

# ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING



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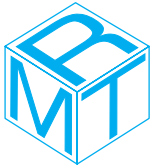
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## A LEGACY SINCE 1864

The Romanian Armed Forces road to modernity started in 1859, once the United Principalities General Staff Corps, currently the Defence Staff, was established.

Soon after it, in 1864, a group of nine captains, graduates of the first series of the Officer Cadet School in Bucharest, took the initiative to develop a "military science, art and history journal" named "România Militară/Military Romania".

The initiators of the publication – **G. Slăniceanu** (Captain, Chief of the Engineer Battalion), **A. Gramont** (Staff Captain), **G. Borănescu** (Engineer Captain), **G. Anghelescu** (Staff Captain), **A. Anghelescu** (Artillery Captain), **E. Arion** (Artillery Captain), **E. Boteanu** (Staff Captain), **E. Pencovici** (Staff Captain) and **C. Barozzi** (Engineer Captain) –, educated not only in Romania but also abroad, were inspired by the necessity to develop a substantial theoretical activity in the Romanian Army too.

The journal manifesto<sup>1</sup>, included in the first issue, which appeared on 15 February 1864, contained innovative ideas and approaches that were meant to:

*"- contribute to the organisation of our military system the Legislative Chamber is about to decide upon soon;*

*- assemble and examine the Country old military institutions that had made for the glory of Romania for several centuries and ensured our existence;*

*- explore, in the absence of any military study, all the aspects related to the Army training, the most solid basis of the armed forces;*

*- get the Romanian Troops well-informed about the military events in the world;*

*- join efforts to work concertedly and whole-heartedly to develop and strengthen the edifice that is meant to ensure the future of our country"*<sup>2</sup>.

"România Militară" was an independent publication, under the aegis of the War Ministry, and it ceased to appear in 1866 as there were no sufficient funds and subscribers. The publication was resumed in 1891, about a quarter of a century later, also as the result of the initiative of a group of officers in the Great General Staff who intended to "reproduce the serious studies on the organisation, strategy and art of commanding troops under any circumstances"<sup>3</sup>. Shortly after it, by the Royal Decree no. 3663 issued on 8 December 1897, "România Militară" became the "Great General Staff official publication".



<sup>1</sup> *Din trecutul României Militare cu prilejul aniversării a 75 de ani de la apariția ei în viața armatei. 1864-1939, București, 1939, p. 31.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem, p. 32.*

<sup>3</sup> *România Militară, no. 1, 1981, p. 6.*

English version by **Diana Cristiana LUPU**.



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## CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Gheorghită VLAD	6	Resetting NATO's Key Purpose of Collective Defence in the Context of the Conflict in Ukraine
MILITARY THEORY AND ART	George-Ion TOROI Cristian-Octavian STANCIU	12	Planning Deception at the Operational Level of War
	Lucian Valeriu SCIPANOV Valentin Costinel TOTIR	36	The Need to Adapt Naval Tactics to Technological Evolution – Drones and Drone-Carrying Platforms –
	Romică CERNAT	56	The Potential Represented by Missile Defence – Emerging and Disruptive Technology – in the Global Power Balance
INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY	Iulian CHIFU	78	European China Policies: Aligning with the Red Lines of Global Economic Competition
	Ionuț-Iulian CĂLUGĂRU	94	The Implications of Sino-American Relations on the World Order – The Taiwan Strait Issue –
	Nicholas ZALEWSKI	110	The Weaponization of NATO Membership: Leaders of Türkiye and Hungary Use Accession Process for Personal Disputes
DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Cezar VASILESCU Daniel DOICARIU	126	Security of Communication and Information Systems of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Context of Hybrid Threats
	Adrian BĂLĂLĂU	142	General Considerations and Conceptual Delimitations regarding the Militarisation of Economic Operators whose Activity is Directly Related to Providing Defence Resources
OPINIONS	Sorin LEARSCHI	156	<i>“Sea Blindness”</i>
	Mircea VLADU	176	Considerations on the NATO and EU Approach to Critical Infrastructure Protection
	Diana-Cristiana LUPU	184	Critical Discourse Analysis in the Age of Multimodal Communication
MILITARY HISTORY	Constantin NEAGU	200	Echoes of the Golgotha Survived by the Orthodox Church in the Bishopric of Buzău within the Kingdom of Romania (1916-1918)
	Ion RÎȘNOVEANU	226	Actions of the 18 <sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment to Defend the Ploiești Area between 23 August and 1 September 1944



## RESETTING NATO'S KEY PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVE DEFENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

*Lieutenant General Gheorghiu VLAD*

*Deputy Chief of Defence Staff*



*The current security environment, especially the regional one, has been deeply affected after 24 February 2022, when the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine, in flagrant violation of the international rules-based order.*

*In this regard, the invasion has mobilised concerted efforts to coordinate the support given to Ukraine, consistently materialised in humanitarian, economic and military aid at both national and NATO level. In addition, NATO initiated a new set of measures aimed at deterrence and defence, which included the deployment of response forces to strengthen the posture and presence in the eastern flank. Considering the geographical location of Ukraine, the Wider Black Sea Area has become increasingly relevant in the new security context, maritime security being mentioned, in the new NATO Strategic Concept, adopted in Madrid, in June 2022, as an element of particular importance.*

### ***A NATO Strategic Concept Tailored to the New Security Environment***

*NATO's new Strategic Concept reaffirms the central role of collective defence in Allied efforts, based on a multidimensional approach, and highlights three essential tasks: deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to the recognition of the strategic role of the Black Sea region for the security of the Alliance, emphasising the need to strengthen cooperation and support for the vulnerable partners in the Black Sea region and in the Western Balkans. Practically, by adopting the new strategic concept, in the eastern flank of the Alliance there is no longer a different approach to the northern part, where an enhanced forward presence – eFP was established, and to the southern part, where the tailored Forward Presence – tFP was established, but it is considered and assessed in a unitary, integrated and balanced manner, thus making the transition to forward defence.*



To ensure an effective deterrence and defence process against the new threats and military actions from Russia, the Alliance established four new battle groups in Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. The Baltic States and Poland benefited from the establishment of similar structures as early as 2017 in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Moreover, in order to tailor and strengthen the collective deterrence and defence posture in the eastern flank, including in the Black Sea, in the long term, there were considered a substantial and robust ground presence, strengthened air missile defence systems, prepositioned military equipment and infrastructure improvement for the logistic support, aspects particularly important for Romania. During the discussions at the NATO Summit in Madrid, it was decided that the Allied battle groups, including the one in Romania, would scale up to brigade size, where and when required. The USA, in turn, decided to increase its military presence in Europe, in Romania included. Currently, both northern and southern eastern flanks have balanced structures that rely on the presence of US troops and battle groups, which ensures the coherence of the Allied posture along the entire flank.

### **Romania, a Key Actor in Strengthening NATO Deterrence and Defence Posture in the Eastern Flank**

Against the backdrop of the illegal and unprovoked war launched by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, Romania has been at the forefront of NATO's efforts to secure the decisions and implement the necessary measures to strengthen the collective deterrence and defence posture in the Black Sea.

Starting in 2022, NATO enhanced Vigilance activity/eVA has been conducted, including in the Black Sea region, particularly in Romania, which has led to strengthening the Allied efforts and presence in support of regional security.

In the first semester of 2022, the French Armed Forces provided, in addition to assuming the role of framework nation for the NATO battle group deployed on the territory of Romania, a surface-to-air missile defence system SAMP/T – MAMBA, in support of the Alliance deterrence and defence efforts in Europe's eastern flank. In order to increase the efficiency of the adopted measures and to meet the needs of NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System, it is connected and integrated into Romania's and NATO's defence systems.

In this context, 78 years after the Normandy landings, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division of the US Land Forces returned to Europe, more precisely to the Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base, as a result of the US commitment to enhancing the security of the Black Sea region and of NATO Allies. Moreover, at Mihail Kogălniceanu, detachments from various Allied states, such as Italy, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, the United Kingdom, have contributed, on a rotational basis, alongside the Romanian pilots, to the NATO Air Policing mission.

Romania's objective, in this context, has been to identify options for the medium- and long-term adaptation of the defence and deterrence posture, in parallel with participating in the efforts to develop the defence capabilities of the most vulnerable to Russia's aggressive actions regional partners (Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia).

The national efforts have focused on ensuring the operational level and implementing NATO multinational projects within the national territory, namely: NATO Force Integration Unit/NFIU, Multinational Brigade South-East/MN BDE SE, Headquarters Multinational Division South-East/HQ MND-SE, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East/HQ MNC-SE.

The strengthening of the Allied deterrence and defence posture and the implementation of specific measures regarding eFP in NATO's north-eastern flank have also represented a priority for the Romanian Armed Forces, which have maintained their contribution regarding the deployment of an air defence detachment in Poland, within the US-led Battle Group (United States enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group/US eFP BG). The mission of this group is to ensure the enhanced Forward Presence, on a rotational basis, in the north-east of the Alliance, to deter any potential aggression, in accordance with the measures adopted during the NATO Summit in Warsaw, in 2016. Moreover, in April-July this year, a Romanian Air Force detachment equipped with F-16 aircraft was deployed in Lithuania, under NATO command, to ensure the integrity of the Baltic states airspace.

Another consequence of the conflict in Ukraine was that, on 24 February 2022, the North Atlantic Council issued the NATO Execution Directive/NED to authorise the activation of the five Graduated Response Plans/GRP of the Alliance. Consequently, the Commander of the Headquarters Multinational Division







South-East/HQ MND-SE ordered the training, with a view to being deployed, of a Romanian Deployable Communications and Information Module/DCIM to ensure the command support and the link with the Allied Battle Group/BG deployed in Bulgaria, under his operational control.

Ensuring the NATO standing naval presence in order to deter potential threats to the Alliance is a constant concern for the Romanian Armed Forces, which participate every year in the missions of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2/SNMG 2 and the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2/SNMCMG 2, with frigate-type ships (with a helicopter and a SOF team on board) and sea dredgers.

Moreover, Romania maintains its contribution to Operation Sea Guardian, with the T22 frigate. Because of the conflict in Ukraine and its consequences for the free passage of military ships through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the missions have been successively cancelled.

In order to ensure maritime security in the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, the Romanian Armed Forces contribute to the missions of the NATO Standing Naval Forces with staff personnel in the embarked commands.

### **Cooperative Security: Romania's Contribution**

Another dimension of Romania's contribution to the implementation of NATO initiatives is the participation in cooperative projects in the field of defence capabilities development carried out in Allied context. In this regard, it is worth noting the participation in the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force/NAEW&C, an edifying example of a multinational cooperation programme for the jointly generation and funding of defence capabilities. NATO Security Investment Programme/NSIP represents another model of cooperative security in which Romania participates as a NATO member state. The national participation in the capability development programmes through a multinational approach within the NATO Smart Defence Initiative includes 22 projects, out of the 76 active ones at the Alliance level.

At the EU level, the European cooperation developed under the auspices of the Common Security and Defence Policy/CSDP has been

significantly improved, being amplified by Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as by the major geopolitical changes. The main institutional effort with an impact on the CSDP was the fact that, on 21 March 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted the Strategic Compass, which affirms the commitment of the member states to the imperative of strengthening European defence, especially in the face of the systemic threat posed by the Russian Federation. The document expresses an explicit recognition of NATO's role in the European security architecture, the need for complementarity and the repositioning of the transatlantic relationship at the core of the European dialogue on defence issues.

Romania has supported the efforts of the European Defence Agency/EDA, which are aimed at promoting collaboration between EU member states in the field of military capabilities, including by connecting the national defence industry and the research and development units of the Ministry of National Defence to the programmes and projects that benefit from EU non-refundable grants. Thus, Romania participates in 21 out of the 60 ongoing PESCO projects. Regarding the participation in the projects for the jointly development and use of military capabilities carried out at the EDA level, Romania participates in 20 projects, of which six are dedicated to research and technology.

### **Conclusion**

Romania is at the forefront of NATO and EU allies' efforts to maintain a security climate in the eastern flank of the Alliance. The sustained efforts made by the Romanian military authorities to implement the deterrence and defence measures decided at the level of the Alliance for the eastern flank, in general, and for the Black Sea region, in particular, position Romania as a stability pillar and a security provider in the region.







## PLANNING DECEPTION AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

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10.55535/RMT.2023.3.1*

*Deception has long been an essential component of military operations. It can be considered a tactic as old as warfare, having been used since immemorial times. From Sun Tzu’s “Art of War” to the present days, military strategists have recognized its power to turn the tide of conflict. Although, over the years, the methods, means and techniques specific to it have continuously evolved, along with technological developments, its basic principle remains the same: portraying a false reality to the adversary that leads to the materialization of operational opportunities, by causing the adversary to adopt courses of action disadvantageous to him. As the battlefield has become increasingly complex, the ability to deceive the adversary has also become an increasingly important asset to the success of military operations. Today, in an era of instant and abundant information, deception has paradoxically become more difficult to achieve and more critical to operational success. The deceptive action of the Ukrainians at Kherson last September against the Russians once again demonstrated its importance on the modern battlefield.*

*However, many military planners tend to overlook this key aspect of military strategy despite its importance. This oversight can lead to grave consequences in the modern battlefield, where the enemy’s ability to gather intelligence can hinder operational success. For this reason, the present paper is an analysis of how deception actions can be integrated into the operational planning process at the operational level in order to maximize the chances of their success and, consequently, the military operation success. The need for such a scientific approach arises from the complexity of the deception process, which places a special emphasis not only on the thoroughness in planning these actions but also on the need to integrate and synchronize them with other military actions.*

*Keywords: deception; planning; operational level; information; war;*



## INTRODUCTION

War has always been a significant part of human life. People have engaged in armed conflict for a variety of reasons, including territory, political power, natural resources, religion, and ideology. Throughout history, wars have been fought in various forms, from small clashes between neighbouring tribes or states, to large-scale global conflicts such as the two world wars. Nevertheless, the fundamental nature of it remains essentially unchanged. It is a clash of wills, a violent struggle, and a chaotic endeavour. War is often a mix of elements such as friction, fog, uncertainty, manoeuvres and deception. It is a multifaceted and complex undertaking that can have devastating effects on both sides involved in the conflict.

One of the key features of warfare is considered to be deception. It has long been seen as a huge enabler for military success. We might even state that it is rooted within its very own nature. Man has always tried to come up with solutions to surprise its opponent in order to gain a position of advantage. Regardless of the character of war, deception has been a constant of almost every confrontation. One might even argue that deception is as old as conflict itself. Oldest examples dates thousands of years ago. One of the most famous examples takes us back to ancient Greece. It is well-known the case of the Trojan Horse, which was a decisive ruse that facilitated the Greeks access into the well defended Troy city during the Trojan War, more than 3000 years ago. Since then, history is full of examples that emphasise the importance of deception throughout military conflicts.

However, considering the complexity of the contemporary operating environment, the ability to identify feasible solutions to the problems encountered on the battlefield has grown exponentially. This aspect puts huge emphasis on the operations planning process as the way to come up with those solutions that can bring about the desired conditions for the envisioned end-state of the conflict.

*War is often a mix of elements such as friction, fog, uncertainty, manoeuvres and deception. It is a multifaceted and complex undertaking that can have devastating effects on both sides involved in the conflict.*



*Understanding that the whole is greater than the total of its components is of utmost importance to achieve success in modern conflicts. As a consequence, getting the complete joint impact is crucial in order to dominate the opponent, thus emphasizing the importance of the operational level to plan and synchronize those effects.*

Furthermore, today's operating environment stresses the importance of synchronizing the effects of all military services across the whole spectrum of operational domains to achieve the strategic aims. Understanding that the whole is greater than the total of its components is of utmost importance to achieve success in modern conflicts. As a consequence, getting the complete joint impact is crucial in order to dominate the opponent, thus emphasizing the importance of the operational level to plan and synchronize those effects.

While NATO's operational doctrine does provide a framework for incorporating the three concepts highlighted before – deception, planning and operational level –, this framework does not address the full range of elements related to this topic. Despite it, western armed forces have recognized the importance of conducting deception operations and have recently developed specific doctrines to address the subject, but there's still room for improvement in this area.

In light of the above-mentioned aspects, the research addresses the following primary question: *Considering the importance of deceit in modern warfare, how can western armed forces deception planning be optimized at the operational level?*

In this regard, the article's primary goal is to identify how deception can be better integrated in the *operational level planning process (OLPP)* to enable improved outcomes on the battleground.

In order to identify solutions to the problem presented before we have tried to provide answers to the following subsequent research questions:

- *Why does the operational level of war really matter and what are its main features?*
- *What benefits can planning at the operational level bring and which are key considerations with respect to the OLPP?*
- *How does deception work at this level and what are the main benefits of integrating deception in the overall concept of operations?*
- *What are the specific activities that need to be integrated within the OLPP, and how?*

In this respect, the paper contains two key aspects that operational level commanders as well as key planning, operations and intelligence staff should be interested in. First, our article explains why militaries

should use deception at the operational level of war, thus providing a solid background for the importance of the research theme to the community of researchers in the warfare domain. Second, it provides a suitable solution to integrate two extremely important processes at the operational level: the OLPP and the deception process.

To this end, we first conduct a comparative analysis of some representative western actors' planning processes to include, NATO, the US, or Canada. The aim of choosing this research method is to find similarities between the processes in order to better integrate the deception process steps, which are also analysed in this paper.

Moreover, we have used the qualitative method of content analysis to detect patterns with respect to deception theory in the western military doctrines. This method provided our research with the specific concepts used in deception operations as well as with the concrete steps one should consider when planning such actions.

Based on the information obtained regarding to the OLPP and deception process, we have then used deduction to optimize the OLPP in order to be better suited for planning deception operations as well.

## THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

The level of war at which major battles and campaigns are organized, coordinated and conducted to achieve strategic objectives is known as the *operational level of war*. It is the stage where commanders apply their own expertise to develop optimal solutions to the problem they are facing. The operational level of operations plays a critical role in any conflict, providing the link between strategic planning and tactical execution. Effective operational planning and good coordination of actions at this level contribute to the success of missions and the achievement of strategic objectives. However, they require a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the operating environment by addressing all aspects related to the physical, geographical, political, economic and social context, as well as the relationships between them. Nowadays, in the context of evolving technology, the global security environment and the nature of current conflicts, the operational level continues to remain a critical component of modern military operations, with the responsibility to coordinate and execute military



*The level of war at which major battles and campaigns are organized, coordinated and conducted to achieve strategic objectives is known as the operational level of war. It is the stage where commanders apply their own expertise to develop optimal solutions to the problem they are facing. The operational level of operations plays a critical role in any conflict, providing the link between strategic planning and tactical execution.*





actions in an efficient and adaptive manner, in accordance with the strategic objectives and the specific context of the conflict. It bridges the gap between the strategic and tactical levels of war, providing a framework for the planning and execution of military operations. We consider that, in today's operational environment, the importance of the operational level of war cannot be overstated, the following arguments sustaining this statement:

❖ *Complexity of modern warfare.* The complexity of modern warfare is the result of a combination of technological, political and socio-economic factors that influence the way they are planned and conducted. In this context, modern warfare is characterized by a high degree of complexity and uncertainty. Contemporary operating environment can be characterized as being volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (TC 7-102, 2014, pp. 1-2). All the mentioned aspects amplify the pressure on military forces to find proper solutions to the problems encountered. The operational level of war provides a structured approach to understanding the complex operational environment, and enables military planners and decision-makers to develop effective strategies to achieve operational objectives.

❖ *Integration of multiple domains.* Military operations in the modern era often require the integration and synchronization of multiple operational domains. It is due to the increasingly complex nature of today's threats and challenges, which require multidimensional and interconnected approaches. Contemporary operations often involve the combination of land, sea, air, cyber and information efforts. The integration of these operational areas allows for creating a synergistic effect and maximizing the results obtained. In addition, military structures should address the cognitive effects generated in the information environment, an increasingly significant element for the way current conflicts are conducted. In this respect, the operational level of war provides a framework for coordinating these disparate elements, ensuring that they are integrated and synchronized to achieve operational objectives.

❖ *Importance of joint and multinational operations.* Joint and multinational military operations have become a constant in today's security and defence environment. It is due to the need to address

complex global threats and respond to cross-border challenges to ensure stability and security in a complex and interconnected world. Multinational military operations bring innumerable benefits as well as a number of challenges. Perhaps the most important of them is the interoperability of forces, whether procedurally or technologically, but especially cognitively. In this regard, the operational level of war establishes a common language and framework for planning and executing joint and coalition operations, ensuring that all partners and all force categories are aligned and synchronized toward the achievement of common objectives.

❖ *Need for adaptive and agile operations.* Modern operational environment is characterized by rapid change and uncertainty. It requires a flexible organization that can easily transform and adapt to the circumstances in order to overcome difficulties on the battleground. The need for adaptive and agile military operations can be considered another dimension of the complexity of modern warfare. In the face of an ever-changing security environment, the armed forces must be able to rapidly adapt and adjust their strategies and tactics to meet the threats and challenges specific to the battlefield. It implies flexibility in the planning and execution of military operations, as well as the ability to make quick and effective decisions in real time. The operational level of war offers a framework for adaptive and agile operations, enabling military forces to quickly adjust their plans and tactics in response to changing conditions on the battlefield. It ensures a coherent adaptation for all services involved in conflict, but also provides consistency with respect to generating operational effects in support of the military objectives.

❖ *Importance of information and intelligence.* Information and intelligence are critical components of modern military operations. The information environment has grown exponentially and has a huge impact on the conflict outcomes. Information is an increasingly valuable asset in modern conflicts. They are essential for making informed decisions, detecting and assessing threats, coordinating operations and monitoring outcomes. The ability to collect, analyse and use the appropriate information can make the difference in achieving strategic and operational advantage in a complex and dynamic theatre



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*The complexity of modern warfare is the result of a combination of technological, political and socio-economic factors that influence the way they are planned and conducted. In this context, modern warfare is characterized by a high degree of complexity and uncertainty. Contemporary operating environment can be characterized as being volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.*



*The operational level of war ensures a framework for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and intelligence, enabling military forces to make informed decisions and maintain situational awareness on the battlefield. The ability to collect information with sensors specific to different services, as well as their integrated analysis, considerably supports the reduction of the risk of misunderstanding the operational situation.*

of operations. Today, timely access to accurate information can be an extremely important advantage for the success of military operations. The operational level of war ensures a framework for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and intelligence, enabling military forces to make informed decisions and maintain situational awareness on the battlefield. The ability to collect information with sensors specific to different services, as well as their integrated analysis, considerably supports the reduction of the risk of misunderstanding the operational situation.

Considering the facts highlighted before, the operational level of war plays a key role in modern warfare, being a framework for understanding the complex and uncertain operating environment, integrating multiple domains and partners, conducting adaptive and agile operations, and leveraging information and intelligence. It also facilitates the coherence of the tactical level activities to generate specific operational effects that can shape the environment in accordance with the strategic objectives.

The practice of deception has been a fundamental element of war since ancient times and has played an essential role at the operational level as well. Both concepts, operational level of war and deception operations, are intricately linked, as the latter, at this level, can be crucial in creating confusion, exploiting vulnerabilities, and achieving strategic goals by providing the opportunities needed to gain the upper hand on the battlefield. However, considering the complexity of the contemporary environment, the need to develop proper solutions has increased in importance as well. It also affects deception and puts huge emphasis on the planning of operations, which is actually the main function of this level.

### PLANNING OPERATIONS AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Planning is of utmost importance to any military operation. It is the first stage of the operation process and all other stages depend on the quality of its products. It allows proper coordination of resources, the creation of achievable goals, and the development of strategies that takes into account potential obstacles and contingencies.

In addition, through planning, potential risks and threats are analysed and identified before the operation begins. It allows for preventive measures to be taken and appropriate countermeasure strategies to be implemented. Planning helps to anticipate difficult situations and prepare appropriate solutions.

Operational-level planning also ensures effective coordination between the various military components of the military operation, such as land, air, or naval forces. It makes it easier to synchronize actions and avoid confusion or counterproductive actions. Through planning, effective links and communications are established between units and commanders.

Moreover, planning allows the development of alternative plans in case the situation changes or unpredictability occurs. Flexibility in planning allows adaptation to new information and modification of the operational approach to cope with situational changes. By taking the time to plan ahead, military operations can be undertaken with greater confidence and assurance of success. *“Planning is the art and science of understanding a situation, envisioning a desired future, and determining effective ways to bring that future about”.* (FM5-0, 2022, pp. 1-1)

Planning is an important part of any endeavour, as it provides a roadmap for achieving desired goals. It is the process of envisioning a desired future and develop the necessary steps to bring it about. It entails understanding the current state of affairs and then utilizing that knowledge alongside the experience to create a plan that will help to achieve the desired goal. The planning process requires clear objectives and measurable actions that can be monitored along the way. It can help ensure that progress is made towards the desired outcome in an efficient and effective manner.

Planning is the first step in solving a problem. Unless for pure luck, there is no way one can address and solve a situation without a plan. The more complex the circumstance, the more pressure on the precision of the planning process. As a consequence, planning is a valuable tool for any organization or individual looking to achieve their goals.



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*Military operations planning must be adaptable and allow for real-time adjustments to respond to unexpected changes and ensure success in a complex and unpredictable operating environment.*

*A well-structured and detailed planning allows the analysis of the complex situation and the identification of effective options and strategies to address the problem at hand, providing a structured framework and clear guidelines for effective actions.*

Moreover, the complexity of the current operating environment specific to military operations requires rigorous and adaptable planning, emphasizing the importance of the fidelity of this process. Hybrid threats, the volatility and uncertainty of the contemporary environment, advanced technology, the involvement of non-state actors, and political and social factors are just some of the complex elements that military commanders must contend with. Military operations planning at the operational level must integrate all these aspects and identify effective solutions to meet complex challenges. A detailed analysis of the operating environment, the anticipation and countering of threats, the use of advanced technology to optimize the process, as well as a comprehensive approach that takes into account the other actors in the area of operations and synchronizes the objectives of own planning with theirs is necessary. Thus, military operations planning must be adaptable and allow for real-time adjustments to respond to unexpected changes and ensure success in a complex and unpredictable operating environment.

Proper planning can bring several benefits to any military organization (MCDP5, 2018, pp. 1-5 - 1-8):

- it can be crucial to gaining the upper hand by foreseeing events and act deliberately and efficiently before the opponent can;
- it can lessen the inevitable lag between decision and action on the battleground;
- in complex situations, planning is crucial to bring about the proper solution to the problem encountered. A well-structured and detailed planning allows the analysis of the complex situation and the identification of effective options and strategies to address the problem at hand, providing a structured framework and clear guidelines for effective actions;
- unfamiliar circumstances where expertise is lacking stresses the importance of planning. In unfamiliar circumstances and in the absence of previous experience, planning plays a crucial role in identifying options, assessing risks and adequately preparing the operation, as well as in ensuring its flexibility and adaptability to contingencies that may arise.

Centuries ago, Napoleon stated: *“Nothing succeeds in war except in consequence of a well-prepared plan”*. This assertion is just as relevant today as we have shown before. However, developing a sustainable plan that delivers the benefits outlined above requires a structured planning approach. At the operational level, it is represented by the operational level planning process (OLPP). The OLPP is a systematic approach to planning that provides a comprehensive framework for developing and implementing plans at the operational level. It includes a range of tools and techniques that enable organizations to identify and analyse their strategic objectives, assess their resources and capabilities, and develop detailed action plans to achieve their goals.

Besides the above-presented benefits of planning, we consider that the planning process itself provides a huge advantage for the military force in that it ensures the same level of understanding within the HQs with respect to the situation and the solutions identified for solving the problem. One of the novel elements of the updated NATO Allied Joint Doctrine, AJP-01, released last December, in comparison with its previous version, is the fact that it acknowledges the importance of understanding in military affairs as a key enabler for success. Its significance is demonstrated by the fact that it has an entire annex devoted to it. *“Understanding is one of the cornerstones of our military philosophy and it is implicit in applying the tenets of doctrine”*. (AJP-01, 2022, p. 95)

In *table no. 1* we have made a comparative analysis of the operational level planning processes within the armed forces of several western international actors. The criterion upon which we made the comparison was represented by the activities specific to planning processes. We conducted this analysis to identify similarities in order to establish a common operational level planning framework upon which an integrated deception planning process model was subsequently developed.

The comparative analysis carried out in *table no. 1* highlights the fact that, although the names of the stages are slightly different, the activities carried out within them are generally the same. Considering our effort to integrate activities specific to deception actions into the OLPP, any of the processes previously presented can be used for



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our further purposes. However, given the fact that NATO is the most important international actor and all the other actors in the analysis are part of it, we will continue to develop our deception process based on NATO's OLPP that is integrated in the Allied Joint Doctrine for the planning of operations, AJP-05.

Table no. 1: Operational level planning processes – comparative analysis (authors' conception)

NATO (COPD, 2021, pp. 4-3)		NATO (AJP-5, 2019, pp. 4-1)	US (JP5-0, 2020, pp. III-11)	CAN (CFJP5.0, 2008, pp. 4-1) (CACSC-PUB-500, 2018, p. 12)
1. Initial situational awareness of a potential / actual crisis		1. Initiation	1. Planning Initiation	1. Initiation
2. Operational appreciation of the strategic environment				
3. Operational estimate	3a. Mission analysis	2. Mission analysis	2. Mission analysis	2. Orientation
	3b. COA development	3. COA development 4. COA analysis 5. COA validation and comparison 6. Commander's COA decision	3. COA development 4. COA analysis and wargaming 5. COA comparison 6. COA approval	3. COA development
4. OPLAN development	4a. CONOPS development			
	4b. OPLAN development	7. Plan development	7. Plan or order development	4. Plan development 5. Plan review
5. Execution				
6. Transition				

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### BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING DECEPTION

“The fundamental nature of war does not change. It always involves a clash of wills, violence, friction, fog, maneuvers or deception” (Tammen, 2021). Over time, deception has been a constant in armed conflicts. The reasons can be understood by referring to the benefits it can offer in the operational approach.

As previously stated, deception operations have been an integral part of military strategy for centuries. Throughout the annals of military history, the use of deception tactics has been seen as a huge enabler for successful outcomes in conflicts. Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, one of the most appreciated pieces of military art is full of examples of how deceiving one's enemy can be a potent tool. From ancient Greek battles to the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict, deceiving one's enemy has been a powerful resource.

*What makes it so attractive?* Deception operations represent such a valuable asset to military forces because they offer the ability to surprise and confuse an opponent, thereby creating effects that can cause the adversary to react inappropriately. Deception operations make it easy for a smaller and less powerful force to take on a larger, more powerful enemy by providing the capability to create situations or circumstances that give an advantage to the smaller force. Moreover, great powers make use of deception in order to optimize their operational approach and save resources and lives. One great example in this regard is that of the Gulf War (1990/1991), when the coalition led by the USA, a far greater power than its opponent, made extensive use of deception to facilitate their operational success. The coalition's plan to free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's Iraqi troops depended on a massive deception campaign, which was successful. So, regardless of the situation, by succeeding in exploiting the enemy's weaknesses, deception provides armed forces with an invaluable resource for achieving victory. That is why it can be considered a “force multipliers, which support the commander achieving their objectives by providing greater freedom of action” (AJP3.10.2., 2020, p. 1).

**Having the tactical edge** in the field is critical for success in any mission. In this context, deception can be used as part of a broader military strategy to gain this advantage. Regardless of the tactics used, the reason deception is used is to put the adversary in a position of operational disadvantage, a situation that can be exploited by the forces initiating deception. So, by using effective deception tactics, military structures can gain decisive advantages for operational success. Using false information or disguises, a commander can make his forces appear stronger or weaker than they really are, depending on the situation, allowing him to surprise the enemy and achieve victory.



Deception operations represent such a valuable asset to military forces because they offer the ability to surprise and confuse an opponent, thereby creating effects that can cause the adversary to react inappropriately. Deception operations make it easy for a smaller and less powerful force to take on a larger, more powerful enemy by providing the capability to create situations or circumstances that give an advantage to the smaller force.





*Making decisions and implementing them are fundamental components of war. The probability of achieving the desired result increases with the improvement of the decision-making process. To create the optimal conditions for the achievement of objectives, military forces must act faster, more rationally and decisively than the opponent.*

Making decisions and implementing them are fundamental components of war. The probability of achieving the desired result increases with the improvement of the decision-making process. To create the optimal conditions for the achievement of objectives, military forces must act faster, more rationally and decisively than the opponent. **Decision-making superiority** in relation to it is, therefore, another critical element for operational success. Degrading the enemy's decision cycle and protecting and enhancing your own is the solution to creating decision superiority. From this point of view, deception is a viable tool by which the quality of the adversary's decision-making process can be affected.

John Boyd, the OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) loop decision action cycle inventor, acknowledges deception as one of the elements that can be employed to disrupt the enemy OODA cycle thus obtaining the C2 advantage on the battlefield. *"Boyd himself also emphasized the importance of maintaining orientation under conditions of menace and uncertainty, as well as the importance of using deception and ambiguity to affect the adversary's orientation. For Boyd, operating inside the adversary's decision cycle implies not merely going through the cycle faster but maintaining superior orientation about the developing situation"* (Piehler, 2013, p. 1016). As such, several factors come to one's mind when we speak about slowing down an OODA loop or making it significantly less effective. They include raising doubt, producing ambivalence, presenting novel actions, arousing scepticism, conveying risk, as well as misleading and deceiving the adversary.

In order to structure the operation in such a way that its concept can be easily understood, the military forces use a series of conceptual frameworks, which refer to the geographical space, to the functions to be performed during the operation or to the purpose and effects of tactical actions. Deception is a key factor in military success, and using these conceptual frameworks brings consistency to the timing of various deceptive actions. If we think of the operational framework, then deception can be used as a shaping operation in order to create the optimal conditions for decisive action, and when we consider the functional framework, then it can be used as a fixing action to facilitate other actions at different times or areas. The geographic framework

can support understanding how specific deception actions are spatially correlated, often requiring concurrent activities in both depth, contact, and the back area to increase the chances of deception success. As such, one can appreciate that **deception is consistent with any of the conceptual framework** specific to the military concept of operations.

Deception can be seen as an enabler for the *Protection joint function*. *"Protection results from many factors, including operations security, dispersion, deception, survivability measures, and the way forces conduct operations"* (FM3-0, 2022, pp. 2-3). By employing military deception, forces can create a complex and dynamic operating environment that can confuse and disorient adversaries, reducing their ability to detect and engage friendly forces, thereby enhancing the operations' protection. Also, by delaying adversary actions or making them occur at the incorrect location, deception techniques play a crucial role in the force protection, boosting the security of friendly troops. So, by using its specific tactics, a military force can try to protect its own forces and minimize its exposure to danger. By disseminating false information or creating illusions, one can encourage the enemy to make wrong decisions or divert their attention, thus allowing one's own forces to operate under safer conditions.

There are other numerous benefits that deception can provide the force with. The following are only a few notable implications that deceit can have on the concept of operations:

- surprising the enemy thus enhancing the probability of mission success;
- inflicting misallocation of personnel, financial, and material resources on the opponent;
- forcing the enemy to disclose their weaknesses strengths, intentions, and also disposition;
- forcing the opponent to degrade its combat effectiveness by wasting resources in unimportant operational areas.

Although the benefits of using deception can be multiple, as we have previously shown, the doctrine of the United Kingdom has made a delimitation and framing of them in four broad categories: surprise, security, freedom of action and economy of effort (AFM, 2018, pp. 3A-2).



*The geographic framework can support understanding how specific deception actions are spatially correlated, often requiring concurrent activities in both depth, contact, and the back area to increase the chances of deception success. As such, one can appreciate that deception is consistent with any of the conceptual framework specific to the military concept of operations.*



The advantage of such an approach lies in the clarity and structure it brings, allowing an easier understanding of these advantages as well as of the way in which they can support the objectives of military operations. Thus, this delineation facilitates streamlining analysis and decision-making regarding the use of deception in various operational contexts.

It is important to note, however, that deception is a delicate tactic and its excessive or uncalibrated use can have negative consequences. Also, manipulation of information and disinformation can damage long-term trust and credibility, both among the civilian population and among allies. As one can notice, deception can be a huge enabler for military success. By recognizing the benefits of military deception and investing in its development and execution, military organizations can enhance their ability to achieve operational success and protect the safety and security of military personnel and assets. Moreover, *“deception is used because it succeeds”* (Moore, 2015, p. 4). But how does it work?

### DECEPTION FUNDAMENTALS

Military deception has been and continues to be an essential aspect of warfare, which involves the use of disinformation, false information, or other techniques to mislead an adversary about the course of events. Its purpose is to cause him to make decisions, unknowingly, that will create negative effects for him and advantageous situations for the deceiver. Considering its proven efficiency, *“deception must be an integral part of all operations”*. (AFM, 2018, pp. 3A-5).

