrorism* concept: the relations between US democracy and central Asian quasi-totalitarianism; Russian-Saudi approaches, approaches seen as impossible in the past years (Ronald D. & Bruce P., 2004, p. 20).

According to the past, the Black Sea region was seen as a bridge between the old powers such as the Ottoman and Russian Empires, and in the same time, at the intersection between the western with the eastern civilisations. Anyway, it is hard to discuss the influence of these cultures on the riparian states, as the geopolitical structure of the Black Sea area has been constantly changing. The last change occurred with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new states (Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) (Constantin, 2006). The Black Sea region is a highly dynamic geopolitical area. From this perspective, the Black Sea region is "a relatively small area, crossed over time by forces from the north-east (Russia via Ukraine and/or Georgia), south (Turkey) and west (European powers: France, Germany, Austria, Great Britain or countries like Romania and Bulgaria)" (Constantin, 2006, p. 88).

The importance of the Black Sea must be seen in the wider context of international relations (Dr. Federico, 2005). Globally, there are two main elements that coordinate

the policies of strategic actors, whether we are talking about states or international organizations: the need for energy resources and the threat of terrorist organizations. The geopolitical and security developments in the Black Sea region, the geographic position of the region, the risks, the existing threats and the advantages of political, economic and military cooperation have attracted the interest of European and transatlantic organizations, leading to a closer approach to the problems that this space is confronted with.

In the new geostrategic context, the influence of historical evolution represents a major factor in the configuration of the region's relationship with NATO and the European Union and in demonstrating the growing importance of this region. In the recent years, however, the Black Sea region has emerged globally as a transit area between Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East and Central and Western Europe. It should be mentioned that the South East Europe, including the Wider Black Sea, is the only European region in which the *frozen conflicts* still exist. First of all, all states in the region are united around fundamental values and interests that govern the evolution of current international relations such as: democracy, respect for human rights, free market economy and the fight against terrorism. Secondly, all states from this area are linked, in one way or another, with the Euro-Atlantic security structure (Vladimir, 2006, p. 7).

Once NATO and EU moved their borders to the Black Sea, the importance of this region has increased significantly. The internationalization of this region should be seen as a result of the changes in the regional security environment, generated by the growing membership in the values of democracy and the market economy, as well as the *frozen conflicts*, the risks, dangers and threats that arise from this space. The enlargement of NATO and the EU, the possible expansion of *Active Endeavour* in the Black Sea, as well as the strengthening of regional cooperation, are the main factors in the process of achieving a space of peace, security and prosperity. The world in which we live transforms, resizes. Conflict strategies are replaced by partnership strategies, expressed in economic, political cooperation, in international crisis management and conflict management. These do not exclude competition.

This is the reason why the states, the international organizations and bodies and the international community have increased their responsibility towards this aspect. This

trend is significantly manifested in the Wider Black Sea Region, a favourable space for strategic opportunities that has to be characterized by prosperity, stability and security. Currently, we are witnessing its transformation into a confluence area for the 21st century. The main components of the confluence in the Wider Black Sea Region are: the economic dimension, particularly in terms of energy resource management and access to resources, the political and military dimension and the security processes.

If consolidation is to be achieved in the Eurasian area, the process must begin in areas that once were confrontational. And one of these is the Wider Black Sea Region. The effect of this construction will be the transformation of the Black Sea Region into an area with a strengthened democracy that irradiates security and stability in the region. This strategy of transforming the Wider Black Sea Region into a pillar of security and stability is strengthened with the counter-terrorism strategy, with the active efforts of the South East European Cooperation Initiative - SECI and the Border Defence - BDI (Cristina, 2008).

The Black Sea has a strategic position: it is at the intersection between Europe and Asia, between Russia and the Middle East and directly links south-eastern Europe with Western Europe through the Danube and the Mediterranean, and nowadays NATO and EU enlargement has transformed it into a close neighbourhood of the great Euro-Atlantic powers. The Black Sea region is also important for the vast diversity of people and cultures that characterize riparian countries, a diversity that is both a source of conflict and a source of cultural enrichment. The economic factor, especially the natural resources that make the Black Sea an area of strategic interest, must not be forgotten either. There are some important reasons for linking the Black Sea region, the six riparian states, with the more far away regions of the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, when it comes to security issues (V., 1998, p. 112). The most important thing is that this area is a bridge for the various actors of the international arena, with distinct economic, political and strategic interests. In this context, the concept of the Black Sea region is a useful tool for describing and explaining the complexity of the dynamic relationships manifested here.

Over the years, Monroe Treaty has been the Black Sea stability guarantor on the status of the Black Sea straits, whose preserver is Turkey. Ankara is concerned that

US insistence could trigger talks on revising the article in the agreement that limits the terms of foreign ships' presence in Black Sea waters. But it is not excluded that if the US fails to consolidate itself in the Black Sea Basin under its own strand, the consolidation could be produced under the NATO banner of which Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria are part of. Russia or Turkey are not interested in the destruction of this balance of forces because of their increasingly independency in terms of foreign policy. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the refusal of the Turkish Parliament in March 2003 to allow US armed forces to enter Iraq from Turkish territory (Cristina, 2008).

As a supporter and initiator of the Black Sea Basin collaboration, Turkey is trying to use its independence factor and common history to strengthen the trust and the formation of good neighbourly relations. However, the orientation of Turkey's Black Sea policy to support the potential of BLACKSEAFOR remains unchanged. Together with Russia, Greece and a number of countries in the Black Sea Basin, Turkey is making significant efforts, including the expansion of regional economic cooperation as well.

1.2 THE MAIN REGIONAL ISSUES

There are two types of issues specific to the Black Sea region. The first one is represented by the interaction of the interests of the great powers and regional powers. This includes also the security areas of the great politic, economic and military powers: USA, NATO, EU, Russia and Turkey (Balog, 2009, p. 29). Actually, the most important political actors from the Black Sea region expand their issues to a regional level in order to transform them into crisis of their neighbours too. The states from the Black Sea region are very important for the European Union's politics because through their territories energetic resources are transported. For this reason, the European Union had promoted a series of initiatives for giving a new alternative to the states from the proximity, one of them being the Eastern Partnership (Balog, 2009, p. 29).

Russia, on the other hand, being aware of its global power with revisionist tendencies in the ex-Soviet space is confronting, at the same time, with the effects of the economic-financial crisis and with a crisis of self-definition of its international status (Balog, 2009, p. 29). The CIS, as a regional organization under the Russian rule, does not have the same importance as before, so many states turning to the EU. In this context, Russia is trying to keep its influence as a regional leader by political and economic means and is trying to create an economic and a politico-military bloc as a revive of the Soviet Union (Balog, 2009, p. 30). Turkey, on the other hand, is stuck between the Western institutions, economic flows and the collective Islamic identity (Balog, 2009, p. 30). Moreover, Turkey has a very important geostrategic position in the Black Sea. Its human and military potential made it a very important pillar for NATO.

The second problem of the Black Sea region is related to the instability of the political regimes that are also affected by economic problems. It should be mentioned the Black Sea is located at the meeting of three different geopolitical centers of influence: Euro-Atlantic, ex-soviet and the Middle East one (Balog, 2009, p. 30). Therefore, Moldavia and Ukraine found themselves between the Russian and Euro-Atlantic influence while Caucasus is disputed between Russia when the Middle East has Euro-Atlantic influences (Balog, 2009, p. 30). Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia are totally under the Russian control due to their economic dependence, confronting with separatist and interethnic conflicts and movements (Balog, 2009, p. 30).

1.3 THE GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE REGION

In 2014, the global attention focused of the Russian illegal action from Crimea. The reason was the strategic importance of the region, a bridge between the two former empires, the Ottoman and the Russian one, accompanied by the European powers involvement (Toucas, 2017). It is important to understand the present context by analyzing the region's history. The conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire that ended in 1774 by signing the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca allowed Russian access to the Black Sea region (Toucas, 2017). Later on, in 1783, Russia

became an increasing power in the Black Sea region compared to the Ottomans after it annexed Crimea and established Sevastopol city (Toucas, 2017).

The region was marked in the 19th century by the Crimean War between the Ottomans and Russia during the period of 1853-1856 (Toucas, 2017). The Ottoman Empire was supported by the French and the British for fighting against Russia and for diminishing its power in the region. The World War I was seen in the Black Sea's history as a dispute for the Turkish straits, Bosphorus and Dardanelles (Toucas, 2017). Russian goal in the war was to take the control over the two straits, so important for the Russian economy.

The end of the World War I brought the end of the Russian and Ottoman Empire and the Lausanne Treaty created the Turkish Republic in 1923. According to the Montreux Convention from 1936, the two straits were legally accorded to the Turkish control. It also permitted free passage of warships belonging to any Black Sea state not in conflict with Turkey (Toucas, 2017). The other non Black Sea states were not allowed to send their military ships to the Black Sea.

At the end of the World War II, in 1946, a new conflict raised in the region, having again the main actors Russia and Turkey. At that time, Russia was demanding to share the control over the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. The moment was named the Turkish Straits Crisis and the Soviet Union increased its military presence in the Black Sea. Moreover, it also asked Turkey to allow the setting of a Russian military base on the Turkish territory (Toucas, 2017). Forced by circumstances, Turkey asked for American help and immediately U.S. warships were sent to the region.

Although Russia stepped back, the moment was a very representative one for the Truman Doctrine, which aimed to diminish the Soviet threat from the Mediterranean by giving to Turkey and Greece the status of NATO members in 1952 (Toucas, 2017). The Cold War period was dominated by a tensioned balance in the Black Sea region. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Western powers stopped seeing the region geostrategically important, but Russia still kept an eye on it for its future plans (Toucas, 2017).

Later on Crimea became a factor of tensions between Ukraine and Russia. Although Crimea was given as a gift by the Soviet Union to Ukraine in 1954, Russia

maintained its military troops and infrastructure in Sevastopol, the most important base for the military operations of the Black Sea Fleet (Toucas, 2017). After the Soviet Union has collapsed, more than 160,000 soldiers and members of military staff forced Kyiv to give a legal status to Sevastopol (Toucas, 2017). However, at that time there were some nationalist movements for Crimea in Moscow and by coming together with the Crimean officials, they started pressuring Kyiv for gaining autonomy. In 1997, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was divided between Russia (81%) and Ukraine (19%) according to the Ukraine-Russia Friendship Treaty (Toucas, 2017).

1.4. ROMANIA AND THE BLACK SEA

The Russian economic and political influence wanted to spread also to Romania, the NATO ally from the western shore of the Black Sea. For this reason, Romanian government was happy to welcome the U.S. military presence on its territory and provide them a place for establishing *the first operational land-based NATO missile defense site* (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016). Romania is the U.S.'s biggest and the most capable ally from the Black Sea region and represents the anchor of stability and promotion of the democratic values among its NATO member's neighbours (Miron, 2015).

Romania represents a stabile political actor in the Black Sea region. For reaching this status, it needed a long period of time to recover after the fall of Communist regime in 1989. Moreover, significant political changes in the internal system and the geostrategic advantages made it gain the membership with full rights in the European Union and NATO. Being placed in an important geopolitical and strategic area, Romania aims to play an important role in cooperation for the NATO stabilizing politics in the Black Sea region.

From a military point of view, Romania has used the opportunity to go to the sea to develop a competitive military fleet that takes part in missions under the aegis of NATO. The Black Sea was also used as a transit route for troops sent to the Middle East in the context of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the retreat also use a

Black Sea route in 2014. Being an actual subject, the Black Sea strategic importance is so kept at a high level not only in Romania or in riparian states, but even at global level, where major powers, like the USA, are developing cooperation plans in the region.

For Romania, the Black Sea neighbourhood can be an important asset in energy development, not just by extracting resources from the continental platform, but by participating in interconnected energy projects. Moreover, beyond the economic nature, the Romanian state will benefit from deep cooperation at regional level, thus ensuring both the stability of its own Eastern border and that of the Euro-Atlantic structure. All this, if Romania knows how to play well the cards it has.

1.5 TURKEY AND THE BLACK SEA

Turkey has a very important geostrategic position in the Black Sea. Its human and military potential made it a very important pillar for NATO. The end of 2015 brought a wave of tensions between Turkey and Russia when a Russian fighter jet was shot down by the Turkish army for violating the Turkish airspace. Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed his concern about the Russian military activities in the Black Sea region and called for NATO to increase its troops in the area for preventing Russian power spreading all over the region (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016).

The Black Sea Naval Co-Operation Task Group-BLAKSEAFOR was created in 2001 as a naval cooperation program following the Turkish initiative (BLACKSEAFOR). Firstly, it was made up by six Black Sea countries: Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Turkey, Russian Federation and Ukraine. Due to the last tensions from the region, the cooperation passed to a passive mode. By reviving this project, the NATO states and the not member ones will come together again to cooperate in the Black Sea against any possible danger, expected mostly from the Russian side (Horrell, 2016, p. 5).

Turkey represents a significant regional power in the Black Sea region. The actual AKP administration will continue to follow its *good neighbourhood policy* (The

Black Sea Region: New Cooperations, Enduring Interests, 2009, p. 8). The countries from the Black Sea region and their security strategies represent *the third factor* with important chances to affect the regional security agreements (Çelikpala, p. 12). The biggest concern of the regional actors is related to the possible future tensioned moments as a result of competition between the non-regional actors.

