

RISKS AND ACTUAL WARNINGS SPECIFIC TO THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *We need a brief assessment of the international security environment in order to have a more realistic picture of the world we live in, having the perspective of threats, risks and vulnerabilities. The current and future security environment is characterized, among other things, by its complexity of actors, dynamism of threats as a result of the rethinking of the political-military postures of some states with military potential ore emerging states and non-state actors. In the foreseeable future, the security environment will continue to be influenced by multiple challenges, risks and threats, caused by the globalization phenomenon and political, economic, military and technological interdependencies which can provoke strategic surprises. The European area is in a continuous process of transformation with strategic implications. The systemic transformation will affect the European states and their adjacent regions visibly but distinctly, but the impact on European and Romanian security will be differentiated in the long run.*

Keywords: threats, security environment, challenges, strategic implications, risks

1. General and methodological considerations

In a global way, the security environment is “undergoing continuous transformation, which is mainly reflected in an increase of interdependencies and unpredictability in the system of international relations, and the difficulty of delimiting the risks and threats” [1] of classical irregular and hybrid threats. As medium and long term, developments in the global security environment will be “dominated by complex trends, which knowledge is for our country of major importance. Thus, at the basis of these evolutions are a series of vectors, among them, I will list the main ones: configuration of geo-strategic games, the rapid development of information

technology, resurgence of nationalism and extremism, ethnic-religious fragmentation and ideological radicalization, adapting critical infrastructures against calamities, energy crises, cyber attacks, pandemics” [2]. The high degree of uncertainty surrounding developments in the security/operational environment, “correlated with internal and external factors that influence the course of Romania, requires new ways of action, based on a medium and long-term vision. The dynamics of current security developments present two major challenges: the identification of constants and the anticipation of possible internal, regional and international phenomena that may affect Romania's national security” [3]. In anticipation and prevention of major

global security issues, the United Nations has an important role to play in both consultation and decision-making on regional crises. More and more frequently, deployment and stationing of military forces and capabilities, and confidence and confidence building measures at regional and international level may accentuate fragmentation, divisions and cleavages, generating turbulent reconfiguration at the level of international relations, which appeals to the international regime of arms treaties and understandings.

2. Specific issues to the European Union

The solidity of the European relationship depends on maintaining the states commitment and how European partners will devote resources to developing their own security/defense capabilities. The possibility of a “new army” in Europe will completely change the region's current picture. Recent statements by the President of France - Emmanuel Macron - sparked a huge wave of concern, saying: *“We will not be able to defend the Europeans if we do not decide to have a real European army. In front of Russia, which is at our borders and which shows that it can be threatening, we must have a Europe that can defend itself more than one, without being dependent on the United States alone, and more sovereign”* [4]. Obviously, security specialists and political analysts speculate that there will be states that will be part of the possible “alliance”, as there will also be states that will not assume this form of organization, the basis of these decisions will be interests of economic, political, social, security or other nature. The leader of Paris denounced President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Inter-Nuclear Force (INF) treaty signed with Russia, warning that the main victim of this decision is Europe and its security. The President of France has warned, without giving details, that there are authoritarian powers re-emerging and rearming at the borders of Europe. We have

to defend China, Russia and even the United States of America. At a regional level, *“the environment in which Romania defends and promotes its values, principles and interests is in a new phase of reconfiguration. The current security dynamics can affect both Romania's security situation and the security of its citizens”* [5], both directly and indirectly.

Romania has the obligation to *“preserve the strategic balance in an area of interference of some regional security complexes, as well as to contribute to the consolidation of the process of Europeanization through the gradual extension of the European area of freedom, prosperity, security and justice”* [6]. Regional security is growing, due to strengthening the south-eastern dimension of the EU neighborhood and cooperation policies. The Russian Federation is trying to strengthen its regional status, its actions affecting the *“regional stability and the European course of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. The perpetuation of instability in the Western Balkans generates populist, extremist, radical or even fundamentalist skirmishes by deepening historical cleavage and affecting the rights of ethnic communities, favoring organized crime and corruption”* [7]. The regional energy architecture may undergo mutations due to possible syncope in the valorization of the energy resources in the Pontic area and the development of energy projects competing with those supported by the EU and Romania. The questioning of the system of liberal values, gaps in the norms of the rule of law, the authoritarian tendencies in the exercise of power, the exacerbation of the nationalist and populist discourse leads to the increase of the regional instability and the diminishing of the sense of security in the area. Traditionally, *“threats, risks, and vulnerabilities to defense and security are assessed through military concepts, but the current security environment requires an extended approach”* [8], in addition to elements of security, and those of an

economic nature, social, political, technological and environmental issues. The deterioration of the security situation at international and especially regional level requires knowledge of the main threats, risks and vulnerabilities our country faces in the context of the emergence and possible development of new forms of influence and constraint as a result of a mix of nonconventional and conventional components.