Any analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of deception must also include the examination of attempts to define the concept. A comparative analysis from the perspective of this criterion highlights the fact that there is agreement between the views of the majority of Western actors from the perspective of defining the concept. Thus, deception represents *“deliberate measures to mislead targeted decision-makers into behaving in a manner advantageous to the commander’s objectives”* (AAP-06, 2021, p. 39). It can be identified, therefore, that it must have a precise target and purpose. In this sense, to influence adversary leaders to act in a way that is harmful

to their interests but advantageous to the deceiver, deception aims to portray a false but believable reality to the adversary that causes him to adopt disadvantageous measures, in ignorance of the cause. For this reason, the analysis of the deception target, of the entire apparatus of collecting, analysing and disseminating information, of the level of understanding regarding the operational situation, as well as of the way in which the adversary makes decisions become crucial elements for planning a successful misleading action.

Deception operations entail conveying both false and true information, employing specific methods and techniques to inoculate the target with a desired perception. The majority of scientists who have dedicated their lives to the research in this field, as well as the visions of most Western actors transposed in their doctrines specific to the field under analysis, give due importance to the previously listed concepts.

Next, we considered it essential to conduct a content analysis of the specialized literature to determine those elements essential to a successful deception. We chose this approach because it supports, through its results, the broad approach of this paper, namely that of streamlining the planning of misleading operations at the operational level. The main conclusions resulting from the analysis were the following:

- there are two deception methods, simulation and dissimulation, the former involving showing and the latter hiding specific elements to/from the enemy. Also, more often than not, an act of deception must involve elements specific to both methods;
- there are various types (Monroe, 2012, p. 44) of deception, including displays, feints, demonstrations, disinformation, camouflage or denial, each of them requiring specific means to be put into practice. We would also like to highlight the fact that the former four represent active measures specific to simulation, while the latter two represent passive measures specific to dissimulation;
- there are three types of means employed by deception operations: physical, technical and administrative (FM3-13.4, 2019, pp. 1-11). They are extremely important because



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*Deception can be a huge enabler for military success. By recognizing the benefits of military deception and investing in its development and execution, military organizations can enhance their ability to achieve operational success and protect the safety and security of military personnel and assets. Moreover, “deception is used because it succeeds”.*





A key element of deceit and a major facilitator of these kinds of tactics is uncertainty. From this point of view there are two methods of portraying deception (A-type/ambiguity producing deceptions and M-type/misleading deceptions). The choice of one of these methods is dependent on the operational situation, the character and leading style of the target, or the specific objectives of the deception.

- they represent the tools through which observables can be portrayed to the adversary and thereby contribute significantly to the effectiveness and success of these types of operations;
- a key element of deceit and a major facilitator of these kinds of tactics is uncertainty. From this point of view there are two methods of portraying deception (A-type/ambiguity producing deceptions and M-type/misleading deceptions) (Daniel, 1980, p. 8). The choice of one of these methods is dependent on the operational situation, the character and leading style of the target, or the specific objectives of the deception;
  - deception employs specific techniques in order to be successful: obvious solution, false routine, substitution, lure, deliberate leak, mistake, piece of bad luck. *Table no. 2* is the result of our comparative analysis of the techniques of deception from some of the most important western actors' doctrine.

Table no. 2: Techniques of deception – comparative analysis (authors' conception)

US (FM3-13.4, 2019, pg. 1-8)	NATO (AJP3.10.2, 2020, p. 47)	UK (AFM, 2018, pg. 3A-7)	CAN
Reinforcing the impression	Obvious solution	Obvious solution	Obvious solution
Conditioning the target by repetition	False routine	False routine	False routine
Leading the enemy by substitution	Substitution	Substitution	Substitution
	Lure	Lure	Lure
	Deliberate leak	Deliberate leak	Deliberate leak
Leading the enemy by mistake	Mistake	Mistake	Mistake
	Piece of bad luck	Piece of bad luck	Piece of bad luck
Overloading enemy sensors		Exploiting enemy's C2-intel sources	Exploiting enemy's C2-intel sources
Amplifying signatures			
Suppressing signatures			

US (FM3-13.4, 2019, pg. 1-8)	NATO (AJP3.10.2, 2020, p. 47)	UK (AFM, 2018, pg. 3A-7)	CAN
Repackaging known organizational or capability signatures			
Conditioning the enemy			

Moreover, we consider it appropriate to highlight the fact that, although technology influences the way deception operations are carried out, it must be remembered that *“the human mind is the target of deception and remains susceptible to being deceived”* (AFM, 2018, pp. 3A-1). From this point of view, studying and exploiting the cognitive limitations and vulnerabilities of the target can support the efficiency of the deception process. Furthermore, knowing how the adversary thinks is a *“sine qua non”* condition of these types of operations, deception being *“dependent on understanding how someone else (or something else) is thinking. In other words, if you're going to fool someone, you have to be able to imagine how they're going to interpret and react to your actions”*. (Moore, p. 4)

Deception operations represent, in fact, a process that follows specific steps towards achieving its goals. *Figure no. 1* highlights this process of conveying deceptive messages to the target. This process is an adaptation from the one Michael Bennett and Edward Waltz proposed in their famous book dedicated to counter-deception, *Counter-deception Principles and Applications for National Security*. (Bennett, 2007, p. 49)

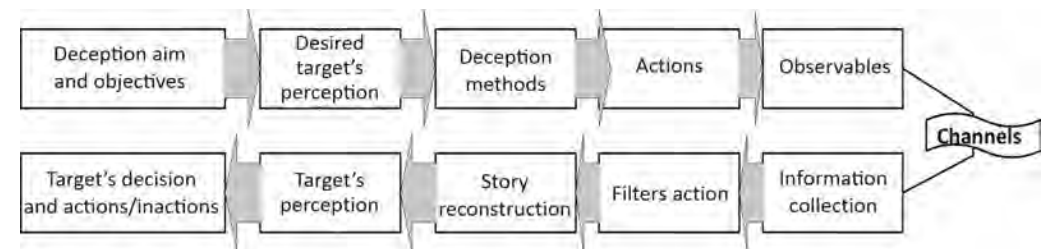


Figure no. 1: Deception process

However, deception operations often involve meticulous planning, requiring attention to details, and synchronized execution to provide the operational flexibility necessary to adapt these actions



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to the monitored adversary reaction. We consider planning to be crucial for deception operations as it provides a structured approach to achieving objectives, aligns the operation with broader strategic goals, optimizes resource allocation, mitigates risks, ensures coordination and synchronization, and facilitates evaluation and feedback for continuous improvement. For these reasons, in our next chapter we provide a framework for integrating deception within the OLPP.

### INTEGRATING DECEPTION PROCESS INTO THE OLPP

*“Deception planning and execution is a critical function within the operational art of warfare and has been used effectively by commanders for centuries. Deception has proven time and again to be an effective force multiplier. There is no shortage of examples of brilliant deception operations of past ages. Making an argument for deception and deception planning is rather straightforward”.* (McPherson, 2010, p. 1).

The foundations of a successful deception operation are laid from the planning phase. The level of understanding how these operations can support the overall concept is critical in the deceptive endeavour. Therefore, special attention must be paid to how the elements necessary for misleading can be integrated into the operational planning process.

In order to be able to plan successful deceptions one should be proficient in the theory of deception and have a solid grasp of the target personality and its intelligence and decision-making processes. Planning for deception operations must also consider information security, OPSEC measures, protection of information sources, and assessment of potential risks associated with premature detection of operations by the adversary.

Moreover, in order to enhance the deception planning efficiency, one should also have a solid grasp of the specific concepts that deception operations use, such as deception target, cognitive limitations, deceptive indicators, observables, perception, deception channel, deception filters, deception events, deception plan, or deception story.

The complexity of deception operations places additional stress on the fidelity of the planning process, and for this reason a systematic and well-coordinated approach is essential. In this regard, planning must be rigorous, with detailed analyses of possible situations and second- or third-order effects, risk assessment and the development of alternative strategies. Effective communication and collaboration between all parties involved in deception operations is also of crucial importance, during both the planning and execution of such operations.

Therefore, proper planning of deception operations is essential to their success. The level of understanding, the integration of the necessary elements and the attention to detail are fundamental in the deceptive approach and in supporting the overall concept of the operation. However, the complexity of misleading actions can present a challenge to the planning process, but a careful and well-structured approach can help maximize the efficiency and success of these types of operations.

We consider that the proposed process can bring more synchronization and accuracy to the planning of deception operations. We would like to specify that it is fully integrated with NATO’s OLPP, being developed in accordance with NATO’s deception doctrine. As such, our process complements the one used by NATO (AJP3.10.2, 2020, p. 30), but provides more detail on the elements that should be analysed during planning, as well as on how they can be synchronized with the specific stages of the OLPP. *Table no. 3* is a schematic representation of the process proposed by us.

*Table no. 3: Operational deception planning process (authors’ conception)*

OLPP steps	Operational level deception process integrated within the OLPP
1. Initiation	1.1. Initiate/update deception estimate: - Enemy doctrine, disposition, capabilities - Enemy intelligence system - Features of the information environment
	1.2. COM’s initial guidance on deception



*Proper planning of deception operations is essential to their success. The level of understanding, the integration of the necessary elements and the attention to detail are fundamental in the deceptive approach and in supporting the overall concept of the operation. However, the complexity of misleading actions can present a challenge to the planning process, but a careful and well-structured approach can help maximize the efficiency and success of these types of operations.*





OLPP steps	Operational level deception process integrated within the OLPP
<b>2. Mission analysis</b>	2.1. Deception analysis - Deeper analysis of the information environment - Analysis of own resources that can be employed for deception operations - Deception target identification and analysis - Timeline for deception - Suitable conditions to employ deception - Identification of opportunities for deception - Deception risk analysis - Current enemy knowledge - Possible deception channel analysis - Analysis of relevant factors that can influence deception (ROE, legal aspects etc.) - Recognition if the force has any part in the higher deception plan
	2.2. Establish the aim and goal of deception
	2.3. COM's direction and guidance on deception
<b>3. COA development</b>	3.1. Update deception analysis information/Update deception estimate - Developing intelligence relevant for deception with respect to the enemy
	3.2. Establish the target's desired perception
	3.3. Establish means of deception and observables
	3.4. Develop the deception story
	3.5. Develop deception event matrix
	3.6. Develop OPSEC measures to support deception
	3.7. Establish feedback criteria
	3.8. Develop termination plan
	3.9. Develop deception plan to support all friendly COAs
<b>4. COA analysis</b>	4.1. COA deception analysis - Wargame deception plans for each COA
<b>5. COA validation and comparison</b>	5.1. Comparing COAs including deception based on COM's comparison criteria

OLPP steps	Operational level deception process integrated within the OLPP
<b>6. Commander's COA decision</b>	6.1. COM's decision on what COA and deception plan should be developed
<b>7. Plan development</b>	7.1. Plan development 7.2. Distribution of the plan - On a need-to-know basis

It can therefore be seen that planning a deception operation is an extremely complex task that requires a high level of expertise. We believe, however, that the proposed process provides a comprehensive framework to approach the effective planning of such operations. The importance of planning is extremely high for the success of deception operations, and for this reason, streamlining this process can represent an additional guarantee of the success of the deceptive endeavour. To this end, misleading should be included from the early stages in the planning process. Deception operations that do not benefit from considerable time to collect and analyse the information specified in the process proposed by us will carry a high risk of generating some effects inconsistent with those anticipated. Hereby, an operation that is intended to cause operational advantages may, in fact, produce the opposite effect.

To benefit from the maximum effect, all steps of the deception planning process at the operational level must be completed, each of them being extremely important in this endeavour. However, the understanding that is generated after the first two phases is critical to the success of the operation, as it provides the proper foundations to develop flexible and successful deception plans. In addition, it must never be forgotten that deception is an action that is used only in support of one's own operational plan, as an integral part of it. Therefore, an important aspect of planning is the timing of the deception in one's course of action.

### CONCLUSIONS

In a world characterized by unrestricted access to information, ambiguity and uncertainty, deception operations have become a constant in today's military operations. They are very complex



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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Deception planning at the operational level of conflict is a crucial element in gaining strategic advantage over the enemy. Through proper planning, the use of varied tactics, coordination with actual operations, and constant evaluation, the effect of deception can be maximized and the overall success of military operations can be enhanced.

undertakings that require an extreme amount of planning, preparation and execution in order to be successful. It is essential for deception plans to be able to “fool” both the enemy and friendly forces in order to achieve the desired effect. The need for such an approach is based on the need to maintain secrecy regarding the deception action to be carried out. It requires careful and elaborate planning in order to ensure that the plan is successful and not easily exposed.

Moreover, deception planning at the operational level of conflict is a crucial element in gaining strategic advantage over the enemy. Through proper planning, the use of varied tactics, coordination with actual operations, and constant evaluation, the effect of deception can be maximized and the overall success of military operations can be enhanced.

Considering all these variables of deception planning, the process we provide can be an effective solution to increase the probability of success of these actions. By applying a systematic and well-structured approach, and by using available information and resources, deception planning can contribute significantly to disorganizing and disorienting the enemy, protecting own forces, and creating tactical opportunities. Therefore, a well-designed and implemented deception planning process can significantly strengthen the position and advantages of military forces, thereby supporting the achievement of strategic objectives.

In conclusion, the effective use of operational deception planning process can make the difference between success and failure in achieving strategic objectives. That is why it a critical process for any force or military operation.

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## THE NEED TO ADAPT NAVAL TACTICS TO TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION. – DRONES AND DRONE-CARRYING PLATFORMS –

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*The creative genius and strategic vision of great commanders, influenced by technological advancements, have led to a continuous adaptation of naval tactics employed in independent or joint military actions throughout history. A significant period of time has passed during which it seemed that nothing had changed in the realm of tactics. The evolution of modern military operations, in the context of hybrid warfare, multidomain operations, and both conventional and special military actions, signals the need to reconsider the ways in which naval forces are involved in combat operations. The historical and evolutionary analysis of naval tactics suggests the necessity of conceptual adaptation to the demands of the operational environment and optimization of operational planning in light of technological developments. In this context, our concern is to identify theoretical approaches to the utilization of modern platforms that respond to the need for projecting new vectors. To achieve it, our focus is directed towards exploring the opportunities for developing drone tactics, particularly in the maritime environment, as well as promoting the concept of drone-carrying platforms.*

*Keywords: drone-carrying platforms; naval tactics; drones; unmanned vehicles; maritime environment;*



## INTRODUCTION

Within this approach, we have aimed to identify possible solutions for adapting naval tactics in relation to certain determining factors that have influenced the approach to the methods and procedures for using naval capabilities in military actions.

It started from the state of affairs observed in the military art field, from which it could be determined that technological evolution represented the motivational and inspirational factor for adapting the way of action of the forces through the use of new technologies and developed capabilities.

We emphasize that the synergy between the creative genius and the strategic vision of the great commanders has determined a permanent adaptation of the naval tactics adopted in independent or joint military actions, to which the naval forces have contributed throughout history.

It can be also observed that a rather significant period has passed in which, in the field of tactics, nothing seems to have changed. However, the evolution of modern military actions, in the conditions of hybrid warfare, multi-domain operations, in classic or special military actions, signals the emergence of reconsideration of the ways of involving the combatant forces, especially the naval forces, a field in which, as teaching staff and permanent observers, we can consider ourselves specialists.

Therefore, the intrinsic motivation for the development of this approach starts from the premise that, considering the technological evolution, the adaptation to the conditions of the operational environment, and the optimization of the way of planning operations, the tactics were slightly overtaken by the technological advance. Thus, we have felt the need to be involved in identifying optimal ways of conceptually adapting the theoretical approaches regarding the use of platforms able to perform the projection of new vectors, especially

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naval drones. This area has attracted our attention, considering that their very emergence has led to a new approach to war, the model already being applied in military actions in Ukraine.

We believe that since the emergence and implementation of some tactics that positively marked the conceptual approach in military actions that changed the evolution of factual history, nothing relevant has happened in the sphere of military tactics. However, today we are witnessing new transformations of the classic tactical approaches through the lens of relevant factors that force us to reconsider the way of action in the tactical field. The main factors that have produced slight changes in the approach to established tactics are the technological evolution, the emergence of new platforms, the use of new vectors, the modification of the architecture of the operational environment, among other factors.

Upon a brief analysis, it can be argued that these tactics respect the doctrinal principles regarding the methods and procedures of application in military actions, but it can be admitted that, in fact, each of the factors generates the emergence of specific tactics. For example, technological evolution has generated the emergence of modern combat systems which, in order to be used, required an adaptation of the way of use in combat in accordance with certain classical principles, generating specific tactics, still valid today (examples: artillery, close-in weapon systems, drones and autonomous combat systems, radars, sensors and observation systems with innovative technologies). At the same time, the emergence of new platforms has generated the adaptation of the tactics used in battle according to the mission and the specific tasks it could perform in relation to the contributions of other already existing capabilities (examples: the battleship, the submarine, the aircraft carrier, the mine hunter, the drone and autonomous platforms). Regarding the use of new vectors, their evolution has kept pace with technological development, as well as with the nature of the operational environment (examples: torpedo, short-, medium- or long-range missile, submarine, drone). Last but not least, the modification of the architecture of the operational environment has generated an adaptation of the capabilities necessary to operate in the conditions imposed by the evolution of the environment, as well as by its nature (examples: submarine, maritime aviation, satellite systems, missile, drone, sensors, radar, sonar etc.).

To support our exposition, we will next analyse a system that, from the point of view of the use of some functional tactics, falls into almost all the spectrums of influence of the determining factors previously exposed. So, in the following, we will make an analysis of how drones have determined the emergence of new specific combat tactics, different from the established ones, or have shaped the already existing tactics, allowing the delimitation of those characteristics of the tactics that provide them with individualization.

We could say, in the first instance, that, in fact, drones are the ones that have adapted to the evolution of the operational environment, respecting the principles, methods, and procedures of use in military actions by applying the same tactical formulas used in artillery and missile tactics or other similar tactics. In relation to these aspects, we believe that precisely the emergence of the tactics of using drones represents the new paradigm in military affairs because their use combines certain methods and procedures specific to the complexity of the field in which the military action is performed (air, on the surface and in the underwater environment). Moreover, the emergence of these tactics has determined the need to discover and use some tactics to counter drones, an aspect that complicates the classical procedures of combat action of the capabilities intended.

On the other hand, the principles of armed struggle and the general laws of war represent conceptual-doctrinal benchmarks that have not undergone changes in content, so that, in modern military actions, we have observed only a slight adaptation of some methods and procedures to the evolution of the operational environment. Therefore, the emergence of new vectors may seem like only a slight adaptation of the classical principles of combat to the new challenges of the complexity of the current operational environment. However, we believe that precisely this issue, of the appearance of drones, represents a great doctrinal challenge, as there are practically no tactics for using them in military actions, but we note that they have already been used successfully. Thus, we can say that technology has surpassed tactics and we are witnessing the emergence of new ways of overcoming the technological advance through concrete measures to conceptualize the methods and procedures used in such military actions, in which drones play the main role.



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Moreover, with the development and consecration of these tactics, we believe that new platforms will emerge for the projection of these special combat capabilities in the three environments. Therefore, the novelty of our approach consists of the fact that we bring to the specialists' attention the need for the development of specialized force projection platforms. In this regard, for the naval field, we propose the conceptualization of the *drone-carrying platform* notion.

### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE EVOLUTION OF NAVAL TACTICS

In this chapter, our aim is to identify the main historical milestones that have shaped the evolution of naval tactics as a result of technological innovations and inventions, the effects of which have led to the emergence of innovative methods and procedures that have brought success in the tactical field. Throughout history, there have been many such moments when the philosophy of conducting military warfare has undergone major transformations, sometimes driven by technological advancements that changed tactics and doctrines, and other times by the genius of leaders who provoked and accelerated technological evolution to maintain a balance between doctrine and technology in military actions. To highlight the importance of the synergy between military genius and the tactics or strategy of conducting warfare, we consider the most significant moments that have marked a major change in the specific naval warfare to be the emergence of naval artillery, innovative methods of naval tactics (such as the Battle of Trafalgar), as well as the introduction of new platforms such as line-of-battle ships, submarines, and aircraft carriers.

#### Artillery and naval weapon development

On 23 September 1338, the first naval battle of the Hundred Years' War and the first naval battle that employed artillery aboard ships took place. Near the Port of Arnemuiden (Armouth) on the island of Walcheren (Netherlands), five English ships, including Christopher, equipped with cannons, were ambushed by a fleet of over 50 French navy ships. Despite the imbalance in forces, the battle was fierce,

and losses were comparable on both sides. The importance of artillery aboard ships is highlighted by the fact that the English ship Christopher was the last one to resist the attacks of numerous French ships (Castex, 2012, pp. 18-21).

Analysing the technological evolution of shipboard armaments, we observe that the tactics and procedures used in combat have evolved based on the technical and tactical characteristics and destructive power of the weapons. The rapid increase in the range of artillery forced ship commanders to abandon the tactics of boarding enemy ships and engaging in close-quarters combat on the deck in favour of tactics that allowed striking or destroying an enemy from a greater distance (*The Evolution of Naval Weapons*, 1949).

Unable to limit the spread of scientific discoveries, inventions, and innovations, including in the military field, leaders were forced to face technologically comparable adversaries in a short time, compelled to exploit other advantages offered by the operational environment or their training and experience to ensure the success of military actions.

#### Impact of technological development

From a technological perspective, victory is not solely determined by the characteristics of the weaponry but also by the characteristics of the platforms on which it is mounted. When the development of the striking and destructive capabilities of cannons experienced a stagnation or slowdown, military leaders turned to the creative genius and expertise of shipbuilders to create a tactical advantage on the battlefield. Consequently, maritime platforms underwent constructive evolution to meet the commanders' requirements and provide them with the necessary speed, manoeuvrability or firepower to defeat the enemy.

The need for increased firepower and advantages in the tactical field, such as speed and manoeuvrability, led to the emergence of line-of-battle ships in the early 17th century. By utilizing wind power for propulsion and having a more streamlined superstructure due to the elimination of forecastles at the stern and centre, with close-quarters combat no longer essential, this type of ship could be equipped



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with more cannons by enlarging the hull. From this point on, warships were equipped with numerous gun ports located on one or more decks, featuring embrasures (special openings in the hull for artillery fire) on both sides. Having cannons placed on their sides, during naval battles, this type of ships would line up one after another in order to maximize the effects of artillery fire, hence the name “*ship of the line*” (Mahan, 1890, pp. 110-120).

### **Adapting naval tactics and the commander’s creative genius**

The evolution of the new combat tactics, initially used in an ad-hoc manner, forced the ships to advance and maintain the line formation and concentrate the fire from the cannons on the side facing the enemy to maximize damage. The influence of environmental factors increased in importance, as the line formation had to be maintained regardless of the hydro-meteorological conditions at the time of battle (Ib.), and any changes in wind direction were compensated for by the skill of the commanders and the design of the ships. It was the method of deployment in almost all naval battles for a long period of time, whether they took place on the high seas, near the coasts, in ports, or on rivers, and positioning the ships on the windward side was vital for ensuring success on the battlefield. However, military genius knows no limits, and the Battle of Trafalgar is emblematic in this regard. On 21 October 1805, Admiral Horatio Nelson, the Commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet, achieved a brilliant naval victory against the combined fleet of France and Spain, despite being outnumbered, near the Strait of Gibraltar (<https://nelson-society.com/>). It is not the only case where an inferior naval force succeeds in winning a maritime confrontation, but through a new and completely different tactic from the usual one at that time. Thus, this battle would influence the conduct of naval battles for the centuries to come.

Contrary to expectations, instead of aligning his ships parallel to the enemy’s formation to achieve greater firepower, the English leader decided to attack the enemy formation from two perpendicular directions. Although it may seem disadvantageous because, at this stage of the battle, the number of Franco-Spanish guns was much

greater than that of the English, the advantage gained through the surprising manoeuvre of intermingling the English ships among the enemy’s proved decisive in the outcome of the battle. To truly understand the impact and importance of this innovative naval combat tactic, it is enough to observe that, although twenty-seven English ships faced thirty-three Franco-Spanish ships, after approximately six hours of fighting, the British succeeded in sinking one ship of the combined fleet and capturing sixteen others without losing a single ship. The same discrepancy can be observed in terms of human casualties, as the English recorded 1,700 victims, including Nelson, while the Franco-Spanish forces suffered 2,600 dead and approximately 7,000 prisoners, including the commander of the combined fleet, Vice Admiral Villeneuve (Breemer, 1993, pp. 19-24).

Although wooden ships or sail-powered vessels are no longer used today, the combination of innate abilities and the conscious and subconscious study of the principles of military leadership can lead to the emergence of innovative strategies and tactics that, when translated into simple plans and correlated with the leader’s ability to instil confidence in subordinates, as well as the implementation of the concept of mission command, can ensure victory even when one’s fleet is technologically inferior or outnumbered. The famous message “*England expects that every man will do his duty*”, signed by Nelson, immediately electrified the ship commanders and increased morale and the will to fight among the English sailors, which also contributed to the achievement of such a brilliant victory (Hark, 2007, p. 2).

### **Adapting naval tactics to the emergence of new naval platforms and vice versa**

Using old or new tactics and continuously improving the onboard weaponry, sailors have relied on line-of-battle ships for a long time to achieve the necessary maritime dominance for the progress and prosperity of the state. It seemed that, from an evolutionary standpoint, the apex of naval platform construction had been reached. However, everything was about to change in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the emergence of the submarine. Initially met with scepticism



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by experienced sailors, the submarine built by David Bushnell before the American Revolutionary War (<https://www.history.navy.mil>) completely altered the approach to naval warfare by introducing the underwater environment into naval actions.

At first, submarines operated independently, with the success of the attack relying on concealment and surprise rather than on the concentration of force. These tactics, quite different from surface fleet actions, resemble guerrilla warfare at sea. The submarine stalks its target while the target searches for clues regarding its presence in order to take defensive, engagement, or evasion measures (<https://www.britannica.com>). The consequence of the submarine's emergence, its refinement, and the tactics used in naval warfare was the emergence of anti-submarine forces, represented by destroyers, maritime patrol aircraft, or helicopters. The tactical competition between submarines and anti-submarine forces got manifested through the development of new operational procedures, supported by technological advancements that allowed for faster construction and a greater number of submarines, as well as through the development of sophisticated systems for detecting and attacking submarines.

Faced with a technological disadvantage in the fight against specialized anti-submarine vessels, their commanders devised compensatory tactics. Thus, the Battle of the Atlantic during the Second World War is closely tied to the wolf-pack attack tactic (Showalter, 1995, p. 817). The efficiency and lethality of this tactic are demonstrated by the fact that in March 1943, Karl Doenitz's wolf packs sank allied ships with a tonnage exceeding six hundred thousand, while losing only fourteen submarines. It was the peak moment of the German submarine offensive, with the results of the confrontations between submarines and surface ships favouring the latter. In the same year, in May, the German submarine fleet sank transport ships with approximately half the tonnage but suffered the loss of forty-one submarines (Ib.).

The major disadvantage of the German tactic was that wolf packs were not permanent formations but were formed ad hoc and had a fluid composition. Upon receiving information about the position and destination of an Allied convoy, the submarine fleet command

directed a certain number of submarines to a sector along its most likely route. Command and coordination were carried out remotely, with no command relationships among the submarines engaged in the attack; they acted independently and freely. Perfecting this tactic, the US Navy created a coordinated attack group (CAG), which had an on-scene commander assigned to coordinate the actions of the isolated submarines to maximize and optimize the synergy of the attack (Hoffman, 2016, pp. 131-139)<sup>1</sup>.

The naval battle, initially conducted by surface vessels, has grown in complexity with the introduction of the underwater environment into the battlefield through the emergence of submarines, culminating in aerial warfare when the use of aviation against surface vessels or submarines became possible due to technological advancements. In order to project force at a greater distance from national territory and to enable the attack of the enemy far beyond borders, the synergy between the ingenuity of engineers and the military leadership resulted in the emergence of a new naval platform, capable of incorporating and deploying the speed, manoeuvrability, firepower and precision of aircraft over considerable distances. Thus, the emergence of aircraft carriers marks the moment when an almost perfect symbiosis between air and naval forces is achieved, dominating the seas and oceans of the world to this day.

The Second World War represents a significant milestone in the evolution of naval warfare, during which naval power reached its peak influence on the conduct of wars. In addition to witnessing the largest land and air battles in human history, this conflict also witnessed large-scale naval operations, with their contribution to achieving victory being indisputable. Conducted on a global scale, the outcome of these operations depended largely on the pooling of resources by both belligerent alliances, which was dependent on ensuring freedom of navigation on maritime communication lines. The role of aircraft in ensuring this freedom is decisive, and the effects of aircraft on surface vessels and submarines have influenced naval tactics, maritime operational art, and maritime strategy (Brodie, 1946, p. 210).

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*The technological evolution of naval platforms has led to their utilization in a wide range of maritime operations, with their capabilities for force projection, discovery and identification of potential enemies or adversaries represented by state or non-state actors being essential in stability operations, countering piracy, illegal trafficking of people and materials, or countering hybrid threats in the maritime domain.*

One primary impact of these platforms on naval tactics is that the traditional formation of ships *in line* or *column*, which was the main instrument used by admirals to coordinate ships and ensure coherent action, needed to be changed with the development of airborne capabilities in combating surface vessels or submarines. Thus, the circular formation centred around the aircraft carrier has become the basis for command and control of ships during naval combat. This approach makes the overall force easily manoeuvrable, facilitates coordination and coherence of actions, and maximizes the synergistic effect of individual ship actions while achieving mutual support. By combining the capabilities and technical-tactical characteristics of both categories of forces, the main characteristic of modern naval warfare is coordination, which is achieved through doctrinal adaptation to technological advancements (Rubel, 2018, p. 117).

In conclusion, throughout the history of military conflicts, naval tactics and technological evolution have influenced each other, driven by the need to gain an advantage on the battlefield and achieve military success. From the introduction and use of artillery on ships to the development of line-of-battle ships, submarines, and the use of aviation in naval warfare, along with the adaptation of older tactics or the development of new procedures for conducting naval operations, the constant objective has been to maximize enemy losses while minimizing one's own. Striking the adversary before they detect or have the opportunity to retaliate has been the focal point of technological genius and the talent of military leaders in managing a multilateral battlefield, where understanding and comprehending the operational environment architecture are increasingly important, regardless of whether the conflict takes place on land, in the air, or at sea.

Moreover, the technological evolution of naval platforms has led to their utilization in a wide range of maritime operations, with their capabilities for force projection, discovery and identification of potential enemies or adversaries represented by state or non-state actors being essential in stability operations, countering piracy, illegal trafficking of people and materials, or countering hybrid threats in the maritime domain.

## A NEW CONCEPT – NAVAL DRONE-CARRYING PLATFORM

In this chapter, we aim to introduce a new concept, the *drone-carrying platform*. Our approach is supported even by the lack of validation of such a concept in specialized doctrinal content, such as *Naval Doctrine Publication 1 – Naval Warfare* (US Naval Service, 2020), which was released in April 2020, or *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-10 – UK Maritime Power*, 5th edition, published in October 2017 (Ministry of Defence, 2017). On the other hand, the need for such an approach is felt, due to the fact that, slowly, such platforms are starting to emerge, under different names. The first step has already been taken by capitalizing on the concepts: modularity, multi-functional platform, and multi-role platform. This process was achieved by adapting existing platforms to new destinations, according to functions, roles, or operating environment.

However, the essence of the emergence of the concept of *drone-carrying platform* is related to the need to adapt the projects of future platforms to the requirements and specifications corresponding to the destination. Thus, the drone-carrying platform is a platform specially designed, built, and intended to fulfil various roles in military actions, with the main function of transporting, launching, and operating drones.

When we refer to drones, it should be borne in mind that this concept sums up a series of characteristics depending on the operating environment, mode of operation, mode of movement, propulsion, destination, role, and other specific characteristics.

The following types of systems that operate different types of drones are known in the specialized literature: UAS (Unmanned Aerial System), UGS (Unmanned Ground System), USS (Unmanned Surface System), UUS (Unmanned Underwater System). In general, the acronym UxS or simply US (Unmanned Systems) is used to refer to all these systems without a crew on board (Scipanov, Dolceanu, 2020, pp. 62-68).

Generally speaking, a drone is an unmanned, remotely piloted, self-guided device (equipped with onboard artificial intelligence), or a combination thereof that can operate in the air, on the surface of water, on land, or underwater.



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The general characteristic of the drone is observed, being a device without a crew on board, which, even if it is autonomous or not, the drone can benefit from the human intervention for effective piloting or at least for proper exploitation.

Compared to those proposed in this approach, we continue to present elements characteristic of platforms that operate in the maritime environment, in order to be able to build a drone-carrying platform concept.

Naval platforms are ships, aircraft, and submarines, especially for military purposes, specially designed to operate in the maritime environment and capable of carrying out missions in accordance with the destination, role, purpose, and function for which they were built. The drone-carrying platform will be a military platform, specially designed and built to be able to embark, accommodate, transport, launch, monitor, and control, deck landing, or recover drones.

Considering the peculiarities of drone-carrying platforms and their destination, the widest spectrum of missions is covered by naval surface drone-carrying platforms, which, as we will see, are able to operate drones in all three environments – air, surface, and submarine. In order to argue the need for the existence and use of drone-carrying platforms that operate on the surface, in the air, and in the underwater environment, we will carry out an analysis of their advantages and disadvantages. We mention these aspects due to the fact that, in the case of submarine platforms, the carrier-drone submarine already exists, because almost all existing submarines can operate underwater vehicles with various proximity missions. So, the submarine drone-carrying platform is represented by any submarine that can operate a UUV. The aerial drone-carrying platform will require a more detailed analysis due to the particularity of the operating environment. The aerial drone-carrying platform will gain utility in military actions when the advantages of the projection of vectors represented by drones will be opportunely exploited.

However, in this endeavour, we are focusing on the most versatile drone-carrying platform, in this case, the naval platform. In the case of surface vessels, the drone-carrying platform will represent a vessel specialized in operating aerial drones, surface drones, or underwater

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drones. For this purpose, it is obvious that it will meet the specific requirements to embark, accommodate, store, transport, launch, monitor and control, relaunch or recover drones.

Table 1: Analysis of advantages/disadvantages of drone-carrying platforms (authors' conception)

PLATFORM TYPE	DRONE-CARRYING SHIP	DRONE-CARRYING AIRCRAFT	DRONE-CARRYING SUBMARINE
<b>ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES</b>			
AUTONOMY	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Drone carrying capacity	HIGH & VERY HIGH	LOW 1-2 PAX	LOW 1-2 PAX
Drone boarding possibilities	EXTENDED	LIMITED	LIMITED
Drone accommodation/storage possibilities	EXTENDED	LIMITED	LIMITED
Capabilities to launch, operate and recover drones	MULTIPLE AND EXTENDED	LIMITED	LIMITED
Embarkation of remote operation teams	EXTENDED FACILITIES	SMALL AND LIMITED	SMALL AND LIMITED
Modularity-related destinations	EXTENDED MISSIONS	LIMITED MISSIONS	SPECIFIC MISSIONS
Roles and functions within the naval group	MULTIPLE	PUNCTUAL	MINIMAL
The possibility of adapting the project to the specific requirements of drone-carrying platforms	VERY ADAPTABLE	SLIGHTLY ADAPTABLE	NOT ADAPTIVE AT ALL



*In the case of surface vessels, the drone-carrying platform will represent a vessel specialized in operating aerial drones, surface drones, or underwater drones. For this purpose, it is obvious that it will meet the specific requirements to embark, accommodate, store, transport, launch, monitor and control, relaunch or recover drones.*

From the analysis carried out, depending on the degree of manifestation of some specifications, qualities, or particularities of the three drone-carrying platforms considered, analysis that consisted in assigning degrees of appreciation of the advantages/disadvantages that turn into strong points or vulnerabilities, it can be seen that the drone-carrying platform has the most strengths.

In conclusion, the *drone-carrying platform* has high autonomy, a large and very large drone transport capacity, extensive drone boarding



and accommodation/storage possibilities, multiple and extensive drone launch, operation, and relaunch/recovery capabilities. Moreover, such a platform can embark on a considerable number of remote operation teams, is characterized by modularity, can have other related destinations, fulfils multiple roles and functions within the naval group. Last but not least, from a constructive point of view, it poses the advantage of adapting the project to the specific requirements of drone-carrying platforms without major additional costs.

### THE INFLUENCE OF DRONE-CARRYING PLATFORMS ON NAVAL TACTICS

Continuing this endeavour, our goal is to identify the advantages generated by the use of drone-carrying platforms in naval warfare and their influence on surface, underwater, and aerial tactics and procedures.