One example in this case is Turkey, a very important ally of NATO, has developed in time several particular policies towards Russia. After the September 11 events when the security environment had faced a change, Turkey opposed U.S. policies regarding Iraq. Moreover, the tensions accumulated between Russia and NATO made Turkey adopt some cautious policies in the Black Sea region context. “In order to prevent the existing and operational initiatives (e.g. BSEC, Black Sea Naval Task Force (BLACKSEAFOR) and Operation Black Sea Harmony (OBSH)) from being damaged as a result of the emerging rivalry, Turkey has chosen to defend the status quo”. (Çelikpala)

1.5.1 Role and Turkey's position in the Black Sea Region

Turkey and Russia

In 1999 some improvements could be seen in the relation between Turkey and Russia when the Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit visited Moscow. One year later, the Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visited Ankara and in 2001, both, the Turkish and the Russian ministers of Foreign Affairs signed “Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia from Bilateral Cooperation towards Multidimensional Partnership”. Through this document, it was determined to increase the cooperation in the Eurasian region and a Joint Working Group was created (Turkey's Political Relations With Russian Federation, 2011). The ministers of foreign affairs of both Turkey and Russia signed the *2004-2005 Consultations Programme*. A turning point in the Turkish-Russian relations was in December 2004 when Putin, the President of the Russian Federation (Turkey's Political Relations With Russian Federation, 2011), came to Turkey for an official visit. That was considered as the first official meeting in the Turkish-Russian after the one of the

Chairman of the Presidium, Podgorny, in 1972 (Turkey's Political Relations With Russian Federation, 2011).

1.5.1.1 Turkey's maritime security in the Black Sea Region

The study of Turkey's maritime security will start with a short introduction about the initiative BLACKSEAFOR. This project was set in 1998, but the founding documents were signed three years later in Istanbul. A special importance was granted to BLACKSEAFOR after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The participant countries in this initiative were all the Black Sea littoral countries: Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia. At its very beginning, the aim of this project cooperation was humanitarian aid, search and rescue operations, but later on, it included the prevention of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trafficking and organized crime. (Sophia, 2015)

In 2003 the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre (BBCIC) was found for defending information-sharing about abusive maritime operations in the Black Sea basin. (Sophia, 2015) Turkey started another project in 2004, named Operation Black Sea Harmony, aiming to improve the interoperability and the competence of the Black Sea littoral countries to respond to different and continuous changing security threats. (Zeyno, 2008, pp. 88-89) The government from Ankara saw the Black Sea's maritime security as the main goal of the littoral countries. Moreover, solving some other issues could give the possibility of a wider representation. (Zeyno, 2008, p. 90) Therefore, all these projects had a common goal, bringing other all The Black Sea littoral states, including Russia.

It could be understood that all these projects were not used only for providing a greater maritime security, but they represent a chance for bringing collective trust among all the Black Sea littoral countries. However, it can be said that Turkey's leadership in the context of integration through maritime security cooperation was no so successful. Even if Turkey would have managed to bring all these states as signatories together, it could not interfere directly to their coalescence. (Sophia,

2015) All Ankara's projects regarding the Black Sea maritime security show an absence of a Black Sea regional vision because of two reasons.

Firstly, Turkey does not have a clear idea about the autonomy of the Black Sea region. Secondly, by securitization of the maritime region, in its efforts to keep and enlarge its rule in the Black Sea region, Turkey did not let any other powers such as the US and NATO to play an important role in the region. Some people might disagree with the idea expressed in the previous paragraph because they tend to believe that the government from Ankara aimed to use its naval strategy in order to support the protection of NATO's superiority in the Wider Black Sea region. (Oktay F., p. 13)

1.5.1.2 Turkey and NATO

After the terrorist attacks from September 11, NATO put in practice the article 5 of the Treaty, activating the collective defense against external threats. Since that time, due to a very diverse security area, NATO started being interested in the Euro-Atlantic region, and gave a more importance to Turkey's geographical and cultural position. (Davutoğlu, 2012, pp. 9-10,16) Turkey played a very important role because it permitted the European involvement in Afghanistan where the Turkish troops have been placed since 2001, possessing command of the Kabul-based ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) both in 2002 and 2005. (Pearson, 2008, p. 62) (Özcan, 2012, p. 110)

Turkey's role in NATO has increased considerably in the past years. The Turkish army is the second largest within the alliance after the USA's one. Turkish total involvement to NATO's operations and missions reach around 3.250 troops, 1.840 of them being deployed to ISAF. (Sofia, 2012, p. 2) Moreover, Turkey took the responsibility to get involved in all NATO missions, and its military has proved its ability to rule some alliance's operations when needed. ISAF and the command over the Multinational Task Force South in south region of Kosovo in 2007 are some examples in this regard. (Pearson, 2008, pp. 61-62) Besides its involvement in all these cases, Turkey played a significant role in the alliance's partnership such as the

Mediterranean Dialogue for cooperation with countries not member NATO from the Mediterranean region and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative from the Istanbul Summit, 2004, for consolidating relations and security in the broader Middle East region. (Nişancı, 2005, p. 5)

1.6 NATO AND RUSSIA IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

According to its principles, NATO is an organization that aims to defense its members from the Black Sea region in order to keep their sovereignty. The most important and direct NATO contribution to the security in the Black Sea region is the strong defensive position (Horrell, 2016, p. 5). Moreover, the NATO Black Sea littoral countries have to continue their operations within Black Sea Naval Force at the right time based on political context and significant NATO consideration (Horrell, 2016, p. 5).

After the 2014 events, when Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine, NATO started focusing on finding new possible Russian threats in the Black Sea region. Russian assertive policy gives so much importance for increasing its military power and influence in the Black Sea region (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016). The military stability of the Black Sea area was destabilized, shifting in Russia's favor. Moreover, for gaining control over the most important natural harbor, Sevastopol, Russia also took the power in three other naval bases in Crimea (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016). Until 2018, Russia planned to spend \$2.4billion for repairing and modernizing the fleet and for acquiring new advance military technique (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016). In this way, Russia desires to show its power in the region and to spread its influence to the Middle East, the Balkans and the Mediterranean region (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016).

Although Russia stopped the military intervention in Ukraine, the threat continues to exist. The most dangerous situation is represented by the animosities between Ukraine and Russia due to the economical pressures. However, with European and western support, Ukraine succeeded to adopt several important reforms, but it still has a long way and a difficult struggle for organizing and establishing a democratic

independent and stable state (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016). The western states in collaboration with NATO provide military support for making Ukraine able to cooperate with other allies in regional and global security problems (Larrabee & Flanagan, 2016).

The security framework from the Black Sea region has changed in the past years due to the changes in the regional security paradigm (Rosu, 2015, p. 18). In this case, Russia was the one that changed completely its strategy. The security in the Black Sea region represents the total of all countries' peace and it can be achieved only through a total cooperation (Rosu, 2015, p. 5). Russia tries to increase its security level by stopping the NATO influence reaching the eastern countries. By acting in this way, it automatically creates instability and a low security level in the Black Sea region. An example for this case is represented by the Russian illegally annexation of Crimea.

Even if Russia perceived the Black Sea region as part of its natural sphere of influence, it failed at political, military and economic level to accomplish its goal (Toucas, 2017). After the Colour Revolutions from Georgia and Ukraine, the Russian power was replaced by pro-West leaders. Moreover, the integration of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO made 3 countries (Turkey was already a member of NATO) with littorals at Black Sea being on the western influence. Ukraine and Georgia were also part of cooperation and alliance project with potential view toward NATO membership (Toucas, 2017). From NATO's perspective, the Black Sea was *important for Euro-Atlantic security* (Toucas, 2017).

Being aware of the NATO increasing influence in its old space of control, Russia started to impose its strength and intensified its military activities in the region. Economic influence over Ukraine in 2006 and recognition of the Abkhazian and South Ossetia's independence are examples for Russian struggle to overcome the NATO influence over its former areas of control (Toucas, 2017). The most significant moment with a military and a geostrategic importance happened in Crimea in 2014. The Russian participation in Syrian war in 2015 was a chance to show its military power for the first time since the Cold War, by joining the Black Sea Fleet missions (Toucas, 2017).

Moreover, Russian will use the energetic resources for gaining the power in the Black Sea region. This means that Russia could use all the economic, energetic or military sectors for imposing its will and for influencing the political actions and behaviours of the other political actors. All this have only one goal, achieving its own interests. Besides the already presented international organization that activate in the Black Sea region, there are some others that contribute for the good political and economic environment of the region. Federation of Romanian NGOs for Development established The Black Sea NGO Forum in 2008 (Black Sea NGO Forum).

This Forum was created with the help from Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission in the context of the Black Sea Synergy (Black Sea NGO Forum). Its main purposes are to increase the level of dialogue and cooperation between the NGOs present in the Black Sea Region, sustaining the NGOs possibility to influence regional and national policies and to make the number and the quality of the regional partnerships and projects grow in future (Black Sea NGO Forum). Members of the Black Sea NGO Forum are as follows: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine (Black Sea NGO Forum).

At the beginning of the 21st century, *The Black Sea Economic Cooperation* was a new recognized international legal identity that had to be transformed into a full regional economic organization – *the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation* (Black Sea Economic Cooperation). Members of this cooperation are Republics of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Republics of Serbia and Turkey and Ukraine (Black Sea Economic Cooperation). The Black Sea Economic Cooperation established so many partnerships during the time with other international organizations such as: United Nations, World Bank, World Trade Organization, Eurasian Economic Community, The Central European Initiative etc (Black Sea Economic Cooperation).

1.7 THE US IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

A very important place for this study is occupied by the US policies in the Black Sea Region. In one of his work about the Black Sea Basin, Orhan Babaoğlu attempts to answer two questions: “Is the Black Sea a bridge or a barrier between the United States and Turkey? And does the issue of Black Sea security provide an opportunity to mend deteriorated relations or a new source of friction?” (Orhan, 2005) His point of view is that the cooperation between United States and Turkey in the Black Sea region is based on the security and energy issues (Orhan, 2005).

The same subject was approached by Stephan Larrabee as well in one of his articles (F. Stephen, 2009, pp. 301-315). Firstly, the main reasons why the United states are interested in the Region are expansion of the Euro-Atlantic institutions, democratization, energy and the Russian growing aspirations (F. Stephen, 2009, pp. 301-302). Secondly, Larrabee points out the most important three objectives followed in the US strategy: security, energy and commerce, democracy and market reform (F. Stephen, 2009, p. 302). Following its strategy, the US faced six obstacles: historical animosities and ethnic conflicts, western ambivalence as to whether the countries of the Region are part of Europe, diversity of the region, lack of strong regional institutions, strategic rivalries and ambitions (F. Stephen, 2009, pp. 302-303). At the end, Larrabee finds some priorities regarding the Black Sea Region for Obama administration such as: possible NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia, the importance of Azerbaijan, the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia and engagement of Russia (F. Stephen, 2009, pp. 309-314).

From Nicole Dolghin points of view, there are few possible issues that may arise between the US and Russia regarding their interests in the Black Sea Region (Nicole, 2009, p. 17). According to her study, the two actors see the region in two different ways, for Russia the Black Sea represents a vital region where it can impose its interests, while the US perceive the region as a space for free traffic of hydrocarbons (Nicole, 2009, p. 20). In her article, Nicole found three main reasons that can create problems in the near future: the relationships in the Caucasus Region, NATO enlargement and the anti-missile shield (Nicole, 2009, p. 20).

1.8 BLACK SEA AFTER THE COLD WAR

The end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union brought so much tension in the international system, changing the threat of nuclear competition as well. Russian Federation, Georgia and Ukraine emerged as three different states in the Black Sea region. Their political regimes and economic system were turned to capitalism from the socialist system. Romania and Bulgaria were part of the same transformation. While those internal political and economic processes were going on, the states from the Black Sea region were also in a process of normalizing their relations with their old allies and with the Western powers.

The Russian Federation was trying to re-impose its dominant status over the post-Soviet states, excluding the states from the Baltic region, keeping the anarchic relations with the former Warsaw Pact states. The following period was witness of new intense relationships between regional states and the Western countries, situation that could affect the regional status-quo. Only until 1996 there were some instability moments in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After that moment, the region started benefiting from stability and security values even though some security issues were still disputed in Russia and Ukraine until 1997.

This chapter will focus on the security situation from the Black Sea region during the period between 1991 and 2000. There will be analyzed how the relations between the Western countries and Russian Federation affected the regional security in the context of the Black Sea Region's security seen as dependent on the US and EU relationship with Russia. There will be presented also the role played by Turkey in the regional Security. The other regional actors and regional structures will be presented according to their ordering principle and distribution of capability in the Black Sea Region. There will be made an analysis on the role and effect of Russia and the other regional countries. At the end, there will be made some conclusions regarding this topic.

1.9 SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE BLACK SEA (1991-1999)

In this part of the study there will be analyzed the Soviet influence after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. It is necessary to remind that the Eastern Bloc was dominated by the USSR during the Cold war period. After the end of bipolar international System, the USSR focused and continued its influence only over the countries called as Near Abroad, rather than over all the former Warsaw Pact states. Moreover, after the Cold War period came to an end, the Western countries started establishing relations with all of these countries. The intervention of non-regional great powers in the regional power's sphere of influence had the capability to affect in a negative way the stability and security of the region. Hence, there is a need to find out if the relations between the Western countries and the regional states were in the position to damage the security in the Black Sea region during that period.

In order to find out this aspect, it is needed to make a short introduction about the EU, USA and NATO policies regarding to states from the Black Sea region in the first decade after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. There should be also presented the policies of the regional countries towards the Western powers as well. All these relations can be defined and understood only by looking at their cooperation regarding trade, military equipment supply and their membership in the regional organizations. There will be firstly presented the countries left under the Russian influence, then there will be explained how the relationships between the Western and the regional countries affected the regional security.