3. Romania's approach to risk and threats management

Romania's positioning in the eastern part of Europe, where many insecurity areas intersect, Romania's commitments as a security contributor in this region require the pertinent identification and analysis of risks and threats to national and regional security.

3.1. Main Threats

Threats are capabilities, strategies, intentions or plans that can affect national values, interests, and national security goals! The most significant threats to Romania are:

- “destabilizing actions in the eastern neighborhood that generate major challenges for the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, creating regional instability and possible negative phenomena;
- the perpetuation of frozen conflicts in the Black Sea region and instability in the Western Balkans”; [9]
- inter-ethnic tensions and regional imbalances in neighboring countries; distortions on energy markets and competing projects of state/non-state actors;
- “cyber threats launched by hostile, state or non-state entities, information infrastructures of strategic interest to public institutions and companies; cyber attacks by cyber-crime groups or extremist cyber attacks launched by hacker groups;
- terrorism with forms of manifestation that are difficult to anticipate and counteract, including from the perspective of identifying and destroying the

recruitment and funding flows of these activities” [10];

- increasing “fundamentalist propaganda, especially in the virtual environment, favors the emergence of new cases of radicalization or involvement in extremism and terrorist attacks” [11];
- dual-use products traffic and proliferation NBC weapons and carrier vectors;
- hostile informative actions that aim at developing support points on national territory, especially for influence purposes.

3.2. Risks

Risks are the “*probability of manifestation of an uncertain event with a direct or indirect impact on national security*” [12]. The main risks that may affect Romania are:

- “the persistence of economic difficulties, the proliferation of the underground economy and corruption, tax evasion”, [13] infrastructure precariousness that may lead to the failure to achieve Romania's development goals;
- demographic decline, emigration of active population;
- “degradation of environmental factors, deficiencies in national health systems, education and social assistance, and distortions in the labor market” [14];
- the accentuation of extremist ethnic, religious or other origins, which may lead to the radicalization of the extremist entities present on the territory of Romania;
- “cross-border crime, drug trafficking, people, weapons and goods, illegal migration to economic and financial crime” [15];
- illicit trafficking in conventional arms may stem from the interest of state and non-state actors to carry out such operations, targeting conflict zones or armed conflict potential; low-intensity but time-consuming military confrontations, migratory flows generated by natural disasters, pandemics, ecological disasters are low probability risks but with a major impact on national security.

3.3. Vulnerability issues

Vulnerabilities are “*the consequences of systemic dysfunctions or deficiencies that can be exploited or can contribute to materializing a threat or risk*” [16]. The capacity of state departments to assess and mitigate the “impact of risks and threats is limited by the persistence of vulnerabilities in: absorption of European funds, use of public money, energy, critical infrastructure, agriculture, environmental protection, justice, health, education and scientific research” [17]. The absence of real multi-annual budget planning/programming has negative effects, including the increase in the capabilities of the armed forces and compliance with the military expenditure commitments which will “*lead to the assumption and observance of investment programs and another vulnerability is the capability of central and local government to implement national and European public policies*” [18].

4. Conclusions

Inter-institutional response to crisis situations is affected by resource precariousness and huddle in managing the different class of risk. Vulnerabilities come even more important if we address to the interoperability capability of the various

state departments/agencies that have to act in case of asymmetric and hybrid threats. Corruption as vulnerability affects the stability and development potential of a state, it damages the economy, right governance, decision making for the benefit of citizens and confidence in the act of justice. Also, at the external relations, corruption has a negative effect on the credibility of country.

Other vulnerabilities stem from social dysfunctions, poverty of population, economic disparities, demographic decline, specialized labor migration, lack of civic solidarity.

The risks and threats to public order, consisting in the development of organized crime networks, terrorist threats, the negative effects of human action on the environment, the lack of clear political horizons, and the negative effects of globalization create many problems of public order and security. In this context, we believe that a strong force structure is needed, capable of maintaining, securing and restoring public order, as well as maintaining the status of Romania, a democratic state, a generator of stability and security in the area of geographical proximity.

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