The undeniable complexity and ambiguity of the operational environment necessitate a thorough understanding as a primary condition for overcoming these obstacles. In this regard, information about the enemy and the operating environment is crucial. The variety of means by which information can be obtained is driven by both human inventiveness and technological advancements. These two factors are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they complement each other with the aim of increasing the quantity and quality of acquired information. Thus far, although highly advanced, the technology-based analysis and decision-making tools, including artificial intelligence, are still morally contested. Therefore, the human factor, based on a wealth of information, remains responsible for determining the optimal means and methods to achieve the objectives of a maritime operation.

As we have seen, naval warfare takes place on the surface, underwater, and in the air, with these three environments being closely interdependent. Failure to succeed in any of these environments can lead to the failure of the entire operation. This generates the need for early warning as well as the identification and implementation of measures to mitigate the vulnerabilities and risks to which these environments are exposed, while ensuring an efficient and rapid response. Thus, obtaining a precise Common Operational Picture (COP) could be a viable solution to optimize command and control (C2) capabilities and gain a deep understanding of the maritime operational environment (Rădulescu, 2018).



One of the greatest challenges in understanding the maritime domain lies in creating the most accurate image of the underwater environment. Unlike the aerial and surface environments, where observation and assessment of the influence of environmental factors on military actions or the distances to targets can be done by human observers, the interpretation of the underwater environment is entirely dependent on technology. Therefore, we can say that underwater warfare is predominantly technological, where both threats and countermeasures are influenced by the progress and technical evolution of the equipment used. From this perspective, naval mines, with their diverse launching platforms, long lifespan, and the absence of human intervention required to engage a target, represent a serious threat with multiple effects, ranging from damaging and sinking ships to impacting the enemy's psyche, morale, or will to fight. Furthermore, with the emergence of mine hunters, the human factor is protected during mine countermeasures missions as the naval platform remains outside the mined area, and the actions of mine detection, identification, and destruction are carried out using devices controlled by an operator on board the ship (Tănăsescu, 2018, pp. 231-232).

While mining and mine clearance have existed in various forms since ancient times, submarine warfare emerged as a significant area of offensive and defensive military operations in the First World War. This global conflict marked the widespread use of submarines to attack enemy merchant shipping and warships, giving rise to both anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and competition between submarines and anti-submarine forces (ASW forces). This competition evolved based on the predominant method of submarine concealment or detection. During the two world wars, submarines relied on radio communications to identify and attack convoys, but could also be located by anti-submarine forces. Another vulnerability of submarines during that period was their relatively short dive duration, which necessitated manoeuvring to avoid detection by the adversary (Clark, 2015, pp. 1-4).

Although submarines have significantly evolved, and their current submerged endurance is quite long, the need for replenishment of supplies or crew recovery requires them to enter ports or naval bases, thereby exposing their position, even if only for a short time,

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*Drones are perceived as a threat to the security of existing military platforms in military operations, and in some cases, they can even jeopardize the existence and development of new platforms, whether aerial, naval, or submarine. An example in this regard is the concern of British experts related to the future of nuclear submarines of the Trident class, in the event that the vulnerability of timely detection is exploited by a potential adversary through the use of underwater drones.*

being observed and analysed by potential adversaries' specialized structures. This disadvantage can be mitigated by replacing submarines with underwater drones, which, depending on their configuration and equipment with various devices, are capable of conducting a wide range of missions, from maritime surveillance and research to search, detection, and neutralization of mines or enemy submarines. Moreover, the significantly lower maintenance and operational costs of these unmanned vehicles enable the creation of an impressive fleet that could make a significant contribution to gaining and maintaining control of maritime space in the required areas and timeframes (Tănăsescu, pp. 231-232).

Recent history confirms that drones are perceived as a threat to the security of existing military platforms in military operations (such as the effects on Russian naval vessels engaged in the war in Ukraine), and in some cases, they can even jeopardize the existence and development of new platforms, whether aerial, naval, or submarine. An example in this regard is the concern of British experts related to the future of nuclear submarines of the Trident class, in the event that the vulnerability of timely detection is exploited by a potential adversary through the use of underwater drones (Hambing, 2016).

In conclusion, the role of drones in the success of military operations in the maritime domain increases directly proportional to their numbers, and drone-carrying platforms provide the optimal means for projecting this force into operational areas located at great distances from own ports and naval bases.

## CONCLUSIONS

It can be observed that, in history, we can identify moments in which the philosophy of leading and conducting combat at sea has experienced major transformations, of doctrinal, technological, or operational nature. From the analysis, we can affirm the fact that, sometimes, it was the technique that determined the change in tactics, other times the creative genius of the commander, and, periodically, the technological evolution, so that, alongside the doctrine-technology binomial, a new element emerges, the maritime operative art, which completes a triptych specific to the military field: *doctrine – technology – creativity*.



*In the face of varied and ever-changing threats, the emergence of drone-carrying platforms is due to technological evolution and doctrinal adaptation, human inventiveness and ingenuity, as an adequate response to the need to contribute to maritime security.*

The most important moments that changed the approach to naval combat were the emergence of naval artillery, the adaptation of naval tactics to the situation of the tactical field, and technological development, such as the emergence and development of naval platforms, without minimizing the influence of the creative genius of the military commander.

The *naval drone-carrying platform* is a platform specially designed, built, and intended to fulfil different roles, functions and tasks in naval actions, specific to the maritime environment. The naval drone-carrying platform exists under various names, characterized by modularity, multi-functionality and multiple roles. The essence of the emergence of the *naval drone-carrying platform* concept is related to the need to adapt future platforms to the requirements and specifications corresponding to the destination of their use in the maritime environment.

From a technological point of view, the first advantage of future drone-carrying platforms is given by the possibility of adapting any platform to specific requirements without major additional costs.

From an operational point of view, the drone-carrying platform has high autonomy, physical protection of personnel, freedom of movement, secrecy of action etc.

From a tactical point of view, the drone-carrying platform requires an adaptation of the tactics of use in military actions. However, in our experience as specialists, this tactic will not be different from the use of other existing vectors, but they will also adapt to the creative genius of military commanders, being a synergistic result of the application of maritime operative art and the technical-tactical characteristics of the drones used.

In the face of varied and ever-changing threats, the emergence of drone-carrying platforms is due to technological evolution and doctrinal adaptation, human inventiveness and ingenuity, as an adequate response to the need to contribute to maritime security.

*Drones and drone-carrying platforms* represent a technological way that can contribute to strengthening maritime security by minimizing exposure to danger and protecting personnel and equipment, including the quasi-elimination of the human component in the task execution process while increasing the importance of the human factor in the process planning, decision-making and leading military actions.





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## THE POTENTIAL REPRESENTED BY MISSILE DEFENCE – EMERGING AND DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY – IN THE GLOBAL POWER BALANCE

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*The rapid exploitation of the scientific research results for military purposes, implementing them in new weapon systems, has become a key factor in the global power relationships. The possession of the nuclear weapon has a relevant contribution to maintaining the high-power status by placing the states having it in the first positions of global military power hierarchy. Emerging technologies, in this case the missile defence, have the capability to threaten or strengthen strategic stability.*

*Missile defence represents a complex system of armaments that includes a variety of capabilities designed to protect different objectives against missile attacks in different ways. The integrated missile defence system (IMDS) entails tracking weapons/missiles to know their location during the travel trajectory, assessing the missile nature and capability, detecting (sensors, radars – early warning), identifying (sensor- or procedure-based), selecting the type of response (rules of engagement), selecting the weapon system to engage the missile (air/ground based-tracking, weapons) and destroying the missile (lethality – tactics and weapons effectiveness). Low observability aircraft – stealth/invisible and network-centred warfare are technologies affecting IMDS performance. The missile defence is largely determined by the improvement of the detection (radars), the assets of engagement (weapon range, tracking, sensor fusion, situational awareness) and the degree of destruction (tactics).*

*Keywords: missile defence; ballistic missile; sensor; radar; detection;*



## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The security environment has changed deeply in recent years, both globally and regionally. There have been outlined quite relevant tendencies and actions regarding the revival of the dispute for superpower status, the redefinition of the relationships between actors with global interests, the reconfiguration of the power balance, the amplification and diversification of the fields of competition and geopolitical rivalry, nuclear deterrence becoming more present and relevant in the relationships between the great powers. (*White Paper on Defence*, 2021, pp. 10-12). The features of the security environment have undergone dramatic changes, especially after 24 February 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, affecting the rules-based international order. In this context, NATO has diversified deterrent and defence measures, including by deploying response forces, to strengthen the posture and presence on the eastern flank. The consequences of the war have already been felt at global level, the strategic and systemic competition has intensified, involving operational aspects of defence and deterrence, consolidating and diversifying capabilities, the technology and industry development, prioritizing and redefining the multilateral strategy. The employment by the Russian Federation of conventional, cyber and hybrids assets to undermine the rules-based international order represents the most significant and direct threat to the security of NATO allies as well as to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The new challenges with an impact on the security environment are generated by: the increasing tendency of state and non-state adversaries to exploit the limited ability to protect against hostile complex actions; the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic; the strengthening of the Russian Federation military potential on NATO eastern flank, namely on NATO border, through which offensive operations can be carried out, amplifying and causing major challenges against national strategic interests aimed at securing

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EU and NATO borders and ensuring energy security and stability; the delays in the Alliance's adaptation processes to the threats in its eastern and southern neighbourhood; the volatility of the security status in the Western Balkans, the instability of the Middle East and North Africa; the terrorist threat; the hostile informative actions; the cyber-attacks; the integration of emerging and disruptive technologies; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems; the phenomenon of organized crime and, last but not least, the distortions in energy markets. (Presidential Administration, 2020, pp. 24-27).

*The threat represented by the hypersonic missiles, together with the ballistic and cruise missiles capabilities arsenals, increasingly complex, under development and modernization, of the Russian Federation and China clearly demonstrates the prominence the adversaries place on long-range strike capabilities.*

The global strategic situation, which has never been so uncertain, volatile and constantly evolving, is influenced by many dynamics, including the political-social, demographic, environmental, economic, military, and technological ones. There are threats that potentially have an impact on the global strategic balance and on the new world order established after the Second World War. The armed forces of a great power and of any country, in general, must meet the emerging challenges that, in terms of size and nature, are unprecedented. (Italian Army Headquarters, 2019, pp. 3-10). Missile defence represents a decisive and challenging military mission, and its relevance has evolved because NATO adversaries continue to develop new and disrupting attack capabilities intended to threaten the Allies. The threat represented by the hypersonic missiles, together with the ballistic and cruise missiles capabilities arsenals, increasingly complex, under development and modernization, of the Russian Federation and China clearly demonstrates the prominence the adversaries place on long-range strike capabilities. In response to these developments, NATO must ensure that the missile defence mission is planned, organized, budgeted and managed properly in order to be effective in this new and demanding security environment. (Department of Defense, 2022, pp. 4-8).

In order to cope with the new security environment characterized by an unprecedented strategic competition, NATO must improve the degree of global awareness and the deterrence, defending and contesting capacity, as well as deny access and dominance in all domains and directions, in accordance with the 360-degree approach. NATO's deterrence and defence posture is also based on missile

defence capabilities. (NATO, 2022, p. 6). Investment with dedication in hypersonic capacities is not only a strategic advantage but also a risk for opponents. NATO adversaries also invest in missiles, while allies have not invested enough in the assets for defending against missiles, an aspect highlighted by the excessive use of missiles by the Russian Federation in the invasion of Ukraine and the massive use of missiles by the Houthis movement in Yemen, supported by Iran, during the attacks on the United Emirates and Saudi Arabia. NATO states must invest now to ensure that they can defend themselves against missiles and to eliminate any strategic advantage taken into account by adversaries. (Department of Defense, ib.).

Considering the missile's massive use in the latest conflicts, the consequences that this threat represents, the effectiveness of these emerging offensive capabilities, and their contribution to fulfilling the objectives of NATO adversaries military operations, missile and air defence missions have become decisive during a war. Therefore, the armed forces services must treat missile defence capabilities as a primordial task, in order to respond to the changing security environment features we are facing now, having the consequence of highlighting the missiles and means of air strikes as a mainly used battle form by adversaries. (Department of Defense, 2022, p. 6).

Two of the main problems that have caused frictions between the great powers lately are represented by the NATO member states' missile defence and the strategic balance stability, aspects highlighted since the Cold War era. The contradictions were generated by the fact that the deployment of the missile defence systems could substantially diminish the capacity of the adversary forces that use strategic assets and survived a first strike to penetrate the missile defence, thus offering an incentive for both sides to trigger a nuclear war in a contingency crisis. Moreover, the deployment of the missile defence systems could generate a nuclear arms race, because the parties involved developed their missile forces to favour the penetration of the adversary's missile defence system. (Sankaran, p. 55). Ballistic missile defence has lately represented the most important topic that generates tensions between the USA, on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other hand, regarding strategic stability. (Ib., p. 54). Emerging technologies, which favour great powers to use the global connection, to easily influence



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*Missile defence represents an emerging technology that has a significant potential for substantially dangerous or disrupting effects on strategic nuclear stability and global and regional security. The great powers seek modalities, techniques and strategies to address, or at least mitigate, the impact and risks caused by the use of this new technology and the potential to disrupt the calculation of deterrence.*

migration and to compete for resources, result in the distribution of centralized power and the change in traditional identities. These significant changes make effective the reflection on the character of the war and on the anticipated shifts that the evolving trends at this time will have on the future battlefield. (Amerson, 2016, p. 1).

The challenges generated by emerging and disruptive technologies in the arms realm can be represented by five significant and potentially disruptive technological developments: hypersonic weapons, missile defence, artificial intelligence, counter-space capabilities, and computer network operations (cyber). (Futter, 2021, p. 1). This article will highlight only the nuances specific to missile defence, assessing the comparative influence of missile defence, particularly in the following domains: intercontinental ballistic missiles; hypersonic missiles; missile defence systems; command and control systems; coverage and protection; ballistic missile defence architecture; proliferation of ballistic missile capabilities; effects on international stability and security.

The gap between the speed at which the shape and identity of threats change and the sometimes slow adaptation of the armed forces to the needs of transformation and modernization of the response capabilities clearly highlights the difficulties the states must meet during the process of transforming forces. The importance of defence against ballistic missiles has increased in recent years, especially after North Korea tested ballistic missiles that could threaten the territory of the United States of America (Watts, 2020, p. 1).

Missile defence represents an emerging technology that has a significant potential for substantially dangerous or disrupting effects on strategic nuclear stability and global and regional security. The great powers seek modalities, techniques and strategies to address, or at least mitigate, the impact and risks caused by the use of this new technology and the potential to disrupt the calculation of deterrence. One thing is clear, there is no one universal solution to eliminate the threats generated by all types of missiles. (Bidwell, 2018, p. 4). The ability of new underwater drones to detect the ballistic missiles launched by submarines and the small satellites with advanced sensors to determine the variable route of intercontinental ballistic missiles (IBMs) in a coordinated, intelligent and remotely guided way constitutes a new fundamental challenge to strategic offensive nuclear forces.

## THE SITUATION OF MISSILE AND AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS ARCHITECTURE

The renewal of super power status competition has led to prioritizing the defence planning of the great powers on the capabilities for conducting so-called *high-end conventional warfare*, meaning large-scale war, high-intensity, technologically sophisticated conventional warfare against adversaries with similarly sophisticated military capabilities.

The defence capabilities against ballistic missiles, hypersonic and cruise missiles and attacks with other aerial means as well as land and anti-ship weapons with a longer range than the previously deployed systems also represent emerging technologies with the potential to influence the global strategic balance. (Congressional Research Service, 2022, p. 10). The war in Ukraine has validated in a convincing way the entry into a new missile era. This era is characterized by global messages amplification regarding the supply and demand for both missile delivery systems and for systems to counter them. In addition to the morale of the Ukrainian people, the support of intelligence for determining the targets and the sustained logistical support from the West, the conflict is defined by the mass use of precision fires. (Karako, 2022, pp. 1-3). In the latest and most relevant war, among other things, it is highlighted the fact that the Russian Federation uses the missiles, the means of air striking and the artillery in Ukraine, leading to the conclusion that we should accept them as predominant in the future military actions of this century. The emerging threats represented by the ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles, as well as by other lower-level ones, including unmanned aircraft systems, are rapidly amplified and evolving risk for NATO forces and countries. Identifying the ways and effective means of counteracting the threats and effects generated by the use of such weapons is a primordial mission for NATO. (Plumb, 2022, pp. 3-5).

*The missile defence system* is a generic term used for a missile defence shield that is designated to protect a country against any types of missile – conventional, cruise or nuclear – that enter the national airspace, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (IBMs) or other ballistic missiles. (MDA, 2023, p. 1). The USA, Russia, India, France, Israel, Italy, the United Kingdom, China and Iran have developed



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

*The defence capabilities against ballistic missiles, hypersonic and cruise missiles and attacks with other aerial means as well as land and anti-ship weapons with a longer range than the previously deployed systems also represent emerging technologies with the potential to influence the global strategic balance.*



such defence systems. Any mechanism that can detect and destroy a missile before striking the target is assimilated to the missile defence system. (Ib.).

**Integrated Air Defence System (IADS)** generally consists of sensors (inputs, what is put in, taken in, or operated on by any system), command and control, and effectors (a weapon that acts in response to a stimulus). The **Kill chain** of IADS integrates the following six steps:

1. tracking weapons release;
2. assessment;
3. detection (sensors);
4. identification (sensor- or procedure-based);
5. reaction selection (rules of engagement), selection of weapon system;
6. engagement. Details are presented in figure no. 1.

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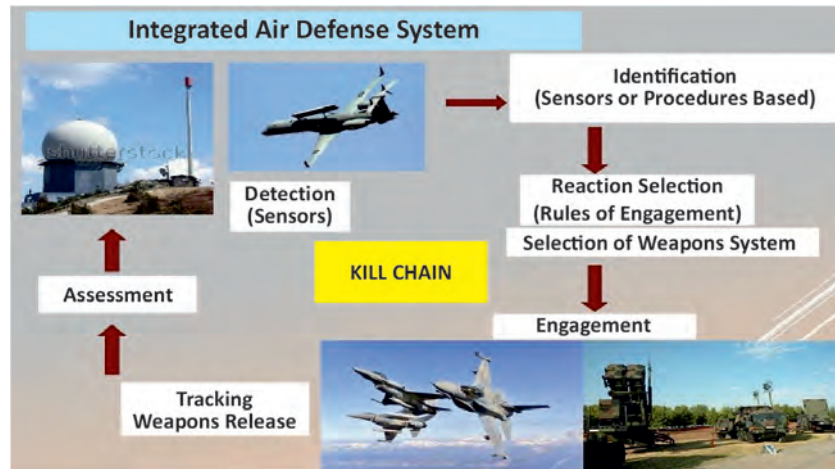


Figure no. 1: The Kill Chain of Integrated Air Defense System (Ib.)

In this process, the detection is determined by the early warning, the engagement (air/ground means), which is influenced by supervision and the technical-tactical characteristics of the armament and the degree of neutralization, which is determined by the tactics used and the efficacy of the armament.

**Interception of missiles** involves:

- 1) identifying and tracking the missiles or warheads;
- 2) discriminating the missiles or warheads from other false missiles;



3) determining the coordinates of the missile hitting point on the trajectory;

4) recording the fire elements and launching the missile interceptor (or directed energy) to destroy the missile or warhead. The ballistic missile flight trajectory has the following **phases**: *boost* (the most advantageous phase for detection and monitoring), *ascending* (rocket motor is burned out and downrange sea-based systems can be effective to intercept), *midcourse* (the longest flight phase, most interception opportunities, and the decoys are released) and *terminal* phase (final opportunity for missile intercept). Currently, there is no asset to target ballistic missiles during the initial, or “boost” phase of missile trajectory. (American Foreign Policy Council, 2015, pp. 1-8).

Unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAVs) have the ability to intercept rockets during flight trajectory. The ability to quickly detect a launch and react to it significantly increases interception opportunities. Land, sea, and space-based sensors, including satellites and radars, provide the Ballistic Missile Defence System (BMDS) with the ability to detect, track and destroy incoming ballistic missiles. Details are presented in figure no. 2.

Land, sea, and space-based sensors, including satellites and radars, provide the Ballistic Missile Defence System with the ability to detect, track and destroy incoming ballistic missiles.

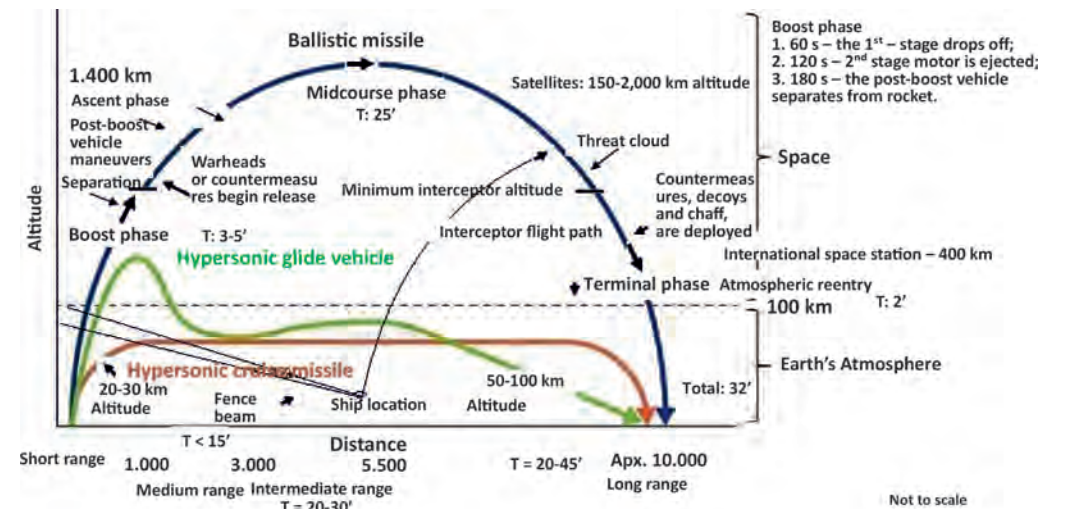


Figure no. 2: Missile trajectories, their actions during the flight and the reaction of the air and missile defence system

(Kunertova, 2021, p. 55, Williams, 2022, p. 3, Karako, 2022, p. 3, Boord, 2016, pp. 36, 63, 99, Speier, 2017, pp. 2, 11-12).



*NATO Air Policing, part of active air defence, is a peacetime mission that requires an Air Surveillance and Control System, an Air Command and Control structure, Quick Reaction Alert interceptors, and aircraft to be available on a 24/7 basis. It enables the Alliance to detect, track and identify to the greatest extent possible all aerial objects approaching or operating within NATO airspace.*

**The NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS)** represents an integration of the capabilities and overlapping operations of all services to deter and defend the Alliance' territory, population and forces to ensure freedom of action by denying the adversary's ability to achieve destructive effects due to its air and missile assets. It includes a network of interconnected systems to detect, track, classify, identify and monitor air assets and, if necessary, intercept them by using terrestrial or air weapons systems, as well as the necessary procedures to employ these systems. NATINAMDS is a foundation stone of NATO air defence and defence policy, which was implemented in the 1970s. Generally, it has the following components: command, control, communications and intelligence; surveillance; active air defence and passive air defence (dispersal, hardening, shelters, camouflage, decoys, electronic protection measures). NATO Air Policing, part of active air defence, is a peacetime mission that requires an Air Surveillance and Control System, an Air Command and Control structure, Quick Reaction Alert interceptors, and aircraft to be available on a 24/7 basis. It enables the Alliance to detect, track and identify to the greatest extent possible all aerial objects approaching or operating within NATO airspace, so that the violations can be recognized and the appropriate actions can be performed.

The architecture of the NATO Ballistic Missiles Defence System has as a central part the NATO Command Centre in Ramstein, Germany, which leads the activity of the following elements: satellites providing early warning for NATO BMD; Aegis Ashore "Sensors Shooter", Deveselu, Romania, operational since 2016; four US Aegis BMD capable ships – "Sensors Shooter", Rota, Spain; air defence systems – PATRIOT (Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target – a US theatre-wide surface-to-air missile defence system) and SAMP-T (*sol-air moyenne portee-terrestre* – the main French medium-range air defence system for theatre protection); sea-based radars; land-based radars; Aegis Ashore, "Sensors Shooter", Redzicowo, Poland, 2023; BMD tracking radars "Sensors" Kurecik, Turkey, and Ship Force Protection. (NATO, 2019).

**The European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA)** represents a NATO missile defence project, whose implementation started in 2011, in which the USA has a decisive contribution, being designed

to protect Europe against short, medium and intermediate range potential ballistic missiles, launched from Iran. This initiative is based on the missile defence system Aegis configured for terrestrial and naval employment and has as its essential means the standard SM-3, missiles interceptor designed to engage short and medium range, ballistic missiles in the mid-course and terminal phase of trajectory, a system that will be progressively integrated into a network of land and space-based sensors. All of the SM-3 variants fire from the Mk 41 vertical launching system. An overview of different EPAA phases is provided by the following three phases with reference to: *missile platforms and number, SM-3 variant and number, sensors and combat system.*

**Phase 1** – deployed. In phase 1, EPAA consists of the command centre arranged in Germany, the radars deployed in Turkey, the ships of the US Navy in Monterey and 29 other ships with Aegis ballistic shield capabilities in Spain and 129 SM-3 Block IA and IB interceptors. The system has been operational since the end of 2011. Starting in 2014, Spain has hosted four of those ships (equipped with SPY-1 radar) at its naval base in Rota. The sensors and interceptors operate under the Aegis combat system. This is a system capable of tracking 100 simultaneous targets. US and European BMDS are integrated for battle management at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany.

In **Phase 2**, the system has been operational since May 2016. At the July 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO declared the Initial Operational Capability of the NATO BMDS. In May 2016, NATO declared operational the Romania Aegis Ashore site at Deveselu as part of EPAA Phase 2. Interceptors were also mounted on an increasing number of Aegis BMD ships in support of global missions. The first Aegis Ashore site in Romania (which completed an update in August 2019) is equipped with one land-based Aegis SPY-1 radar and 12 missile tubes for 24 SM-3 Block IB interceptor missiles. Phase 2 obtained the Technical Capability Declaration in December 2015, certifying that the system operates according to the project.

**Phase 3**, having 2022 as planned implementation date, includes the deployment and operationalization of the Aegis Ashore system in Poland, operational probably in 2023 (Costea, 2023), which was initially scheduled in 2018. Thus, the assets deployed at sea and those existing



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*Phase 3 of EPAA provides equipment with the most efficient interceptor SM-3 Block III. This interceptor provides the system with an increased capacity to engage intermediate-range ballistic missiles and a restricted capability to employ IBMs. One last test on a destroyer equipped with Aegis IBMs having SM-3 Block II A interceptor, in November 2020, completed the development phase and confirmed the production phase.*

in Romania will be supplemented and the European area protected by the system will be expanded. Phase 3 provides equipment with the most efficient interceptor SM-3 Block III. This interceptor provides the system with an increased capacity to engage intermediate-range ballistic missiles and a restricted capability to employ IBMs. One last test on a destroyer equipped with Aegis IBMs having SM-3 Block II A interceptor, in November 2020, completed the development phase and confirmed the production phase. In 2022 it was planned the production of eight SM-3 Block II A interceptions for deployment in Romania and Poland, as well as on some Aegis ships, along with 60 others produced in 2021. In Phase 3, the United States of America planned to deploy two new tracking systems to support early interception: the airborne infrared sensor platform (ABIR), a system designed to track a significantly larger number of missiles launched by the enemy and the Precision Tracking and Surveillance System (PTTS), which would provide up to 12 satellites. Both the ABIR and PTTS programmes were provided in the budgets of 2013 and 2014 respectively. (Arms Control Association, 2022, pp. 1-5). Space-based sensors represent the most effective means with operational capabilities for ballistic missiles in flights persistent global surveillance. The PTTS was designed to strengthen the BMDS, by using a constellation of infrared sensors to exploit all the benefits of space deployment for precision missile tracking. The PTSS satellite programme corresponds to the needs of the warfare forces, by ensuring persistent tracking, post the first stage of missile flying, used to give initial acceleration, the ballistic missiles elements tracking, and provides assistance to the description and discrimination of the elements. Although the necessity and efficiency of a space layer, part of BMDS are of great topicality, in October 2013, the programme was officially interrupted. (US Department of Defense, 2013, p.1). Phase 3 of EPAA was planned to comprise a capability that can only be accessed by means of a network, the Aegis interceptors to perform operations based exclusively on the information provided by radar, thus extending the range of Aegis systems. In this capability, the interceptor can be launched and guided to intercept sensors deployed at a distance from the launching platform.

**Phase 4** was cancelled in March 2013. The Aegis platforms for SM-3 interceptors would have remained the same, namely the naval platforms, and the terrestrial platforms deployed in Romania

and Poland and the SM-3 block IIB interceptor missiles, which were only in the design phase, were designed to be used to neutralize the medium, intermediate range missiles and IBMs. These missiles were scheduled to have an improved detector and an initial engine with higher performance and speed. The planned mission of “early interception” without adequate technical support was appreciated as being not realistically achievable. According to the initial project, the space-based sensors would have played a decisive role in this phase. Aegis Ashore – is a land-based component of the BMDS and is the achievement implementing’ decisive element of the EPAA, respectively the US military support to the NATO Missile Defence. (Everson, 2022, p. 1).

If North Korea launches a ballistic missile, the sensors located in space will begin tracking it in seconds. The ground-based radars, located on different continents, will continue tracking it even after the rocket engine is removed and the warhead continues the movement. The radars will guide the interceptors to a planned interception point. (Sankaran, 2022, p. 52).

### THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEM TO MEET THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The emerging threats represented by the ballistic, cruise, hypersonic and lower-level systems, as well as by Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) constitute an expanding risk for NATO and great powers. NATO adversaries, in order to create a favourable course of action in a potential conflict, are developing, deploying, and integrating emerging technology in the field of missiles and missile defence capabilities. The missile defence is decisive to deny the implementation of the plans by the adversaries, the conventional and nuclear military power projection creating uncertainties regarding the success of employing missiles of any kind and UAVs in battle. It highlights the importance of the so-called high intensity, technologically sophisticated conflict that includes ballistic missiles defence capabilities and longer-ranged land and naval-attack and anti-ship weapons and offers possibilities that have a lower escalation potential than other offensive means.



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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*The amplification of the dimension and complexity of the capabilities and effects of the missiles possessed by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran determines the United States of America and NATO to develop new capabilities and strategies to neutralize these threats for their territories through actions that result in stopping the development, acquisition and proliferation by adversaries as well as in denying their current and potential employment of offensive missiles of any type and diminishing the effects caused by such use.*

The amplification of the dimension and complexity of the capabilities and effects of the missiles possessed by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran determines the United States of America and NATO to develop new capabilities and strategies to neutralize these threats for their territories through actions that result in stopping the development, acquisition and proliferation by adversaries as well as in denying their current and potential employment of offensive missiles of any type and diminishing the effects caused by such use, enhancing the reliability of global Ground-based Midcourse Defence Systems, increasing this active defence capability, deployment of new generation interceptors and enlargement of ground and space-based sensors network, maintaining in operational state the nuclear arsenal in order to employ and neutralize the threats generated by long-range intercontinental nuclear missiles. (US Department of Defense, 2022, pp. 1-2/63). The United States of America and NATO will continue to develop hypersonic missiles active and passive missile defence capabilities and effective sensor networks to discriminate and track all types of hypersonic missiles, in order to improve the selection and employment of targets and will deploy platforms equipped with modern weapons and means to neutralize UAVs and combat new regional threats. The massive employment by Russia, in an indiscriminate manner, of cruise missiles in Ukraine has determined the USA to consider finding decisive solutions to counter cruise missiles. The main problem of the **Air and Missile Defence System (AMDS)** involves the capability to neutralize advanced aerodynamic ballistic missiles, aircraft, and unmanned autonomous vehicles in a complex tactical theatre. (Boord, 2016, p. 49).

Theoretically, the armed forces try to develop systems for neutralizing rockets in all phases of their flight. However, most of them guide their efforts, almost exclusively, on intercepting ballistic missiles or other types of missiles in their midcourse and terminal stages of the trajectory. There are sufficient technical, operational arguments or results from the latest conflicts that support this approach. The analysts conclude that the programmes and concepts of striking in the trajectory' ascending or boosting phase would be expensive, strategically destabilizing, technologically unfeasible, or operationally unrealistic. The United States of America has tried to achieve several

boost-phase defence systems but none has passed the development stage. (Williams, 2022, p. 1). Details are presented in *figures no. 1 and no. 2*.

The operational requirements fulfilment and the achievement of an efficient and performing Missile Defence System entail an optimal balance between the air defence armament platforms, the sensor systems and their performance as well as between the system's requirements, possibilities and ballistic missile and air defence needs. Today, many countries have offensive missile capabilities deployed on terrestrial, naval and air platforms. The need for missile defence systems to defend against more capable and diversified offensive missile system capabilities is increasing. (Boord, 2016, pp. 1-2). Generally, a missile defence system has to respond to the clearly defined or identified operational requirements that are approached together to provide an effective defence. The functional requirements are: intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); detection and tracking; weapons control; and engagement. Ballistic missile defence is carried out in three stages: boost, midcourse, and terminal intercept engagement phases. (Ib., p. 23). Missile defence entails a range of actions to counteract the development, acquisition, proliferation, real and potential use by adversaries of any type of missiles and limiting the effects of their use. (US Department of Defense, ib., p. 1/62).

Cruise missile defence is usually separated into three sections: *defence stage area, self-defence stage, and point defence stage*. Self-defence and point-defence stages may employ the same system elements but with various mission requirements. These components and missions are integrated to assure a layered defence capability to increase defence efficiency. Also, in order to counteract the penetration of the missile defence system, it is necessary to employ higher-speed missiles, aerial and more efficient information, surveillance, recognition sensors and radars connected to data networks and sophisticated signal processing techniques to counter these offensive techniques. (Boord, ib.). In order to be effective, the air and missile defence system (AMDS) is necessary to have the ability to neutralize advanced aerodynamic and ballistic missiles, aircraft and UAVs in a complex, multidomain operations theatre. All military operations are multidomain operations on land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. AMDS will involve theatre



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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Analysts specialized in weapons consider that the trajectory of a ballistic missile has three phases: the boost phase, the missile is most vulnerable few minutes, from ignition through launch to engine shut off at the edge of the atmosphere; the midcourse phase, the missile is now on the flight trajectory, it includes the highest point of the trajectory in space, located between the ascending and the descending branch of the trajectory, and the terminal phase that includes the last minute.

defence – provides protection to any other military or civil element throughout the operation theatre, area defence – air defence assets area, point defence – the mission to defend military or civil assets from within the immediate area of the missile attack, and self-defence. (Boord, p. 49).

Analysts specialized in weapons consider that the trajectory of a ballistic missile has three phases: the *boost phase*, the missile is most vulnerable few minutes, from ignition through launch to engine shut off at the edge of the atmosphere; the *midcourse phase*, the missile is now on the flight trajectory, it includes the highest point of the trajectory in space, located between the ascending and the descending branch of the trajectory. On the *descending branch* to the target the missile reaches the maximum speed, the ICBMs flight length for this phase is about 20 minutes; the *terminal phase* includes the last minute when the warhead or warheads return into the atmosphere and head to the target. (Watson, 2018, pp. 1-3). Details are presented in *figure no. 2*.

An important stage is ballistic missiles interception. After the adversary launches a ballistic missile for a target on the NATO's states territory, the reaction time is reduced to a few minutes. NATO's BMDS employs sensors and interceptors' networks integrated into a layered defence. It determines the missile trajectory, assesses the threat, and calculates the most effective variant for the interception. At the same time, it issues rapid warnings regarding the possible impact areas in order to warn the national authorities. Thus, the threat is identified and it is selected the optimal interceptor for launching from land or naval platforms to annihilate the opponent's missile and finally to assure the protection of NATO populations, territories and forces. A simple algorithm and landmarks from the adversary's missiles launching to destroying are presented below: time zero, launching the missile representing the threat; the tracking sensors convey the signal and threat missile trajectory computing. The total flight time is assigned as follows: 25% into the flight represents burnout stages, the fuel is consumed; at 50% of the trajectory flight, the interceptor is launched; at 75% of the trajectory flight, the threat missile is destroyed by the interceptor. BMDS must cope with tactics that may include jamming and manoeuvres either combined or separately. Jamming is used to delay the detection by the radar and the search missile or to prevent



According to realistic scenarios, radars and missile detectors have to be able to function in complicated environments that comprise mixed consequences of various trajectories, jamming and clutter. Missile seekers have to also cope with the terrain bounce jamming and towed decoys. Both of these deceptive techniques are designed to confuse the seeker angle estimates for the target.

an accurate range and angle estimation. Details are presented in *figures no. 1* and *no. 2*. According to realistic scenarios, radars and missile detectors have to be able to function in complicated environments that comprise mixed consequences of various trajectories, jamming and clutter. Missile seekers have to also cope with the terrain bounce jamming and towed decoys. Both of these deceptive techniques are designed to confuse the seeker angle estimates for the target. (Boord, p. 29). The advantage of intercepting a missile at the beginning of the flight is unanimously acknowledged. The neutralization in the boost or ascent phase can make less severe and critical certain technical requirements generated by the interception in the final phases of the trajectory, where the missiles can trigger certain countermeasures and can perform manoeuvres to avoid interception. (Williams, p. 1). Achieving effective fighting capability in defence against missile attack is conditioned by ISR; detection and tracking; weapons control; engagement process addressed in the circumstances of the complete area where the mission of the defence system is performed. Once a missile is detected, through the battle management process is carried out an assessment of potential targets or hostile actions.