1.10 US POLICIES IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

The debut of George Herbert Walker Bush as a President of the United States of America was hard because he had to deal with a very unstable world dominated by diversity, one of the regions being represented by the Black Sea itself. The US policies focused on transforming the post-Soviet and Post-Warsaw Pact countries and carefully assisted them. Later, the new President of the USA tried to revive the

cooperative relations between his country and the Russian Federation. One of the main issues he was focused on was the nuclear and conventional arms reduction, issue that debated with Gorbachev. Moreover, Bush was trying to convince Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to remove the nuclear weapons from their territories (Peter & Gregory, 2008, p. 260) and signed the START II with Yeltsin on January 3, 1993.

The En-En Strategy (the National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement) was accepted during Bill Clinton's presidency. The meaning of *Engagement* was the USA will stop using the isolationism principles and will get involved in policies that aim cooperation, assistance and negotiations with the former socialist countries (Daniel S., Loch K., & John E., 2005, p. 204). The *Enlargement* term meant that the US would promote an open market economy, democracy and some other values from the West (Daniel S., Loch K., & John E., 2005, p. 204). Another aspect Clinton carried about were the issues regarding non-proliferation and decreasing the mass destruction and nuclear weapons in the new independent countries such as Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

The cooperation between Russia and the US was not restricted only to the non-proliferation and reduction of nuclear weapons. There were three steps that the USA wanted to make in the context of its cooperation strategy. Firstly, the US wanted to make sure that Russia will get involved (an example could be the integration of Russian forces in IFOR or SFOR after the Bosnian war or leaving Pristine airport to Russian forces after the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo (Mustafa, NATO Bağlamında ABD-Türkiye İlişkilerinde Devamlılık ve Değişim, 2004, p. 389)). Secondly, the US wanted to succeed persuading Russia (one example can concern the NATO enlargement). The last step followed by the US in its strategy of cooperation was controlling Russia (Mustafa, NATO Bağlamında ABD-Türkiye İlişkilerinde Devamlılık ve Değişim, 2004, p. 399).

The beginning of the relations between NATO and Russia and the other post-Svie countries from the Central and Eastern Europe started after the The London Declaration from July 1990. After that moment, the governments of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria were invited by NATO "not just to visit, but to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO" (London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance, 1990). With the

Rome declaration from December 1991, NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept which concerned a wider security comprehension and asked these states to enlarge their relations and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was set as a forum for further dialogue and cooperation (Partnership for Peace programme, 2017).

Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) was a programme initiated by NATO in 1994 under US leadership and envisaged a major bilateral cooperation between NATO and individual partner states (Partnership for Peace programme, 2017). The PfP supposed common military activities and peacekeeping field exercises in order to provide interoperability and military cooperation between the partner countries and the NATO military forces (Declaration of the Heads of State and Government, 1994). This programme was adopted by almost all Central and Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics.

There was registered a significant intensification in the relations between NATO, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 1997. In the same year, there was signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, then the Permanent Joint Council was set for supporting and promoting the bilateral relations (Relations with Russia, 2018). Moreover, there was signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with Ukraine and the NATO-Ukraine Commission was established (Relations with Ukraine, 2018). Once the *Operational Capabilities Concept* was adopted in 1999 at the Washington Summit, the operational dimension of PfP entered into a process of consolidation (Partnership for Peace programme, 2017). Moreover, during the same summit, Membership Action Plans (MAP) was signed with Bulgaria and Romania and accepted Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as member states (Aslıhan, 2013, p. 166).

Through all these movements, US succeeded to create relations with the post-Soviet and former Warsaw Pact states and continued a strategy of incorporating them into the world capitalist system. In this way, the US tried to keep a balance in its strategy and intended to create a cooperative environment with Russia, better than diminishing its position in the region. Moreover, besides the help given to Turkey on the construction of the BTC pipeline, the US supported the Baltic countries' membership in NATO, which was accomplished in 2004 (Aslıhan, 2013, p. 166).

1.11 POLICIES OF THE COUNTRIES FROM THE REGION TOWARDS THE WEST

1.11.1 Romania

After the fall of the communist regime in Romania, the new created governments started a process of cooperation with the European Union and formally applied for membership in 1993. It is important to mention that the political organization that governed Romania until 1997, The National Salvation Front, paid more attention and gave a more significance to relations with the US (Romania - NATO, 2004). In 1994 Romania became a NATO PfP member and one year later signed the *Status of Forces Agreement* between NATO members and other PfP participants (Romania - NATO, 2004). In 1999 Romania gave its permission to NATO for using the country's air space for eventual military actions against Yugoslavia. As a reward, in the same year NATO presented a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Romania (Romania - NATO, 2004). In comparison with the other former Warsaw Pact states, Romanian situation was different, Russia having here a limited influence. In the period after the Cold War, Romania tried to come closer to the West, but it was restricted by the reserved policies imposed by the EU and USA. The same period of time is marked by the Romanian split from the Russian influence (Aslıhan, 2013, p. 174).

1.11.2 Bulgaria

After the fall of communist regime in Europe, Bulgaria, like all the other post-Warsaw Pact countries, started created new bonds with the West. Because the new created Bulgarian government could not define the foreign policy priorities, the period between 1990 and 1996 was both marked by some efforts for develop Bulgarian relations with the West and by not neglecting the links with the Russian Federation (Mustafa, Geçiş Sürecinde Dış Politika Öncelikleri: Bulgaristan Örneği,

2002, pp. 192-193). Bulgaria understood the importance of the relation with the European Union as well and formally applied for the membership in 1995.

So different from the Romanian case, Bulgarian government had a *Gorbachevian vision of European security* concerning the relations with NATO (Dimitar, 2009, p. 213). In this case, Bulgaria chose to stay close to Russia and take its concerns into consideration regarding the NATO enlargement. This Russian concern and opposition against NATO enlargement was reduced after in 1997 NATO Russia Permanent Council was set (Mustafa, Geçiş Sürecinde Dış Politika Öncelikleri: Bulgaristan Örneği, 2002, p. 199). Surprisingly, in December the same year, Russia showed a positive attitude for a future Bulgarian NATO membership (Aslıhan, 2013, p. 175).

After taking the so called *permission* from the Russian Federation, the government lead by Kostov started a process of consolidating the relations between Bulgaria and NATO, on 17 March 1997 adopting the National Programme for Preparation and Accession to NATO and taking part in Stabilization Forces in Bosnia Herzegovina in 1997 and KFOR in 1999 (Bulgaria - NATO , 2003). In April 1999, a Membership Action Plan (MAP) was proposed by NATO to Bulgaria (Bulgaria - NATO , 2003). Later on, Bulgaria presented the first Annual National programme 1999-2000 under the Membership Action Plan in October 1999 (Bulgaria - NATO , 2003). Besides the pro-Russian Bulgarian population, the Bulgarian government followed its plan for making Bulgaria part of the Euro-Atlantic structures. In this context, Russia did not oppose and slowly starting losing its influence in Bulgaria after 1997 (Aslıhan, 2013, p. 175).

CHAPTER II

2. NATO POLICIES IN THE FORMER SOVIET STATES

2.1 THE PRAGUE ENLARGEMENT

The 9/11 events made NATO think twice before granting the membership in 2002. It invited for full membership, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. On the other hand, the US wanted to accept the other states as NATO members faster for fighting together against terrorism (Stephen F., 2003, p. 45). Moreover, the United States needed new force capabilities in the Black Sea region for fighting with more efficiency against the threats from the Middle East or Asia. However, while NATO recognizes the change in their strategic postures to respond to out-of-area threats, few members were ready to shift from a territorial force design to a deployable projection force concept.

Furthermore, NATO had ensured the post-1999 enlargement problems had been solved so the new allies presented no surprises. The new seven allies also presented a strong pro-American attitude strengthening more NATO's Atlantic strategic dimension. This raised political concerns from the European Union (EU). Focusing more on a robust strategic partnership with the US, most Eastern European members remained skeptical about the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Strategically, NATO had to rely on its Eastern flank members to promote the advantages of NATO membership to countries like Ukraine and Belarus.

The NATO cooperation and enlargement process after 1990 shaped the Eastern European security environment. On the other hand, each candidate's efforts were focused on rapid integration in the Western security and economic organizations. Ensuring strong democratic development was the fundamental concern of the new government in Eastern Europe. Following more than four decades of painful communism, Romania's current status relies on its critical security relationship with NATO. However, Romania achieved this position through a rather challenging process.

2.2 FINALLY MEMBERS

2.2.1. Romania and the Black Sea

Romania's major objectives in the Black Sea region, as defined by the national strategy in the field (2006), remain unchanged: consolidation in the eastern neighbourhood of a stable, democratic and prosperous area by opening up the Black Sea space to the values and processes of European and euro-Atlantic cooperation. Within NATO, these objectives are pursued through the country's continued support for the development of NATO's partnerships with the states from the region in order to advance their aspirations for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, to carry out defense reforms and to strengthen the capabilities of these states to secure their security.

Marking for the first time the inclusion of references to the Black Sea in the declaration of a NATO Summit, the Istanbul Summit in 2004 highlighted the *importance of the Black Sea region for Euro-Atlantic security* and expressed NATO's desire to identify ways to support regional efforts to strengthen security and stability, using the existing cooperative mechanisms of the states in the region (Marea Neagra, 2017). The importance given by the Black Sea Region Alliance was reconfirmed at the subsequent meetings of the Heads of State and Government in Riga (2006), Bucharest (2008), Strasbourg- / Kehl (2009), Lisbon (2010) and Chicago (2012).

In a thematic section devoted to the Black Sea, the Bucharest Summit Statement reaffirms "the constant importance of the Black Sea region for Euro-Atlantic security" and the Alliance's wish to "continue to support these efforts in line with the regional priorities and that are based on transparency, complementarily and inclusiveness, in order to develop dialogue and cooperation between the Black Sea states and between them and the Alliance (Marea Neagra, 2017)".

Following the crisis from Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, the security situation in the Black Sea region has steadily deteriorated. Within NATO, Romania, in collaboration with other riparian allied states, acted to increase the Alliance's practical assistance to Ukraine, as well as to strengthen national and

collective defense measures to respond to the massive increase in Russia's military presence in Crimea and its actions in the Black Sea. NATO's response was a firm, gradual and proportional one, cantered on defending allied states in the region and assisting regional partners in defense reform (Marea Neagra, 2017).

In this spirit, the Alliance decided, at the Summit from Wales (2014), measures and activities to ensure security in the Black Sea area by creating a South East Multinational Command and some forces for integrating forces in Romania and Bulgaria, strengthening defense plans, increased air police activities, maritime attendance and naval exercises. At the meeting of the head states and governments from Warsaw (2016), due to the increasing presence and intensification of Russia's military actions in the area, there was decided that it was the time to move to a new level of these deterrence and defense measures by establishing an advanced presence adapted to the area Black Sea (tailored forward presence - TFP). (Marea Neagra, 2017)

As a continuous presence, it has the purpose of defending allied states in the area and increasing inter-operability between them and other allies. The adapted advanced presence includes defense measures in the field of land, sea and air, in process of development and implementation. In the terrestrial field, a multinational brigade was created, with the contribution of Romania and other allied states, under the command of the Multinational Command for Southeast, with the participation of 13 allies. In the maritime field, there will be an increasing presence of the NATO navy forces as well as increasing training and exercise activities. There will be added the intensification of airspace training activities as well (Marea Neagra, 2017).

NATO's maritime presence will include drills and training activities involving NATO's permanent naval forces alongside vessels from riparian Allied states and other interested allies. NATO will ensure the coordination of these maritime activities, which will result in an increased surveillance (by the Alliance) of the situation in the region as well as the coherence between NATO's activities in the Black Sea and the maritime activities of the Alliance in general. All these actions will be carried out in accordance with the stipulations of the Montreux Convention. The increasing NATO presence in the region has a defensive character, being a balanced measure of enhancing interoperability and strengthening the national

defense capabilities. It will lead to a better knowledge of the regional situation and it will increase the stability and the predictability in the region (Marea Neagra, 2017).

At the same time, the NATO Summit from Warsaw has sent a clear political message that reconfirmed the fact that the Black Sea region remains an important component of Euro-Atlantic security. It has also been said that Russia's actions are contrary to the values on which regional confidence instruments have been built on. NATO has confirmed its support for the regional efforts of the Black Sea riparian states to ensure the security and stability in the region (Marea Neagra, 2017).

2.2.2 Romania after 10 years of NATO membership

The feeling of security provided by the principle of collective solidarity mentioned in article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the modernization of the army and the participation in the missile shield are some of the advantages of membership in NATO, paid by Romania with human lives, but practically not disputed by anybody. Romania joined NATO on March 29, 2004 but the first contacts took place just a few months after the Revolution of December 1989. The road was opened in July 1990 by Prime Minister Petre Roman who invited NATO General Secretary Manfred Wörner, to visit Romania and propose the accreditation of a Romanian ambassador to the Alliance (Catalina, 2014).

The desire to become a NATO member, with a national consensus in this respect, made Romania the first former-communist state to join the PfP in 1994, a sort of anteroom of NATO, created in the same year with the goal of getting closer to the former-Soviet countries. Accession to the PfP meant practically an intensification of relations from both Romania and NATO, an important moment taking place in 1999, when Bucharest allowed its airspace to be used by allied airplanes during the conflict in Yugoslavia and transit of Czech contingents and Polish troops parts of international peacekeeping troops for Kosovo (KFOR) (Catalina, 2014).

Before becoming a NATO member, Romania participated in the mission from Afghanistan that started in June 2002, and it registered the first two victims in 2003 (Catalina, 2014). Another 24 Romanian soldiers lost their lives last in the 10 years of

NATO membership. Although painful, these loss of human lives have not led to discussions and debates on Romania's participation in NATO's military missions, as it happens in the cases of the old member states, such as Germany (Catalina, 2014).