The characteristics on which the *mission's fulfilment* depends are the following: 1. *Reaction time* – executing fire within the available engagement timeline, consisting of target detection and transfer of target location from the sensor to shooter, combat identification, and missile launcher response time; 2. *Firepower* – the ability to launch missiles at the target when and where it is required to be done with adequate quantity to guarantee the fulfilment of the mission. It has two components: a) adequate *range* to detonate the target missile, not at the end of the trajectory and, b) *homing* – requirement to achieve the desired single-shot probability of a kill; 3. *Defence penetration technique resistance* – the denying of the missile's characteristics designed by adversaries in their offensive air and missile systems that are intended to defeat the defensive systems of targets to be destroyed. Missile defence has to eliminate the missile counteract measures regarding: search and surveillance, detection and tracking within a fire-control system, engagement – considered the sensitive or most vulnerable phase in the engagement chain and counterpoint defence – when short-range systems will be used to achieve a self-defence





layer against the missile. In this phase, fluctuations in trajectory and altitude, jamming, signature dilution, masking schemes and speed are taken into account. The system computes the likely point in time and space where the engagement will fulfil; 4. *Environmental resistance* – maintain AMDS performance in hostile environments; 5. *Continuous availability* – refers to the AMDS ability to be in the operating state, according to the designated parameters, permanently; and 6. *Contiguous coverage in the theatre* – involves the perfect coverage of the objective to be defended from all directions from a certain range and altitude. (Boord, pp. 43, 49).

The functional requirements that define the **system architecture** decompose into the following functional elements or systems: (1) the *central defence system* has as missions – detect and track, discriminate, compute the engagement doctrine and decisions, compute engagement solution, clarify, handover and communicate; (2) the *intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance system* – compute target origin, compute and update target geolocation, estimate target geospatial and temporal final objective and exchange information; (3) the *target system* – a form of identification/signatures, dynamics, time/space correlation, physical characteristics; (4) the *engagement system* – flyout, midcourse guidance and control, terminal homing, lethality mechanism, exchange information; and (5) the *communication link system* – frequency, bandwidth, word content and format, data rate, reference frames (spatial, temporal). (Ib., p. 50).

## CONCLUSIONS

Air and missile defence is one of the toughest missions the great powers' armed forces have faced in the past period, an aspect particularly highlighted in the war in Ukraine. They must find a balanced approach to neutralize a missile in both standard and electronic attack environments. It must also improve the key performance parameters that determine the capabilities of AMDS, respectively weapons and sensors systems. AMDS is necessary to exploit new technologies and innovative architectures to make certain that they are exceeding those of targets. The importance of missile defence will increase, as long as there will be offensive missile capabilities, as a guarantee against missile strikes.



In order for the air and missile defence to be effective, at least three actions are needed: improve targets detection by equipment with performance assets, very high-frequency radars, passive radars, over-the-horizon radars, radars with the ability to detect targets at very long distances; improve engagement by employing long-range weapons that have the ability to engage at long distances, tracking, fusion sensors, which have the ability to combine sensor data or data obtained from disparate sources, so the resulting information has less uncertainty, infrared searching, and tracking radars; and, situation awareness through networks that process a large amount of data and finally improve the kill probability by adopting adequate tactics.

The missile interception efficiency in the initial part of the trajectory is unanimously accepted. Missile interception in the trajectory impulse or ascending phase can eliminate many of the technical challenges specific to the final stages of the trajectory, in which certain misleading, counteracting interception actions are triggered and manoeuvres difficult to forecast are carried out. At the same time, engagement missiles in the boost phase are largely influenced by the short-length exposure as well as by certain delays in the detection and tracking process. Selecting the boost stage to neutralize a missile is considerably impeded, among others, by the reduced reaction time in relation to the other phases, the release frequency of the support penetration elements against missile defence, and the time required to position itself on the final ballistic trajectory. As a result of missile neutralization costs and benefits analysis, it can be concluded that it is effective to engage them in the trajectory midcourse phase at the same time with the improvement of the actions to missile tracking and the discrimination capacities.

The Ukraine war has shown that the threat of missile and aircraft employment has accelerated lately. In order to counter these threats, the AMDS must be layered with terrestrial-based and space-based sensors, comprehensive, mobile, with integrated command and control system, and capable of suppressing, neutralizing, and destroying the adversaries' missiles in any situation and in all phases of the trajectory based on tactics that emphasise manoeuvre and dispersion to give it resilience in a disputed theatre by adversaries and where multidomain operations are conducted. The presence of flexible capabilities

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that ensure a permanent and detailed situation awareness and are integrated into a layered defence network supports the fulfilment of the air and missile defence missions. The reliability of the missile defence system is given by the engagement of missiles launched on any platform, terrestrial, naval or air. There is a gap between the development and evolution of ballistic missiles and the development and evolution of air and missile defence assets, including their roles and missions. The air and missile defence systems are outrun, in particular situations, by the missile threat and other modern equipment for striking from the air.

For the great powers, the only deterrence viable element in the short term remains nuclear missiles, which no other power element can replace. Missile defence remains the main priority not only for the defence of national territories but also for deterrence. In order to be effective, AMDS must integrate all defeat capabilities, offensive, defensive, passive, kinetic, and non-kinetic, in a large, cohesive, combined, and joint headquarter.

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## EUROPEAN CHINA POLICIES: ALIGNING WITH THE RED LINES OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC COMPETITION

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*European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's speech at the meeting organised by the Mercator Institute for China Studies and the European Policy Centre revealed a comprehensive and realistic European strategy on China, adjusted to the latest developments (European Commission). These foreshadow the EU's future Economic Security Strategy. The major outstanding European issues in the relationship with China remain on the table: the EU between China and the USA, in the context of the debate about Beijing's usefulness in dealing with Russia and possible arms deliveries; the possibility of concomitant EU decoupling from Russia and China; but above all, the need for real war preparedness of European industries. The refusal to see the competition of democracies with China going to war leads to the rejection of the instrument of real deterrence of Beijing's march towards a new global war. All this while French ambitions and obsession with strategic autonomy (Taylor, 2022) undermine EU unity, and Germany has been forced by Macron's post-Beijing tirades to restore clarity to the European position and red lines on China.*

*Keywords: European Commission; China; economic security strategy; sensitive technologies; strategic autonomy;*



## THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC SECURITY STRATEGY. AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS REALISING THE PROSPECT OF CHINA'S GLOBAL WAR

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave a **keynote speech on China** at a meeting organised by the Mercator Institute for China Studies and the European Policy Centre. On this occasion, the **EU's strategic approach to China** became very clear. We have thus seen, for the second time in European documents, speeches and policy approaches, after the **policy on stabilising migration in North Africa** in the volume signed by Josep Borrell Fontelles (Fontelles, 2021; ATEF, 2020), a strategy in the full force of the word, a **comprehensive and realistic European strategy on China**, adjusted to the strictly topical developments of Beijing and Xi Jinping's one-man authoritarianism. An extremely pleasant surprise, a profound approach, foreshadowing **the future EU Economic Security Strategy** expected in the second half of this year.

President von der Leyen's speech was framed by the **complication and difficulty of deciphering** today's **global affairs** because **the facts themselves are in question** – a direct allusion to the components of information warfare widely used to **battle public perceptions** of reality (European Commission, 2023). Yet, a good understanding of the world as it is, not as we wish it to be, is a good basis for developing **effective policies based on decrypted accurate information**. And in this key, her speech is dedicated to all those – individuals, institutions, European officials – who have been incorrectly placed on the **Chinese government's sanctions lists**, including a number of MEPs (European Parliament, 2021). **China's assertiveness** heralded by the latest Chinese Communist Party documents from last year's Congress and President Xi Jinping's subsequent statements have reshaped **the relationship of European policies to China** (European Commission, 2019), aimed at managing these developments in the context of the future European economic prosperity and security. The most important concern is **China's level of ambition for 2049** (Overseas Development Institute;

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*While President Xi's maintenance of "Friendship without limits" with Putin's Russia can be interpreted as exploiting Moscow's weakness due to the war waged in Ukraine and a way to increase leverage in relations with Moscow, the blatant and inverted asymmetry between the two is already a given and the balance of power has shifted dramatically over the past 30 years.*

Nikkei Asia, 2022), when it aims to lead the world through *"an overlay of national power and international influence"*, i.e. making China **the world's most powerful nation. And not with the most benign tools.**

**China's strengthening of its strategic power** has been planned and forcibly developed, with **deliberate amplification of its global strategic posture**, for some time. And it is being achieved through measures and actions **with exponentially increasing assertiveness**. While President Xi's maintenance of *"Friendship without limits"* with Putin's Russia (Cheng, 2022) can be interpreted as **exploiting Moscow's weakness due to the war waged in Ukraine** and a way to increase leverage in relations with Moscow, the **blatant and inverted asymmetry** between the two is already a given and the balance of power has shifted dramatically over the past 30 years.

Of course, the President of the European Commission addresses the issue **of China's responsibility to the principles and values of the UN Charter**, as a permanent member of the Security Council, including towards the **advancement of a just peace**, taking into account the **sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine**. While Beijing mentions principles in its 12-point document (Parley Policy Initiative, 2023), it stops short of **identifying the aggressor, Russia**. Moreover, it argues in its national position that *"both sides have legitimate security concerns"* (Sorgi, 2023), a reason to emphasise a relative equality of responsibility for the war, not an **identification (and consequent sanctioning) of the aggressor**. On this basis, the European Union will also define its relations with China according to **how Beijing interacts with Putin's Russia**, which is the determining factor in bilateral relations (Gabuev, 2023).

In addition to its relationship with Putin, **Beijing's assertive approach to its own neighbourhood** – the demonstrations of military force in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, the undermining of the legitimate interests of the EU's partners – is added to the **list of irritants and criteria defining the relationship with China**, the dominant component of cooperation, strategic competition and direct conflict, peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait – **serious human rights violations in Xinjiang**, as well as China's **rampant but solidly reinforced military build-up, policies of disinformation and economic and trade coercion**, especially the deliberate use of dependencies and economic leverage against small states (Kausikan, 2023; Foreign Affairs, 2023).



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The conclusions from the actions evoked underscore escalatory actions to the point where **China has become more repressive at home and more assertive internationally**, turning the page from an era of *"reform and opening up"* to one of giving rise to **security threats and excessive control** over its own people and the world. On this list is the habit of forcing, by law, all Chinese companies to **collect information for the Chinese state in secret**, but also the inclination to make **China less dependent on the world and global trade** and the **world much more dependent on China** as a state policy or, as President Xi Jinping has explicitly said, China must control international supply chains and dependence on China in order to have **a strong countermeasure and deterrence capability against all** (Pomfret, Pottinger, 2023).

The President of the European Commission's **trenchant assessment of China's situation to date**, based on information from all the European and national institutions of the EU states, continues with the **darkest aspirational trails**. Control of current production chains is **critical for emerging technologies and the economy of the future**, as well as for national security, and is achieved through quantum computing, robotics and artificial intelligence, among other means. Beyond the security component, these actions fundamentally affect **the logic of the free market and free trade** that China is cheating and distorting (Terrabianca, 2020; Small, 2020). In addition, we can add **President Xi Jinping's exhortation to the Chinese people to prepare for battle**, an important indicator of the mission he is preparing for the Chinese nation, once the Chinese Communist Party has taken on the clear goal of **systemic change in the international order to place China at the centre of the world, of imposed rules and global control over all**, with human rights subordinate to national security at home and around the world, and with security and economics taking precedence over civil and political rights. That is a **complete undermining of democracy**, wherever it develops, with Chinese-controlled institutions carving out a **parallel, underground world to rival the current international system** and rules-based world (Ib.).

Of course, after such a starkly explained reality and ambitions, the speech also touched on the themes **of a realistic stance towards China and the EU's reaction** in this context. And these options start with the struggle to **strengthen the international system** itself, strengthening institutions and systems in which states can compete and cooperate



*Diplomatic stability and open communication with China are part of the European solution, because decoupling from China is neither viable for Europe nor in its interest, so the interest is in eliminating or mitigating risks, not in economically decoupling the EU from China, which is impossible in the age of globalisation.*

and gain mutual benefits. **Diplomatic stability and open communication with China** are part of the European solution, because decoupling from China is neither viable for Europe nor in its interest, so the interest is in **eliminating or mitigating risks**, not in economically decoupling the EU from China, which is impossible in the age of globalisation.

The EU does not want to **sever economic, societal, political or scientific ties** with China, which is a vital trading partner, accounting for 9% of the EU exports and more than 20% of imports of goods into the European market. Of course, **imbalances are growing in the balances of payments of European countries and with the EU** as a whole, but if the rules of fair competition are to be enforced, trade in goods and services with China is **a mutual benefit and is largely non-discriminatory**. Of course, the imbalance comes from and is increasingly affected by the **distortions created by China in the capitalist system**, hence the need to rebalance the relationship on the basis of transparency, predictability and reciprocity by **eliminating economic risks**. At the same time, free trade does not concern the **merging elements of China's military and commercial sectors** and especially with regard to **sensitive technologies** such as dual-use goods or even investments that come with the forced transfer of technology and knowledge to China. And this capacity depends on **the EU's own resilience and dependencies**, particularly in the area of its defence industrial base.

On **solutions**, President Ursula von der Leyen presents four points. First, making the economy and industry **more competitive and resilient by eliminating dependence on China** as the sole supplier of 98% of rare metals, 93% of magnesium and 97% of lithium, and the list goes on. Then, **better use** must be made **of the trade instruments** at the EU's disposal. **Developing defensive instruments** in certain critical sectors is also important, in the context of China's latest policy changes, especially in high-tech sensitive areas such as **microelectronics, quantum computing, robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnologies** etc. Last but not least, the de-risking strategy requires **cooperation and alignment with other partners**, especially democratic states and the G7 and G20 partners in particular, with whom we have most in common (European Commission, 2023).

## FRENCH AMBITIONS UNDERMINE EU UNITY IN CHINA POLICIES

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen correctly identifies that the **Chinese state has become "more repressive at home and much more assertive abroad"**, that security and control substantially outweigh any other concerns of the regime, and that **Beijing is very easily resorting to political and economic coercion and control**, exploiting other states' dependencies on China, which China even encourages in order to **create new and new levers of influence**. Equally correct and straightforward is President Xi Jinping's preparation of China for **a long-term struggle, with violent components, with the United States of America**, to achieve his **"very clear goal" of "systemic change of the international order with China at its centre"**. In fact, as much of the press rightly notes, no other leader has presented such a clear dissection of Xi Jinping's agenda, which will underpin European policies towards China.

As clear as this message was, the **position of many countries** that rushed to Beijing after the vote to extend President Xi's mandate, practically for life, **by reintroducing the third term after more than 30 years, was ambiguous and distinct**. They were joined in March by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who became the first leader to meet Xi after his summit with the Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Next came the duo of Emmanuel Macron, President of France, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. Later, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock arrived in Beijing. The big winner of this sarabande was the Chinese president, who not only **made no concessions on key European issues**, but also managed to divide European leaders, mainly by exploiting Emmanuel Macron's weaknesses and his exaggerated level of ambition.

So Xi Jinping offered **a three-day official state visit to Macron**, including a six-hour bilateral meeting and countless economic contracts to French firms. In return, the European Commission President had a few brief protocol meetings with little pomp and circumstance. In **their joint meetings, the two European officials demonstrated unity** (Sorgi), but more on **a variant of role-sharing**, Macron's good cop and the European Commission President's bad cop (Wong, 2023).



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*The European Union is in the process of defining its own red lines, and von der Leyen's speech is very eloquent on their content, but until the EU's Economic Security Strategy is presented, in the second half of the year, various slippages by various states as well as attempts by Beijing to create rifts between Europeans will continue.*

The result was also a public variant of splitting the perception of the two, with the French President appearing to maintain **the illusion of the possibility of real reciprocity in bilateral relations**, while the impact of advocating fundamental European interests was not done with much heart. Moreover, on **Taiwan**, President Macron appeared to make the USA solely responsible for the rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait and to attempt **a false insularity between China, Taiwan and the United States of America** (Benner, 2023). And the ambiguity comes from the approach he associated with France as *puissance d'équilibres*, **Balancing Power**, which ended up, however, only reverberating on the balancing elements of the United States of America and **even sliding into an anti-American agenda** that even ended up discrediting the last traces of rationality in the concept of **"European sovereignty" he introduced**.

Despite the Joint Communication of the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament on **relations with China** of March 2019, European states maintain **diverse relations with China** and the European Union still has important steps to take before it can **establish an EU consensus on Xi Jinping's current China** and even implement what has already been agreed in its relations with China. The European Union is in the process of **defining its own red lines**, and von der Leyen's speech is very eloquent on their content, but until the **EU's Economic Security Strategy** is presented, in the second half of the year, various slippages by various states as well as attempts by Beijing to create rifts between Europeans will continue.

Most EU Member States are effectively leaning towards de-risking **China** rather than **de-coupling from China**. The variant presented during Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to Beijing was very clear, involving criticism of **human rights and treatment in Xinjiang province** in relation to the Uighur population and **China's relationship with Taiwan**, as well as of **China's domestic issues** with its own population – mass surveillance, control. And China's discouragement agenda on Taiwan is based on the same German and European Union document advocacy in place.

## MACRON AND CHINA: FRANCE'S LEVEL OF EXCESSIVE AMBITION, WITH EUROPE ON THE BACK FOOT

It must now be made very clear that **French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to China** is hardly open to criticism in substance, perhaps only in terms of politeness towards Ursula von der Leyen, whom he invited to join him, and the **ineffectiveness of his positioning**. Otherwise, the positive elements were mainly in his overall objective of **getting concessions from Xi Jinping on the stance towards Ukraine and Russia** and **"bringing Russia to its senses"**.

Unfortunately, **Emmanuel Macron has achieved nothing** on this issue, and the failure has been described as such by the French press as **"a cold shower"**. He did, however, win support on the **nuclear issue, on Russia's avoidance of nuclear weapons in Belarus**, a theme that was echoed in Xi Jinping's statements. The need to **respect humanitarian law** and strengthen efforts to **combat impunity** and **respect for UN principles** (sovereignty, territorial integrity, respect for human rights), the **imperative need to end the war in Ukraine, while respecting its sovereignty and integrity**, were also endorsed. Of course, he did not get a word from his Chinese counterpart for criticising Russia for violating these principles.

But it has won from China a certain kind of **support for France and its own agenda** of strategic autonomy, albeit a controversial approach at EU level, support for improving global governance in a multipolar world by **rejecting the bloc-based logic**, as Xi Jinping has called it, support from China for the **EU as "an independent pole in a multipolar world"** and, above all, readiness to support France's efforts to **achieve strategic autonomy**. For the European Union, he explicitly **called for restraint and reason to avoid escalation, especially nuclear escalation**, and the **need for a rapid relaunch of peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia**, leading to the realisation of an effective and lasting peace and security architecture in Europe.

On the **negative side**, Emmanuel Macron exhibited a certain **French unilateralism**, betraying the fact that he went to Beijing to sign advantageous contracts with China and took the EU President with him only as a **measure to legitimise his own positions**, not to fully respect the European position. His constant harping on the **need**



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*In an interview with the newspaper Les Echos the President of France launched himself into a tirade of rhetoric about strategic autonomy, which he wants to achieve sui generis, at all costs. And the difficulty of defending these positions stems above all from the opposition to the USA of its own position, which undermines its own European position because of the lack of confidence in a European leadership of France against America.*

for **EU strategic autonomy**, a divisive issue in the European Union, is shaping up as an obsession of his own, and the great failure remains the fact that the **Chinese President has not offered concessions on Ukraine and the relationship with Russia** (Kyiv Post). The Chinese leader's remarks during the visit repeated without addition or nuance what constitutes the official Chinese line on the war: a **call for peace negotiations, condemnation of the use – or threat of use – of nuclear and chemical weapons, but no express condemnation of the Russian aggression**. The absence from the French President's public discourse of the **issue of disengagement from China**, in whatever form, and his **reluctance to comment on the question of Taiwan** remain notable.

But perhaps **China's most ominous approach** came immediately after his return to the country, in an interview with the newspaper *Les Echos*, where the President of France launched himself into a **tirade of rhetoric about strategic autonomy**, which he wants to achieve **sui generis, at all costs**. And the difficulty of defending these positions stems above all from the **opposition to the USA of its own position**, which **undermines its own European position** because of the **lack of confidence in a European leadership of France against America**. Even the example in the subsidiary about the **memory (and perspective) of the Trump administration proves insufficient**.

**Macron's obsession with strategic autonomy** is pushed so assertively to the forefront also because of a certain **embarrassed reserve on the part of Europeans**, including those in the East, to give Macron a reply, which is seen by the Elysée as a **manifestation of constructive ambiguity**, if not **positive acquiescence to Macron's French ambitions**, cut off from French reality and completely detached from European and world reality. Clearly, his statements constitute a real **act of splitting European unity** by pronouncing in the name of Europe on unconventional issues: **the relationship with the USA, the relationship with China** in a variant far from or even contrary to those agreed in the 2019 Joint Communication, in force, and EU documents. These forms of **French unilateralism and exceptionalism** are counterproductive both to European unity and to the prospect of resolving the Ukrainian problem. The very reference to the **new European security framework including Russia, i.e. involving China**, is a prospect of obvious division among EU member states.

Macron's **third way of positioning himself** becomes a crack in the European, Euro-Atlantic unity of democracies. **The lessons learned during the Cold War about the politics of non-alignment** seem to be missing from the panoply of sophisticated French diplomacy around the president at a **time of deep polarisation and war** (McGee, 2022). You cannot be indifferent or neutral between victim and aggressor, **you cannot defend democratic principles and values sequentially or infrequently**. In addition, Emmanuel Macron managed to formulate on this occasion **his first explicit public position towards the United States of America**, whether or not he wished to express it publicly in this way. And **his policy of argumentation** is rather *cherry picking* – only arguments favourable to his claims are chosen.

Thus, **Macron's claims** are as follows: the worst-case scenario for Europeans would be **to find themselves in the position of following and adapting to American and Chinese dynamics**. Europe must not use the pace imposed by others and must assess its own interests, because the **European priority must not be to adapt to the agendas of different actors** in certain regions of the world; Europe is building its strategic position and **must avoid the pitfalls of global deregulation and crises that do not belong to it** – with reference to Taiwan; in the event of an **escalation of the US-China relationship**, Europe will not have the time and the means to finance its strategic autonomy and **will become "vassal" to the USA**; Europe needs a few years to **build itself as a global third power**. In addition, Macron's claim is that **France has won the ideological battle in Europe over strategic autonomy**, evidenced by recent developments in the idea of European defence, the Chips Act, Net Zero Industry and the Critical Raw Material Act. **Strategic autonomy** must be Europe's goal in order not to depend on others in critical areas. Without **choice in energy, defence, social networks or artificial intelligence**, because of lack in necessary infrastructure, Europe could be out of history, says Macron.

In the same vein of the **need to present more important achievements in foreign policy at home**, in order to cover as much as possible the noise of public demonstrations against his otherwise useful and compulsory pensions policy, President Macron also claims that, from a doctrinal, legal and political perspective, **there has never before been such a major acceleration of European power**,



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*Macron's claims are as follows: the worst-case scenario for Europeans would be to find themselves in the position of following and adapting to American and Chinese dynamics. Europe must not use the pace imposed by others and must assess its own interests; Europe is building its strategic position and must avoid the pitfalls of global deregulation and crises that do not belong to it; Europe needs a few years to build itself as a global third power.*



*Public analyses have suggested that France's positioning and a possible similar positioning of Europe at a distance from the USA and China risk annoying the USA and some Europeans, while at the same time being misunderstood by the French, who could see this approach as a pact with the Chinese dictatorship.*

the foundations of which were laid before the pandemic crisis by the **Franco-German concerted action** that enabled progress to be made in terms of **European financial and budgetary solidarity**. **The American influence on Europe has increased in the context of growing energy dependence**, necessary in the logic of diversification of sources (USA, Qatar, but also other countries) to eliminate Russian gas, Macron also admits.

One could see a certain **level of reserve**, including among those close to **him, even in commenting** on this public interview. Public analyses have suggested that **France's positioning** and a possible similar positioning of Europe at a distance from the USA and China **risk annoying the USA and some Europeans**, while at the same time **being misunderstood by the French**, who could see this approach as a **pact with the Chinese dictatorship**. Analysts qualify their assessment on France's position by placing it in a particular geopolitical context, dominated by **growing hostility between Washington and Beijing**, which is progressing towards a (potentially warming) cold war. This **first public detailing of France's position on US policy towards China** cannot help European unity, indeed it **singles out France on this dimension** (Mazarr, 2023).

### THE MAJOR OUTSTANDING EUROPEAN ISSUES IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA

With or without Macronist approaches, however, Europe faces a set of pending issues, with the potential to divide member states, and all are linked to the relationship with China. A situation that will have to be **debated, then decided** very clearly and, above all, **followed up by all member states**. How does the **EU position itself between China and the USA?** Such a discussion was settled at the beginning of the current Commission's mandate, when the High Representative for Foreign and Defence Policy, Josep Borrell, came back to make the point that the **EU is a meeting of democratic states**, and that it **can never be in the middle between the USA and China**, obviously standing by its democratic partner overseas.

Nor is the argument of a need for a **benevolent approach by China to resolve the situation regarding Russia** an acceptable explanation for a contrary behaviour. And the past cannot be revisited even when the fundamental issue at stake is the **relationship between China**

**and Russia**, and the question is whether **China will deliver arms to Russia**. President von der Leyen's position is very clear here. **The assertion that China would deliver military aid to Russia**, even if it were true, it does not really cover a **transfer of Chinese military capabilities to Moscow**, but only much more sequential elements, know-how support and elements that do not single it out and damage its prestige, especially vis-à-vis the Global South, or **make Beijing pay for Russia's war-adventure** in Ukraine.

Then there is the open debate about possible **simultaneous decoupling from Russia and China**, which the United States of America would suggest. This is not the case, nor **has the USA done so**, trade volumes have increased even after **the economic war of taxation launched by Donald Trump**, but it does not mean that **measures** should not be taken **to avoid the risks associated with relations with China** that have already been revealed. **The EU-China Investment Agreement** has been halted and it is to be reviewed, **political differences and the EU's assumed systemic rivalry** are facts, while the **sanctioning of some MEPs who have criticised China's treatment of the Uighurs** is making any kind of more robust rapprochement even more difficult.

**The most complicated point of the European dilemmas** paradoxically links Russia and China. It is about the lesson learned from supporting Ukraine in Russia's full-scale war of aggression and the need to have **armies, resources and reserves, and mass military production capable of sustaining large-scale war over long periods of time**, hence war production. **The prospect of a confrontation with China** (Pomfret, Pottinger) that would draw the entire free and democratic world, including EU member states, into the conflict points to the need for **this leap, complicated by the scale of the investment to be made, to be achieved as quickly as possible**, given the time needed to fill empty stockpiles, to provide the necessities for a long-term war to its own armies and to support allies, including the United States and Asia-Pacific partners. **Actual war preparedness**, even if only in the perspective of creating **the conditions for global deterrence of China**, remains the thorniest issue to be debated, publicly communicated and funded in the period ahead.



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## GERMANY AND ANNALENA BAERBOCK: RESTORING THE EUROPEAN CLARITY ON CHINA POLICIES

Of course, the current review of EU-China relations could not pass without addressing the subject of **German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's visit to Beijing**. And its importance is all the more relevant as it had the role of clarifying all EU positions after the **ambiguity of President Macron's previous visit**, but especially after the public statements he made. And the German Foreign Minister appeared unabashedly, in the familiar vein given by Chancellor Scholz, claiming that, **as far as EU-China relations are concerned, China remains "partner, competitor, systemic rival"**, according to the Strategic Compass in force. The novelty comes from the German Foreign Minister's other communication, when she told Chinese partners that **the direction in which the needle of the European relationship with China moves will be determined by China's choices and options**. She stressed that neither Germany nor the EU as a whole **"can be indifferent to the current China-Taiwan tensions"**, warning China to de-escalate these tensions because **a war in the region would have disastrous consequences not only for China but for the whole world**. "A military escalation in the Taiwan Strait, through which **50% of the world's trade passes every day**, would be a horror scenario for the whole world" (Oltermann, 2023), said Annalena Baerbock at a press conference in Beijing with her Chinese counterpart Qin Gang (Reuters, 2023). These claims are consistent with bilateral interests, especially since, in the case of any war with such an impact, the first to be affected are **the states dependent on foreign trade**, especially China and Germany. Moreover, the EU's position on Taiwan was directly evoked as **"consistent and clear"** without having changed: the EU **"remains fully committed to the <One China policy>"**, which recognises the Chinese government as **"the sole legal government of China"**, but reserving the right and assuming **to develop cooperation in various fields with Taiwan**. To these public remarks, the Chinese side replied that **"China once supported the reunification of Germany and hopes and believes that Germany will also support the peaceful unification of China"** (Xie, 2023; European Commission, 2019).

Of course, the German Foreign Minister also addressed the **EU's position on China's respect for human rights**, again focusing on the themes of competitiveness, trade and a fair economy: **"when**

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**companies gain advantages at the expense of human rights, we are not dealing with fair competition"** (Camut, Burchard, 2023), insisting that Germany has noted with concern that human rights are increasingly being diminished or ignored in China.

As for Ukraine, also in a public format, Annalena Baerbock insisted that she wondered why the Chinese position did not include **a call to the aggressor state Russia "to stop the war"** while, on the other hand, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Defence Policy, Josep Borrell, asked President Xi Jinping to have a conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart, **Volodymyr Zelensky**.

In the run-up to the adoption of Germany's own (first) National Security Strategy, the Chinese side also publicly requested at the press conference that **Germany should not be too critical of the strategy being developed** (Oltermann; Deutsche Welle, 2023). Alongside human rights and trade issues, the subject of Ukraine was among those that highlighted the divergence between Germany and China, with the **European Union's clear positions on the various issues of divergence** being mentioned each time.

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## THE IMPLICATIONS OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS ON THE WORLD ORDER – THE TAIWAN STRAIT ISSUE –

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*This article aims to highlight, in a realist perspective, the importance of Sino-US relations and the diplomatic steps taken by the main global actors in the context of the military actions in Ukraine. In order to provide an authentic portrayal of the characteristics of the international security environment and, in particular, of the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on the Taiwan issue, I have taken an overview of the situation in the region, with reference to recent history and the current context, while showing the implications of Sino-American relations over security and the role of the AUKUS and QUAD alliances in the politico-military sphere.*

*The current crisis on the international arena, triggered by the individual or joint actions of certain state actors, has political, economic and military aspects with serious repercussions for the whole community and affects global security to a degree that brings the military component to the fore. This “atrophy” is being addressed by a number of events taking place at different points around the globe, namely the war in Ukraine, the Asia-Pacific region and the Taiwan Strait, where the interests of major state actors are involved and are finding it difficult to reach a consensus.*

*Keywords: security crisis; Sino-US relations; Asia-Pacific region; Taiwan Strait issue; war in Ukraine;*

### INTRODUCTION

*Motto: “The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin”.*

Sun Tzu

The changes in the current security environment are determined by the confluence of the interests of major state actors, who are in constant competition for control of a particular area, political, economic or military, at the international level. The historical framework presents us with a result of the factual and ideological contrasts of states, starting from the first project of international relations, namely the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which founded the current context of international relations, thus portraying the current state of affairs at global level and reflecting the positions of large and small state actors and their interdependence in relation to the magnitude of the security factor.

In terms of the evolution of economic, political and military factors at the level of states, it is increasingly difficult to anticipate changes in the security environment and to take measures to combat the threats that may arise in these evolving processes. Power poles are tending to shift, and the global centre of gravity in economic, political and military terms is changing its position, drawing the attention of the main players and the main world organisations, particularly in Asia.

Asia has been a point of great interest for Westerners since ancient times, as evidenced by military expeditions for economic and expansionist purposes to the far reaches of East Asia, one of the most exciting areas and with great industrial potential being the territory of China and the areas contained by neighbouring states. In this respect, things do not seem to have changed very much in the view of the Western countries; still, of utmost interest in terms of international relations, as well as geopolitical and geostrategic factors, remain the actions of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and its influence at regional and global level.



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## CHANGES IN THE ACTUAL COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT CAUSED BY THE TENSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND THE PRC

A short retrospective of China's history, beginning with Britain's intention to colonise this vast territory in 1637 (Luard, 2019, p. 16), when it first appeared on the Chinese coast for commercial purposes, shows us the fundamentalist ideological way in which the great Chinese empire conducted its policy towards outsiders. Throughout this time, China showed patience and tenacity in its strategic planning to face Britain's colonising attempts on the one hand, and to face Japan's military might on the other, and then to free itself permanently from its domination with the end of World War II.

Relations between the PRC and the United States have been subdued by the tactful actions of the Chinese people, who wanted to develop politically, economically and militarily after the Communist Party's seizure of power and the relentless attempts of the West to limit the development of the Communist state as much as possible.

The beginning of the Cold War marks a turning point in Sino-US relations, which have never been "warm" but, on the contrary, have been dominated by disagreements that escalated to the use of armed force, especially during the wars in East and Southeast Asia, where the two states were involved with military attributes.

There have been no direct implications for mainland European organisations as a result of tensions between the PRC and Taiwan, but they are felt in certain sectors, such as the economy and industry. The European Union's attempts to maintain good economic relations with the PRC have been given concrete form by practical actions taken by France, which wanted a constant import of products from the Asian state in order to increase the economic level, which has suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic and tensions in Eastern Europe, following the entry of Crimea into Russian administration and the military exercises conducted by Russia on the border with Ukraine after 2014.

The US membership of the North Atlantic Alliance, complemented by its interest in European states and the objectives set at European level, could not but generate tensions and repercussions for this area once China became involved in domestic and foreign policy. If the Cold War period did not generate critical moments for European states through the actions of the United States of America on the Taiwan Strait

and on countries in China's sphere of interest, the period following the break-up of the Soviet bloc, in addition to the rapid development of the phenomenon of globalisation, began to exert an increasing impact on Europe. This impact was reflected both in the accessible labour force coming from China and in the economic and industrial level, the main factor being the flooding of the market with remunerative, low-quality products, which were becoming a first choice for most buyers, compared to higher quality, more expensive products from Western countries.

The present shows us increasingly tense Sino-American relations, which is also reflected in the National Security Strategy of the United States of America (National Security Strategy, 2022, p. 23), determined by the race of the two countries to take the lead in the economic, industrial, military and political domains. This competitive state of affairs has given rise to tug-of-war between the US and the PRC, driven by global technological developments as well as important political and military changes that have occurred at distinct points around the globe, including the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan and the war in Ukraine.

The new intergovernmental mechanisms, namely AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) and QUAD (The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), which have been formed at global level, are a result of Sino-American relations, thus confirming once again the global importance of the two actors. For a clearer perspective on these alliances, I will take a look at their role in the global politico-military sphere.

QUAD took the form of an Asia-Pacific fulcrum, consisting of four countries: the US, Japan, Australia and India (Panda, Gunasekara-Rockwell, 2022, p. 1). Having emerged relatively recently, in 2007, this form of cooperation, initiated by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Rossiter, Cannon, 2023, p. 3), was given the status in the international sphere as a response to the growing economic and military power of the PRC, with the diplomatic arrangement being referred to as "Asian NATO".

AUKUS, on the other hand, is a much more militarised but non-military alliance whose short-term goal is to increase Australia's capabilities through the assistance of the USS and UK. We can say that AUKUS emerged as a complement to QUAD, which resulted



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from the very fact that, as a diplomatic dialogue, QUAD did not have strong levers for eventual military development among its members. Even after the “resuscitation” of the QUAD alliance in 2017 (Panda, 2022, p. 34) under the Trump administration, its objectives have been to create an economic balance in the Asia-Pacific through political and diplomatic channels. The emergence of what is now known as QUAD plus is a legacy left by the Trump administration, continued by the Biden presidency, which maintains the same vision of how to counter China’s expansionist initiatives in the economic-military sphere, but which has focused primarily on defending against COVID-19 and is expected to continue to take reinforcing measures with regard to maintaining economic and military security in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

AUKUS is focused primarily on developing Australia’s military domain and, by extension, maintaining a balance in the Asia-Pacific security environment by responding to potential threats that may arise as technology continues to evolve. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has little involvement in the region, the only member states directly involved being France and the US, but in a manner independent of the Alliance. Of course, the interests of the two alliances (NATO and AUKUS) are similar, as they want stability in regional security, because indirectly, the outbreak of a military conflict here would also have repercussions for the members, if not militarily, then economically.

Changes in recent years, manifested in response to attempts by the world’s major state actors to maintain supremacy in a particular area, have had consequences for smaller states, leading to challenges at home and abroad, and also to a military arms race in response to the changing security environment.

### RECENT HISTORY AND THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT

The Taiwan Strait has been one of the most controversial points on the globe since the end of the Second World War and has involved the Republic of China (Taiwan, with its capital in Taipei), the People’s Republic of China and the United States of America. The nature of the adversarial relations between China and Taiwan was generated by the PRC’s non-recognition of Taiwan as an autonomous and independent territory, as the latter and the US would have wished. In order to clarify

Taiwan’s political position at the international level, I find it useful to mention that in 1971 the PRC was recognised as China’s sole legitimate representative in the United Nations, which resulted in Taiwan’s exclusion from the organisation and loss of statehood (UN Assembly, 1971). This was preceded by events in 1949, when the two parties fighting for power, the Nationalist Party of China and the Communist Party of China, separated, with the former retreating to Formosa (present-day Taiwan), representing China internationally, including at the UN until then.

Disagreements between the two political parties culminated in three major crises (Kissinger, 2011, p. 116) in the Strait, the first two of which can be traced temporally to 1954-1955 and 1958 respectively, with a third crisis occurring in the Taiwan Strait in 1995. The actor involved in managing these crises was the USA, which, driven by geostrategic and geopolitical interests, intervened with armed forces in the area, ultimately succeeding in bringing the two sides to a common denominator. Although the peak of tensions materialised in the three major crises, there was never a definite period of peace and stability between China and Taiwan. Political and diplomatic divergences were constant throughout the period following the separation of the two parties, the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party. The role of the US has been instrumental in keeping relations between China and Taiwan on the edge of instability, promoting the idea of a future where the latter will gain independence.

One of the states that fuelled tensions both in the Taiwan Strait and in the spectrum of Sino-US relations was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which never wanted a bilateral development of ties between China and the United States, but rather tried to gain as much influence over the Asian state as possible and, why not, turn it into a Soviet “satellite”, already having common political characteristics under Marxist ideologies.

The end of the Cold War and the entry into the third millennium, complemented by technological developments and their impact on all areas, have brought major changes to the security environment. Massive fluctuations at the military level have prompted politicians to adopt a different strategy for managing inter-state relations, where the geopolitical and geostrategic spheres can no longer be neglected. This perspective gives the impression that the space given by the seas



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*Within this framework, characterised by plurivalence, major changes are generated in the international security environment and, by implication, in all the areas that converge towards it (economic, social, financial, health security, etc.). A major role in this instability is played by the major state players, mainly the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, but also by intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Alliance and AUKUS.*

and oceans shared with the continental-land areas is already too small for the intentions and interests of the major state actors and even insufficient for the accumulation of military forces currently present at global level. The three areas that used to delimit the space where conventional battles were fought, namely land, air and sea, have been supplemented by two others, space and cyber. The latter two domains complement the three basic domains mentioned (Cucinschi, 2023), but we believe that they are rather beginning to gain independence from the three spheres and massively influence the way in which combat is currently conducted, even though all five are interdependent in the perspective of creating the environment where a state should be able to conduct armed combat, thus rendering the multi-domain conceptual-practical framework.

Within this framework, characterised by plurivalence, major changes are generated in the international security environment and, by implication, in all the areas that converge towards it (economic, social, financial, health security, etc.). A major role in this instability is played by the major state players, mainly the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, but also by intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Alliance and AUKUS. Their actions have created the geopolitical and geostrategic space that defines the framework in which the world now finds itself, influencing both the security environment and the reactions of some against others. One example is the PRC, which is constantly striving both to develop its own armed forces, including nuclear capabilities, and to gain global economic supremacy by waging an "open battle" with the US in this regard.

The free will generates situations that are difficult to anticipate and then equally difficult to control, causing difficulties depending on the magnitude of the factor of risk. Such a situation has been experienced by the entire population of the globe in the period 2020-2022 under the pandemic manifestation of the COVID-19 virus. On the one hand, this example showed us the state of global cooperation between countries and governmental and non-governmental organisations and, on the other hand, it showed us a barrier that is difficult to overcome between the same countries which, before and after this phenomenon, showed hostility in their mutual relations.



*Sino-US relations are influenced in particular by the current status quo of the territory defined by the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan Island. President Xi Jinping's coming to the helm of the Chinese Communist Party has facilitated new perspectives on Taiwan in Sino-Taiwanese relations, as he increasingly desires territorial unification, repeatedly referring to the historical factor.*

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The actions of the Soviet Union up to the time of its collapse, and of the Russian Federation afterwards, led to significant fluctuations in US-China relations and, at the same time, in relations between European states and China, as the Russian Federation was a particularly important state actor at regional and international level. Russia's assistance to the PRC during the Cold War was of real interest to the PRC, not only in terms of mutual benefits, but also in terms of its development in a number of areas, not least the military – including the development of nuclear capabilities.

After the end of the Cold War period and the break-up of the Soviet bloc, bilateral Sino-Russian relations began to cool down, with the Russian Federation focusing more on domestic issues. However, as the new millennium entered, China and Russia began to reconsolidate their relations, with mutual benefits translated to the economic level, thus generating a response to the growing global economic influence of the European Union and the United States. The affront created by China and Russia also came as a result of the impact that the fall of the communist bloc had on the world order and the extent to which the democratic-liberal trend promoted by the US and the Western Europeans gained ground. The world order was tilting towards the visionary democracy of the Western states, and the states resulting from the break-up of the Soviet bloc, which still wanted a political regime based on communist foundations, together with the People's Republic of China, had to join forces to avoid coming under the influence of the democratic political current.

We consider it necessary to refer to the year 2021, more precisely to the 15th of September, when a new organisation, namely AUKUS (Implementation of the AUKUS Partnership, 2022), was launched in the existing global inter-state competition. As I said, the new alliance was aimed at reorganising the poles of power in the Pacific Ocean and limiting the hegemony exercised by China. This development in the security environment, all the more so as it was reinforced by the fact





that the US was behind the alliance, led to contradictory responses from China regarding the completion of the AUKUS pact. The PRC issued several criticisms and complaints, including the fact that security in the Asia-Pacific will be increasingly difficult to maintain as an arms race will begin between states in the region, the main consideration being rendered by the fact that the PRC will no longer have the same control over them (Wende, 2022, p. 50).

The recent period, defined by the years 2020-2021, shows that China's intentions are to further consolidate capabilities among its armed forces, and according to a US report (The Department of Defense, 2021, p. 5), Beijing has set 2027 as the deadline for completing the modernisation process that China's military is currently undergoing (Wei, 2022, p. 12).

Since 2016, when Tsai Ing-wen from the Democratic Progressive Party took over the leadership of the province (Clark, 2017, p. 4), China has been increasingly vocal in its desire to annex Taiwan to its territory, repeatedly exposing historical issues, and in order to demonstrate its supremacy in the area, the PRC has begun to carry out large-scale military exercises with the aim of intimidation, going beyond Taiwan's territorial boundary. These military exercises conducted by the China Eastern Theater Command (Wood, 2016, p. 1) were aimed at demonstrating armed supremacy in the region and providing a response to the political and diplomatic changes generated by Taiwan, Japan and the US in the Pacific region. Taiwan's 2020 presidential election was yet another reason for the PRC to step up its military exercises around Taiwan, a context also provided by the fact that diplomatic ties between the two sides have stalled since 2016. Nor has the pandemic situation seemed to stop China from conducting large-scale military exercises, and not only against Taiwan but also against Japan, highlighting the issue of the Senkaku Islands, which are under Japanese administration but which the PRC wants, also appealing to the historical factor. The United States disagreed with China's actions in entering Japanese-administered territorial waters, stating that Japan administers that territory (Ibid., p. 100).

The tensions between China and the United States have increased with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, especially since China is a strategic partner for Russia and an opening market for the Federation's natural resources, as well as a powerful economic agent that can indirectly support Russian troops in the conflict west of its borders.

The issue arose when China exhibited a neutral stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but also the fact that it did not impose any economic restrictions on the Russian Federation, as many other states around the world did. An interesting point of view is made by Monish Tourangbam in an article in which he refers to Sino-American relations and China's actions in the Indo-Pacific and, by implication, the Taiwan Strait (Tourangbam, 2023, p. 1), with the implications of the withdrawal of US and allied troops from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, relatively shortly before the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, being outlined. These actions may be the result of a lengthy US analysis of the international security environment and global interstate diplomatic and political relations. With the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the US and its NATO allies have been given more freedom of action both to support Ukraine in the Russian-initiated war and in the event of a conflict in the Asia-Pacific region that might be triggered by China.

August 2022 marked a critical moment for Sino-US and Sino-Taiwanese relations with the visit of US Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. China has been vehement in its statements against this act initiated by the United States, warning during the discussion between Xi Jinping and Joe Biden that this event will not escape the notice of the People's Republic of China and that *"those who play with fire will get burned"* (Toh, Yang, Lee, 2022). So this visit did not benefit Taiwan in its relationship with China, but in the end the government in Taipei was in a position to choose the *"lesser of two evils"*, and the gains from the US spokesman's visit mattered more for US-Taiwanese relations than the island's relations with China, which were not, in any case, sufficiently calm ones to be worth losing this opportunity. China's intentions to take over Taiwan had not ceased before Nancy Pelosi's visit, and even more so, they would not have taken a different turn had the Taipei stopover not taken place. This event highlighted, finally, two important issues: the first is the fact that the Taiwanese government continues to hold its position towards China at a constant level, without an openness to dialogue in a productive way for the bilateral relationship, and the second is the uncompromising position of the US, on the one hand, in relation to the foreign policy of the Chinese Communist Party and, on the other, to China's military capabilities, which have not yet had sufficient impact to pose a real threat to the United States.



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*The trio that has militarily dominated the world from the end of the Cold War to the present day, consisting of the United States, Russia and the People's Republic of China, has in recent years stepped up its efforts to gain supremacy in a particular area (military, economic, political, etc.), with implications at both military and economic level, thus resulting in an increased dynamic in changing the world order already established in recent times.*

## INTERNATIONAL DYNAMICS IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT

The European Union is confronting a series of challenges in international relations that are only leading to an increased pace of role-shifting among its members before the pandemic challenge caused by the COVID-19 virus and even more so before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Many of these changes in the European continent were influenced by the world's major economic and military powers, through the interests they had and continue to pursue in various areas. The trio that has militarily dominated the world from the end of the Cold War to the present day, consisting of the United States, Russia and the People's Republic of China, has in recent years stepped up its efforts to gain supremacy in a particular area (military, economic, political, etc.), with implications at both military and economic level, thus resulting in an increased dynamic in changing the world order already established in recent times.

East-West relations can very well be translated as a crisis driven by political, economic and military considerations, with important global repercussions (Tian, 2023, p. 217). Until the outbreak of the War in Ukraine, these tensions were spilling over into consequences on two "battle fronts", firstly at the economic level, between the US and China, and secondly at the military level, in different areas around the globe, including the Taiwan Strait, through the display of military capabilities by each other. Also in this context, we find two sides with relations established also on political-ideological grounds, the western formation being composed of the US and the EU, and the eastern formation of China and Russia.

The outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, through the involvement of the military instrument, once again puts the East and the West in the position of exposing their military and diplomatic qualities, having, at this moment, practically two dimensions of the conflict: one determined by the economic-commercial factor and the other determined by the military factor.

Under the spectrum of this situation, both the EU and NATO are in a position to put into a realistic and practical framework the inter-state links between its members and, implicitly, the quality of these relations, on the base of which the two organisations operate. Thus, at NATO level, we see changes in the way some states act, depending

on their interests, and as an example, we can see states such as Hungary, which has distanced itself, to some extent, from the policies imposed by NATO regarding the War in Ukraine (National Assembly of Hungary, 2022), Poland, which has embarked on an arms race at a much faster pace than other states in the region (O'Donnell, 2022), or Germany, which seems to have taken a step back from the foreign policy pursued before Chancellor Olaf Scholz came to power.

All these political and diplomatic changes taking place in Europe have consequences for all the states and organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, and in terms of international relations and economic ties, we can attribute the role of negotiator – practically self-assumed – to France, which wants to increasingly impose its point of view on the old continent and also on the interests of the EU. Considerations such as Brexit or political changes in Germany have given it this option, which it seems unwilling to share with other countries, and, moreover, it seems to be pursuing a foreign policy with clear intentions of moving away from American influence.

With regard to the situation mentioned above, there are two major events that determined the French state to pursue interests that are not exactly in line with those of the US, one of them being Australia's choice to purchase nuclear-powered submarines delivered by the US and the UK (which resulted in the AUKUS pact), at the detriment of conventional submarines to be purchased by the Australians, following earlier discussion with France, Australia being a virtual 'victim' of the vices of economic interests that transcend the intrastate sphere. The second event involving the French state was President Emmanuel Macron's official visit to China in April 2023, which resulted in a three-day meeting (Hale, 2023) with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The situation that generated questions about France's position in the "new world order" was, on the one hand, the statements made by its president upon his return to Europe, including that "being allies does not mean we are also vassals (with reference to the relationship between Europe and the US)" (Tisdall), and, on the other hand, the assumption of speaking for the entire European community, being, in practice, a self-assigned role beyond the verbal agreements of all EU members, portraying a vision of Emmanuel Macron that assumes European individualism in the international sphere and the establishment of a superpower status for the Union. The role performed by the French





delegation was also probably focused on intrastate interests and with reference to the establishment of strong economic relations with the People's Republic of China, also targeting the French extension (French Polynesia), located in the Pacific Ocean, in China's sphere of economic influence.

In the same context, generated by France and the French President's visit, is the attitude towards China's policy on Taiwan, implying that it is not a European issue. This attitude, demonstrated by a state which is increasingly present on the international relations scene and which seems to be at odds with the interests shown by the United States and the United Kingdom, may have a brutal impact on diplomatic relations conducted at world level.

The impact of the French President's actions antagonises American political intentions, all the more so as the current framework of the international security environment reveals the presence of instability and also an inability of international bodies to restore it to a status quo at least similar to that which prevailed before the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine.

The international community's call for the unresolved security problems of today continues to be met with an uncertain response, given the multitude of technological changes taking place and the efforts of states to keep up with them in order to create a solid and secure framework.

## CONCLUSIONS

This article has aimed to provide a realistic picture of the rapid developments in international relations, highlighting the most important issues currently facing the world, and the Asia-Pacific region in particular. Thus, by presenting aspects regarding the most important state actors from the beginning of the Cold War to the present day, we can easily see the framework where the protagonists have been the three superpowers – the United States, Russia and China, which have configured the "world order" according to the interests pursued, using the tools of influence in their specific spheres and domains.

The present offers us a similar picture, in which the three states are present and exert, through political, economic and military means, the same influence, but supplemented by the emergence of new presences, in the form of the European Union or states such as Turkey, which want a place alongside these major actors.

With regard to the Taiwan Strait, limiting ourselves to China and the United States of America, we can conclude by saying that, at this stage, no consensus has been reached, with antagonistic attempts and reactions on the part of both military superpowers, both politically and militarily, on a field where Taiwan is practically the epicentre of the problem.

The European Union, even though it has suffered a huge loss with Britain's withdrawal, has an increasingly vocal and consistent presence internationally by promoting its main "voice", namely France. The EU's views on the world stage highlight aspects that interfere with those of the US and the UK, in some cases even seeming to contradict them, but under the desire for international recognition as a player worth considering.

The global security environment now more than ever needs the diplomatic prowess of states, which in our view is the most important means of stabilising a potential crisis at some point. However, when the diplomatic instrument is depleted, the crisis falls under political and military means, which can ultimately create the conditions for armed conflict.

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## THE WEAPONIZATION OF NATO MEMBERSHIP: LEADERS OF TÜRKIYE AND HUNGARY USE ACCESSION PROCESS FOR PERSONAL DISPUTES

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*Finland and Sweden originally made a pact to join NATO together following the invasion of Ukraine. As evident by current events, Finland has joined the bloc, while Sweden must continue to wait to have its membership approved. This article examines why it has occurred through an analysis of the requirements to join NATO and the reasons Türkiye and Hungary have used to justify their delaying Finland from joining NATO while continuing to refuse to sign Sweden's accession protocol. Finland joined without Sweden – a result of Türkiye and, to a lesser extent, Hungary attempting to make NATO membership conditional on issues unrelated to the requirements to join NATO. Due to the requirement that the members of NATO unanimously approve applicants, applicant countries are at the mercy of current members. It has allowed Türkiye and Hungary to delay Finland's accession to NATO and to not ratify Sweden's accession protocol, not based on the country's preparedness to fulfil NATO obligations but instead based on personal disputes they have with the Swedish government. Türkiye is not satisfied with Sweden's freedom of speech laws permitting the burning of the Quran meanwhile Hungary is using the opportunity to punish Sweden for raising concerns about the state of democracy in Hungary. The North Atlantic Treaty does not include an article that details the removal of a country from NATO, and NATO leadership has not indicated any interest in removing Türkiye or Hungary for not yet approving Sweden's request to join the organization.*

*Keywords: NATO membership; defence; invasion of Ukraine; democracy; accession process;*

Ed. note: The article was written before 10 July 2023, when Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan announced that he agrees, under certain conditions, to support Sweden's candidacy for NATO membership, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66160319>, retrieved on 10 July 2023.



### INTRODUCTION

Finland and Sweden have both been famously neutral and resisted joining NATO for decades. This situation changed with Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and both Finland and Sweden applied to join only three months later after the invasion started. Both countries created a pact to join NATO together. Support to join NATO increased in both countries because of the fears that Russia could increase its aggression to other countries besides Ukraine. Finland was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1939 and lost 10 percent of its territory. The Swedes have increasingly become concerned about Russia after Russian military planes have repeatedly violated Sweden's airspace. Finland also shares a 1,340-kilometre land border with Russia making a threat from Russia seem likely due to its decision to invade Ukraine (Alberque, Schreer, 2022).

Although the original pact provided for joining NATO together, Finland ultimately had to join alone because of Türkiye maintaining its refusal to approve Sweden's accession to NATO. President Erdogan has changed his position on the matter several times. First, President Erdogan opposed both Sweden and Finland from joining, then agreed to both joining and later came out against Sweden's accession to NATO and approved only Finland's request.

This paper examines NATO's requirements for joining the organization and whether President Erdogan and Prime Minister Orbán have valid reasons for originally blocking and then accepting Finland as a member while simultaneously refusing to ratify Sweden's accession protocol. The purpose of NATO is to facilitate cooperation in defence between members, yet Türkiye and Hungary are potentially using the accession process as leverage to settle disagreements with Sweden and Finland, which do not pertain to their ability to fulfil the obligations of NATO members.

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## NATO ACCESSION PROCESS AND MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

While NATO was originally founded in 1949, NATO membership is not limited to the countries that were part of the founding group. Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty makes it clear that membership in NATO is possible for any *“European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area”* (NATO, 2019). Once a country in Europe expresses its interest in joining NATO, it is known as an aspirant country and participates in dialogue with NATO about the country’s membership aspirations and the reforms that must take place in order for it to be allowed to join. Depending on how the dialogue goes, the aspirant country may be invited to join the Membership Action Plan. This phase of the accession process determines whether the aspirant country can meet the obligations and commitments of NATO membership. Successful participation in this phase still does not mean automatic membership for the aspirant country (*“Enlargement and Article 10”*, 2023).

To join NATO, a country must meet some basic requirements: uphold democracy and tolerate diversity, work towards transforming its economy into a market economy, civilians must control the armed forces, the aspirant country must be neighbourly and respect the sovereignty of other countries, and the country must achieve progress towards making their armed forces compatible with NATO forces. These requirements are considered essential yet NATO membership for a country is not automatically granted as soon as these requirements are met. Meeting these requirements however signifies that the aspirant country can meet the minimal obligations of NATO membership (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

The 1995 study on enlargement added additional requirements for aspirant countries that must demonstrate: fair treatment of minority groups, peacefully resolving conflicts, ability and will to contribute to the military aspect of NATO, a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy. If the current members of NATO feel a country can meet these requirements, the country is then invited to start the accession process. The accession process consists of seven

phases: the invited country starts accession talks with a NATO team, the invited country sends a letter of intent with a schedule of reforms, accession protocols are signed by current NATO members, accession protocols are certified by current NATO members, the prospective member is invited by the Secretary-General to accede to the North Atlantic Treaty, the invited country accedes to NATO in the procedure dictated by its national legislation, and, finally, once the invited country deposits its instruments of accession with the US State Department, it is an official member of NATO (*“Enlargement and Article 10”*, 2023).

The preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty is *“The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments. They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. They therefore agree to this North Atlantic Treaty”* (NATO, 2019). It becomes clear that members are expected to have democratic systems of government. As both Finland and Sweden are already members of the European Union, both countries demonstrate that they have democracies as it is required by the Copenhagen Criteria. One of the three requirements is *“stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities”* (Publications Office of the European Union, n.d.).

Since 2006, the member states of NATO have agreed to spend a minimum of two percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence in order to ensure that NATO countries are prepared to collaborate in defence of an attack should the situation arise. It has been done to balance the divergence in defence spending between the United States and other countries that are part of the organization (NATO, 2014). Finland and Sweden were previously spending less than two percent of their GDP on defence, but both were dedicated to abiding by this NATO obligation due to their desire to become NATO members and as a result of the invasion of Ukraine (Hutt, 2022).



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Increasing their spending to at least two percent satisfies the condition and would not constitute a motive to prevent either Sweden and Finland from joining NATO.

While Sweden and Finland chose to not request to join NATO before 2022, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, it is not because these countries were not prepared to fulfil the obligations of NATO membership. Instead, both countries considered that the price of joining NATO was higher than the benefits (Alberque, Schreer, 2022). However, the situation changed with the invasion of Ukraine and the perceived threat of an attack on both nations. Both nations would benefit from defence cooperation with other NATO members. Both are significantly smaller than Russia, which would make defending against an invasion similar to the one that started on 24 February in Ukraine difficult to survive without NATO help.

### RUSSIA MOTIVATES FINLAND AND SWEDEN TO APPLY TO NATO

While Finland and Sweden both had the opportunity to join NATO in the past, the situation was not as urgent as it is presently. Due to the invasion of Ukraine, public sentiment in both countries changed about the value of joining NATO to prevent a similar situation from occurring in Finland or Sweden. Both Sweden and Finland have significantly smaller armies than Russia, making it difficult to protect themselves from Russia alone. NATO however has 3.5 million military personnel, dwarfing the 900,000 military personnel of Russia (Dutton, 2022). NATO membership for Finland and Sweden could dissuade Russia from attacking both countries the same way it has attacked Ukraine. On 18 May 2023, both Finland and Sweden formally applied to become NATO members. Accession protocols were written for both countries on 5 July, after the accession talks ended (Reuters, 2023).

Russia previously invaded Ukraine in 2014 after the Euromaidan Revolution, yet there was not the same sense of urgency for Finland or Sweden to join NATO as the fighting was much more limited to Russian majority areas of Ukraine. In 2014 the Russian narrative was that Crimea wanted to be part of Russia and that this is the will of the people due to some separatist movements, which were supported

by Russia. President Putin also claimed that it was a historical injustice that Crimea became part of Ukraine when the Soviet Union collapsed as Russians found themselves to be the minority in another nation overnight. (Myers, Barry, 2014). Russia however has been much more aggressive in its attacks on Ukraine since 28 February 2022, and it has attacked residential areas and city infrastructures all throughout Ukraine including Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital and Lviv, a city in western Ukraine near the national border it shares with Poland (Tondo, 2023). This is because, in 2022, Russia launched a “special military operation” that Russian President Putin deemed necessary in order to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. President Putin also classified Ukraine’s aspiration to become a member of NATO as a direct threat to Russia. Putin claimed that for three decades Russia attempted to find a solution regarding security in Europe, but the West was deceitful (Troianovski, 2022).

Shortly before Finland officially became the newest member of NATO, Alexander Grushko, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, warned that Russia will take action in response. Russia will strengthen its military potential in the northwest and west of Russia. In the case that NATO troops are deployed to Finland, Russia would respond with additional measures (Al Jazeera, 2023). It appears to indicate that Russia will only act if provoked rather than a pre-emptive attack on Finland. Sweden however still has not had its accession protocol ratified by Türkiye and Hungary. Finland joining NATO has limited how Russia can attack Sweden. As Sweden does not border Russia by land, Russia cannot attack Sweden by land now without crossing through Norway or Finland which are both already members of NATO.

### TÜRKIYE’S STANCE ON NATO ACCESSION FOR SWEDEN

Sweden is currently stuck on the fourth phase as Hungary and Türkiye have not yet ratified Sweden’s accession protocol. As the accession process must be conducted unanimously, Sweden will not be allowed to become a member of NATO until after both Türkiye and Hungary ratify Sweden’s accession protocol. While Hungary appears to be waiting for Türkiye to act, Türkiye is currently blocking Sweden’s accession to NATO regarding specific situations like burnings



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*Türkiye has taken the position that the burning of the Quran is a hate crime against Muslims. This concern could fall under the fair treatment of minority groups as required by the 1995 study on enlargement. This argument is not valid however as the Quran is allowed to be burned in protest located in a current NATO member without it being accused of violating its duties as a member of the organization.*

of the Quran, the burning of an effigy of Turkish President Erdogan, and Sweden's unwillingness to deport every person accused of being a terrorist by the Turkish government. President Erdogan is taking advantage of the unanimity required for accession to NATO in an attempt to settle personal disputes with Sweden, which are not related to Sweden's ability to meet the obligations of NATO membership. In this way, President Erdogan has turned NATO membership into a weapon in an attempt to force Sweden to modify its legislation to his liking in exchange for protection from a potential Russian invasion.

Examining the first instance, Türkiye wants Sweden to outlaw the burning of the Quran. The police in Sweden attempted to ban the burning of the Quran based on security threats, but the Supreme Administrative Court in Sweden overturned the decision and said the police did not have the authority to make such a decision. The police blocked the burning of the Quran outside the Turkish and Iraqi consulates in Stockholm due to the negative rejection as a result of the burning of a copy of the Quran in January (Agence France-Presse, 2023). Türkiye has taken the position that the burning of the Quran is a hate crime against Muslims. This concern could fall under the fair treatment of minority groups as required by the 1995 study on enlargement. This argument is not valid however as the Quran is allowed to be burned in protest located in a current NATO member without it being accused of violating its duties as a member of the organization.

The Quran was not burned just in Sweden but in Denmark as well (Fraser, Tanner, 2023). As Denmark is already a member of NATO, Türkiye cannot demand Denmark to change its legislation as it can try to coerce Sweden in exchange for membership. It also reveals that Türkiye would require legislation in Sweden in order to ratify Sweden's accession protocol despite no other member state is being required to legally ban the burnings of the Quran. The Swedish government attempted to stress that it does not politically support demonstrations that include the burning of the Quran while simultaneously stating that these types of demonstrations are protected under Sweden's freedom of speech. Former Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson even labelled the protestors who banned the Quran as "useful idiots"

as a result of their protests causing Sweden's NATO accession to be further delayed (Ib.).

This matter plays no role in Finland due to its legislation pertaining to maintaining religious peace. Finland's criminal code, under Chapter 7 (563/1998) Offences against public order, Section 10 (563/1998), discusses violation of the sanctity of religion and states "A person who 1) publicly blasphemes against God or, for the purpose of offending, publicly defames or desecrates what is otherwise considered sacred by a church or a religious community referred to in the Act on the Freedom of Religion (267/1922), or 2) by making noise, acting threateningly or otherwise disturbs a church service, a religious ceremony, another similar form of worship or a funeral shall be sentenced for a violation of the sanctity of religion to a fine or to imprisonment for at most six months". (Ministry of Justice, Finland, n.d.). Due to this legislation, the burning of the Quran would not be permitted in Finland as the burning of the Quran is considered desecration by Islam. While President Erdogan would prefer Sweden to add this to its criminal code, Sweden is unlikely to do so as it has already stated that burning the Quran falls under freedom of speech. It is important to note as well that the North Atlantic Treaty does not mention religion yet repeatedly mentions protecting democracy. According to Sweden's interpretation of democracy, while burning the Quran can be considered offensive by some people, it is protected free speech in Sweden. By Türkiye requesting Sweden to change its legislation to ban Quran burning, Türkiye is expecting Sweden to respect the freedoms its citizens enjoy.

Besides burning the Quran, an effigy of President Erdogan was burned in Stockholm. The effigy was hung from a light pole in the Swedish capital by the Swedish Solidarity Committee for Rojava, a pro-Kurdish organization, to mimic the hanging of the former Italian dictator Benito Mussolini as a warning sign to President Erdogan. The organization hinted that if President Erdogan did not resign, he could face the same fate in Taksim Square. The Swedish Prime Minister condemned the action by the organization and classified it as an attempt to sabotage the country's application to join NATO. Mevlut Cavusoglu, the foreign minister of Türkiye, argued that Sweden has the opportunity to take an action against the organization in order



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*President Erdogan has also delayed approving Sweden's NATO membership due to Sweden's unwillingness to deport individuals Türkiye sought to extradite as the government said these individuals were part of the PKK, which is considered a terrorist group in Türkiye. Sweden's former Prime Minister Andersson has refused to confirm or deny whether the decision to deport individuals was part of an agreement with the Turkish government to have Sweden's accession protocol ratified.*

to maintain its pledge to Türkiye that Sweden is serious about cracking down on terror groups. As a result of this incident with the effigy, the Swedish ambassador to Türkiye was summoned and prosecutors in Ankara started an investigation into the incident (Chatterjee, 2023).

President Erdogan has also delayed approving Sweden's NATO membership due to Sweden's unwillingness to deport individuals Türkiye sought to extradite as the government said these individuals were part of the PKK, which is considered a terrorist group in Türkiye. Sweden's former Prime Minister Andersson has refused to confirm or deny whether the decision to deport individuals was part of an agreement with the Turkish government to have Sweden's accession protocol ratified. President Erdogan claims however that 73 terrorists would be deported by Sweden in order to approve NATO membership for Sweden (Rudaw.net, 2022). Given President Erdogan's reaction to the attempted coup in 2016, it is possible not every individual is a known terrorist. As a result of the coup, Erdogan fired 125,000 public employees, 3,000 foundations and institutions were forced to close, and 600,000 people in total were accused of being involved and investigated. It is agreed that human rights of people were potentially violated despite Türkiye being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Beris, 2023). Andersson has stressed that she is concerned with the human rights of the Kurds, who are a minority group (Rudaw.net, 2022). As they are a minority group, Sweden is respecting one of the further requirements added to NATO membership obligations as a result of the 1995 study. It is possible that there were people fired who were not involved in the attempted coup and had their human rights violated, meaning Türkiye should also re-examine whether it is fulfilling its obligations as a member of NATO.

In May of 2023, President Erdogan had a difficult re-election campaign and, for the first time, he had to participate in a second round of the election as he failed to receive 51 percent to outright win in the first round. It is suspected that President Erdogan used his conflicts and denial of NATO membership to Sweden to increase support for himself in the election (Altayli et al., 2023). As he has done before, he criticized the events as Islamophobia in Europe, a strategy

that has already proven to work for him in Europe. In order to increase his appeal and fight against the perceived rise of Islamophobia in the West, President Erdogan has increased his nationalistic rhetoric. He has been very supportive of Muslims as it can be seen by his acceptance of refugees while most opposition parties call for their removal from Türkiye (Beris, 2023). It has yet to be seen how President Erdogan will now act since he won the second round of the election and whether or not he will be more willing to negotiate with Sweden in order to ratify Sweden's accession protocol and allow it to become a member of the organization. He may potentially change his approach to the discussion of Sweden's accession to NATO due to not being under imminent electoral pressure, or he may remain firm in his stance. This decision will likely depend on what Erdogan will ultimately feel is best for his personal political objectives and whether he will benefit more from letting Sweden in or continuing to block its accession to NATO.

### HUNGARY USES NATO MEMBERSHIP TO SETTLE EU DISAGREEMENTS

Hungary has become one of two European Union member states constantly facing criticism and attempted discipline by the European Union for democratic backsliding. One of the most recent examples of Sweden being critical of Hungarian legislation is known as the Child Protection Act (Reuters, 2023). Fifteen EU member states including Sweden have joined the European Union's lawsuit against Hungary because they consider the legislation to be anti-LGBT legislation rather than focused on protecting children as the Hungarian government claims (Fox, 2023). As this lawsuit is in the Court of Justice of the European Union, Hungary is bound as an EU member state to respect the court's decision. While other member states have a strained relationship with Türkiye, Hungary views the member state of NATO as an ally due to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán belief in the decline of the West (Bayer, 2023). It appears to be partially guiding Hungary's decisions as Finland is one of the fifteen member states that joined the EU's lawsuit regarding the Child Protection Act and Hungary delayed ratifying Finland's accession protocol.



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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*EU funds will be unfrozen as soon as Hungary makes necessary legislative reforms that convince the EU that Hungary is dedicated to being a democratic member of the bloc. As Hungary receives significantly more funds from the European Union than it contributes, it is referred to as a beneficiary member state of the EU. It gives Hungary a motive to punish Sweden and Finland in whatever way possible, including interfering in the accession process of Sweden and Finland to NATO.*

Additionally, Finland led talks suggesting that EU funding becomes conditional on the basis of the rule of law during its rotation of the European Council presidency (Tuominen, 2023). Just four years ago, Prime Minister Orbán was critical of Finland for these discussions as Hungary would be one of the two EU member states, along with Poland, that this manoeuvre would target because of reforms being considered undemocratic (Yle News, 2019). EU funds will be unfrozen as soon as Hungary makes necessary legislative reforms that convince the EU that Hungary is dedicated to being a democratic member of the bloc. As Hungary receives significantly more funds from the European Union than it contributes, it is referred to as a beneficiary member state of the EU (Malone, O'Connell, 2019). It gives Hungary a motive to punish Sweden and Finland in whatever way possible, including interfering in the accession process of Sweden and Finland to NATO.

The European Commission however has frozen the cohesion and post-pandemic recovery funds designated for Hungary. On 24 May 2023, the European Parliament passed a resolution urging the European Commission to continue to keep the funds frozen for Hungary because of various breaches of the rule of law (Wiseler-Lima et al., 2023). It demonstrates that Finland, which led the efforts for European Union funding to be conditional on the basis of the rule of law, was successful and yet Hungary ratified Finland's accession protocol since Türkiye also ratified it. Hungary originally blocked Finnish accession to NATO citing the Finnish government's criticism of Hungarian democracy as its reason. The Hungarian government however changed its mind and ratified Finland's accession protocol before Türkiye, only after President Erdogan indicated that he would approve of Finland's NATO bid while still blocking Sweden's membership request (Bayer, 2023). While Türkiye is using NATO's accession process as leverage in political conflicts, Hungary is playing a supportive role to Türkiye and Prime Minister Orbán is following President Erdogan's lead. It is likely that, as soon as Erdogan ratifies Sweden's accession protocol to become a member of NATO, Hungary will do the same and not continue to object to Sweden joining the organization.

Besides Finland, Sweden has been critical of the erosion of safeguards for democracy in Hungary, as democracy is also supposed to be protected in EU member states, which Hungary has used as a reason to continue to delay ratifying Sweden's accession protocol alongside Türkiye. Balázs Orbán, the political director for Prime Minister Orbán, has stated that the Swedish government is "constantly questioning the state of Hungarian democracy" which is "insulting our voters, MPs, and the country as a whole" (Ib.). It demonstrates that Hungary has a motivation to not ratify Sweden's accession protocol on the basis of political disagreements rather than whether or not Sweden is prepared to join NATO.

### NATO MEMBERS MUST VOLUNTARILY LEAVE

Article 12 of the North Atlantic Treaty outlines that members may voluntarily leave the organization and the text reads "After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation". (NATO, 2019). As the treaty has been in force since 1949, any member may voluntarily leave as long as they communicate to the government of the United States of America a year in advance before they intend to leave the organization. Similar to the discussions about the Treaty of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty does not include an article that mentions a member being forced to leave NATO either. Türkiye has mentioned that it may leave NATO.