The only *incident* in the relation between Romania and NATO was triggered by the Prime Minister, Calin Popescu Tariceanu, who in 2006 proposed the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. CSAT, however, rejected the document that was calling for the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo and demanded a reduction in participation in Iraq with only 20 soldiers. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense, Teodor Atanasiu, were the only ones who voted *for* (Catalina, 2014). According to the Ministry of Defense, in the 10 years of NATO, 40,000 troops, 30 battalions and 150 microstructures participated in external peacekeeping missions (Catalina, 2014). Moreover, 400 troops in missions representing NATO command structures and 80 military structures were certified to participate in missions and operations of the Alliance (Catalina, 2014).

The NATO-led mission from Afghanistan was the biggest effort the Romanian Army had put into a theatre of operations, especially since many Romanian forces were concentrated in August 2006 in the province of Zabul, a very unstable area in the south of Afghanistan. The peak of the Romanian participation in the International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan (ISAF) was in 2011, a year in which more than 2,000 soldiers were deployed for a few months (Catalina, 2014). In fact, Romania was the seventh contributing country to the ISAF mission, in terms of the number of deployed military personnel and the complexity of the executed missions. In March 2014, 1,021 Romanian troops were deployed in Afghanistan. (Catalina, 2014)

For 12 years, 30 troops from the Ground Forces, as well as 137 microstructures, took part in the mission from Afghanistan (Catalina, 2014). At the same time, the Romanian Air Forces have ensured the command of the International Airport from Afghanistan's capital for a period of six months, in 2006, and in the period April 2011 - April 2012, in two rounds for six months (Catalina, 2014). Romania has also participated in the NATO's mission from Afghanistan called *Resolute Support*. Another important mission was the one from Iraq, where Romania took part even before the NATO accession. At the international coalition's mission called "Iraqi

Freedom", Romania participated for more than six years (March 19, 2003 - July 23, 2009), and with the maximum number of deployed militaries being 773 (Catalina, 2014). Bucharest also contributed with instructors to the second mission from this theatre of operations, from January 2005 to November 2011 (Catalina, 2014).

If NATO and US officials have repeatedly praised the behaviour of Romanian soldiers in theatres of operations, Romania cannot pride in respecting the promise of allocating 2.38% of the Gross Domestic Product for Defense. This promise violated by many European states, especially after the economic and financial crisis. In 2004, the defense budget grew significantly by 8.4% compared to the previous year, the 50.000 billion lei (1.4 million dollars) representing 2.38% of GDP (Catalina, 2014). An increase followed in 2005, when the Ministry of Economy and Finance received 60,000 billion lei (1.6 billion dollars). (Catalina, 2014)

In 2006, the sum increases by about \$ 400 million, but represents only 2.1% of GDP (Catalina, 2014). The same thing happens in 2007, when the defense budget represents 2.05% of GDP (7.7 billion lei), after an initial proposal of 1.78% (Catalina, 2014). When the economy has exploded, the MApN received 8.3 billion lei in 2008, an increase of 12.28% compared to 2007, but only 1.89% of the Gross Domestic Product, while in 2009 the allocation decreased to 7.3 billion lei (around 1.3% of GDP) (Catalina, 2014).

On November 3, 2009, despite the PDL's opposition, deputies adopted a legislative proposal that set the budget of the Ministry of National Defense to be at least 2% of GDP annually, but the budget cut continued in 2010, when the defense received about 7 billion of lei, which means 1.31% of GDP (Catalina, 2014). The lowest budget was allocated in 2011, when the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs received only 4.8 billion lei (0.81% of GDP), due to the fact that funds for the payment of military pensions were transferred to the Ministry of Labour (Catalina, 2014).

On 31 March 2011, the Ministry of National Defense asked the Ministry of Public Finance to increase the institution's budget by 2012, to 2.38% of the GDP, according to the commitment undertaken by Minister Gabriel Oprea when he took the mandate. In May, the Ministry of National Defense's budget for 2012 is 7.57 billion lei,

representing 1.31% of GDP (Catalina, 2014). The Supreme Defense Council approved in 2013 the gradual increase of the Ministry of National Defense's budget by 0.3% of GDP annually until reaching 2% of GDP in 2016 (Catalina, 2014). The Minister of Defense, Mircea Dusa, said that "with the joy of receiving NATO, politicians have forgotten that the MAPN budget should be one that will allow it to achieve" the objectives assumed before the Alliance's accession (Catalina, 2014). He recalled the strategic document, with legal power, drafted by the CSAT last year, to ensure an annual increase in the budget of the Minister of Defense so that in 2016-2017 it will reach 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (Catalina, 2014).

Considering the Romanian contribution to the North Atlantic Alliance's budget, in these years it represented about 1% of NATO's total budget (Catalina, 2014). In 2013, the value of all Romania's financial contributions to NATO amounted to almost 180 million lei, according to the Ministry of National Defense (Catalina, 2014). After the accession, a number of legislative changes have been made to harmonize the national legislation with the NATO acquit, including the 2003 Revised Constitution. These changes made in the constitutional texts have created the basis for the lifting the compulsory military service in peacetime, and, as well as the transition to an army of professionals starting with January 1, 2007 (Catalina, 2014). In case of war, however, the state of mobilization and the state of siege, the military service is obligatory.

Law no. 384/2006 on the status of professional soldiers and graduates marked a significant achievement in the process of training and developing a modern, flexible, armed troop with an enhanced operational capacity, interoperable with the armies of the other NATO member states. (Catalina, 2014) The Transformation Strategy of the Romanian Armed Forces (STAR) comprises three distinct phases, with the second stage, the *Operational Integration Stage in NATO and the European Union*, scheduled for 2008-2015. During this stage, is expected the achievement of medium-term objectives, such as the continuation of the efficiency of the forces, the deployment of the major supply programs, the reorganization of the military education, the extension of the implementation of the Interoperability Requirements of the Force Objectives at the level of the non-indivisible units. (Catalina, 2014)

Romania brought another important contribution to the staff of the Alliance's structures. Permanent posts within command structures (NCS) and NATO Force Command (NFS), as well as within NATO Agencies and Centres of Excellence have evolved since 2004 from 50 positions in the NATO Commands to 145 at present (Catalina, 2014). Regarding the level of visibility of the posts, if in 2004 only one general post was assigned to the Partnership Co-ordination Cell, currently Romania has 5 general posts (Catalina, 2014). According to the MApN, during the 10 years of NATO membership, about 400 soldiers were routed on international positions or in Romania's military representations to NATO (Catalina, 2014). Undoubtedly, the most visible position is the one occupied by Sorin Ducaru, one of the assistants of the NATO Secretary General.

Romania is also well on the exchange of information. Thus, during 2008-2012, the Military Intelligence Directorate (DIM) was placed among the top five contributors to the Information Division of NATO's Military International (Catalina, 2014). In an interview with MEDIAFAX on March 30th, 2014, SRI Director, George Maior, said that Romania is the second country contributing information to NATO's civilian intelligence unit (Catalina, 2014). In addition to participating in the Alliance's classic military operations, Romania participates in various bodies created within NATO.

Since 2010, Romania is a member of the Multinational Integrated Logistic Unit for Movement Control - Mov Con MILU, ensuring in this position, through the national component, the deployment of the movement and transportation operations in the mission bases from Kosovo in 2014 and 2015. (Catalina, 2014) A new field, developed after Romania's accession, is the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP). Romania is designated as an implementing authority (host country quality) for a total of 50 NSIP projects, which are part of 10 capabilities packages. (Catalina, 2014) These capabilities packages aim at providing operational facilities, especially in the field of aerodrome infrastructure, providing and maintaining the capabilities included in the NATO Integrated Nationwide Defense System - NADINADS and improving network communications systems of major interest at NATO level. (Catalina, 2014)

In terms of endowment, the Department of Armaments purchased in the last 10 years two T-22R *Regele Ferdinand* and *Regina Maria* fighters, C-27J *Spartan* short-haul

courier aircraft, reactive artillery systems *LAROM*, 2x35 mm anti-aircraft artillery systems, *Viforul* and *Ghepard B2L*. (Catalina, 2014) The list also includes the upgraded IAR-330 helicopters in SOCAT version, Transport and MEDEVAC, naval IAR-330 helicopters, boarded on T-22R fighter-type boats, VAMTAC 4x4 vehicles in the armoured and uninhibited versions, armoured conveyors 8x8 "Piranha III-C" version, radar for surveillance at low and medium heights *Gap Filler* version as well as electronic warfare for airplanes for *C-130 Hercules*. (Catalina, 2014) Airplanes, however, have been an important and widely debated issue that has not yet ended.

In 2003, the Romanian Air Force had 101 upgraded MIG 21 Lancer planes, of which only 58 were active, and another 100 not upgraded MIG 21 devices that had exhausted their flight resources. (Catalina, 2014) On September 21, 2005, Minister of Defense, Teodor Atanasiu, said in an interview with Reuters that Romania would select new hunting jets in 2006 to replace the outdated aircraft fleet of MiG-21 aircraft. (Catalina, 2014) Teodor Atanasiu specified that Romania needed at least 24 new aircraft, which could be purchased in leasing system as a result of auctions, or could be obtained by participating in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), developed by Lockheed Martin. (Catalina, 2014)

Only in September 2012 the Supreme Defense Council approved the *gradual realization of the air defense capability* project under the *Air Force Multi-Role Airplane* program. (Catalina, 2014) In June 2013, the Government announced the approval of the draft law on the purchase of 12 old F-16 aircraft, for which 628 million euro will be paid. (Catalina, 2014) Later on in the same year, the MAPN informed that the Government of Romania and that of Portugal signed the F-16 acquisition contract. (Catalina, 2014) On 10 January 2014, Minister of Defense, Mircea Dusa, announced that more than 90 people will leave this year to Portugal and the United States for training in order to operate the F-16 multirole aircraft that were expected to arrive in Romania in 2016. (Catalina, 2014)

As a US ally in NATO, Romania benefited from the modernization of the Mihail Kogălniceanu base, where US military officers from the Joint Task Force East were installed in the summer of 2010. The modernization cost 50 million dollars, paid by Washington, but the base, which can accommodate up to 1,600 soldiers, is used jointly by Romanian and American soldiers. (Catalina, 2014) At the same time,

Mihail Kogalniceanu's base will become an essential transport hub for American equipment returning from Afghanistan, after Kyrgyzstan did not want to renew the agreement to use the base from Manas by US troops.

As a result of the situation in Crimea, the United States has requested permission from Romania to supplement the number of American soldiers from Kogalniceanu base. The Romanian President at that time, Traian Basescu, endorsed the US Embassy's request for the deployment to Mihail Kogălniceanu airfield of elements of marine infantry called *Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crises Response (SP MAGTF-CR)* with up to 600 soldiers, as well as *a number of military aircraft required to carry out specific missions*. (Catalina, 2014) Thus, the number of deployed US troops was around to 1,600. (Catalina, 2014)

2.2.3 Romanian security after placing the missile shield

Romania was participating in the development of the US missile defense system, an integral part of the NATO missile defense system, which had to become operational in 2015. In 2014, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report showed that the Pentagon estimates of anti-missile shield planning in Romania and Poland were *optimistic* and there would be delays in delivering components and capabilities. The US Embassy said on 20 March 2014 that the implementation of interceptor systems in Romania is ongoing and is fully budgeted for the 2015 time horizon. (Catalina, 2014)

Deveselu missile shield is not, however, agreed by Moscow, which claims, despite assurances from Washington and Bucharest, that it is directed against it. At the same time, the Crimean crisis could make Romania one of the beneficiaries of the repositioning of NATO forces in the region. The disadvantage, raised by President Traian Băseșcu, is the possible intensification of the espionage activities. President Basescu said in 2014, after the SRI's balance sheet, that Romania is likely to be one of the beneficiaries of the repositioning of NATO forces as a result of developments in the region, which will make it *more attractive* to espionage, so it needs to be strengthened counterintelligence component. (Catalina, 2014) The situation in Ukraine has also brought to attention the fact that Romania is protected from a

possible attack, based on the principle of collective solidarity enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

2.3 Bulgarian case

2.3.1 From Red Army to NATO

Bulgaria came out of communism with the same military heritage that all the other Warsaw Pact countries had: rigid structures, outdated equipment, hierarchical relationships based on corruption and brutality. Bulgaria's first governments sought to apply NATO's reforms to the candidate countries by increasing, for example, military spending to bring it closer to that alliance standard consisting of reserving 2% of the GDP to the military. (Dan, 2008) In the early years of reforms, however, Bulgaria had to advance qualitatively, relying equally on the military personnel of the past. Reforms were very slow, and Bulgaria was not received in NATO until 2004, in the same time with Romania.