As no formal mechanism exists to force a NATO member to leave or at least be suspended, it has led to debate whether this is possible. If so, this could be potentially taken as an action for Türkiye and Hungary refusing to ratify Sweden's accession agreement, based on Türkiye and Hungary not having valid reasons to refuse to ratify, and not on Sweden's ability to fulfil NATO membership obligations. NATO officials have given no indication however that the will to take such a drastic measure as disciplining Türkiye is even currently an option. Almost a year has passed since Sweden formally declared its interest in joining NATO and yet it has not been admitted, but there has been no indication



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*In order to convince Türkiye to ratify Sweden's accession protocol, it is likely that the other countries that are currently members of NATO may have to make a deal with the Turkish government. One potential option is that the United States of America can allow Türkiye to buy American F-16 fighter jets. This deal would be dependent on the willingness of the United States Congress to approve such a deal in order to make Sweden a member of NATO.*

from NATO that Türkiye or Hungary would face any consequences for not yet allowing Sweden to become a member of the organization.

In order to convince Türkiye to ratify Sweden's accession protocol, it is likely that the other countries that are currently members of NATO may have to make a deal with the Turkish government. One potential option is that the United States of America can allow Türkiye to buy American F-16 fighter jets. This deal would be dependent on the willingness of the United States Congress to approve such a deal in order to make Sweden a member of NATO. Another potential option is to lift some of the current economic sanctions that the United States and the European Union have placed on Türkiye. The Turkish economy has been struggling and lifting some sanctions may appease President Erdogan enough in order to approve of Sweden becoming the latest country to join NATO (McGee, 2023). Prime Minister Orban is expected to agree to ratify Sweden's accession protocol immediately after Türkiye does. If not, a deal may have to be made with the Hungarian government as well. Making a deal with the Turkish government and potentially the Hungarian government as well would be a compromise to keep NATO together while allowing the bloc to expand to also include Sweden.

## CONCLUSION

Both Finland and Sweden have demonstrated that they are capable of assuming the responsibilities of NATO members, yet their processes were delayed and Sweden still awaits approval. Instead of strictly approving, delaying, or rejecting ratification of Sweden's accession protocol based on Sweden's ability to meet the obligations and commitments of a NATO member, the leaders of Türkiye and Hungary have chosen it as an opportunity to vocalize personal grievances with Sweden. For Türkiye, it means framing Sweden as a country that permits Islamophobia while failing to cooperate with Türkiye to stop tourism and extradite suspects to face trial. The problem is that President Erdogan is attempting to force Sweden to change its freedom of speech law to appease his desires even though Denmark, which is already a member of NATO, also permits the burning of the Quran.

Hungary follows the lead of Türkiye as it is evident by its ratification of Finland's accession protocol. Despite Finland being responsible for EU funds being linked to the rule of law and leading to the freezing of these funds for Hungary, President Orbán in the end approved of Finland's accession to NATO as President Erdogan signalled that he would approve Finnish membership. Prime Minister Orbán's comments suggest that he was partially motivated to delay the accession process for Finland because of his personal qualms with Sweden and he is currently doing the same with Sweden, yet these issues are not enough to cause Hungary to continue to delay ratifying Sweden's accession protocol as soon as President Erdogan signals he is willing to ratify it.

Going forward, it is important to research whether this behaviour continues from President Erdogan and President Orbán, resulting in Türkiye and Hungary delaying and refusing to ratify a nation's accession protocol not on the basis of the nation's preparedness to fulfil its obligations as a member of NATO. It should also be investigated if any strategy exists for other NATO members to help intervene without causing a member state to try to leave the bloc that does not require deals to be made which act as bribes. For the time being, member states can agree to make deals in order to appease the leaders of Türkiye and Hungary in exchange for the two nations to ratify Sweden's accession protocol. The focus of the organization is on defence cooperation and maintaining democratic values, which would be undermined if nations begin to leave.

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THINKING

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## SECURITY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF HYBRID THREATS

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*The article briefly presents some arguments regarding the need to ensure the security of communication and information systems at the NATO level. In this context, a series of threats, vulnerabilities and risks to communication and information systems are mentioned, as well as preventive measures and indicators on the adversary’s actions.*

*In order to ensure the security of communication and information systems, there is a need for securing the “deployment environment” of the information, which is the electronic protection and security of the cyber space.*

*For this scientific approach, we have chosen the type of descriptive research with the aim of documenting and understanding the importance of the security of communication and information systems at the level of the North Atlantic Alliance, through the analysis of specialized literature, for the issue covered by the article.*

*We consider it opportune to carry out this work because communication and information systems in support of military operations involve specific security measures in cyber operations and electronic warfare, in the field of radio spectrum management, on own communication and information equipment/networks etc.*

*Keywords: alliance; security; hybrid warfare; communication and information systems;*



### INTRODUCTION

Hybrid threats exist where asymmetric actions make their way to avoid a direct confrontation with the adversary. “A hybrid threat is the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, terrorists, or criminal elements, acting in concert to achieve mutually benefitting effects” (ADP 3.0, 2019, pp. 1-3). Hybrid threats introduce new and complex elements into the battle, using atypical forces, technologies and techniques, not seen in classical warfare. A hybrid action can start from a conventional military attack and continue with propaganda actions, to reduce confidence in the political-military factor, depriving the population of basic services, such as medical care, supply of electricity, water, access to the banking system etc., causing a humanitarian crisis. Such combined actions are more difficult to counter. From the perspective of communication and information systems, they must be able to act, react, adapt, be resilient and robust to ensure services and facilities in times of peace, crisis or war.

A definition of security is provided by Arnold Wolfers, in the article “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol”: “Security, in an objective sense, means the absence of threats to the acquired values, and in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked”. (Wolfers, 1952, p. 485). It should be emphasized that proactive and reactive measures contain security policies, guidelines and standards, issues related to security culture and the application of INFOSEC (information security) measures. Information security is necessary to protect the growing number of users, in the context of the increasing threats in cyberspace and the diversity of emerging and disruptive technologies increasingly available in the information technology (IT) market.

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## SECURITY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN NATO

The security of communication and information systems is defined in AJP 6 as “an element of information assurance, and consists of the application of security measures for the protection of communication, information, and other electronic systems; and the information that is stored, processed, or transmitted in these systems with respect to availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and non-repudiation”. (AJP-6, 2017, pp. 1-4).

The security of communication and information systems contains defensive measures to counter cyber attacks, to limit their effects and to prepare network users and administrators. In order to ensure the security of communication and information systems, encryption of information is necessary and essential, and “in NATO, cryptography is used at all levels (i.e., from strategic to tactical, and in static and deployed) and for mostly all communication services (e.g., voice, video conference, real- and non-real time data)”. (Ib., p. B-6).

The security of communication and information systems is integrated throughout the planning and execution of all military operations. Cyber defence activities are also essential elements in ensuring the security of communication and information systems, allowing services to operate in the context of hostile enemy actions in cyberspace. The information must be provided and protected correctly, based on three main and two secondary pillars: confidentiality, integrity, availability, as well as authentication and non-repudiation (figure no. 1), on which we will focus in the following:

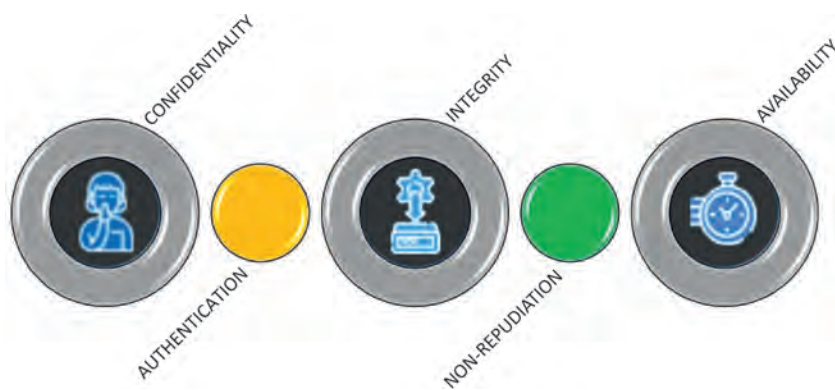


Figure no. 1: Characteristics of information security (authors' conception)

❖ *Confidentiality* implies that information is not made available or disclosed to unauthorized persons, entities or processes. It prevents the disclosure of unauthorized information.

❖ *Authentication* is the act of verifying the identity claimed by an entity.

❖ *Integrity of information* (including data) assumes that it has not been altered or destroyed without authorization. It prevents the manipulation of information by compromising its correctness, integrity or reliability.

❖ *Non-repudiation* is an assurance measure for the recipient that the information was sent by a certain person or organization and for the sender that the information was received by the intended recipients.

❖ *Availability* means that the information is accessible and usable at the request of an authorized person or entity. It consists of protecting information against intentional or accidental unauthorized attempts by denying information or systems. (Ib., pp. 1-13 \_ 1-14)

For support with communication and information systems, NATO doctrine specifies several essential features. One of these essential features of communication and information systems is security, which “guarantees the required levels of confidentiality, integrity and availability for services, systems and information, commensurate with the mission requirements” (AJP-6, pp. 1\_10).

The relationship between information assurance and the security of communication and information systems (including cyber defence) is also closely related to the other security environments, such as industrial, physical and personnel, according to figure no. 2.

The security of communication and information systems involves securing information, by applying security measures to the technique, equipment, networks and information transmitted or received. Cyber defence counters cyber attacks or mitigates their effects by integrating efforts for incident responses, preventive measures for the security of communication and information systems, but also the awareness of operators regarding the need to protect equipment.

**When we talk about the security of communication and information systems, it also includes cyber defence (according to Allied Joint Publication – AJP-6).**



Cyber defence counters cyber attacks or mitigates their effects by integrating efforts for incident responses, preventive measures for the security of communication and information systems, but also the awareness of operators regarding the need to protect equipment.



In order to ensure and maintain the security of communication and information systems, it is necessary to guarantee the security of cyberspace. "Cyberspace security actions protect the networks and systems through all phases of network planning and implementation".



Figure no. 2: Relationship between Information Assurance and Communication and Information Systems (CIS) Security (Ib., pp. 1-14, adaptation)

In order to ensure and maintain the security of communication and information systems, it is necessary to guarantee the security of cyberspace. "Cyberspace security actions protect the networks and systems through all phases of network planning and implementation. Cyberspace security activities include vulnerability assessment and analysis, vulnerability management, incident handling, continuous monitoring, and detection and restoration capabilities to shield and preserve information and information systems". (Wade, 2019, pct. 2\_12, lit. E).

The operational environment is much larger than an area of operations. It includes the physical areas of the land, maritime, air and space domains, as well as cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. The conditions and operational context that may influence a commander's decisions or the ability to act of forces and technical means. Communication and information systems provide services

and equipment depending on the mission, to support the exercise of command and control. Hybrid threats are carried out mainly in the information environment, the cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum being its components. In hybrid conflicts, control of the information environment is as important as control of physical areas. Moreover, the two environments are integrated and any activity that takes place in one affects the other.

Cyberspace includes "the interdependent networks of information technology (IT) infrastructures and resident data. It includes the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers" (see JP 3-12, 2018, p. I-1).

The electromagnetic spectrum ensures the connection between the cyberspace and the physical domains in which the military actions take place. Own forces must ensure the security of their own communication and information systems in cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum and, as far as possible, to control the adversary's capability in an operation in these components of the information environment.

### INFORMATION SECURITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In the *National Defence Strategy for 2020-2024 (SNApT)*, one of the national security objectives, from an internal perspective, aims at "ensuring the security and protection of information and communication infrastructures that are critical to national security, as well as identifying, preventing and countering cyber threats posed by actors with strategic extremist-terrorist motivation or financially motivated" (SNApT, 2020, p. 15). In this regard, in the Defence White Paper, a priority for action is represented by "running continuous improvement programmes in the line of ensuring cyber security, communication systems and combating hybrid threats, in order to increase resilience in the face of new challenges" (Defence White Paper, 2021, p. 18). In the two strategic level documents that regulate national defence, we have, among the priorities and objectives, cyber security and that of the communication and information system, which need to be implemented through Planning Directives and Major Procurement Programmes. Also, in the National Defence Strategy are found some of the threats, risks and vulnerabilities aimed at the field of communications and information at the national level, as it can be seen in *table no. 1*.



In the *National Defence Strategy for 2020-2024 (SNApT)*, one of the national security objectives, from an internal perspective, aims at "ensuring the security and protection of information and communication infrastructures that are critical to national security, as well as identifying, preventing and countering cyber threats posed by actors with strategic extremist-terrorist motivation or financially motivated".





Table no. 1: Threats, risks and vulnerabilities in the field of communications and information (extract from SNApT, pp. 25-29)

<p>Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Hostile actions of influence carried out in the public space</b> aimed at changing perceptions and influencing the civil society's behaviour are a constant threat to social security, and have the potential to proliferate due to the increasingly diversified means of communication in the online environment.</li> <li>- <b>Cyber-attacks</b> launched by state and non-state entities (cybercrime groups, hacker groups with or without ideological, political or extremist-terrorist motivation) on critical information and communications infrastructures.</li> <li>- <b>The integration of emerging and disruptive technologies</b> among the cyber entities' offensive instruments exponentially multiplies the sources of threat and enhances solutions to conceal cyber operations in order to create the appearance of false membership.</li> <li>- <b>Cybercrime</b> is on an upward trend, with more and more local groups specializing in illicit cyber activities (compromising ATMs and POSs, card cloning, unauthorized access to computer systems, illegal interception of computer data, posting of fictitious ads on intensively accessed trade sites, infecting information systems with ransomware, taking control over computer resources for virtual currency mining, as well as the use or exploitation of cryptocurrency for the conduct of illicit operations in the economic area).</li> </ul>
<p>Risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The <b>new technologies' use</b> by organized crime and cybercrime entities, terrorist or extremist groups and organizations, and actors interested in developing offensive actions <b>will be on an upward trend.</b></li> <li>- The dependency of communications services on a <b>limited number of technology providers</b> and the existence of <b>unsecured flows of procurement of technologies</b> used in the provision of essential or critical services are phenomena with impact on the communications networks' availability and integrity.</li> <li>- <b>The risk of an interstate armed conflict remains low, yet there is an emerging risk of adapting hybrid offensive operations</b> to technological developments by continuously diversifying the modus operandi and coordinated resources in order to negatively impact the national interests, security included.</li> </ul>

The integration of emerging and disruptive technologies among the cyber entities' offensive instruments exponentially multiplies the sources of threat and enhances solutions to conceal cyber operations in order to create the appearance of false membership.

<p>Vulnerabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The low level of cybersecurity</b> of communication and information technology infrastructures in strategic areas (including as a result of vulnerabilities in terms of technology and procedures of communication operators' infrastructures) makes way for the conduct of cyber-attacks by state or non-state actors.</li> <li>- <b>Deepened technological gap</b> and under-exploitation of the benefits provided by the use of new technologies in most of the fields of activity may have a negative impact in terms of economic development and competitiveness, from the perspective of the research-development-innovation, as well as on medium and long term in ensuring national security.</li> <li>- <b>The poor security culture</b> at the level of civil society and decision-making apparatus may be exploited by hostile intelligence entities for the purpose of collecting information or carrying out influence actions.</li> </ul>
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According to some specialists, "in future military conflicts, the greater the advantage obtained from information and communication technology is, the greater its potential vulnerability would be" (Boaru, Iorga, 2018, p. 31).

An action of particular importance at the national level was the establishment of the National Cyber Security Directorate (NCSd), which replaced the Romanian National Cyber Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO), a fact materialized by Emergency Ordinance no. 104 of 22 September 2021, published in the *Official Gazette* no. 918 of 24 September 2021. Among the objectives of the NCSd activity, we highlight a few:

- ensuring the security, confidentiality, integrity, availability, resilience of the elements of the national civil cyberspace, in cooperation with the institutions that have powers and duties in the field;
- ensuring the framework of strategies, policies and regulations to support the implementation of the national vision in the field of cyber security;
- the creation of the national cooperation framework between public, private, education and research institutions, to ensure



Deepened technological gap and under-exploitation of the benefits provided by the use of new technologies in most of the fields of activity may have a negative impact in terms of economic development and competitiveness, from the perspective of the research-development-innovation, as well as on medium and long term in ensuring national security.



a realistic, common and coherent vision and approach regarding Romania's cyber security;

- the international promotion and support of the national strategy in the field of cyber security (Emergency Ordinance no. 104, 2021, art. 4).

Also, according to the Practical Guide for Operators of Essential Services (OES) – Implementation of minimum measures to ensure the security of networks and information systems, information security is a concern “protecting the organization's assets against internal and external threats, threats that are classified according to the potential damage they can cause to the protected assets” (Munteanu, Păuna, Constantinescu, Măgdălinoiu, Voinea, Găbudeanu & Anghel, 2021, p. 22). In this regard, the relationship between assets and vulnerabilities, threats and risks, according to ISO/IEC 27032 (Information Technology – Security techniques – Guidelines for Cybersecurity) is shown in figure no. 3.

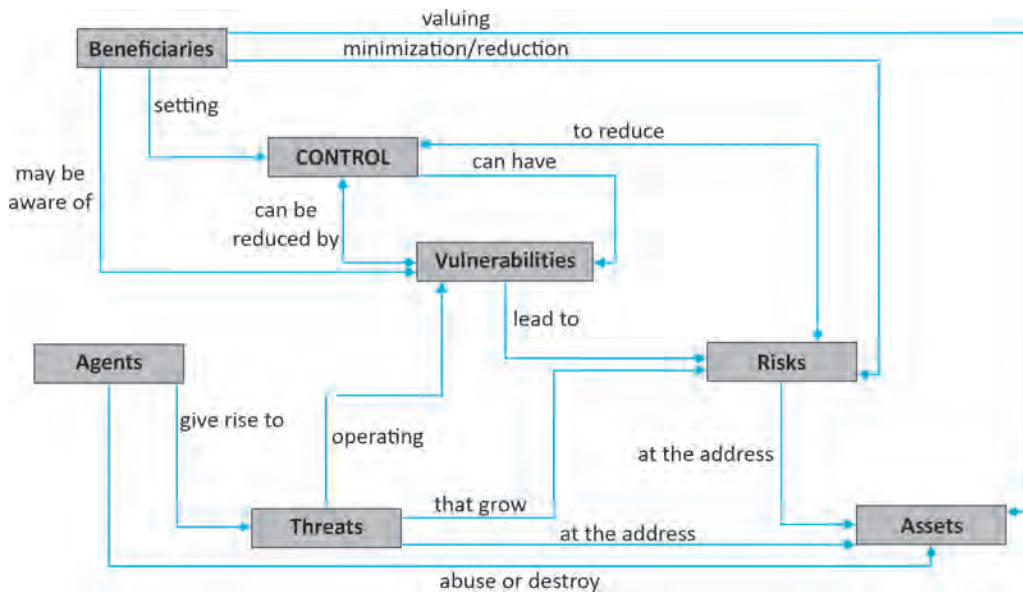


Figure no. 3: Relationship between assets and vulnerabilities, threats and risks (Ib., p. 23)

It is clear, therefore, that any analysis should consider the relationship between vulnerabilities, threats and risks. Risk relates

to each individual threat and vulnerability. If the probability of threats occurring is difficult to estimate, then risk reduction can be achieved by reducing vulnerabilities.

### SECURITY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS

The military experiences of NATO forces in Iraq and Afghanistan can no longer be taken as a benchmark in the development and strengthening of the communication and information system. The military operations in the two countries have been characterized as counterinsurgency, support and stability missions. However, the conflict in Ukraine, presents us with a different reality, in which the pace of operations is accelerated, and human and equipment losses are considerably higher. The effects on the economies of European countries, and not only, have been felt since the beginning of this conflict.

The management, dissemination and control of the information transmitted through the communication and information equipment are essential from the perspective of mission accomplishment. Potential adversaries have understood this aspect and, in order to achieve their goals, are gathering technical and tactical intelligence to act with electronic warfare operations.

Such elements include:

- jamming on communications systems using the radio frequency spectrum;
- interception of communications in radio/radio relay/satellite networks;
- interference with the adversary's communication flow, and so on.

Communications and information systems planners can take steps to mitigate adversary threats in the radio frequency spectrum. Among the measures to reduce the electromagnetic signature in command points and in communication centres, eloquent are those specified in FM 6.02 (2019, p. A-1), as follows:

- careful site selection for communication equipment;
- employment of directional antennas;



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Information and communication systems support is much more than the transmission of information within a military operation, it is the link between information and decision, as well as between decision and action. Therefore, there is a concern about the security of communications and information to protect the content of their own information against the adversary.

- operations using the lowest power required;
- limiting radio transmissions;
- using burst transmission to minimize transmission time;
- using a random battle rhythm schedule.

Also, various measures can be taken to mask the radio, to capitalize the battlefield, electronic protection measures etc. These measures are applicable under optimal conditions, for short periods of time. Without continuously assured communications, command and control of forces suffers, which can result in loss of initiative. *“An enemy can use radio frequency direction finding equipment to locate any radio frequency emitter, such as a radio, satellite communications terminal, counter-improvised explosive device system, radar, or cell phone. Once they determine an accurate location, the enemy can direct lethal fires to destroy the capability”* (ATP 6-02.71, 2019, p. 3-20). Any of the mentioned situations is possible, if the security measures in the electromagnetic environment are not respected.

Information and communication systems support is much more than the transmission of information within a military operation, it is the link between information and decision, as well as between decision and action. Therefore, there is a concern about the security of communications and information to protect the content of their own information against the adversary. Cryptographic systems allow the protection of information transmitted by users: *“Including COMSEC key management in operations planning is essential to enabling secure communications”* (FM 6.02, pp. 2-38), as shown in *Signal Support to Operations*, combat manual in the US Army. Communications security implies *“actions designed to deny unauthorized persons information of value by safeguarding access to, or observation of, equipment, material, and documents with regard to the possession and study of telecommunications or to purposely mislead unauthorized persons in their interpretation of the results of such possession and study”* (JP 6-0, 2019, p. GL-4). These electronic protection techniques support the security of communications, by preventing the enemy from identifying the electromagnetic signature. The existence of a CEMA (cyber and electromagnetic activities) officer can play a key role in electronic protection planning.



The use of technologies specific to communication and information systems can be hampered by various aspects, such as protocols, security measures, bandwidth and equipment interoperability, so that “a corps must be supported by a signals brigade at all times, with multinational elements attached to work through interoperability challenges prior to the first shot fired (...).”

Radio operators should recognize and react when they identify electromagnetic jamming actions, in the context where enemy jamming and own electromagnetic interference are difficult to differentiate, complicating their tasks. For example, interference can be unintentionally caused by other own or adversary radio stations, electrical and electronic equipment in the surroundings, atmospheric conditions or malfunctions of own equipment etc.

Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, Commander of the US Land Forces in Europe, mentioned, in an interview granted in 2015, the shortcomings in the area of *“information technology”*, emphasizing the following aspects:

- ❖ *“Secure FM radios so US troops can talk securely and to allies without being jammed;*
- ❖ *Shared data that allows troops to see a common operating picture (COP), so that US and allies’ commanders see the same situation on their screens;*
- ❖ *Secure digital networks to call in artillery fire by linking human observers and radars to the guns themselves”.* (Freedberg Jr., 2015).

The use of technologies specific to communication and information systems can be hampered by various aspects, such as protocols, security measures, bandwidth and equipment interoperability, so that *“a corps must be supported by a signals brigade at all times, with multinational elements attached to work through interoperability challenges prior to the first shot fired (...). As communications architectures continue to develop at pace, it is also worth reiterating that the most effective capabilities of many member states will be dependent on systems that for security reasons cannot be brought in line with NATO STANAGS”* (Watling, MacFarland, 2021, p. 22). Standardization and interoperability agreements, the same paper says, assume *“network integration and protection efforts are only possible with the active participation of all key members of the corps team”* (Ib.).

The most important attacks that can be executed on communication and information systems are:

- *COMPUSEC attacks*, which may lead to: the unavailability of some services; unauthorized access to classified information stored, processed and transmitted through communication





and information systems; unauthorized access to management information; copying and evasion/stealing of sensitive information; complete blocking of some communication and information centres;

- COMSEC attacks materialized through cryptanalysis action or TEMPEST attacks (Turcu, 2014, pp. 17-18).

The COMSEC components in figure no. 4 include:

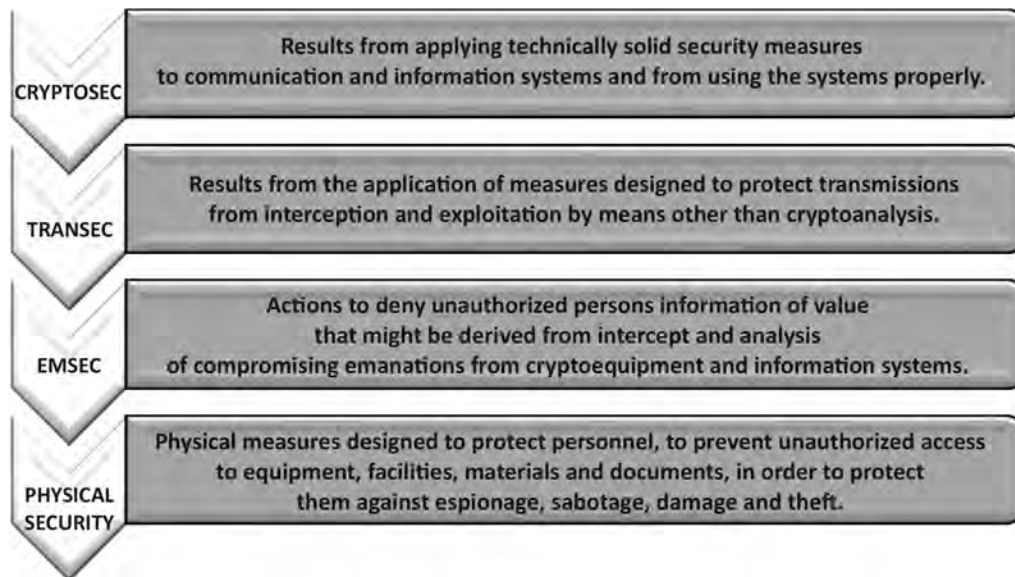


Figure no. 4: COMSEC components (ATP 6-02.75, 2020, p. 1\_1)

Computer security – COMPUSEC involves the application of hardware, software and firmware security measures to prevent the unauthorized disclosure, modification or deletion of information or the unauthorized invalidation of functions in computer networks. COMPUSEC comprises the “set of measures and controls that ensure the authenticity, confidentiality, integrity, availability and non-repudiation of information processed and stored in computers (servers and workstations)” (Alexandrescu, C., Alexandrescu, G., Boaru, 2010, p. 256). The information transmitted through communication and/or information systems is vulnerable to interception and technical exploitation by the adversary. Also, “communications are a particularly important component of the military information system

and, implicitly, their security is of exceptional functional importance, therefore protection measures must be adequate, timely and effective and of great informational value” (Boaru, Iorga, p. 77). Countering the adversary’s actions requires protecting information during its transmission and reception. The transmission of information at the level of large units and tactical units is carried out through the infrastructure of communication and information systems. NATO, at the corps/division level, requires the support of a communications and information brigade/battalion, made up of elements from several allied forces. In this regard, we believe that special attention should be paid to aspects related to interoperability, standardization and security. Information must flow uninterruptedly and safely, horizontally and vertically, and efforts to integrate and secure networks are possible only with the active participation of all Alliance members.

## CONCLUSIONS

After the Cold War, the conflicts that took place did not hamper the HF, VHF and UHF communications of the NATO Alliance. Electronic warfare activities have been reduced or non-existent, but these conditions are changing in a potential conflict that opposes approximately equal forces. Under these conditions, electronic warfare will have a much greater role, and military communications will be unsafe or interrupted.

Depending on terrain, weather, adversary and so on, own communication and information systems must be redundant and resilient to ensure information security. Even if satellite communications systems provide essential support in command points, commanders must be prepared to conduct military operations also by radio or wire communications as needed.

User training, security culture and compliance with security measures are among the aspects that are necessary in the security of communication and information systems. Also, redundancy is a measure to resolve some COMSEC situations (when the need arises), and frequency spectrum management is essential in ensuring the security of communications.



*Depending on terrain, weather, adversary and so on, own communication and information systems must be redundant and resilient to ensure information security. Even if satellite communications systems provide essential support in command points, commanders must be prepared to conduct military operations also by radio or wire communications as needed.*



For effective interoperability in communication and information systems, it would be ideal to have a single central authority in NATO, allowing the joint application of algorithms and encryption keys, this solution being able to ensure command and control at the level of the North Atlantic Alliance. However, it would also represent a challenge for implementing and ensuring security in national communication and information systems.

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## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS REGARDING THE MILITARISATION OF ECONOMIC OPERATORS WHOSE ACTIVITY IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO PROVIDING DEFENCE RESOURCES

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*The gradual process of planning and preparing for the mobilisation of national economy includes the set of measures that are taken in peacetime in order to capitalise on the entire economic potential of the country and subordinating it to the national defence effort, and is realised through drawing up and approving the Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence, sized for a period of one year and valid for four years.*

*During the state of mobilisation, the implementation of this plan involves the implementation of the measures established by the Mobilisation Plan, adapted to the situation arising at a given moment, as well as some hypothetical measures that can support the achievement of the final goal. Thus, the possible militarisation of economic operators whose activity is directly related to the resources needed for defence is a subject of study that cannot be analysed outside of other specific procedures such as, for example, economic reconversion, requisitions of goods and the provision of services in the public interest, the mobilisation at work of persons with military obligations, etc.*

*Keywords: militarisation; economic operators; mobilisation of the economy; military leadership; military commander; production capacity; war economy*



## INTRODUCTION

The recent evolution of the geostrategic situation, having a direct effect on the security of the NATO member states and the safety of its citizens, for which measures are required to counteract the dangers through the development of economic-military capabilities, creates the necessary premises to ensure an efficient, coherent and judicious management of defence resources, by referring to the national priorities, interests and objectives aligned with the collective ones, according to the assumed international commitments.

In this context, for the fulfilment of the duties of the Government regarding the preparation of the national economy and the territory for defence, the main vector of reference is the priority provision of the requests for products and services necessary for the forces of the national defence system, as well as those necessary for the functioning of the national economy and the population during a state of siege, mobilisation or war.

For the first time, the mobilisation of the national economy was an object of study for specialists in economic-military issues, as a result of the lessons identified from the analysis of the conduct of the two world wars whose characteristics highlighted the increased role of economic potential as a factor of military power, under the conditions in that the reserves of armaments, ammunition, combat equipment and other materials had to ensure the necessary requirements for the entire period of conflict.

Today, the evolution of the situation at Romania's Northeast border highlights other essential needs of the economy besides the classic military equipment, ammunition and combat equipment. We refer to critical railway, road, air and maritime infrastructures, products of particular importance for the economy and the population (*primary energy resources, electricity, food products for the National Defence Forces and for the rational consumption of the population, medicines,*

*For the fulfilment of the duties of the Government regarding the preparation of the national economy and the territory for defence, the main vector of reference is the priority provision of the requests for products and services necessary for the forces of the national defence system, as well as those necessary for the functioning of the national economy and the population during a state of siege, mobilisation or war.*





vaccines and services for human use), cyber security services and software development etc.

In the gradual implementation of the mobilisation of the national economy, we distinguish two phases: *the preparation phase*, which is carried out in peacetime and includes the set of measures that are taken in order to capitalise on the entire economic potential of the country and subordinating it to the national defence effort, and *the execution phase*, in which the measures established in the previous stage are implemented through the specific mobilisation plans.

This last phase, actually the one that is the object of our study, during which the possibility of militarisation of economic operators is established by law, as a specific process of mobilising the national economy but which cannot be analysed apart from other specific processes such as, for example, economic reconversion, the requisition of goods and the provision of services in the public interest, the mobilisation to the workplace of persons with military obligations etc.

### CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE MILITARISATION OF ECONOMIC OPERATORS

Thus, the project of the *Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence*, sized for the first year of the war and valid for a period of four years, stipulates the tasks of all the structures engaged in the national defence effort, as well as the human, material and financial resources that they will engage for this purpose. After its approval by the Decision of the Supreme Council of National Defence, based on their obligations, the public administration authorities, public institutions and economic operators establish and maintain in time of peace capacities and mobilisation reserves necessary to carry out the respective tasks, creating the conditions necessary for the transition of the national economy from the state of peace to the state of war.

According to the provisions and under the conditions established by law (Law no. 45/1994), upon the proclamation of a *state of siege* or *emergency situation*, upon the *declaration of mobilisation* or a *state of war*, goods belonging to economic operators, public institutions, other legal entities and individuals may be requisitioned, fit citizens can be called to active duty, under the conditions provided by law.

In the situations provided above, with the approval of the Supreme Council of National Defence (Law no. 45/2004), economic operators whose activity is directly related to the provision of resources necessary for defence *could be militarised*, and their organisation and operation established by decision of the Government.

The dynamic development of society in the last century has filled the dictionaries with a multitude of terms denoting a huge number of new concepts, among which is the term *militarisation*, which generally describes a phenomenon that is by no means new, but one that has manifested itself clearly in this period, being analysed in detail in the works of renowned political scientists, sociologists and historians. According to them, "*militarisation*" is the process of the penetration of military ideology into all spheres of a country's life, the transfer of the economy, political ideology and most scientific and technical fields in a military channel (Hona, 1998). In other words, the main characteristic of militarisation is the transition of the economy from a state of peace to a state of war in order to ensure the increase of military potential. On the one hand, this implies a constant increase in budget expenditures for the military-industrial complex, in order to maintain a high level of the quantity and quality of defence resources, to the detriment of funds allocated for the development of other spheres (*e.g. social, cultural, public, life, etc.*). On the other hand, militarisation directly stimulates research and development in scientific and technological fields.

Obviously, in specialised literature, the phrase "*action to militarise*", or "*militarisation*" as a noun, is defined by direct association with other terms (*countries, territories, economies, enterprises, etc.*), having similar meanings, such as: *to organise militarily; to subordinate to military purposes; to provide with armed force; to organise militarily (a country, an institution, etc.); to give a military character; to subordinate the goals of militarism; to subordinate (a territory, an enterprise) to a military regime, sometimes directly to the army, and use them for military purposes; to subordinate the development of the economy to military, war preparations requirements; to subordinate enterprises, territories, etc. a military regime or military purposes; to organise militarily.*



*The main characteristic of militarisation is the transition of the economy from a state of peace to a state of war in order to ensure the increase of military potential. On the one hand, this implies a constant increase in budget expenditures for the military-industrial complex, in order to maintain a high level of the quantity and quality of defence resources, to the detriment of funds allocated for the development of other spheres. On the other hand, militarisation directly stimulates research and development in scientific and technological fields.*



*The Ministry of National Defence (Law no. 355/2009) which unitarily coordinates the planning and evaluation of the preparation for the mobilisation of the defence forces and monitors the execution of these activities, through the Defence Staff and the specific structures within the other public institutions/authorities with attributions in the field national defence and security, including the activity of militarised economic operators to meet the demands of the armed forces.*

The legislation incidental to the matter not being sufficiently developed with regard to the subsequent normative acts and/or internal regulations, it is necessary to detail certain aspects regarding the conduct of this process and the responsibilities they have, both the structures with direct responsibilities regarding the implementation of these legislative provisions, and the operators economies in the hypothetical situation of going through the successive stages of the “militarisation” process.

Thus, we can appreciate that direct responsibilities regarding the militarisation of economic operators whose activity is directly related to the provision of resources necessary for defence are attributed to the following structures:

❖ *The National Administration of State Reserves and Special Issues*, the specialised structure of the Government, as a specialised body of the central public administration for the activity of preparing the national economy and the territory for defence, under the coordination of the General Secretariat of the Government, which sends the proposals of the ministries responsible for militarisation of the economic operators whose activity is directly related to the provision of the resources necessary for defence to the Supreme Council of National Defence for approval;

❖ *relevant ministries*, which are responsible for restructuring, reorganising and streamlining the activity of each economic operator with full and/or majority state capital subordinated, under authority or in coordination, based on their own reorganisation/restructuring plans validated in the meeting of the General Assembly of shareholders and approved by a decision of the Government, at their initiative or the one of the coordinating institution within the National Defence Forces System, with the approval of the specialised authority and the Supreme Council of National Defence, if they concern strategic capabilities;

❖ *The Ministry of National Defence (Law no. 355/2009)*, which unitarily coordinates the planning and evaluation of the preparation for the mobilisation of the defence forces and monitors the execution of these activities, through the Defence Staff and the specific structures within the other public institutions/authorities with attributions in the field national defence and security, including the activity of militarised economic operators to meet the demands of the armed forces;

❖ *economic operators (Law no. 477/2003)* with tasks assigned in the mobilisation plan, each in their field of activity, who must provide (Law no. 232/2016) the necessary measures in order to adapt the organisational structure<sup>1</sup> to function in case of mobilisation or war, under the conditions of their militarisation, using all the economic and human potential at their disposal, for the full realisation of their tasks.

Starting from the interpretation of the legislative provision, according to which those economic operators “whose activity is directly related to the provision of resources necessary for defence” can be militarised (Ib.), we can appreciate that the process of militarisation is implemented by;

- economic operators in the national defence industry with or without mandatory tasks established by the Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence;
- economic operators with mandatory tasks established by the Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence and/or those nominated to ensure the continuity of economic and social activities;
- economic operators that are potential suppliers of products and services for defence, who have completed the process of economic reconversion following which they can produce/provide products and/or services necessary to meet the needs of the forces of the national defence system.

Thus, *the militarisation of economic operators* is in a direct causal relationship with *the economic reconversion*, a process of modification, adaptation of the object of activity of an economic operator or an industrial branch, the workforce, etc. to new needs (e.g. the re-profiling of some factories and plants that are able to switch to war production with some changes in equipment and re-technology).

The experience of the two world wars demonstrated that the military production of specialised peacetime enterprises was not sufficient to ensure the needs of war, which is why the enterprises specialised

<sup>1</sup> It is drafted on the basis of the Ops Plans in special work regime, drawn up in peacetime, classified “secret level”, and is ensured by mobilisation at the workplace and by summoning people for the provision of services in the public interest, under the conditions of art. 29 of Law no. 477/2003, republished.



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

*The process of militarisation is implemented by economic operators in the national defence industry; economic operators with mandatory tasks established by the Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence; economic operators that are potential suppliers of products and services for defence.*



*Weapons Factory Cugir SA, established in 1799, during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, one of the first metallurgical factories in Transylvania, where the first steel manufacturing workshops were founded, expanded starting from 1926, by building new lines of production. Due to the militarisation of the factory during the war, the factory switched to the production of parts and assemblies for artillery technique.*

in the manufacture of construction machinery, tractors and trucks were re-adjusted in order to produce parts of exchange and sub-assemblies necessary for the manufacture of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, those specialised in the manufacture of cars, measurement and control apparatus, electrical equipment for the manufacture of aircraft engines, machine guns, etc., the fine mechanics factories have switched to the production of precision equipment of various types.

For example, we bring to your attention a few cases recorded in the historical documents of the time. The first one, *Weapons Factory Cugir SA*, established in 1799, during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, one of the first metallurgical factories in Transylvania, where the first steel manufacturing workshops were founded, expanded starting from 1926, by building new lines of production. Due to the militarisation of the factory during the war, the factory switched to the production of parts and assemblies for artillery technique (in collaboration with the London Company “*Vickers Armstrong Ltd.*”). Later, the takeover of the factory by the Czechoslovak company “*Zbrojovka – Brno*” led to a redesign of production for infantry weapons and ammunition, based on documentary licenses.

The second example is the *Johann Weitzer SA Car Factory and Iron Foundry* in Arad, which had all the necessary machinery for the production of passenger and freight cars, tanks, metal bridges and diesel engines, as well as other machines and installations, transmission bodies for industry, castings, tramcars, steam boilers, etc., during the First World War. After militarisation it received orders to equip the Austro-Hungarian army with platform wagons for howitzers, sleeper wagons for troops, field kitchens, howitzers and field guns, ammunition boxes and genius tools (Truță, 2022, p. 11).

The third example is that of the militarisation of the mines in Jiu River Valley, which was mentioned in the press (Boboc, 2022, p. 1). During the Second World War, the war economy needed coal, therefore the mines of Jiu River Valley were militarised, the commander of the Petroșani mines being Lieutenant-Colonel Ion Gavrilăscu. The army would return to the mines of Jiu River Valley (1949) through the establishment of the Directorate of Military Labor Detachments, subordinated to the General Directorate of the Labour Service,

based in Bucharest and the Office of Labour Detachments from the Coal Industry (1958).

With the motivation that labour was still needed to fulfil the production plan and that militarisation was the only solution to save mining, immediately after the miners’ revolt in 1977, several detachments, brigades and mining/construction battalions were created that would be definitively disbanded in 1990.

This “*kind*” of militarisation was justified in those days, through the reports and briefings sent to the first secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, according to which the mining foremen declared that “*the plan in Jiu River Valley will not be accomplished until we militarise the workers, as in the Romanian Railways, because people are no longer conscientious about their work, they demand a lot from society in exchange for minimal efforts. What would happen if the workers at Romanian Railways were also absent from work like those at the mine?*”, and the difficulties that arise in not realising the plan were due to the fact that: workers’ consciousness was weak (Ibid).

Starting from the presumption that none of the examples are relevant to the current situation, we believe that currently, the militarisation of economic operators aims to ensure the necessary conditions for the accurate and timely completion of the tasks they have established through the *Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence*, as well as to ensure the integrity of the objectives, installations, equipment and the patrimony that they own and consists in placing under the regime of control, discipline and military jurisdiction of all personnel, who are considered to be mobilised to the workplace or called for services of services in the public interest, in accordance with the position he holds in the military record documents (person with or without military obligations).

During the period in which the economic operator is militarised (from the date of publication in the Official Gazette of the Government Decision on the organization and operation of the economic operator during militarisation, until the date of demilitarisation/demobilisation), it is under the control of the Ministry of National Defence (Law no. 355/2009), provided directly or through the structures under its composition or subordination, as the case may be.



*Currently, the militarisation of economic operators aims to ensure the necessary conditions for the accurate and timely completion of the tasks they have established through the Mobilisation Plan of the National Economy for Defence, as well as to ensure the integrity of the objectives, installations, equipment and the patrimony that they own and consists in placing under the regime of control, discipline and military jurisdiction of all personnel, in accordance with the position he holds in the military record documents.*





*During the period of militarisation, the administrative management of the economic operator can be carried out on the basis of a special mandate granted by the relevant ministry and approved by the Ministry of National Defence which will establish the administration/management mode and the exceptional and derogatory measures that must be taken by the economic operator to accelerate the militarisation process, depending on the strategic situation and the implementation concept.*

For situations where militarised economic operators represent a strategic interest, the Ministry of National Defence, which according to the law has the obligation to monitor them during the militarisation period, can establish a military leadership (manager/director/commander/military representative, etc.) at the location of the operator, designated exclusively for the implementation in the form of military provisions/ordinances of the measures necessary for the administrative management of the economic operator.

By referring to the already existing legislative provision (Law no. 45/2002), according to which, in order to ensure unitary leadership, during the state of war, the establishment of the position of “military commander” subordinated to the National Military Command Center is stipulated for each county and for Bucharest, we can conclude that, only during this state, the military leadership of the economic operator could be temporarily subordinated to the Military Command of the County/Municipality of Bucharest (CSAȚ Decision no. 18/2012), a military authority whose attributions are approved by annex no. SG no. 863/2013 to the Decision mentioned as a reference.

Thus said, during the state of mobilisation, the military leadership of the economic operator responds to the circumstantial imperatives imposed by the monitoring obligation that the Ministry of National Defence has during the militarisation of economic operators, through permanent cooperation with the line ministries whose attributions are established according to the law.

During the period of militarisation, the administrative management of the economic operator can be carried out on the basis of a special mandate granted by the relevant ministry and approved by the Ministry of National Defence which will establish the administration/management mode and the exceptional and derogatory measures that must be taken by the economic operator to accelerate the militarisation process, depending on the strategic situation and the implementation concept.

In this sense, the provisions of *Law no. 355 regarding the regime of the state of partial or total mobilisation of the armed forces and the state of war* should be considered, according to which, upon

the declaration of the state of mobilisation or the state of war, some attributions of authorities of the specialised central public administration and authorities of the local public administration can pass under the responsibility of the military authorities, as were provided for in the decision of the Parliament or in the decree of the President of Romania regarding the declaration of the state of mobilisation or the state of war, a situation in which the civil authorities of the public administration continue to exercise the powers that were not transferred to the military authorities and have the obligation to fulfil exactly the provisions of the military ordinances.

Also, during the militarisation, possible measures can be considered, such as state aid provided by law that can be granted to economic operators, in compliance with the requirements regarding the protection of national security interests that refer to the production or trade of armaments, ammunition or war material.

In this context, the main attributions of the military management/monitoring bodies aim at the activities necessary for the realisation of military, sensitive and strategic products, as well as the other related operations, so that it ensures the protection of Romania’s national defence interests, including essential national security interests, of the government commitments assumed in the relationship with the NATO and European Union structures, as well as for meeting other obligations assumed by Romania through treaties, strategic partnerships and international agreements, as follows:

- supervising the strict application by the management bodies of the economic operators of the legal provisions regarding the production capacities and/or defence services held, as well as the observance of work discipline;
- tracking the adoption and application of measures for the full use of the inventory of the production capacities and/or services for defence of an economic operator, the transition to the state of keeping/maintaining them or some assets within them that are exclusively intended to satisfy the demands of the forces of the national system of defence in time of mobilisation or war, as well as to ensure the technical-functional parameters that allow re-commissioning according to strategic needs;



*The main attributions of the military management/monitoring bodies aim at the activities necessary for the realisation of military, sensitive and strategic products, as well as the other related operations, so that it ensures the protection of Romania’s national defence interests, as well as for meeting other obligations assumed by Romania through treaties, strategic partnerships and international agreements.*



- checking the measures taken regarding the organisation of production and work to achieve the tasks provided for in the mobilisation plan, monitoring compliance with the quality of the products and the rhythmicity/periodicity of the delivery of the assumed defence products and services;
- monitoring the compliance with the standards applicable in the field of the measures taken at the level of the economic operator regarding the specific activities of certification/homologation/qualification of products/processes/services;
- supporting the administrative management in order to remove the difficulties and constraints arising in the direct process or related operations of the realisation of military, sensitive and strategic products (research-development, design, trial and testing, manufacturing, modernisation, maintenance, storage, scrapping and decommissioning, development, holding, sale-purchase, rental and transport), as well as for the development of technological and industrial cooperation operations of the economic operator;
- checking and coordinating the way to secure production capacities (ensuring the conditions of the technological climate imposed by the relevant regulations, their guarding and security conditions, so that production can be resumed with minimal expenses and in the shortest time);
- collaborating with the specialised bodies of the relevant ministries in order to apply protection and/or evacuation measures, as the case may be, specific to the personnel and the assets of the economic operator by ordering the operative measures necessary to ensure the continuity of the production process;
- approving restructuring/reorganisation changes, changing the main object of activity and/or the destination of the production capacities and/or services of the economic operators subject to the militarisation process, based on the operation plans in the special work regime and the military records and mobilisation at work for personnel with military obligations, according to the law;

- monitoring damages, destructions, losses of materials and personnel, as well as the degree of damage to production capacities, as well as ordering the necessary measures for the partial or total recovery of the losses incurred;
- sanctioning the violations/contraventions committed by the personnel of the militarised economic operator, criminal, contraventional, disciplinary or material, as the case may be.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The recent geopolitical and economic developments, namely the emergence of a conflict zone near Romania's borders, require measures, concrete actions and *investments by the state in military or dual-use production capacities* necessary to satisfy product demands and services of the National Defence Forces System during the state of mobilisation and/or the state of war, so that they can be prepared to protect the essential interests and security of the Romanian state, as well as to honour their obligations as a EU and NATO member state.

Taking into consideration, as concrete example, the lessons identified during the mobilisation of the parties involved in the conflict in Ukraine, the European reaction is different from country to country, but no comment captures exactly what could be the solution by which a state engaged in an armed conflict can resolve successfully the issue of securing resources for defence. According to Edward Lucas of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), "*a real war economy*" is when "*armed men come and take control of your factory and produce more weapons*" (Schultz, 2023), as is actually happening now in Russia, which has already taken these steps in this respect.

However, the position that Romania has, at a short distance from an ongoing war, invites us to a serious reflection on the subject addressed, being obliged to identify solutions through which, from the perspective of the unfavourable change in the balance of power in the current East-European area, the state's resources should be planned during the peace time, according to economic, social, military and other priorities, so that a satisfactory level of security can be ensured and maintained at all levels of its manifestation.

In this context, the militarisation of economic operators whose activity is directly related to the provision of the resources necessary



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The militarisation of economic operators whose activity is directly related to the provision of the resources necessary for defence represents a required, but quite controversial measure nowadays, if it is seen only as an integral part of a process equivalent to the “wartime economy” in which requires the complete reconfiguration of the economic system and the concentration of production on supporting the national defence effort generated by the ever-present risk of a possible conventional, non-conventional or hybrid conflict that we have before our eyes.

for defence represents a required, but quite controversial measure nowadays, if it is seen only as an integral part of a process equivalent to the “wartime economy”, which requires the complete reconfiguration of the economic system and the concentration of production on supporting the national defence effort generated by the ever-present risk of a possible conventional, non-conventional or hybrid conflict that we have before our eyes.

Confident that our country could become one of the great military powers of Europe, together with Poland, by concentrating some military resources on the national territory, in an allied context, as well as by supplementing military spending and armament production in Romania, we will be able to change our place on the economic map, a situation in which Romania must identify those directions of action aimed at increasing economic productivity, and *the extreme solution of militarisation of economic operators* can be replaced by taking urgent measures for the economic and financial recovery of economic operators strategic interest in developing a strong defence military industry, with new jobs and adequate economic results.

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## “SEA BLINDNESS”

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*The analysis of a country’s development areas requires a clear understanding, by decision-makers, of political, economic, social or environmental phenomena. By analysing the level of awareness and evolution of the policy and strategy of the maritime domain, correlated with their related elements, we can state that Romania has a much greater potential than the level and complexity of development at this date, and the awareness of the importance of the maritime domain should contribute substantially to its evolution. We appreciate that maritime security is a particularly important element in a country’s maritime policy and strategy.*

*In the following contextual analysis, with a view to providing the most appropriate decision support, we seek to examine the rise of maritime security in both conceptual and practical terms. We argue that the developments in the maritime arena have been analysed by various international forums, in security studies, and that a new national agenda for maritime security studies is needed. However, much remains to be studied in the future and a direction for further research should be provided. Thus, the approach taken through this article will contribute to the awareness of the fact that, in Romania, the importance of the maritime sector has declined greatly in the past three decades.*

*The objective of our approach is to make national decision-makers aware of the importance of the maritime domain and, above all, of its contribution to the development of the country. At the same time, we can appreciate that our approach can contribute to increasing the level of maritime education and awareness, as belonging to a maritime nation.*

*Keywords: marine environment; maritime security; “blue economy”; Somali piracy; “sea blindness”;*

## INTRODUCTION

Scientifically speaking, “sea blindness” is a meteorological phenomenon that occurs when water vapours in the sea evaporate and form low clouds that reflect sunlight, blocking visibility on the horizon. This phenomenon can be dangerous for sailors as it can mask the approach to land or other obstacles.

The notion of “sea blindness” has had an interesting development, being multiplied in various fields. Figuratively, the expression “sea blindness” has been adopted to analyse the consequences of neglecting the maritime domain and, by extension, it is also used in other fields such as energy, economics, environmental protection.

“Sea blindness” refers to the inability to see or understand certain issues or situations, such as those related to maritime security, environmental protection or climate change. It can be caused by negligence, ignorance or lack of interest or resources to address the issues. For example, “sea blindness” can be used to describe the lack of attention paid to climate change and its impact on the oceans, or to describe the failure in seeing maritime security risks such as piracy or maritime terrorism. “Sea blindness” is not just limited to one country’s circumstances.

In 2009, reliance on maritime traffic caused the phrase to emerge when UK policymakers were labelled as suffering from “sea blindness”, a charge based on the failure in seeing security needs, vulnerabilities in supply disruption and in weakening the naval forces. A nationwide survey conducted by Seafarers UK in 2011 suggested that the British public was alarmingly ignorant of the island’s dependence on the sea and that “sea blindness” was a “huge problem” (<https://www.maritimefoundation.uk>).

However, in 2017, another poll conducted by the UK Chamber of Shipping claimed that “sea blindness is a myth” (<https://www.ukchamberofshipping.com>).



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## BEYOND “SEA BLINDNESS” – A NEW AGENDA FOR MARITIME SECURITY STUDIES

In the following analysis, we intend to examine the main issues and themes on the maritime security agenda, including the way in which they have been theorised in security studies so far. The first aspect is represented by the fact that the maritime environment should be understood as part of an interconnected security complex, which also incorporates strong connections between the land and the sea.

Secondly, we examine the ways in which maritime security actors have practically responded to these challenges, focusing on issues of maritime domain awareness, coordination of actions and operations.

Thirdly, we refer to the mechanisms by which the new maritime security agenda is disseminated to local actors through a process of decentralised security governance. We focus in particular on the efforts to distribute knowledge and skills to local actors through capability building and security sector reform.

In conclusion, we need to highlight the future challenges for maritime security studies arising from these observations.

A 1909 paper by Constantin Nic Păun, entitled “*Misiunea marinei noastre*”/The Mission of Our Navy”, addresses not only the importance of the maritime domain for states in economic, political terms, but also the navy missions to defend the country’s maritime and river borders. As well, the paper “*Războiul pe Dunăre/War on the Danube*”, part of Romania’s military literature on the maritime domain, published in 1905, by officers Eugeniu Botez (1877-1933) and Nicolae Kirițescu addressed the same topics (Petcu, 2013, p. 1874). We can say that they mark the beginning of Romania’s preoccupations in this field.

However, *maritime security* is one of the most recent additions to the international security vocabulary. Initially created in the 1990s, the concept of *maritime security* has received increasing attention due to the heightened concerns about maritime terrorism since 2000, the rise of modern piracy off the coast of Somalia and elsewhere, and the trafficking in human beings that is so topical today. The growing importance of the so-called “*blue economy*” in recent times, as well as the issues related to maritime environmental protection and resource management have contributed to the growing interest in the subject.

A significant number of states, as well as other international actors, place maritime security at the top of their security agendas. This priority is reflected in several governmental and intergovernmental strategies for maritime security published over the past decade, such as those of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, India, NATO, the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), as well as in multilateral declarations, as the G7 declaration on maritime security, and in the papers of the annual international conference on the topic, *Our Ocean* (<https://ourocean2022.pw/agenda/>).

While maritime security has become a core concern among major global security actors, in international relations and security studies the situation is different, as its study is haphazard at best. Existing literature tends to consider such issues in relation to specific geographical hotspots and the management of specific threats, such as maritime piracy in East Africa, strategic rivalry in the South China Sea or the Arctic, organized crime in West Africa, or human trafficking in Southern Africa and the Mediterranean Sea (China’s Naval Rise and the South China Sea).

Issues such as port security, illegal fishing or environmental crime have received less attention, and the connections between all these themes remain little studied. Other sources subordinate developments at sea to broader themes in international relations, such as Great Power politics, geostrategy or international regime-building (Levy, Thompson, 2010, pp. 7-43).

The amplification of the maritime security agenda has been reflected in a renewed interest among analysts in the issue of order at sea in an age of globalisation (Bekkevold, Till, 2016; Moran, Russell, 2014; Tangredi, 2002) and in its growing significance in national strategic, political and doctrinal publications. Less attention has been paid to the maritime domain as a factor of international change and innovation in itself. The attention given to the domain risks obscuring new and specific patterns in the fields of: international relations, governance and order at sea.

We argue that the maritime security initiatives and activities that have been observed over the past decade require a more robust treatment of the issue in academic discussion. It is time for the discipline to pay more attention to the maritime area and move beyond



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“sea blindness”. Some summaries and generalizations need to be made regarding the basic observations about these developments and activities at sea and the ways in which they require further research need to be highlighted.

There is a growing need for providing new directions for future maritime security studies, but at the same time the challenges posed by maritime security phenomena need to be explored in wider discussions within the framework of international relations and security studies.

### THE GROWING NEED FOR MARITIME SECURITY

Throughout human history, the sea has been seen as an area of danger and insecurity. The seas have repeatedly been portrayed as “an unwanted and unwelcoming wilderness where land is a reassuring reference point” (Mack, 2011, p. 74).

Human history can be interpreted as an attempt to master the sea. However, reviewing the literature, the vast majority of historical and political analyses describe the seas “either as the backdrop to the scene on which the real action – i.e. the land – is seen to take place, or ... simply as a means of connection between the activities taking place on and within the coasts” (Ib., p. 19).

The sea tends to be understood as a stage for the projection of geopolitical power, inter-state warfare or militarized disputes, but also as a source of specific threats such as piracy or as a connector between states enabling various phenomena from colonialism to globalization (Steinberg, 2001). It is where the contradiction arises between the maritime domain, seen as belonging to everyone (for the most part), and land areas as belonging to someone.

Security represents the fact of being sheltered from any danger, a feeling of confidence and tranquility that the absence of any danger gives someone, and as it appears from Maslow’s pyramid, the need for security is placed, as a level of importance, immediately after physiological needs. (Laşan, 2010, p. 39).

Security represents that “state of fact that shelters any community or state from any external and internal danger, following the adoption of specific measures, and that ensures the existence, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the state and respect for fundamental interests” (Europe 2020). It is, since the beginning of mankind, an essential concern, starting in the maritime domain from the security

of inland waters, through coastal areas and to the planetary ocean as a whole.

Maritime security has evolved over time, emerging new sets and systems of non-coercive policies (soft policies) aimed at establishing a favorable environment/ecosystem in which both policies and coercive policies (hard policies) appear. The analysis and understanding of maritime security entail a selection of cases of success, failure or policy disregard. The objective of an analysis is to present very diverse cases from different countries, using qualitative criteria to identify “best” practices.

### THEORIZATION OF MARITIME SECURITY AND THE PATH TOWARDS A MARITIME SECURITY

Mainly, security at sea has been theorised and interpreted from rather conservative points of view, based on traditional realist or liberalist theory (<https://www.jstor.org>). More recent theoretical developments, such as constructivist thinking or critical security studies, have hardly influenced the debate.

In the realist interpretation, the seas are the locus of rivalry between superpowers or regional powers. Recent discussions have focused on China’s rise as a naval power and the US Asian “pivot”, investment in the naval capabilities of emerging powers or the growing competition for resources in the Arctic.

Generally understood as a sub-branch of strategic studies, maritime security has long been approached by focusing on international interaction, influence and order at sea (Booth, 1977; Grove, 1990; Mahan, 1890; Speller, 2014; Till, 2004).

Such work has been located primarily in classical geopolitical studies of international relations, with an emphasis on the historical aspects. Here, what Bekkevold and Till call “top-down” (and less “bottom-up”) structural influences on the international order at sea emerge, including “global shifts in power, changing threat perceptions, naval modernization, and changes in naval capabilities and the application of the law of the sea” (Bekkevold, Till, p. 7).

Liberal interpretations of security at sea highlight the rise of different international regimes governing activities at sea and suggest that the marine environment is increasingly subject to a form of collective public order and legal regulation.



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Since the 1990s, critical security studies, for example in the form of securitization theory or the security-as-practice approach, have hardly, with few exceptions, influenced the debate on security at sea. The concept of maritime security, as part of security in general, includes but is not limited to the existing themes of maritime power and maritime law, being a relatively recently synthesized concept.

Liberal perspectives have been advanced particularly in the work of maritime law scholars (Geiss, Petrig, 2011). Kraska and Pedrozzo, for example, suggest that in recent years international law *“has evolved from a set of rules designed to avoid naval warfare by keeping maritime powers separate to a new global framework designed to facilitate cooperation in maritime security by bringing countries together to achieve common goals”* (2014, p. 10). Even so, such work has tended to focus on issues of technical regulation and formal international law rather than on maritime security governance more broadly defined. Ian Speller noted that *“the maintenance of good order at sea has not traditionally been subject to theoretical analysis in the same way as war activity or even diplomatic roles have”* (Speller, p. 150).

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The concept of *maritime security*, as part of security in general, includes but is not limited to the existing themes of maritime power and maritime law, being a relatively recently synthesized concept. However, in many respects, the study of the seas has lagged considerably behind developments in general security studies. The traditional focus of the discipline has typically been *“broadened”* and *“deepened”* to incorporate a larger set of security issues, areas and activities, at least since the early 1990s. They have included so-called *“new”* security issues such as terrorism, transnational organised crime or environmental degradation, affecting a wide range of actors, including but not limited to the state, with a growing tendency to link security to development.

Broad notions of security began to gain consistent importance in academia and policy at the turn of the millennium. In this respect, it has to be mentioned the 1998 report of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans (IWCO). Published to coincide with the UN’s International Year of the Oceans, it considered a range of military and non-military threats to international order at sea, as well as the ways in which maritime security governance should be reconfigured to address them (IWCO, p. 17).

This process was developed in the wake of the successful attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden by an extremist group in 2000 and the attacks of 11 September 2001, after which the United States

of America began to pay significant attention to the nation’s maritime and security dimension. Thus, the US government published a National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS) in 2005, accompanied by eight supporting plans to address the *“specific threats and challenges of the maritime environment”* (US Government, 2005). The strategy was one of the first documents of the kind to explicitly conceive the maritime sphere as a distinct security complex. The strategy placed considerable emphasis on maritime vulnerabilities generated by terrorism, including the prospect of a terrorist attack either at sea or from the sea, as well as on the challenges of securing ports and coastal areas against incursions of terrorist materials, including potential weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The maritime security measures implemented in the aftermath of the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 have generated a broad review of the organisation, force allocation and modus operandi of forces and institutions involved in US maritime security, extending them into the Mediterranean Sea through Operation *Active Endeavour*.

However, like the IWCO report, it also identified a number of wider maritime security challenges. They include the threat of piracy, illegal exploitation of maritime resources, smuggling and crime, and other threats to the free flow of maritime trade (<https://www.whitehouse.gov>).

The US National Strategy for Maritime Security (<https://amti.csis.org>) was followed by a series of developments in the overall strategy that placed order at sea at the centre of US naval thinking. For example, the *“1000 Ship Navy”* (<https://www.usni.org>) concept in 2005-2006 (abandoned nowadays) began with the recognition that maritime security challenges were too complex and diffuse for the United States of America to manage alone. Instead, it envisioned what Peter Haynes called *“a self-organizing, self-governing global maritime security network that coordinates the activities of the navies, coast guards, and police units of volunteer nations”* (Haynes, 2015, p. 197). This notion was controversial at that time, being hampered by suspicion of US motives from potential partner states and controversy within the US Navy. However, it pointed to some important future trends, including the difficulties faced by a single state, however powerful, in managing a diffuse and complex maritime security environment and the need for cooperative relationships with others in areas of common interest.



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It also pointed to a broader and wider understanding of US maritime power.

As a result of US efforts, a number of similar strategies have been adopted by other nations and international organisations. Most notable among them are the *NATO Alliance Maritime Strategy* (2011, <https://www.nato.int/cps>)<sup>1</sup>; the *UK National Strategy for Maritime Security* (2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government>) and 2022 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-maritime-security-strategy>); the *EU Maritime Security Strategy* (2014, <https://www.eeas.europa.eu>); the *French National Strategy for the Security of Sea Areas* (2015, <https://www.gouvernement.fr>) and *G7 Declaration* (<https://www.mofa.go>) regarding maritime security (also 2015). In common with the US strategy, these approaches are distinguished by their scale and ambition. They strive to connect different maritime threats and risks and aim to provide a comprehensive or holistic overview of the challenges faced at sea.

Thus, the EU Maritime Security conceptualizes maritime security as “a state of affairs in the global maritime domain, where international and national law are applied, freedom of navigation is guaranteed and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment and marine resources are protected” (<https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu>). Similarly, the UK’s National Strategy for Maritime Security is concerned with “promoting and protecting the UK’s national interests at home and abroad by actively managing risks and opportunities in and from the maritime domain, to strengthen and extend the UK’s prosperity, security and resilience, and to help shape a stable world”.

Each of these maritime security strategies includes a different mix of emphases, inclusions and exclusions. NATO’s strategy, for example, prioritises deterrence and collective defence alongside issues such as crisis management and cooperative security, and continues to emphasise “hard” naval power alongside more diffuse maritime security tasks. The UK strategy, by contrast, does not consider “coastal defence”, military campaigns or maritime security as part of its remit.

<sup>1</sup> Strengthening the Alliance’s Maritime Posture is an integral and cross-cutting part of the implementation of these two paths and was reconfirmed in the 2022 Strategic Concept.

The African Union’s strategy – AIM 2050 (<https://cggrps.com>) emphasizes the importance of maritime resources and trade to the continent’s security and economic development, with a focus on capability building in areas including coastguard capabilities and port facilities.

Even so, the general thrust of each of these approaches is an attempt to understand and engage with the maritime arena as an interconnected security complex rather than as a series of separate threats or challenges, recognising that maritime security is a collective political issue over which no single actor can exercise decisive control.

### THE BASIC DIMENSIONS OF MARITIME SECURITY

The development and increasing importance of the maritime domain have generated new requirements and standards, continuing and perfecting the trend of adaptation and efficiency with regard to maritime security. All this is correlated with the existing technical and technological level as well as with the one forecasted within the extraordinary existing trend. Developments are rapid, and new regulatory documents and strategic studies provide important considerations for security studies scholars regarding the nature of maritime security.

Analyzing the contemporary maritime security complex, we can state that it consists of four domains, each of them incorporating a series of cross-cutting security concerns. The first of these domains encompasses what is best regarded as a national security issue, corresponding largely to the long-standing traditions of naval strategy and naval power (the military domain).

The national security component of maritime security involves the development and application of naval power, incorporating the military power projection and the defence of the nation at sea, as well as the use of warships to protect maritime trade routes and commerce through deterrence, surveillance, and denial (Bueger). Such concerns remain topical in many parts of the world, especially in regions of current geopolitical rivalry, such as the South China Sea.

A second area addresses the marine environment. It includes a wide range of issues such as marine pollution, ship safety and regulation, maritime search and rescue, ocean health, pollution and the impact



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*Marine environmental issues relate to maritime security in several ways. They are a manifestation of wider environmental security concerns at sea and in coastal areas. They concern the position of commercial shipping as a potential target for crime, terrorism or piracy and as a means for trafficking in people, illicit goods or weapons.*

of climate change. The marine environment is a similar long-standing concern in the maritime sphere, with its genesis in international efforts to regulate shipping and other activities at sea through intergovernmental organisations such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) or coordinating bodies such as UN Oceans.

Marine environmental issues relate to maritime security in several ways. They are a manifestation of wider environmental security concerns at sea and in coastal areas. They concern the position of commercial shipping as a potential target for crime, terrorism or piracy and as a means for trafficking in people, illicit goods or weapons (<https://www.sciencedirect.com>). Environmental degradation caused by fishing or other environmental crimes has also the potential to increase the grievances of coastal populations and lead to maritime instability.

Marine environmental problems are closely linked to a third area of economic development. The so-called “blue economy” (<https://cor.europa.eu/ro/news>) concerns underpin much of the maritime security agenda. About 90% of global trade is conducted at sea, and marine resources such as fisheries or offshore oil/gas are key economic assets.

Global trade can be threatened by piracy, crime or other forms of maritime disruption, while protection and development of marine resources are often central priorities for coastal states. Indeed, it is worth noting in this regard that the African Union’s AIM 2050 strategy (<https://au.int/en>) places “blue growth” at the heart of its narrative, while the EU developed its own specific “blue growth” strategy in 2012 (<https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>).

A final area addresses human security issues, in the sense of insecurity of individuals and local communities, as well as those affecting states. Human security issues permeate much of the maritime security agenda. Fisheries protection and sustainability, for example, support the livelihoods of millions of people living in coastal regions, while the same groups are often the most vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change or maritime pollution. Such concerns relate not only to the security of individuals and coastal communities, but also to the role of human insecurity in facilitating the emergence of activities such as piracy or crime as alternative sources of employment in regions of significant economic deprivation.

The maritime security agenda could have four distinctive features. The first of them is the interconnected, sometimes interdependent, nature of the security challenges that maritime security addresses (Samatar, Lindberg, Mahayni). For example, the collapse of the Somali state in the 1990s<sup>2</sup> left coastal regions open to plunder from illegal, unregulated or unreported fishing by wealthier states, as well as other activities such as unregulated disposal of toxic waste. Such activities exacerbated the significant degradation of local economies and fisheries as a result of the war, and created a substantial body of socially and economically displaced youth whose primary “useful” skills were related to navigating through fishing or violence through conflict (Ib.)

Somali-generated piracy was tolerated by local communities because of a severely impoverished population. As a security issue, Somali piracy thus encompasses themes of national security (international naval forces in various forms), maritime security (safety and duty of care towards the crews of hijacked vessels), economic development (fisheries protection and development) and human security (among vulnerable coastal communities).

A second characteristic of maritime security is that it is at the limit or threshold of its perception. Most maritime security issues should not simply be understood and addressed as marine environmental issues alone. Instead, they are invariably interlinked with challenges on land as well, as illustrated by the case of Somali piracy discussed above.

Coastal zones, ports and other infrastructure are integral to maritime security in other ways too. Effective governance and security of port or offshore facilities are often key to managing challenges such as smuggling, looting and corruption. Let us not forget that piracy and terrorism are primarily supported and financed on land, where the leadership is located!

Third, maritime security issues often transcend the clear boundaries of government responsibility or state competence. The High Seas are by definition a transnational environment, over which sovereignty is shared and in which the state is only one actor among many.

<sup>2</sup> In file: //C:/Users/lears/Downloads/itudorache,+19\_POPESCU+Alba+Iulia\_Somalia\_studiu+de+caz.pdf, retrieved on 1 February 2023.



*Somali-generated piracy was tolerated by local communities because of a severely impoverished population. As a security issue, Somali piracy thus encompasses themes of national security (international naval forces in various forms), maritime security (safety and duty of care towards the crews of hijacked vessels), economic development (fisheries protection and development) and human security (among vulnerable coastal communities).*





*At the international level, piracy on the high seas has been addressed primarily as a maritime law enforcement issue, governed by international maritime law. However, this aspect raises a number of questions such as how captured pirate suspects should be treated, including where they should be tried and potentially imprisoned.*

Finally, and by extension, maritime security is inherently interjurisdictional, or at least jurisdictionally complex (<https://www.academia.edu>).

At the international level, piracy on the high seas has been addressed primarily as a maritime law enforcement issue, governed by international maritime law. However, this aspect raises a number of questions such as how captured pirate suspects should be treated, including where they should be tried and potentially imprisoned (Ib.). Even in territorial waters, there can be significant overlap or tension. Indeed, it is instructive in this regard to consider that the US NSMS has replaced what had previously been a series of separate departmental strategies, including those of the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (US Government, 2005).

The maritime sphere is thus increasingly understood as a complex and holistic security issue, requiring extensive international, national, jurisdictional and public-private coordination to effectively address the challenges it presents. In practice, these maritime security challenges generate new forms of association, integration and cooperation between actors.

### THE MULTITUDE AND DIVERSITY OF MARITIME SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COMPLEX SYSTEM

The multiple approaches to the field normally generate a diversity of solutions, individual or group ones, regarding the ways and methods of planning and manifesting forms of maritime security. All these approaches create a multitude of inconsistencies at the macro level, but also gaps in the application of international regulations, fully or partially agreed or even not assumed.

An example is that of the EU maritime security strategy development process, which takes stock of the relevant agencies within the organization itself and its members. Thus, 383 groups or organizations dealing with the problem in one way or another have been identified, their number reflecting the complexity of the maritime security environment at the European level only (<https://www.google.com/search?q=Marcus+Houben>), the Union being nevertheless appreciated as having legislation in the field.

Similarly, the Contact Group on Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS<sup>3</sup>) faces the challenge of bringing together and coordinating the work of more than 80 states and 25 international organizations to address piracy in the western Indian Ocean ([http:// www. lessonsfrompiracy.net](http://www.lessonsfrompiracy.net)).

The organizational and international diversity of such initiatives often creates problems in the field of maritime security. They can be observed at three levels: first, a level centered on the joint production of knowledge; then, a coordination level focused on developing common scenarios for action; and finally, an operational level, incorporating joint maritime security activities.

We can appreciate that the multitude and diversity of structures engaged in the field of maritime security, as a result of national interests, represent a disadvantage that can only be removed through theoretical and operational standardization, as well as through collaboration, coordination and international cooperation. Everything must start from an organizational approach, with the use of simple tools and a coherent and effective response to the complexity and institutional links inherent in the issue of maritime security. Maritime security must be approached in a unitary manner, making connections where they exist and avoiding actions in one area that may be counterproductive to others. However, the strengthening of maritime capacity must be done with a correlation of similar efforts on land. National or regional actors can be supported and encouraged to manage their maritime security sectors in an adapted way and within a preferred organizational model. The application of the concept tends to favor state institutions. Where such institutions are weak or even non-existent, it is necessary to increase organizational efficiency.