As a NATO member, Bulgaria is looking to comply with another obligation, with 8% of all troops being sent to missions abroad, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sofia is still full of statues left since the glory of the Red Army, which occupied it in September 1944, following the withdrawal of the German troops, but nowhere can be seen a monument commemorating the victims of communism. Dictator Todor Jivkov remained until his death (died of good death in 1998) grateful to the USSR, and documents from the archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party proved that Jivkov had proposed, firstly in 1963 and once again in 1973, Bulgaria to become one of the Soviet republics. (Dan, 2008) 11

In this perspective, the Communist Bulgarian army has been, for more than four decades, only an annex to the Red Army. Thus, Jivkov did not hesitate to send in 1968 troops that took part in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. (Dan, 2008) Instead, since November 1989, when foreign minister Petar Mladenov obtained the dismissal of Jivkov from the Communist Party's plenary, the army's leadership stayed out of the political changes. (Dan, 2008) The army refused to intervene when, after the dismissal of Jivkov, Mladenov asked for tanks to be dispatched against the

demonstrators (reason why Mladenov had to resign as well few months later). (Dan, 2008)

In addition of having this complicate past, Bulgaria has come out of communism with the same military inheritance that all the other Warsaw Pact countries have had: rigid structures, outdated equipment, hierarchical relationships based on corruption and brutality. Like all the other former communist countries, Bulgaria did not have the necessary resources to create new armed forces. So, in a first phase, Bulgaria also supported the former army hierarchy, which was asked to continue to function, but at the same time to deeply reform itself. Bulgaria's first governments sought to apply NATO's reforms to the candidate countries by increasing, for example, military spending to bring it closer to that alliance standard consisting of reserving 2% of the gross national product to the military. (Dan, 2008)

In the early years of reforms, however, Bulgaria had to advance qualitatively, relying equally on the military personnel of the past. Reforms were very slow, and Bulgaria was not received in NATO until 2004, in the same time with Romania. Before that, in the first decade after communism, between 1989 and 1999, Bulgaria had already substantially reduced its armed forces, down from 115,000 to 70,000 (Dan, 2008). Then the changes continued, until the 2008 situation, when the total armed forces of Bulgaria did not exceed 40,000 people, including the professional militaries. (Dan, 2008)

However, the professionalization of the army is very recent, since, even after joining NATO, Bulgaria has maintained its compulsory military service by the end of 2007. The drastic reduction of military personnel has been criticized over the years by various opposition politicians who argued that Bulgaria has become unable to defend itself if needed, taking in consideration neighbours, such as Greece and Turkey, maintain important armies, and in the former Yugoslavia, conflicts have not yet ceased until that time (Dan, 2008). The reform defenders have pointed out that, on the contrary, the reduced forces and possessing a high degree of training for Bulgaria at that time (2008) were much more efficient than the massive, unmotivated, militaries of troops that had formed the army so far.

Moreover, as a NATO member, Bulgaria is also looking to comply with another obligation, sending 8% of all troops to missions abroad, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Dan, 2008) In fact, the big problem the Bulgarian Army was facing, once the compulsory recruitment was completed, was finding the necessary personnel to pursue a career in the army. Despite repeated ads, the number of volunteers remained relatively small and only few are looking to become professional soldiers. The Ministry of the Interior buys advertising space on television or in print media, and although theoretically, the size of the staff is covered, in reality every year hundreds of soldiers leave the army for more attractive civil contracts, leaving the armed forces in a chronic lack of people.

The main problem is that of salaries. The salaries of Bulgarian troops among the NATO members are the lowest. In 2008, the payment of a Bulgarian military started at 400 leva when hiring. (Dan, 2008) Even if a number of other benefits are added to it, including clothes, food, important holidays and medical insurance, this does not mean real money in excess of 200 euro per month, well below what the private sector can pay. This is why many soldiers want a service in Iraq or Afghanistan, where payment starts at \$ 3,000 per month. (Dan, 2008) The cost of sending 400 Bulgarian troops to Iraq and Afghanistan was not made public, but it is believed to exceed € 50 million, which the government had to take from other budgets. (Dan, 2008)

Bulgaria spends much in the North Atlantic Alliance to replace its arms and infrastructure of Russian origin with state-of-the-art weapons. Thus, the Bulgarian government bought Spartan fighters from Italy and Eurocopter helicopters from France, and Israeli firms were used to modernize the Mi-24 and Mi-17 type helicopters. (Dan, 2008) Most Bulgarian airplanes are still Soviet MiGs, some of which have been upgraded. For transport Bulgaria maintains massive Antonov Soviet cargo airplanes, which, although obsolete, continue to be useful. (Dan, 2008) Paradoxically, given the strategic importance of the Black Sea and the prospect of transit of oil and gas in the Caucasus, Bulgaria has so far neglected its navy.

In order to reach at least some of the NATO's requirements, Bulgaria bought in 2005 a Belgian frigate, built in 1977, which it sent to sail off the coasts of Lebanon within the UN mission there, but most of the other military ships did not find out in a good state, and out of the four combat submarines only one is operational. (Dan, 2008) It

is less well known that during communism, Bulgaria had an important chemical weapons production. Although it ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1994, Bulgaria has not yet declared all its stocks, and much of this could be made up of gas. (Dan, 2008)

As in Romania, the US has also negotiated in Bulgaria the right to use a number of decommissioned military bases, whose redevelopment has announced an amount exceeding \$ 60 million. (Dan, 2008) Thus, the United States will be able to use the bases of Bezmer, Graf Ignatievo, Novo Selo and Aitos for interventions in various parts of the Middle East without asking the government's approval in Sofia. (Dan, 2008) In 2006, the strategic journal, Foreign Policy, considered Bezmer one of the top 6 US military bases in the world.

2.3.2 2018 – Bulgaria wants to leave NATO

According to the new situation, Bulgaria announces that wants to leave NATO. Bulgarian leader Volia, Veselin Mareskki, said on Thursday at the national radio station that his political party will go ahead with the idea of organizing a referendum on the withdrawal of Bulgaria from NATO, the BTA agency reports (Filip, 2018). According to Agerpres, Veselin Mareskki said that this initiative will be one of the most important goals of their party for the European elections from 2019. From their point of view, NATO does not have anything to offer to Bulgaria, in contrary, it only spends the budget's money. It is talking about some billions of euro that Bulgaria has to spend on some old and useless military acquisitions. The claim that if NATO wants to be their partner, then it should give them more free aircrafts instead of taking the money of one of the poorest countries in Europe, making in this way more problems for the Bulgarian population. (Filip, 2018)

2.4 Ukrainian case

Background

The NATO-Ukraine Commission, created in 1997, is the main forum for political dialogue between the Alliance and Ukraine, being responsible for developing the partnership relationship and jointly setting out the lines of action. The main areas of NATO-Ukraine cooperation include: operations, defense and security sector reform, military cooperation, scientific cooperation, civil emergency planning, and public diplomacy. NATO believes that the sovereign, independent and stable state of Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is essential for Euro-Atlantic security. The NATO-Ukraine Partnership was launched in 1997 and during the time has become one of the Alliance's most developed partnership relations (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017).

2.4.1 Partnership

The formal basis for NATO-Ukraine relations is the Charter for a Distinctive Partnership of 1997, which established the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) and the Charter Completion Declaration, signed in 2009. (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017) Over the time, NATO and Ukraine strengthened the political dialogue and practical cooperation through the National Annual Program of Ukraine (ANP). NATO-Ukraine cooperation has intensified in the context of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine. (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017)

At the Warsaw Summit, the NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting has brought together the heads of state and governments within NATO with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. With this occasion, a joint statement was agreed that reconfirmed allied support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017). At the same time, it is condemned the self-proclaimed *illegal* and *illegitimate* annexation of the Crimea by Russia, as well as Russia's actions of continuous and deliberate destabilization of the eastern Ukraine. (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017) In this context, Romania reiterated its support for the partnership with Ukraine and sent a message of solidarity and encouragement to the Ukrainian people. It should be mentioned that Romania acts as a framework nation for the management of NATO's

voluntary assistance fund for cyber defense, which is a substantial contribution to Ukraine's efforts to develop its defense capability. (Comisia NATO - Ucraina, 2017)

Within the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership, the Allies committed themselves to supporting the strengthening of the security and defense component of the Annual National Defense and Security Program through capability development and capacity building programs. Against this background, the Allies launched at the Warsaw Summit a Comprehensive Assistance Package dedicated to supporting the Ukrainian efforts to reform and modernize the defense and security sector.

2.4.2 Ukraine and Romania

Together with other allies, Romania has an active presence in the political dialogue and the activities of the Alliance dedicated to the development of the relationship with Ukraine, contributing with its own expertise to the reform process, encouraging and participating in many projects launched under the aegis of the NUC. In assessing Ukraine's progress in implementing its National Annual Program, Romania pays particular attention to the results achieved in implementing Euro-Atlantic values, strengthening the rule of law, respecting human rights, including those belonging to national minorities, as well as contributing to strengthening Euro-Atlantic security, particularly at regional level.

CHAPTER III

3. ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

Moscow has completely changed the force ratio in the Black Sea by annexing Crimea. Its equivalent in the Baltic Sea is called Kaliningrad. In both territories, Moscow has brought important amounts of weapons over the past two years, and has threatened to bring nuclear technology to these two regions. (Digi24, 2016) The most feared are the Iskander ballistic missiles. They have a range of 500 kilometres, and are capable of hitting targets in Poland and eastern Romania, including Constanta and the American base from Mihail Kogalniceanu. (Digi24, 2016) There are also speculations that rockets could be upgraded to hit a thousand kilometres away.

Ballistic missiles are just a part of all the Russian crafts. Moscow has maritime fleets in both basins. The Black Sea Fleet counts 45 battle ships and six submarines (Digi24, 2016). Besides this, recently a last-generation submersible that cannot be detected has been added. In the Baltic Sea, the Russian fleet has 55 vessels and two submarines. (Digi24, 2016) On both sides, there is a higher level of security. More specifically, Russian Black Sea forces have as a safety featured the ships and submarines in the Caspian Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, and the S-400 missiles available to them. (Digi24, 2016) Both have proved useful during the Russian intervention in Syria. If necessary, they can put Turkey, the most important NATO ally on the southern flank, to fight simultaneously on two fronts, in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean.

In the same line, the Russians could block the traffic between the two seas, through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. In the northwest, the Baltic Sea Russian army has as a safety tool the device deployed along the Arctic Ocean shore. We are talking about the northern fleet - 38 battle ships and 42 submarines, plus rocket systems, such as the so-called Stooze system. (Digi24, 2016) Rockets are concentrated in the Kola Peninsula and can hit targets in Scandinavia. Together with the northern fleet,

they would put the countries in this region in the same precarious position as Turkey on the southern flank, blocking similarly the entry of other ships into the straits linking the Baltic to the Atlantic Ocean.

Regarding the Ground Forces, besides the troops sent already to the Ukrainian coast few years ago, Moscow has announced the move of three additional armoured and missile-aided divisions in the western military district, which groups the armed forces from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. (Digi24, 2016) Under these circumstances, no one is surprised by the feeling of fear coming from Poland and the Baltic countries, the concerns of Bucharest over the developments in the Black Sea and finally the hesitations of Bulgaria regarding a multinational maritime group at the Black Sea within the North Atlantic Alliance. (Digi24, 2016) The future will show us whether the strongest alliance in the world has found the resolve and the flexibility to counteract this arms race and to stop it at the stage of the scenario.

3.1 NO NATO INTERVENTION IN CRIMEA

Igor Dolgov, former ambassador of Kiev to NATO, said the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine threatens directly the security of the Ukrainian state and poses a threat and a challenge to the world security system. (Ziare, 2015) In his opinion, the events in Ukraine have consequences for both NATO and European countries as well as for the collective security system. Dolgov explained that it was decided from the very beginning that the crisis and aggression from Ukraine must be solved by political means, both from NATO and Kyiv. (Ziare, 2015)

Thus, the military option for NATO and Ukraine's expectations for such an option have been removed from the very beginning. In this context, the Ukrainian Deputy Minister expressed his regret that Ukraine is not a member of NATO. In his opinion, since the beginning of the Donbas conflict, Ukraine's defense sector was not ready for threats, and for this reason the Ukrainian military forces have to be reformed according to NATO standards. (Ziare, 2015)

3.1.1 In 2014 Russia strengthened its military fleet from the Black Sea

In July 2014, Russia's military announced that the country will consolidate its Black Sea military fleet, whose headquarters are in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Moscow in March the same year. (WALL-STREET, Rusia isi consolideaza flota militara de la Marea Neagra, 2014) Consequently, Russia started developing a strong fleet at the black Sea. Russian President, Vladimir Putin declared that Russia should re-establish the military infrastructures from Sevastopol in Crimea for consolidating the country's defense. His declaration was made as a response after NATO increased its presence in Eastern Europe, especially in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. (WALL-STREET, Rusia isi consolideaza flota militara de la Marea Neagra, 2014) Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Soigu, announced in May 2014 that more than 86 billion rubles (1.75 billion Euros) would be spend for the development of the Russian fleet from the Black Sea by 2020. (WALL-STREET, Rusia isi consolideaza flota militara de la Marea Neagra, 2014) The Russian fleet exists in Crimea since the 18th century, even since Ukraine got its independence, according to an agreement with Kiev.

3.1.2 February 2015

The Russian Black Sea fleet carries out military exercises in the Crimean Peninsula

More than 600 Russian soldiers launched military activities in the former Ukrainian region of Crimea, annexed by Russia in March 2014. Approximately 600 soldiers and 50 armoured vehicles participate in military exercises, the Russian Black Sea Fleet notes. (WALL-STREET, Flota rusa de la Marea Neagra efectueaza exercitii militare in Crimeea, 2015) Military exercises take place in the Angarskij Pereval, a training centre that was abandoned but modernized after Russia annexed the Crimean Ukrainian region in March 2014. (WALL-STREET, Flota rusa de la Marea Neagra efectueaza exercitii militare in Crimeea, 2015) In parallel, due to the

crisis in eastern Ukraine, the Russian army started exercises in the Russian republics of Chechnya and Dagestan, as well as in the Georgian separatist region of South Ossetia. (WALL-STREET, Flota rusa de la Marea Neagra efectueaza exercitii militare in Crimeea, 2015)

3.1.3 March 2015

A second NATO convoy crossed Romania on its way to the Black Sea

A train carrying more than one hundred armoured vehicles from NATO forces arrived in Constanta in March 2015 at the US military base from Mihail Kogalniceanu, Romania. (WALL-STREET, Un al doilea convoi NATO a tranzitat Romania spre Marea Neagra, 2015) The train entered Romania from Curtici city boarder and its final destination was the American military base from Mihail Kogalniceanu. There were taking place NATO military exercises, attended by Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish militaries at the Black Sea. Naval drills included simulations of anti-aircraft and anti-submarine attacks as well as coordination activities, according to the NATO-Atlantic Alliance Maritime Command. (WALL-STREET, Un al doilea convoi NATO a tranzitat Romania spre Marea Neagra, 2015)

3.1.4 January 2016

Romania has requested a permanent available NATO fleet in the Black Sea

According to a Romanian Ministry of National Defense project, a NATO fleet with frigates and destroyers could be present permanently in the Black Sea. The project had to be discussed with NATO chiefs during the summit appointed for 2017. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibila in permanenta in Marea Neagra, 2016) During this time, the Romanian army decided in 2016 to participate in a record number of complex military exercises: over 400. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibila in permanenta in Marea

Neagra, 2016) Also, battle ships from Germany, Italy, Turkey or the United States could be part of the new naval group on which Romania wanted its presence in the Black Sea. The project was put on paper by the Ministry of National Defense, after the Russians had also strengthened the Crimean military fleet. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibilă în permanență în Marea Neagră, 2016)

The new maritime grouping would belong to NATO and could be similar to those already existing, but not permanently stationed in the territorial waters of the Alliance. It could perform training and surveillance missions in international waters from the Black Sea. In 2015, Romania also demanded the permanent presence of US troops on the territory of the country. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibilă în permanență în Marea Neagră, 2016) But the approval would have been a challenge to Russia, so the project was postponed. Moreover, in 2015 the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, also announced a comprehensive plan to modernize the naval forces. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibilă în permanență în Marea Neagră, 2016) According to Itar-Tass, Russian naval forces would receive 50 new or upgraded ships and submarines, including Borei-type submersible nuclear propulsion. (WALL-STREET, Romania a solicitat o flota NATO, disponibilă în permanență în Marea Neagră, 2016)

3.1.4.1 Romanian Navy Forces – equal to the Bulgarian ones

Omar Lamrani, military analyst at Stratfor, declared in 2016 that regarding the overall capacity, Romanian Navy is significant behind the Turkish and Russian naval forces in the Black Sea, it is equal to the Bulgarian fleet, but it is significant better than the Ukrainian and Georgian naval forces (Victor, 2016). He explained that the majority of the Romanian existent vessels were built in the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, the Romanian ships are aging, and together with the Air Force airplanes, they need modernization and replacement. Romania has an important number of frigates and corvettes, but it is considerably disadvantaged by the lack of a developed naval aviation, the reduced capacity of ground-air defense and the mediocre capacity

of anti-submarine combat. (Victor, 2016) Romania also lacks an effective force of submarines.

Compared with Bulgaria, Romania has three frigates, two bought from the UK and one of its own production, but all need modernization. Instead, the southern neighbours have four frigates, three bought in 2000 from the Belgian Navy and an older one, of Soviet origin. (Victor, 2016) Bulgarian old Belgian frigates have a small weapons advantage, but they also need upgrades to keep their relevance. The advantage of the Romanian frigates is that all three have the capacity of a helicopter port and have attached one IAR 330 Puma Naval helicopter. (Victor, 2016) The Romanian fleet benefits from several corvettes and fast attack ships, while the Bulgarian fleet has several anti-mine ships, although most of them are at the limit of operability. (Victor, 2016)

3.1.5 The biggest goal in the annexation of Crimea

According to Nicolae Tibrikan, the biggest stake in the Crimean annexation is "the permanent establishment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the infrastructure created in Sevastopol". This is added to "blocking Ukraine from joining European and Euro-Atlantic structures by transforming it into a buffer zone between NATO's eastern borders and the strategic line Sankt Petersburg - Rostov on Don". (Nicolae T. , 2015) Nicolae Tibrikan makes a brief review of the 2014 event and makes a classification of Russia's arguments regarding the annexation of Crimea, drawing a full picture of what the *Kremlin reasoning* means in its new expansionist policy. (Nicolae T. , 2015)

Besides the international law issues or the arguments related to history and spirituality, the sociologist also presents a point of view on the strategic importance of the Crimean peninsula. Historian Gheorghe I. Bratianu stressed that the transformation of the Black Sea into a space of maritime neutrality was achieved in 1859 only with the destruction of the Russian naval bases from the Crimea, and between 1919 and 1920, General Vranghel created so many troubles to the Soviet leadership by ruling Sevastopol. (Nicolae T. , 2015)

Thus, by controlling Crimea, Moscow continues to access the naval base from Sevastopol - the Black Sea Fleet shelter. Moreover, the exit to the Black Sea and the existence of one of the best infrastructures made Sevastopol one of the most valuable naval bases in the Black Sea. However, the Black Sea Fleet station in Sevastopol offers Russia the opportunity to project its power around the Black Sea, and this advantage served to maintain its own regional power status. (Nicolae T. , 2015) Of course, the Black Sea Fleet was no longer the strongest naval force in the region, but Russia was in the process of modernizing its own fleet by estimating to launch six submarines and six new frigates in the water. (Nicolae T. , 2015)

3.1.6 Crimea – *a geographic aircraft carrier*

The author of the article also reminded that in 2008 Russia used its fleet to carry troops and organize a naval blockade against Georgia. Sevastopol also offers to the Russian navy the access to the Mediterranean Sea, the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, of course, within certain limits imposed by the Montreaux Convention on Transit Ships through the Turkish Straits. (Nicolae T. , 2015) The Crimean military harbour is also the basis for the new-established Russian naval forces used for tactical operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, expanding the Russian naval influence and strengthening its prestige across the region. For example, these naval forces deployed to the Black Sea have recently been used to supply Russian military equipment to Syria and conduct anti-piracy operations in Somali waters. (Nicolae T. , 2015)

Nicolae Tibrigan also said that by taking control of the Crimean peninsula, Putin succeeded in turning Ukraine into a less attractive state for the West. According to Moscow, a Ukraine involved in a territorial dispute with another state implicitly makes NATO hesitate to expand its partnership with it. Here we talk about repeating the same scenario applied both in Georgia and other hotspots in the CIS to counteract any attempt of NATO expansion. The Crimean Peninsula also represents a so-called *geographic harbour* that can be used in the event of a direct military confrontation

with Ukraine, for organizing a possible naval blockade, attack operations of amphibious carriers, air raids inside Ukraine, etc. (Nicolae T. , 2015)

3.1.7 Ukraine wants a referendum to join NATO

According to the Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, in the near future there will be held referendums for the Ukrainian accession to European Union and NATO. (Timpul.md, 2017) In 2014, an association agreement was signed between Ukraine and the European Union. It involves deeper economic and strategic cooperation, but does not give the country the right to join the EU. Brussels has repeatedly stated that Kiev should reform trade, business and health areas. (Timpul.md, 2017) In 2015, Poroshenko said that by 2020, Ukraine will ensure full army interoperability (operational and technical) with NATO's armed forces. (Timpul.md, 2017) From his point of view, membership in the North Atlantic Alliance is the strategic objective of Ukraine.

According to a survey conducted by the International Institute of Sociology in Kiev, the country's accession to NATO is supported by 56 percent of Ukrainians in March 2017. (Timpul.md, 2017) Later on, in November 2017, 62% of the Ukrainian population supported the country's accession to NATO. (Catalin, 2017) Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ivanna Klimpuș-Țințadze, believes that the increase in the number of supporters of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO is due to the cancellation of the visa regime for Ukrainians wishing to travel to the EU. (Catalin, 2017) Ukraine has expressed its intention to join NATO after a pro-Western government was formed in February 2014, after the Maidan Square revolt, the annexation of the Crimean Ukrainian peninsula by Russia, and the emergence of a conflict in the separatist East. Prior to these events, only 20% of Ukrainians were in favour of their country's NATO membership. (Iulian, 2017)

3.1.8 Ukraine was offered the status of aspiring country for NATO membership

According to a NATO report, The NATO door remains open to any European country in a position to assume its commitments and obligations and to contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. Since 1949, the number of NATO member states has increased from 12 to 29 through seven rounds of enlargement. Currently, four partner countries have declared aspirations for NATO membership: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine. (Andrei, 2018)

Countries expressing their intention to join NATO are invited to dialogue with the North Atlantic Alliance concerning the necessary aspirations and necessary reforms, followed by participation in joint operations under the Action Plan (MAP) through which NATO provides assistance in preparing for accession (Andrei, 2018). Collaboration for these steps is not a guarantee for membership, but a key mechanism of the candidacy. Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, welcomed the announcement made by NATO and said he was waiting for the Action Plan for membership. (Andrei, 2018)

In his mandate (February 2010 - February 2014), Viktor Yanukovich said he is not interested in his country's NATO membership. (Andrei, 2018) Ukraine is affected by the military conflict in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, between the Ukrainian security services and the breakaway separatist insurgents, conflict that broke out in 2014 and which has so far resulted in about 10,000 deaths. (Andrei, 2018) The Minsk agreement, which provides the cessation of hostilities, has been frequently violated. On July 18, 2017, separatist regimes in eastern Ukraine have proclaimed a new state in the territories they control. (Andrei, 2018)

Russia has repeatedly expressed concern over NATO's expansion to the East. In addition, Moscow has denounced the deployment of US anti-missile elements in Romania and Poland, arguing that although they are presented as defensive, these systems can launch cruise missiles prohibited by the Inter-Nuclear Force Treaty (INF). (Andrei, 2018) Relations between Russia and NATO have reached the lowest

level since the end of the Cold War after the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia's support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

3.2 NATO VS. RUSSIA IN THE BLACK SEA

The Black Sea region became important for the world's politics after the Russian illegal movement from 2014 and after the war had started in the eastern side of Ukraine. Romania's worry about Russia's bellicose stance is legitimate as it represents the eastern border of NATO and it is directly involved in the Black Sea, the area of maximum strategic interest for both the NATO and Russia. But what can Romania do in the face of a potential Russian aggression? Answer: not very well.

That is why the Ministry of National Defense have launched in a debate a highly political and strategic goal: the creation of a joint NATO fleet at the Black Sea. What would this fleet look like compared to the Russian fleet? Romania would strongly depend on its North Atlantic allies in the event of a naval conflict in the Black Sea with a force like Russia. Romanian Naval Forces are small in size compared to the major powers in the area - Turkey and Russia, and its equipment and vessels are old and need modernization.

3.2.1 NATO and the Black Sea

The Black Sea is a region of which role and interference location of Europe, Mediterranean, Asian and Middle Eastern steppes has been invented and reinvented on numerous occasions, which has contributed to the uncertainty surrounding the nature of the Black Sea region and the great complexity of the forces which are still active. The seventy years of Soviet control has turned the Pont-Euxin into an unnatural interregnum and a crucible of instability, having on its background the emergence of *fractured societies*, frozen conflicts and militarized areas.

On the other hand, NATO was already at the borders of Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus, by linking this area with the Black Sea Basin, including, in turn,

what George Friedman called *The Great Black Sea Basin* - Greater Black Sea basin (Fig. 1) (Nicolae & Radu, 2016). Thus, the Alliance was also interested in the security of non-NATO states with destabilizing potential for its eastern frontiers. The security interdependence concept of the NATO member states has generated a wide process of reflection not only in EU and NATO structures, but also in Romania, regarding the level of stability and predictability in the region.



Fig. 1 Greater Black Sea basin (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

That was why a new NATO strategy was imperative in terms of a possible widespread intervention of Turkey in northern Syria to support the fight against DAESH. At that moment, both NATO and the US had to cope with the most urgent short-term challenge - the simultaneous management of the two conflicting regions - Syria and the south-eastern region of Ukraine. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) The solution would be the integration of the two plans into a single theatre of operations - the

Wider Black Sea Region. This was the main nucleus of geographic organization of the new balance of power across the whole area.

The first step towards increasing NATO capabilities in the Western Black Sea region would be the recent proposal from Romania to create a permanent allied Naval Group formed by the Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish vessels. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) They would be ready to intervene quickly until NATO allies arrive (Fig. 2).

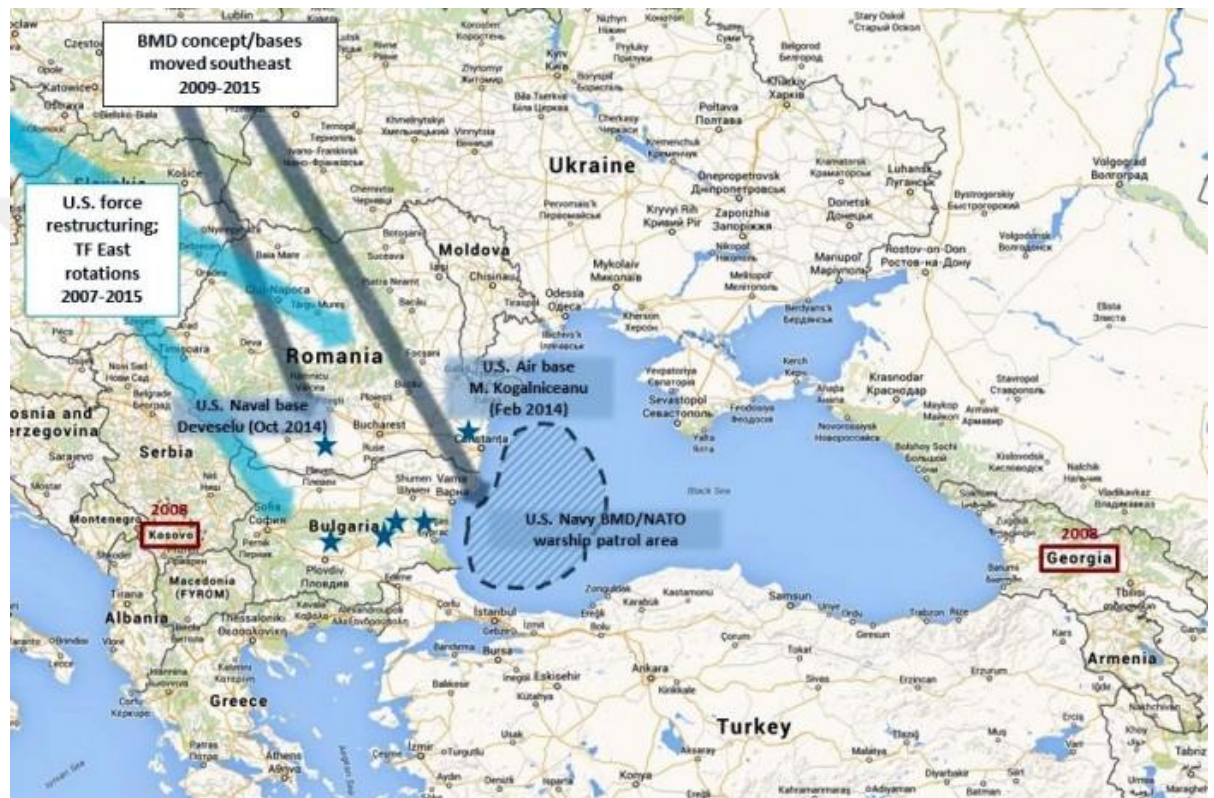


Fig. 2 Dislocation of NATO forces in the Black Sea. The blue stars indicate the location of US military bases (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

Beyond the strategic-military aspects, the reason for the emergence of such an alliance among the *eastern* states is also the priority of the different tasks of the main threats. Functioning as a structure made up of national autonomous puzzles, NATO has not completed an identity or vision of major dangers. The lack of the *great adversary* during the Cold War continues to fuel different uncertainties and visions regarding the allocation of limited resources. Thus, if the former Warsaw Pact states, now members of the Alliance, were fully aware of the Russian Federation's

aggressive measures, the situation in the Black Sea Region for Western European states would not have been an immediate strategic interest. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

Thus, a possible reaffirmation of a regional alliance based on two pillars - Romania and Poland, as well as its extension to Central Europe (among the Visegrad Group states) could reanimate the old Polish project *Intermarium* (Międzymorze – in Polish) to create a secure corridor at NATO's eastern border and to prevent any threats from the East. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) The Alliance was already in the process of asserting and consolidating, and Sofia, Budapest, Prague, or Bratislava, although not key players of the Alliance, they could share the same goal within it. Turkey, on the other hand, has interests across the Wider Black Sea Region, more exactly in Syria, Iraq, the South Caucasus and Ukraine, becoming one of the indispensable actors for crystallizing an integrated naval strategy. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

Another state with a significant role in regional stabilization and reconfiguration is Romania. Experts' clues converge on an important issue - the need to modernize and supplement the Romanian Navy with frigates and amphibious armoured units. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) The task would be assumed by the US as a strategic and reassuring partner for Atlantic border security. Beyond this, Romania's contribution at regional level can be substantial in the case of relations with the Republic of Moldova, just as Poland has recently assumed a commitment to democratization and stabilization of Ukraine within the project *Intermarium* (Nicolae & Radu, 2016).

In the last case, the speeches promoted by the conservative government of President Andrzej Duda had come to a single common idea - the creation of a geo-economic and military union based on a third model of maritime systems: the Baltic Security System + the Adriatic Security System + Black Sea Security System. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) The Baltic system would be composed not only by the EU and NATO member states (Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) but also by non-EU or non-NATO states (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) which the Navy System (Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey) could extend it to the South Caucasus (Georgia and Azerbaijan). (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) The inclusion of the last two states could open European markets to direct access to the Caspian oil reserves

located outside OPEC, thereby enhancing Euro-Atlantic security and fostering development in the Caucasus. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

What Romania could do at that time was to propose the resumption of the ring road project in a much more securitized version. A new highway to the current situation at the Black Sea can start from Constanta, connecting Bucharest with the A2 motorway, then continue through Bulgaria (Varna and Burgas), Turkey (Istanbul, Samsun, Trabzon) and finally get to the city Georgian Batumi with the possibility of extending to Tbilisi and further to Azerbaijan. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) Such a version would be more realistic, would involve fewer actors and could create close links between the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea and the European transport axes. Once the project would be accepted, Romania could start its expansion through a high-speed road to Chisinau or Odessa, giving Moldova and Ukraine another exit to the Black Sea. In addition to the economic benefits, the *Coastal Motorway* project would also be a good strategic opportunity for the North Atlantic Alliance to open an alternative transportation corridor for shipping, this way being often subject to Russian control (Nicolae & Radu, 2016).

According to the Romanian diplomacy, more attention was paid to the problems encountered in the adjacent perimeter of the EU and NATO's external borders. Moreover, in the recent years we witnessed more conflicts - besides Ukraine, the Middle East and northern Africa. Romania launched a new concept – regarding the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the revitalization of the Black Sea Synergy - the creation of *Security Trusts*, permanent dialogue platforms and political support in specific areas, identified as being of common interest (transport, trade, humanitarian assistance, development assistance, energy, environmental protection, migration and human rights). (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

Romania supported the ideas that aim at creating a zone of *security and trust* for the ENP. Romania's contribution to the modernization of the ENP and the European Union's Eastern Partnership approach and the creation of the so called *security belt* could be possible after a series of actions (Nicolae & Radu, 2016), such as:

- In order to avoid the mistakes in recent years, restoring the policies and tools must be based on the lessons learned in recent years.

- The interest to build a space of prosperity and stability around the EU, using the attractive elements of the others adequately, must characterize the future relations of the EU with its neighbours.
- It is necessary to build and deepen a trustworthy environment between the EU and its neighbours, as well as between the EU and the neighbours' neighbours by building a dialogue based on an EU-neighbours/partner - neighbours' neighbours' equation. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016) (Fig. 3).
- A way for establishing common interests through transparency and diplomacy in the form of *Security Trusts* on three geographical areas identified as the focal points of the tensions: The Black Sea Security Trust, The Gulf Security Trust, and The Sub-Sahara Security Trust. (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

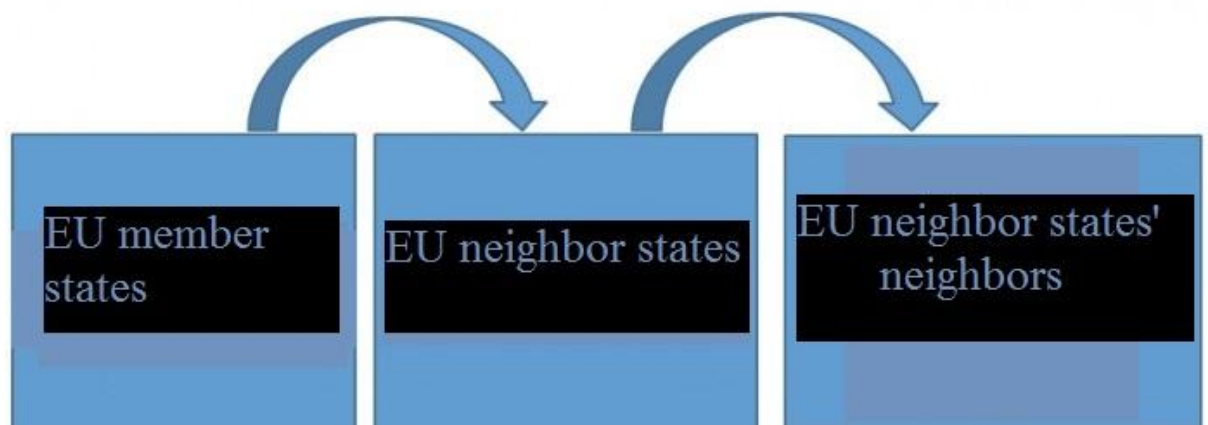


Fig. 3 Principles of *Security Trusts* (Nicolae & Radu, 2016)

3.2.1.1 Romania's position in case of a conflict with Russia

According to Omar Lamrani, in case of a conflict with Russia, especially a high-intensity conflict in the Black Sea, Romania would be largely dependent on NATO allies for help, especially because it lacks effective defense against naval

aviation and would be so vulnerable to Russian aircraft equipped with anti-ship missiles. (Victor, 2016) However, the international rules of access to the Black Sea severely limit the presence of US military ships, the United States being the most important military ally of Romania, the one this country would depend in case of any conflict.

The Montreux Convention (signed in Switzerland, 1936), which sets out the rules by which Turkey controls the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, drastically limits the access of the naval vessels to states that do not have Black Sea littoral, such as the United States or Britain (the other owner of a powerful fleet). (Victor, 2016) The Convention stipulates that the warships of foreign states cannot be more than 15,000 tons, cannot be more than nine and with a combined tonnage of more than 30,000 and cannot stand for more than 21 days in the Black Sea. (Victor, 2016) Thus, ships such as US carriers cannot access the Black Sea, and the US cruisers or destroyers could be limited in numbers.

3.2.1.2 Romanian Submarine

Romania has a submarine - *Dolphin*, a Soviet submarine of the Kilo class - but it is not operational because the engine's batteries are exhausted and its operation and modernization will cost several tens of millions of euro. (Victor, 2016) Omar Lamrani, military analyst at Stratfor believes that the submarines are the safest assets in the Black Sea today, especially in a scenario of direct conflict with a power like Russia. However, the repair and reoperation of the Romanian Kilo submarine would not be economically efficient. Romania would benefit if it will purchase newer and more capable submarines or investing the necessary funds in other directions such as air or naval forces. (Victor, 2016)

3.2.2 Turkey's importance within NATO

US aviation maintains at Incirlik, near Adana, a large airbase with about 2000 soldiers. The base is used for bombing raids on the bases of the Islamic State (SI) in

Syria and Iraq. Incirlik also played a leading role during the Persian Gulf and NATO missions in Afghanistan. Also on the same basis, 250 German Army soldiers are temporarily stationed, equipped with *Tornado* type airplanes and a flying airplane. Incirlik is not a NATO base. Such a base exists, however, in Izmir's western metropolis in western Turkey. There activates one of the five NATO General Headquarters, responsible for the larger-scale operations of the land forces and for their coordination. This General Headquarters, abbreviated LANDCOM, is subordinate to the supreme commander of NATO troops in Europe. In addition, there is another major US Air Force base in Izmir.

Overall, it is estimated that there are 20 military bases and targets in Turkey that are partly used by NATO. Turkey has the second largest army in NATO after the US's one. Turkish militants have so far participated in all NATO operations in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Syria, or Libya. In addition, NATO recently installed radar for missile defense in Turkey. From a geopolitical perspective, military experts say that Turkey - a country on the south eastern flank, adjacent to the outbreaks of the Middle East and the Black Sea - is of particular importance (Bernd, 2016). But this importance *should not be overestimated*, says the former head of the NATO Military Commission, retired German general Harald Kujat (Bernd, 2016). Turkey has always been an *ally that partners could not rely on 100%*, Kujat recently told the Deutschlandfunk radio station (Bernd, 2016). And in the fight against IS, the role of Turkey was at first rather *dubious*, he said.

3.2.2.1 Turkish vs. Russian Navy Forces

Turkey had more submarines and ships, but Russia had the largest Black Sea battle ship and a larger missiles arsenal. Turkey had a decisive submarine advantage in the Black Sea with an effective of 13 operational submarines, while Russia had much less, but it intends to supplement its forces in the coming years. (Victor, 2016) According to Omar Lamrani, Turekey also had a larger number of surface ships, about 25 frigates and corvettes, many of them being quite modern. In comparison, the Russians had around 15 corvettes of larger sizes. (Victor, 2016) The Russian

advantage is Moskva, a Slava class cruiser, which is also the largest vessel in the Black Sea. However, Moskva is an old ship, which was first launched in 1979. (Victor, 2016)



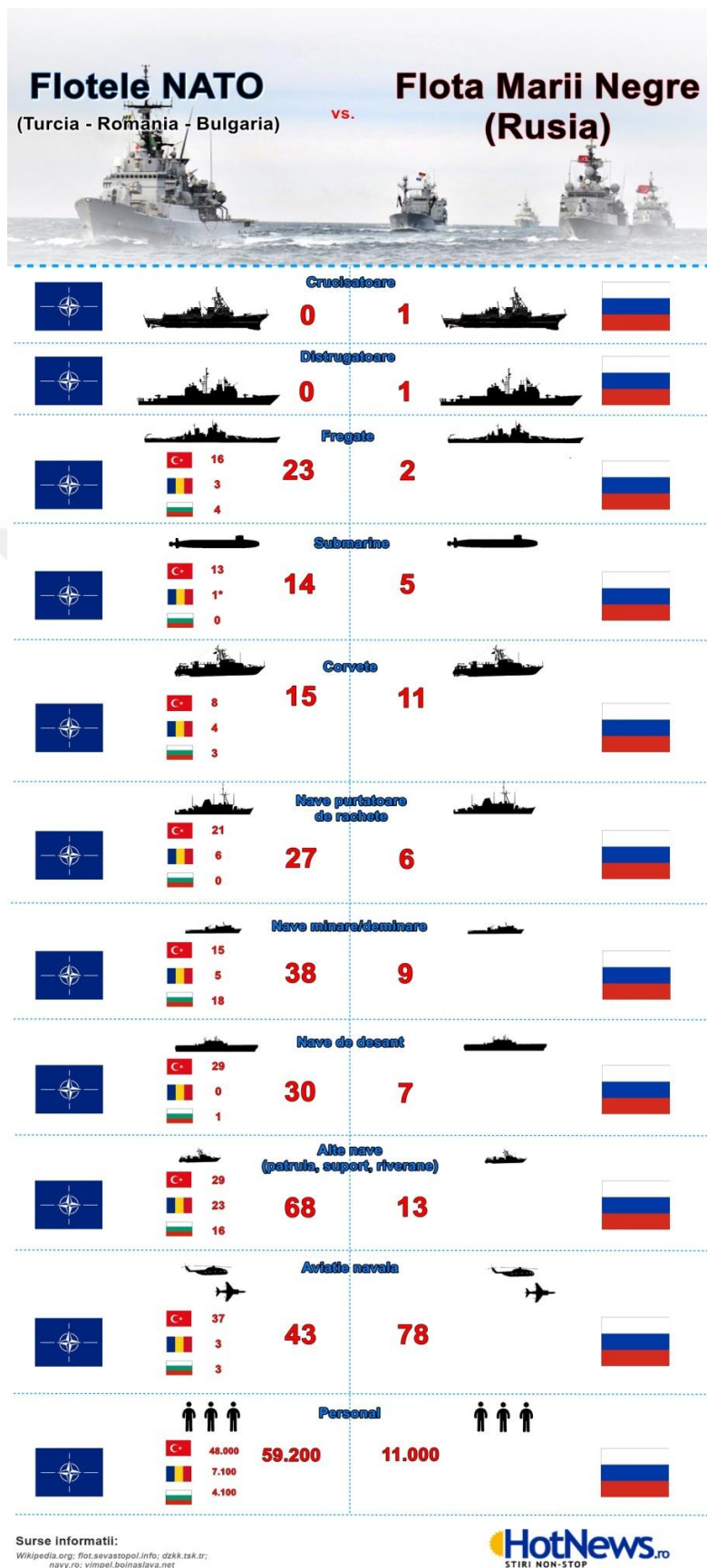


Fig. 4 NATO vs. Russian Fleet (2016) (Victor, 2016)

3.2.2.2 NATO's reactions to Turkish development

The US sends the highest ranked military in Turkey to limit the damage caused in the relations between Washington, Ankara and the rest of NATO. US Chief of Staff, Joseph Dunford, assured that his country will continue to engage for bringing more democracy in Turkey. He also condemned the attempted military coup. The same was done by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg just two days after the failed coup in a telephone conversation with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Stoltenberg also said that Turkey must respect its own democratic order, the rule of law and human rights (Bernd, 2016).

The Ankara government is not delighted by this solidarity, which it regards as hesitant. Erdogan himself asked for high-profile politicians to visit Turkey. The sweep of the Turkish army of soldiers involved in the coup has not been officially commented on by NATO. From Brussels, the Alliance only communicated that each member state has the right to replace its own military commanders in NATO command structures.

3.2.2.3 Possible tensions concerning the Incirlik airbase

President Erdogan urges the USA to extradite preacher Fethullah Gülen, who makes him responsible for the coup d'état from 15th of July. The US administration has promised to analyze the request for extradition as soon as Turkey provides credible evidence in this regard. Gülen, who lives in the United States, maintains strongly that he has nothing to do with the coup. Turkey gave the US the right to use the Incirlik base for IS attacks just four years ago. This can be used now as an exchange tool for Gülen's extradition. The Ankara government is also dissatisfied that the US supports the fight against IS in Syria and Kurdish groups, which the Turkish side consider them as terrorist entities (Bernd, 2016).

Turkey has dissatisfaction with another NATO partner, Germany. It is the resolution adopted by the Bundestag to condemn the genocide in Armenia. The Berlin Parliament has criticized the genocide committed 100 years ago by the Ottoman

Empire, which, according to Turkey, is an attack. As a result, the Erdogan government currently does not allow German deputies to visit the Bundeswehr soldiers stationed at Incirlik. If Ankara does not soon abandon this refusal, the Bundestag may decide to withdraw the German military from Turkey (Bernd, 2016).

3.2.2.4 Can NATO force or exclude Turkey from the Alliance?

The NATO agreement does not contain the possibility of exclusion from the alliance, neither sanctions nor exclusion procedures. The Washington Treaty can only be denounced by the partner state itself. NATO's governing structures in Brussels can only put political pressure on Turkey, so that the country acts in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and does not abuse the state of necessity.

The importance and ability of the Turkish army to fight within NATO will diminish after the coup d'etat attempt, says former James Stavridis supreme commander of NATO troops in Europe (Bernd, 2016). "Unfortunately, the focus will probably be on the military's internal affairs, on endless inquiries and loyalty checks," (Bernd, 2016) said the retired admiral in a review published by the online Foreign Policy portal. The Turkish army will strive to maintain its position in the state.

3.2.3 Russian Navy Forces from the Black Sea

Over the past four years, after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, Russia has begun to consolidate its naval position in the Black Sea. New long-range rocket batteries and installations located in Crimea provide Russia with significant Black Sea coverage, including the Romanian seaside and the Black Sea Fleet (as it is named by Russia) has received new equipment and ships. (Victor, 2016) Four new submarines from the Varshavyanka class (Improved Kilo) were brought into service at the Novorossiysk base, with two more new units expected for 2016. At the same time, two of the newest missile-type rocket launchers from Buyan-M class were activated at the same naval basis (Victor, 2016). Currently, the Black Sea Fleet

counts over 45 warships and more than 11,000 soldiers, but also a heavily naval helicopter and combat aircraft, as well as fixed or mobile rocket systems (eg Iskander) that can be moved anywhere across the Russian seaside. (Victor, 2016)

3.2.4 Vulnerabilities and opportunities from the Black Sea Region

Romanian and Turkish perspectives

Security in the Black Sea region has deteriorated considerably since 2014, with the illegal annexation of the Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The militarization of the Black Sea by the Russian Federation has forced NATO to adopt politico-military measures demonstrating the determination of the North Atlantic Alliance to reaffirm solidarity with the member states of the region. If there is a much better coordination between the Baltic States and Poland in the northern part of the eastern flank, in the southern part there are expected joint initiatives, especially at the naval level. (ISPRI, 2017)

The Black Sea is not an isolated region with little strategic importance. Illegal annexation of Crimea is the worst security crisis since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, in the Black Sea area, the long series of frozen conflicts can be revived in any moment, from Abkhazia and South Ossetia to Georgia, Transnistria to the Republic of Moldova and Donbas to Ukraine. (ISPRI, 2017) The importance of the Black Sea region increased after the Russian military intervention in Syria, the Russian fleet from Sevastopol providing logistical support for the expeditionary body. This is one of the reasons why the Black Sea and the eastern part of the Mediterranean have become a common security area. (ISPRI, 2017)

Turkey's role is very important for cooperation in the Black Sea region, with Romania being interested in strengthening political, economic and military relations with this country, a strategic partner of Romania. Security in the Black Sea Region, the resolution of the crisis in Syria and the management of the migrants from the Middle East depend to a large extent on Ankara's attitude. The EU-NATO Dialogue must continue, going over the tensions registered in the last period and NATO-level

political and military cooperation may be even stronger in the Black Sea region through Turkey's contribution, the country with the strongest fleet and aviation among allied states in the area. (ISPRI, 2017)

Setting up a new White House administration would bring a new vision to NATO, but also in bilateral relations, Turkey being an important country for the US for its security interests in the Middle East. In addition, special attention should be paid to Turkey's relations with Russia, both states showing willingness to work together in the Black Sea region and the Middle East. (ISPRI, 2017) The New Strategy Centre organizes this debate on vulnerabilities and opportunities in the Black Sea region, together with partners from the Marmara Group Foundation from Istanbul. The vision of Romania and Turkey on the security challenges in this space, the evolution of relations between Turkey and the EU, the US or Russia, and the way Romania can develop bilateral relations is some of the ideas of the meeting.

3.2.5 Possible threats in future

There have been so many events happening in the wider Black Sea region lately that any attempt to guess what could be followed is an ingrained task. There are, however, a number of hypothetical developments that, although improbable, they could theoretically become reality. The order of events presented below does not indicate their probability. In all scenarios presented, the accident, the human error or wrong calculation represent a possibility. (Sergiu, Seth, Dan, Iulian, & Cosmin, 2016)

- “*Resumption of military hostilities, this time at the interstate level, between Russia and Ukraine.* This could happen as a result of a major offensive made by one of the parties in the separatist regions of Donbas, in the case of Minsk I and II failure. Another alternative would be a Russian deliberate action to secure a land corridor to Crimea in the attempt to revive, at least partially, the concept of *Novorossia* project.

- *A direct, medium-intensity confrontation between Russia and Turkey.* That would be possible in case of an open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan for taking the control over the Nagorno-Karabach enclave, forcing Moscow and Ankara to support one of the parties. Another trigger could be a serious air or marine incident that would cause a disproportionate reaction. In both cases, NATO would have a difficult decision.
- *Substantial weakness of European institutions, drastic reformulation or even EU dissolution.* In such a scenario, the defense commitments of some Western and Central European states within NATO could be considerably reduced. Partner and member states from the Eastern Flank would be the most exposed.
- *Enabling the conflict from Transnistria.* This separatist province from the Republic Moldova is located between Ukraine and Dniester River, but it has a Russian military presence. Ukraine might be tempted to act for ensuring its sustainable control over the Odessa port, a very important place for this country.
- *Serious tensions with regard to the maritime status as a result of incorporation Crimea by Russia.* In the absence of a formal and legal delimitation of waters territorial and airspace, of continental shelf and exclusive economic areas from the Black Sea, Russia acts unilaterally, imposing its claims by force seizing assets. Based on international law and accepted practices, the minimum that can happen is the beginning of a series of litigations and cases of expensive arbitration.” (Sergiu, Seth, Dan, Iulian, & Cosmin, 2016)

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the military evolution from the Black Sea Region and its connection to the regional security overall. More specifically, the research was focused on the military development in some ex-Soviet countries from the Eastern Europe along with NATO and Russian policies over the region. The Black Sea Region's geopolitics were described and evidenced from the very beginning. The region is seen as a bridge between the West, Asia, Caucasus and even Middle East. For the Black Sea, it is clear that the political harmony is vital for the regional countries' security and for their development.

For having a clear idea about the topic, firstly it was necessary to make a summary of the old regional situation since 1990s using the historical perspective. This summary referred to the new paths the ex-Soviet countries chose after the fall of the communist regime. Generally it is described their way to democracy, to market economy and their desire for EU and NATO membership. Romania and Bulgaria, followed by Ukraine were in this situation. On the other hand, Turkey, an already important NATO member is used by the alliance to play against Russia. The struggle between the West represented by US and NATO and Russia is an old issue that continues until nowadays.

The ex-Soviet countries' development was seen by NATO as a good chance to gain more power in the region, while these countries were searching for common security and defense against any threat most probably coming from Russia. After they became NATO members in 2004, Romania and Bulgaria represented NATO's eastern border to the Black Sea. Turkey had a different situation as it was already member since 1952. It is clear that Turkey, besides its impressive army, the second biggest army after the USA, its geostrategic position influenced NATO to give the membership during the Cold War for protecting the other countries against spreading of the communist regime.

However, NATO's goals were to militarize its members from the Black Sea region for having certain basis that in case of any conflict it will be able to respond. In this context, it is obvious that after 2004 Romania, Bulgaria and in some aspects Turkey

received so much support from NATO for developing their military system. NATO basis was established in Romania for supervising the Black Sea's activity and for pursuing different activities. Moreover, a missile shield was placed on Romanian territory, subject very disputed between NATO and Russia and that left Romania in an unsafe position. On the other hand, Bulgaria did not benefit from so many advantages since it achieved NATO membership, reason for why is possible to leave the Alliance. Moreover, all this military development in the region offered the possibility to these countries to take part in missions from Afghanistan, Iraq and in the Balkans' issue. Without a good training, NATO would not have sent them in such operation theatres.

It can be said that Russian military action in Crimea from 2014 was a result for so much NATO's presence in the Black Sea Region. It is clear that Russia was afraid that Ukraine will be offered the NATO membership and it will lose its last chance to impose its dominant rule and control Crimea. For Russia, the Crimean Peninsula was seen since even the old times as a perfect place for establishing military basis, for pursuing training activities and for controlling the Black Sea. Therefore, Moscow could not afford to lose it against the West, represented by NATO. Therefore, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, even illegal, was somehow legitimated from political and military power perspective.

On the other hand, this work analyzed the issues that undermine the security in the Black Sea region. The Black Sea coasts have been the host for so many geostrategic interests and disputes for a long time. While some of the interests are the same, some others have changed due to the development of the international cooperation. The result of this research focuses on the Russian threatening strategy as well as the position of NATO military bases in the region getting ready for taking action.

Economic issues and the tensions between Russia and the western influence represent concerning factors as well. As the research is done from a historical perspective, the major conclusion is that the security in the Black Sea region is not only compromised by the old tensions, the region being affected by continuous changes in the political strategy of the regional actors.

I believe that the Black Sea region will continue to be very important not only for the regional players, but for the global powers as well. The tensions in the region will continue as long as Russia will keep imposing its politics and will play against the NATO's strategies. Turkey has been as it will continue to be a very important ally for NATO due to its geostrategic position. Although Turkey is a NATO member, it might be better for it to keep its ties close to the Russian Federation as well. Good cooperation and no tensions in this area will reduce the chances of a possible conflict and it will bring benefits to all the participants. More partnerships will define a peaceful and very well established environment in the Black Sea region.



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