Thus, organisational reform often focuses on issues of professionalisation in security institutions, including the definition of clear organisational roles and responsibilities, the development of appropriate structures, tailoring and training human resources to perform specific tasks, the establishment of formal organisational planning models and their implementation based on common standards of best practice.

<sup>3</sup> The CGPCS is an ad hoc international governance mechanism (International Contact Group) established in New York on 14 January 2009 to facilitate discussions and coordinate actions among states and organizations to suppress Somali piracy.



*The organizational and international diversity of such initiatives often creates problems in the field of maritime security. They can be observed at three levels: first, a level centered on the joint production of knowledge; then, a coordination level focused on developing common scenarios for action; and finally, an operational level, incorporating joint maritime security activities.*



The maritime security agenda actually leads to new forms of international order at sea. This process is pragmatic and incremental, driven by innovation and change in the maritime arena rather than by broader structural changes in geopolitics or international regulation.

International actors develop practical responses to specific maritime security challenges. They reflect the requirement to coordinate and integrate the four areas of maritime security, namely: maritime power, marine environment, economic development and human security.

### THE MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS AND THE NEED FOR INFORMATION

At the knowledge level, innovation in the maritime security complex can be seen in a number of new mechanisms for producing knowledge about the maritime security environment and developing what is often called Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) or maritime situational awareness.

To that end, it is used a wide range of data, including (voluntary) tracking of ship movements through information gathering systems such as the Automatic Identification System (AIS) or Single Windows, active surveillance through naval patrols, aerial reconnaissance, satellite imagery and radar systems, as well as the collection and analysis of data from national and international agencies involved in maritime security, shipping companies, including port authorities, customs and law enforcement. MDA aims to provide a rich database of information, often in real time, so that maritime security activities – including ship inspections at sea – can be planned and directed through centralized data mining techniques.

MDA's ambitions are considerable and go far beyond maritime surveillance as conventionally understood. In this regard, it is desirable to effectively understand anything associated with the maritime domain that could have an impact on security, safety, the economy or the environment. Such aspirations require significant transnational cooperation as well as engagement with a wide range of sub-state and private actors. Other initiatives exploit the opportunities offered by new communication and information technologies to open new channels of information exchange between civilian and military actors, as well as between the navies or ships of nations that might normally be reluctant to cooperate with each other. For example, the international

action against piracy off the coast of Somalia has been facilitated by the Mercury Information Sharing Platform (<https://research-information.bris.ac.uk>), which enables various stakeholders – including national navies, international missions and civilian information sharing centers – to communicate with each other via chat-based synchronous text. chat with a live feed of naval operations and piracy incidents, providing real-time data to all participating actors.

### INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN THE FUTURE?

Understanding maritime security and the structural and practical challenges it poses to the way the sea is governed will require continued in-depth study of the activities and initiatives that international actors undertake to address key elements of maritime security. It involves extending beyond the perspective of traditional realist and liberal theorising and using the insights offered by new security studies to consider normative structures, practices and knowledge.

It is necessary, while preserving the knowledge of power and maritime law studies, to connect them to interdisciplinary observations, and five areas in particular require further attention. Thus, we need to understand the changing nature of maritime power and how it can be transformed through connections with marine environmental concerns, *blue economy* and human security, the new focus on maritime crime and law enforcement at sea linked to the use of a full range of practical innovations, including technology and informal practices.

Moreover, we need to review the role of formal and informal rules for maritime security governance and examine how they are implemented through operations at sea, new legal coordination mechanisms and capability building, taking into account the creativity required to manage the complexity of maritime law. In addition, we need to look at how established models of international security cooperation – alliances, multinational operations and so on – become more diffuse, complex and complementary, involving a range of national (sometimes antagonistic) and also private partners as well as other non-state actors, including shipping companies, private security companies, fishing communities and other sub-state groups.

In the same context, it is necessary to pay more attention to the connections between the land and the sea, to the diverse forms



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*It is necessary to pay more attention to the connections between the land and the sea, to the diverse forms of maritime crime and to other threats. For the mentioned problems to be understood and mitigated, maritime security studies should include a more sustained engagement in their causes and interaction on land, as well as in their manifestation at sea.*

of maritime crime and to other threats. For the mentioned problems to be understood and mitigated, maritime security studies should include a more sustained engagement in their causes and interaction on land, as well as in their manifestation at sea.

Last but not least, it is necessary to review the structural effects of capability building in the maritime sphere. At present, these initiatives remain relatively immature compared to those on land and there is a need for systematic experience sharing.

In conclusion, we consider it is time for security studies to move beyond the “sea blindness” and recognize the maritime domain as a subject and instrument for change and innovation in global policy as a whole. It will lead to a more pragmatic and relevant understanding of the maritime security complex, opening up an important environment for international interaction.

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## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NATO AND EU APPROACH TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

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*The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) agree that the strategy of conflict management has undergone fundamental changes in that the neutralisation of critical infrastructure has become an element that facilitates success much more easily than the neutralisation of an adversary’s forces, as it triggers chain reactions leading to the destabilisation of society.*

*According to NATO and EU experts, an infrastructure can only be considered critical when it becomes essential and of particular importance to the functionality of a system and when some or all of its components become vulnerable to certain threats.*

*From this perspective, NATO’s concerns for the protection of critical infrastructure are set out specifically in Directives 114/2008 and 2557/2022, and those of the EU have been extended in particular after the terrorist attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid.*

*With this in mind, the following are some considerations regarding the need to prevent the neutralisation or destruction of critical infrastructure, presented from NATO and EU perspectives.*

*Keywords: NATO; European Union; infrastructure; critical infrastructure;*



## INTRODUCTION

Romania’s accession to NATO and the EU took place in the context of the emergence of a security gap following the abolition of the Warsaw Treaty, to which the Socialist Republic of Romania was part of, and the need for harmonious economic development within the European economic community, following the abolition of the Community of Mutual Economic Assistance, to which it was also part of.

Ensuring national security and the protection of critical infrastructure, especially in the context of the exacerbation of critical actions, cannot be achieved by Romania by its own forces alone, but only within NATO and the EU. From this perspective, NATO and the EU have addressed and continue to address the issue of national security and critical infrastructure very carefully, especially in the wake of the increased terrorism, both at state, regional and global level.

From this perspective, NATO and the EU have each developed a concept of critical infrastructure protection, which will be discussed below.

## NATO’S CONCEPT OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

From NATO’s perspective, interest in critical infrastructure has increased particularly after the terrorist events of 11 September 2011 and as a result of increased local, regional and global terrorist threats and actions.

NATO’s approach to critical infrastructure issues is primarily addressed through the *Civil Emergency Planning Committee*, which was established in 1950 with the creation and development of the Civil Emergency Planning Program.

This committee is NATO’s main advisory body on civil protection issues and the use of civil resources to achieve Alliance objectives.

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NATO's need for civil emergency planning has been driven by the ever-changing world and the proliferation of terrorist threats to the populations of NATO member states, as well as threats from natural disasters.

The term *planning* refers to the collection and analysis of information on the occurrence of emergencies in Alliance states and the allocation of resources available for their management in order to limit and liquidate their consequences.

An analysis of the history of the emergence, development and management of emergencies has shown that they have not only occurred within the national borders of a single state, but have also extended their effects to the areas of several states, thus taking on an international character. Based on this, NATO became involved in emergency management, *"which became a force in civil protection and consequence management, with a focus on possible terrorist attacks with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents"* (NATO, 2006, p. 1).

Critical infrastructure protection is a priority of NATO's civil emergency planning work, in which all partner countries participate.

Cooperation at international level facilitates the much-needed exchange of information to ensure the protection of critical infrastructure, including the identification of threats and vulnerabilities to critical infrastructure and the procedures to be applied to ensure timely and effective protection.

Educating authorities and the population about the importance of infrastructures of all kinds, both for their societies and for the international community (Ibid., p. 9), is an important issue to which NATO pays particular attention.

NATO is also involved in *"Civil Preparedness"* in the sense that it has established obligations for each state to take responsibility for the protection of both its population and its critical infrastructure against disasters caused by terrorist actions or natural factors. As a result, it can be stated that *"NATO acts as a forum that provides best practice in this regard"* (NATO, 2023), since any military operation is dependent on civilian support and relies on civilian resources and infrastructure, including transport routes and means, ports, airports and airfields, communication networks, medical systems, etc.

It should also be noted that in February 2016, NATO set out the following requirements for increasing national resilience from the perspective of Alliance member states (NATO, 2016): *"continuity of government and critical government services; energy sources; ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people; food and water resources; ability to deal with mass casualties; telecommunications and computer networks; transportation systems"*. From the above, it can be concluded that Civil Preparedness is a complex process carried out by the Civil Emergency Planning Committee, involving all NATO members and Alliance partners. This process involves educating civilians, in times of peace and stability, in the field of emergency and disaster management so that they can maintain their basic functions in times of crisis or conflict. In addition to the national capabilities of each Alliance member state to conduct counter-terrorism, identify terrorist threats and reduce vulnerabilities, and counter-terrorism when a terrorist attack occurs, NATO is constantly concerned with the ongoing development of appropriate response technologies and capabilities to protect armed forces and civilian populations, as well as critical infrastructure, against possible terrorist attacks. In order to achieve this goal, NATO member states are pooling their funding to be able to deal with the most urgent situations of threat or attack from terrorist structures.

The need to ensure the protection of critical infrastructure has led NATO to develop specific programs aimed at: the protection of ports and maritime assets, which are particularly important for the conduct of economic activities; the protection of networks, including the Internet, which are so important for human communication in all areas of society; the protection of energy infrastructure, on which the security and prosperity of states depend, etc. At the same time, NATO has developed education and information, supporting international courses on the protection of critical energy infrastructure in countries such as Kuwait and Ukraine, forums on the protection of critical infrastructure in various cities in Croatia, and has continuously developed programs to prepare member countries and partners of the Alliance to be able to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to hostile events and to protect their critical infrastructure with a higher degree of vulnerability.



*Civil Preparedness is a complex process carried out by the Civil Emergency Planning Committee, involving all NATO members and Alliance partners. This process involves educating civilians, in times of peace and stability, in the field of emergency and disaster management so that they can maintain their basic functions in times of crisis or conflict.*





## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CONCEPT OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

The European Union has attached and continues to attach great importance to the protection of critical infrastructure, especially after the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004. In this context, the European Union has taken steps to regulate critical infrastructures, establishing various means of preventing terrorist attacks on them, has taken steps to inform and prepare the member states for better management of the critical infrastructure situation and has improved response strategies in the event of attacks and protection arrangements, thereby ensuring a high and effective level of security of critical infrastructures, communication networks and the Internet, thus guaranteeing the safety of the public in the member states.

With this in mind, the European Union has taken steps to set up teams, formations and organizations responsible for the protection of critical infrastructures.

The main body responsible for the implementation of critical infrastructure protection policies has been nominated as the governmental body of each state, through the structures at its disposal.

To this end, the Romanian Government has delegated the task of protecting each critical sector to one or more ministries, depending on the field of activity, as mentioned above, a delegation which is valid for all Member States of the European Union, but which may differ to a greater or lesser extent without infringing the provisions of the European Union.

The European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) operates at European Union level as a centre of expertise for cyber security in Europe and has been directly involved since 2004 in raising the level of network and information security within the European Union.

The Agency collaborates with EU members and the private sector to provide advice and solutions, addressing topics such as: the development of national cyber security strategies; data protection, protection of privacy enhancing mechanisms for emerging technologies, trusted services and the identification of the cyber threats as a whole. "At the same time, the agency works in the areas of recommendations,

support in policy development and implementation, and direct collaboration with EU-level operational teams" (ENISA, 2023).

It should be noted that these entities play an important role in critical infrastructure protection, as they are specialised structures that are a form of response to requests for this activity. They exist in every country and what differs is their name.

From this perspective, the following entities can be mentioned: "CERT/CC (Computer Emergency Response Team/Coordination Centre); CSIRT (Computer Security Incident Response Team); IRT (Incident Response Team); CIRT (Computer Incident Response Team); SERT (Security Emergency Response Team). CERT started out as a response force but has expanded to become a security service provider, including preventive services such as alerting, security warnings, security management and training services" (CEPS, 2010).

Although no longer a full and binding member of the EU, the United Kingdom remains an important partner of the EU. As a result, we believe it is beneficial to recall the existence of the centre called WARPs (Warning, Advice and Reporting Point) in the UK as part of the NISCC (National Infrastructure Security Coordination Centre) outreach strategy on the protection of UK critical infrastructure from electronic attacks, which highlights that there is an entity that plays an important role in critical infrastructure protection in terms of dealing with warning and alerting, information sharing, reporting, but also raising awareness and educating the public. The Centre has proven its effectiveness in improving information security, stimulating better communication of alerts and warnings, improving education and awareness and encouraging incident reporting. The Centre is an example of best practice in a state's concern for the protection of its critical infrastructure, which can be implemented in EU member states as well.

The private sector in each EU member state or partner country has most of the critical infrastructure in the commercial sector, and good cooperation between the public and private sector in each country is needed to protect it properly.

Collaboration between the private system of infrastructure owners and operators and that of the technology and information sector,



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which has much more limited, local capabilities, is more complicated.

The private sector operates through associations/organisations such as ICASI (Industry Consortium for the Promotion of Internet Security).

In the Conficker Work Group, industry representatives unite under the same goal of preventing *Conficker* virus attacks on Windows operating systems

## CONCLUSIONS

NATO and the European Union are concerned with the protection of critical infrastructure, and from this perspective they are increasingly concerned to understand and apply as rigorously and effectively as possible a concept of critical infrastructure protection, as changes in the security environment can irreparably affect the achievement of their objectives. This has contributed to an awareness of the particular importance of critical infrastructures for the development of a strong, stable and secure society and the need to address the causes that may lead to disruption of their operations or to limit the effects of such incidents.

In order to establish procedures and viable means to generate a high level of resilience of NATO and EU member states, these two major political and military organisations have established and required each member to meet national standards, on the basis of which each must participate in joint international support. Responses to these actions are in line with the available resources and capabilities of each country, as some are more developed and others lag behind and seek to engage the domestic political process towards sustainable critical infrastructure protection.

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## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN THE AGE OF MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

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*The present paper is intended to develop a theory on the aspects that should be considered while meaning is made and conveyed, in the context of multimodal communication, emphasizing the way in which the discourse constructs and deconstructs versions of the social world. The term theory refers to a set of insights, a collection of categories, intended to provide a conceptual understanding of the self and the world, as well as a rational support for such understanding. The paper is therefore an inductive approach, specific to qualitative research. Considering that inductive reasoning entails the derivation of a general principle, a new insight or a theory from a body of systematically collected knowledge, the grounded theory is employed as the research method.*

*Keywords: critical discourse analysis; grounded theory; multimodal communication; coding; framing; positioning;*



### INTRODUCTION

Language, as a system of symbols conventionally adopted by individuals, is central to any form of communication and social interaction. Therefore, linguistics becomes the core of any discussion about identities and relationships. An example in this regard is the act of defining. Defining something/someone is an act of placement involving an entity that defines, one that is defined, and a rational process, while changing a definition entails a reorganization of the identification and disidentification process, resulting in a new category or identity as well as in a new relationship.

In connection with the present paper, I consider necessary some explanatory notes with reference to the terms used in the title. Thus, discourse should be understood as any interchange of ideas and concepts, achieved through written, verbal and nonverbal means of communication. In this context, critical discourse analysis is a tool that helps individuals to understand how language, as it has been previously defined, and implicitly the self, are situated in a specific cultural, social and historical dynamics, taking into account that language has a significant role in the power game (Foucault, 1972). Thus, critical discourse analysis is not used here as a research method. Multimodal communication is a holistic type of communication, involving written, verbal and nonverbal communication, images, iconic elements and one or more devices. An interesting mention that should be made here is that it was initially employed to help people with special needs to communicate and, over time and benefitting from the technological progress, it has become widely used.

The aim of the paper is to develop a theory on the aspects that should be considered while meaning is made and conveyed, in the context of multimodal communication, emphasizing the way in which the discourse constructs and deconstructs versions of the social

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*Grounded theory has been developed for over fifty years as a research method appropriate for qualitative research processes, contributing to their legitimation as scientific inquiries, in the absence of statistical data. Providing explicit and sequential data for research, it allows for streamlining and integrating data collection and analysis as well as for developing novel insights.*

world. The term theory refers to a set of insights, a collection of categories, intended to provide a conceptual understanding of the self and the world, as well as a rational support for such understanding. In the particular case considered in this paper, the developed theory, which is not a grand theory, although the terms are often equated in metaperspective, is meant to explain the underlying processes involved in people's symbolic interaction, which is difficult if not impossible to measure. The paper is therefore an inductive approach, specific to qualitative research. Inductive reasoning entails the derivation of a general principle, a new insight or a theory from a body of systematically collected knowledge and observations that are subject to analysis and interpretation. Considering the above-mentioned aspects, the best option in developing the paper is the employment of grounded theory as the research method.

Grounded theory has been developed for over fifty years as a research method appropriate for qualitative research processes, contributing to their legitimation as scientific inquiries, in the absence of statistical data. Providing explicit and sequential data for research, it allows for streamlining and integrating data collection and analysis as well as for developing novel insights. Moreover, being focused on symbolic interactionism, grounded theory can be a useful tool in studying the relationship between the way meaning is made and conveyed in the perception of subjects and the way they act in response, considering the idea of constructed reality, which is, in fact, the topic of the paper.

Grounded theory approach entails the existence of some relatively common techniques and steps that are conducive to developing an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under research, which may be the developed theory. Moreover, data are collected in a cyclical and iterative manner, each iteration representing a step closer to developing the theory. The mentioned techniques and steps can be grouped under the following topics: theoretical sampling, coding paradigm and theory development. Although the method is an inductive one, considering that it is almost impossible for a particular research topic to have no coverage nowadays, theoretical sampling is the deductive component of grounded theory, mainly referring to data collection

and analysis, taking into account the problem of saturation. Saturation may refer to both data and theoretical concepts. The general perception is that audience claim for saturation, which is not the case in relation to this method that is rather intended to describe and understand phenomena as well as to identify boundaries and develop insights based on theoretical sampling and coding.

### THEORETICAL SAMPLING

As aforementioned, it represents the deductive component of the employed method. Considering the impossibility of either providing all the pieces of information about the research topic or starting it from scratch, theoretical sampling is intended to achieve a balance between the two mentioned aspects, mainly in relation to data collection and analysis.

Language can be understood as a system of signs that, following certain rules, convey a meaning. A sign has the particularity of producing a meaning, other than the sign itself, being the subject of a cognitive process on the part of the interpreter. Semiotics is the study of meaning-making based on signs or a specific sequence of signs.

The fact that the sign does not directly signifies, the meaning being different from the sign itself, entails coding and decoding. A code is a system in which a word, number, symbol, image, gesture etc. stands for something else. To find out a meaning for that "something else", a decoding process is necessary.

Coding/decoding processes entail certain combination rules (syntax), which provide them with a degree of structure, as well as certain cultural units (meme), which explain the spread of ideas and cultural phenomena. The term meme comes from the Greek *mimeme*, meaning imitated thing, shortened following the model of gene. Considering the mentioned aspects, language can be defined as a system that pairs structurally related stimuli (codes) and meme states.

It naturally follows that, in a communication situation, there is an encoder/sender and a decoder/receiver. The encoder uses verbal or nonverbal language, as well as images, icons and certain devices, in the case of multimodal communication, to transmit a message. The way the message is encoded is closely related to the purpose of the message.



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The decoder/receiver translates the code in order to understand and interpret the message. The translation is a cognitive process, being related to own cultural and relational, namely, social context. It entails both the deconstruction and the reconstruction of the message. Deconstruction (Derrida, 1976) refers to the fact that the message is broken down into comprehensible units, while reconstruction entails a reinterpretation of the units as a whole. Mention should be made that deconstruction and reconstruction processes are not the same for all decoders. That is why, in general, a feedback mechanism is necessary so that the degree of equivalence between the sender intention and the receiver interpretation can be as high as possible in order for communication to be effective.

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Therefore, traditionally, a communication model basically involves an encoder/sender, a message, a channel, a decoder/receiver, as well as the implicit cognitive processes and the feedback mechanisms. However, with the emergence of new ways of communication, mainly those facilitated by the technological progress, in the context of multimodality, new models have been advanced.

New communication models essentially entail four processes, namely, production, circulation, use and reproduction, which can be both autonomous and interdependent. Thus, production is defined as the operation of codes within the rules of language. In this context, it is appreciated that communication between the production entities and their audiences is necessarily a form of systematically distorted communication, as an event becomes, more or less literally, a story before it becomes a communication event (Hall, 1973, pp. 1-4). Therefore, production has its own discursive aspect. As for circulation, the audience is both the source and the receiver. With respect to the use, messages are encoded in the form of a meaningful discourse. Last but not least, reproduction refers to the effect of the message/discourse, which has perceptual, cognitive, emotional and behavioural consequences. Thus, decoding does not inevitably follow from encoding. (Hall, 2009, pp. 163-174).

## CODING PARADIGM

From the very beginning mention should be made that the coding paradigm chapter includes two sections – one in relation to coding in communication and the other in relation to coding in grounded theory research method.

### *Coding in communication*

Coding is a term that generally refers to the process of selecting, developing and prescribing a model for standard language using, the act, process or result of arranging symbols in a systematic form/code. A code is defined as a system of rules to convert signs into another form for communication, through a communication channel.

Communication is a complex process that entails the existence of a multitude of codes, especially in the context of multimodality. Some of the common codes used in communication, as they systematically evoke particular meme states, are as follows: language; mathematical symbols; musical notation system; aesthetic codes, related to different types of arts; kinesic codes, referring to the use of physical bodies; proxemic codes, related to the use of space; vocalic codes, referring to different voice qualities (tone, rhythm, resonance, inflection, tempo); haptic codes, related to physical touch; chronemic codes, referring to the use of time; physical appearance; olfactory codes; artifacts (e.g. garments and accessories) and environment.

Communication codes share some important characteristics that are considered by both encoders and decoders in strict relation to the utility of the message. One of the characteristics is related to the syntax, namely the structure of the message beyond grammar, and the degree of its rigidity. The degree of rigidity is high in the case of mathematical notation systems for example. Therefore, it is likely for a rigid or relatively rigid syntax to evoke the same meme states. However, in everyday life communicative situations, the codes that are used do not have such a rigid syntax, not to mention the intrinsic emotional component of a message. Consequently, it is less likely for the codes to evoke the same meme states, which affects the effectiveness of communication.



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*In the context of multimodal communication, it is questionable whether language still remains the most effective activator of meme states, considering, first and foremost, the initial target of the mentioned type of communication, namely the people with special needs, as well as the existence of more than one semiotic modes. Moreover, in the same context, the feedback mechanism is affected, considering the multitude of feedbacks, on the one hand, and the problem of proximity, on the other hand.*

Another characteristic of communication codes, also in relation to syntax, is their complexity. Mention should be made that there is no direct relation between rigidity and complexity. The example of mathematical codes is relevant in this regard. They can be very rigid and extremely complex at the same time. The last but not least characteristic that I would like to emphasize here is related to the relevance of the codes in different contexts. Relevance is in strict connection with the meme states a code can evoke. In other words, certain codes can better evoke certain meme states than others.

In the context of multimodal communication, it is questionable whether language still remains the most effective activator of meme states, considering, first and foremost, the initial target of the mentioned type of communication, namely the people with special needs, as well as the existence of more than one semiotic modes. Moreover, in the same context, the feedback mechanism is affected, considering the multitude of feedbacks, on the one hand, and the problem of proximity, on the other hand. Proximity is also in strict connection with the distribution of the message, namely the communication channel, which, in turn, is related to the interface. It is easy to understand that any switch in one of the above-mentioned aspects result in changing the message or in providing it with different nuances that are subject to interpretation.

Under these circumstances, code-switching enjoys a particular attention. Code-switching entails adjustments at the level of the message coding and channel. The adjustments are mainly intended for the sender and the receiver integration, which is particularly the focus of multimodal communication. However, code-switching comes with psychological and social repercussions, both advantageous and disadvantageous, depending on the context and perspective.

### **Coding in grounded theory research method**

Grounded theory is, as above-mentioned, a qualitative research method employed in theory building rather than in theory testing, within the limits the term theory has already been defined. Coding is an iterative process entailing questioning data/concepts and establishing relationships between them by constantly making comparisons

for similarity and differences. Thus, data are placed under the same or different codes. The iterations uncover the different properties and dimensions of the concepts, to which personal experience can be added, to stimulate thinking about them. Special attention is given to the language, as it can reveal codes in itself, being translated as such, taking into account that words can denote a shift in perception, thoughts, behaviours and interpretations (Corbin, Strauss, 2015). It is evident that all these processes pertain to critical thinking, engaging both intellectual abilities and personal experience.

Depending on the concepts level of abstraction and their relations, the codes used, on iterative basis, in grounded theory can be open, axial and selective. Open coding is the process of collecting data and breaking them up into discrete items that can be labelled to create codes. Axial coding refers to the organisation of codes, by elevating them, based on the relationships between them, into categories that provide a structure. Selective coding, as the name defines it, is the discriminatory process intended to choose the categories that are the building blocks of developing the theory. Diagrams can support the approach (Wertz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson&McSpadden, 2011). In this context, we can say that the research method mirrors the logical thinking processes that are evident in the development of logical data models, applicable in the information technology, as well as of parse/syntax trees, applicable in generative and transformational grammar and computational linguistics.

Computational linguistics is an interdisciplinary field dedicated to approaching linguistic questions in a computational paradigm. To that end, in a very brief presentation, it identifies convergence points from a multitude of domains such as linguistics, cognitive sciences, mathematics, anthropology etc. and integrate them, benefiting from the very rapid advances in technology. As it is not my intention to cover such a topic in this paper, I would just mention that computational linguistics is at the root of widespread debates, especially in terms of ethics, on different ongoing applications and research projects related to speech recognition, speech synthesis, machine learning, deep learning, development of genetic algorithms and other artificial intelligence uses that probe the structure of human discourse.



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Moreover, such techniques can be employed in generating deepfakes, which is another topic of concern nowadays, having both profound and extensive implications, especially with respect to our identity and individuality as human beings.

### THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Taking into account the concepts/data/codes and categories that have already been presented as well as the particularities of the grounded theory as a qualitative research method, it becomes clear that communication is a highly integrative process that can be understood in relation to a multitude of other processes that do not necessarily belong to linguistics in its basic definition of the study of language. It is due, first of all, to the fact that human communication or discourse appeals to a lot of other factors that are the subject of cognitive, social, cultural and, more recently, computational studies. This aspect becomes more evident in the case of multimodal communication, which is also meant to more effective integration. In this context, it appears that the road to the intended theory of everything is well paved.

In terms of codes and their use in communication/discourse, it can be stated that their variation is strictly dependent on their function, namely on the purpose for which they are developed. Thus, especially in the context of language and power, we can distinguish dominant-hegemonic codes, negotiated codes as well as oppositional codes (Hall, 1999, pp. 515-516; Ross, 2011). It means that certain behaviour/action can be imposed, negotiated or rejected, following the operation of the mentioned codes, which is related to the positions bearing the same names.

The dominant-hegemonic position entails that the receiver is within the dominant point of view, meaning that the sender and the receiver work under the same set of rules, assumptions and cultural biases. Consequently, there is little misunderstanding and miscommunication. The negotiated position refers to the situation in which the receiver is able to decode the sender's message within the context of the dominant cultural and societal views. Thus, the message is largely understood, as the receiver is familiar enough

to the hegemonic viewpoint to be able to decode the message. Under certain circumstances, the message is decoded as a personal one, due to own biases and viewpoints. Oppositional position represents the situation in which the receiver is capable of decoding the message in the way it is intended to be decoded. However, based on own societal and cultural beliefs, another, unintended meaning is considered as intrinsic to the message, which results in opposition (Hall, 1993, pp. 101-103).

In this context, it becomes evident that coding/decoding processes, language and discourses systematically construct versions/iterations of the world in order to legitimize certain aspects, depending on the intended purpose. In addition, considering that reality is discursively constructed or co-constructed, conceptualization, operationalization, politicization and normalization represent other important aspects primarily related to coding/decoding processes, code-switching included, in the social world, taking into account variables such as structures, mechanisms, events, experiences and perceptions.

As for the case of multimodal communication, which has a powerful interactive component, the particular situation of being both producer and receptor results in an alteration of the meaning-making process in strict connection with the violation of the coding/encoding model. Under these circumstances, as identity is replaced with multiple identities, individual meaning-making becomes collective/mass meaning-making, thus privileging collective identity, which meets the initial purpose of multimodal communication, namely integration. In this way, meeting communication needs becomes much more important than following the coding/decoding rules that provide communication with a higher degree of effectiveness. Last but not least, paradoxically, it can claim for equality functions by removing equality.

Considering the above-mentioned aspects related to coding/decoding and meme states, it becomes evident that communication entropy and, implicitly, redundancy are affected. Entropy comes from the Greek word *entropia*, meaning transformation, being associated with the amount of order/disorder of a system. According to the mathematical model of communication (Shannon, 1948, pp. 393-400),



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entropy is a measure of similarity between streams of data and already existing classes of data (meme states). Briefly and simplified, in relation to coding, namely the limits of possible lossless data compression based on a set of symbols, entropy refers to the degree of unpredictability and redundancy to the degree of predictability. It comes naturally that too high entropy results in failing to decode the meaning, while too high redundancy results in overlooking particular intended meaning, thus affecting the communication effectiveness, which also depends on the level of noise, that can be physical or semantic, and on the channel capacity, that is related to connection and proximity.

Moreover, the alteration of the coding/decoding paradigm can lead, especially in the case of multimodal communication, to aberrant decoding (Eco, 1972, pp. 235-240). Aberrant decoding may be related, beside the use of different languages, to the use of terminology, slang or acronyms. In addition, it can be due to the fact that the sender and the receiver do not share the same meme states, as well as to the use of a too loose syntax, which are frequent aspects of multimodal communication, especially in the case of using icons/emojis/symbols. Broadly speaking, aberrant decoding appears to have become the norm rather than the exception, as it has happened with the purpose of meeting special needs. In this context, it arises the question of attributing coherence to a semiotic entity/resource and, in connection to it, the so often recently discussed topics of functional illiteracy and even of dissociative behaviour.

Therefore, the most important aspects that should be considered while meaning is made and conveyed are related to coding/decoding processes, which entail language/discourse, syntax, semantics, code-switching/alteration, entropy, redundancy, noise, channel and feedback mechanisms. Moreover, considering that versions/iterations of the social world are systematically constructed or co-constructed through particular discourses, their critical analysis is necessary, as their decoding is the justification of our acceptance as true and, consequently, of our behaviour. Critical analysis entails critical thinking processes, in the context of the term critical, which derives from the Greek word *kritikos*, meaning having the ability to discern.

As for the methods that could be employed in critically analysing discourses, I would suggest framing and positioning. Both methods are focused on meaning-making and constructing identities as well as on their understanding as intertextual phenomena, in terms of self, situation, language in use, relationship, social paradigm.

Framing is mainly related to the discourse context and purpose. In other words, framing can lead someone to accept one meaning over another. When the frames are shared, one interpretation should prevail over all other possible interpretations (Fairhurst, Sarr, 1966, p. 3). That is why it entails asking a sum of questions regarding the meaning that is conveyed, the resources and the methods that are employed in doing it, and the interests at work. In other words, who is delivering the discourse, in the broader sense in which it has been previously defined, to whom, when, how, with what purpose, in what manner should be among the most frequently asked questions on the part of the receiver. Mention should be made that the examination of primary data is rarely enough, which is why iteration and deeply contextualization are often necessary. In addition, particular attention should be paid to the noise.

Positioning focuses on encoding strategies as well as on the boundaries between reception and production, as they have already been defined. It is likely for the mentioned boundaries to be blurred, especially in the context of using different technological devices, an example in this regard being deepfakes. In the case of multimodal communication especially, considering the above-mentioned aspects related to their jointly produced character as well as the multiple identities and feedbacks involved, special attention should be devoted to managing the mass identities and the jointly produced definitions of concepts and events, which is also discursive.

In relation to agenda setting, metaphors, stories, traditions, artefacts, icons can be employed in the discourse construction. In this context, positioning can be regarded as the discursive construction of personal stories so that one person's actions can be made intelligible and determinate as social acts (Ib., p. 4.). In terms of coding and syntax, an entity can deliberately or forcibly self-position or it can be positioned by others.



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Individual experiences and attitudes towards sociopolitical issues, war included, are influenced by their framing in linguistic constructions. In this regard, metaphors can sometimes be lethal, a classical example in this regard being Clausewitz's "War is politics pursued by other means".

As for the military organization, which is part of the state – the main actor in international relations, framing is pivotal. In the context of the intense debate on the topic, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have studied the idea of metaphorical concept, discussing the challenges to metaphorical coherence – apparent contradiction, coherence vs consistency (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, pp. 5, 41-45). Therefore, individual experiences and attitudes towards sociopolitical issues, war included, are influenced by their framing in linguistic constructions. In this regard, metaphors can sometimes be lethal, a classical example in this regard being Clausewitz's "War is politics pursued by other means" (Lakoff, 2012, p. 5)

### CONCLUSION

Instead of a "classical" conclusion, I would like to invite the receivers of the above-presented theory to reconsider the following stanza: "What's in a name?/That which we call a rose./By any other word would smell as sweet". (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene II). Apparently, a name/definition does not matter so much, but, in a social context, historically determined, it acquires the dimensions of life, love and death, the most important human experiences. Therefore, defining and redefining, framing and positioning change the relationship with language/discourse and with life/world. It becomes much more important while considering that the limits of our language mean the limits of our world, where the world is everything that is the case, being constituted by the facts in logical space (Wittgenstein, 1922/2010, p. 74; p. 25), as well as the idea that one must know before one can see (Fleck, 1979, pp. 129-135; Eco, 1986, pp. 213-215).

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## ECHOES OF THE GOLGOTHA SURVIVED BY THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE BISHOPRIC OF BUZĂU WITHIN THE KINGDOM OF ROMANIA (1916-1918)

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*Between December 1916 and November 1918, approximately 66% of the territory of the Kingdom of Romania, including Bucharest, its capital, was under the domination of the Central Powers.*

*This academic approach certifies the fact that the Orthodox Church in the Kingdom of Romania was not exempted from the major trials experienced, during that period, by the population and the other institutions of the state. It highlights some relevant aspects of the “Golgotha” suffered by some hierarchs, clerics, monks and believers, who lived through this unfortunate chapter in the national history.*

*Those “crucified” by the terror practiced by the occupying enemy continued to believe in the resurrection of the Romanian nation.*

*Strong echoes of the temptations, passions and hopes of this capital moment for our existential destiny were also fully felt in the Bishopric of Buzău, chosen as a case study.*

*Keywords: Golgotha; Romanian Orthodox Church; occupation; Central Powers; Bishopric of Buzău;*



## INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the First World War represented a favourable circumstance for the fulfilment of the aspiration of uniting all Romanians in a single national state.

After two years of neutrality, Romania entered the war on the side of the Entente (France, Great Britain, Russia) with the guarantee that it would take possession of Transylvania, Bucovina and Banat, which were under the control of the Habsburg court. On the night of 14/27 August to 15/28 August 1916, the army, which included regiments from Buzău and Râmnic, crossed the artificially constructed border of Transylvania and achieved short-lived successes over the Austro-Hungarian and German enemies, freeing 1/3 of the territory of the ancient Romanian province.

The counter-offensive of the combined troops of the Central Powers, launched in the intra-Carpathian territory and on the front in Dobrogea, caused the Romanian divisions to record defeats and heavy losses and to retreat to Moldova, leaving the opponent in possession of 2/3 of the national territory, Bucharest, the capital the country, included.

Thus, the first phase of the engagement of the Romanian army in the First World War represented a national catastrophe (Dobrincu, 2003, p. 157). The bill paid to the enemy consisted in the cession of over 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Oltenia, Muntenia, Dobrogea and small portions of southern Moldova), with almost 3.5 million inhabitants. At the same time, it contributed to Romania’s significant distance from achieving the goal of the national ideal (Torrey, 2004, p. 186).

The superiority of the armies of the Central Powers in technique, personnel and war experience, the lack of concrete support from the Entente and the unfulfilled promises, the length of the front (almost 1500 km), the errors committed by some commanders, including the leadership of the Great General Staff, and the uninspired measures

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ordered by a series of incompetent officers cost greatly to the Romanian army. The military establishment counted in its account the heroic toll of 100,000 dead, 150,000 wounded and missing, to which were added 250,000 prisoners (Platon, 2003, p. 435). The “full side of the glass” was that the Central Powers did not achieve their planned objective of getting Romania out of the war.

A detail worthy of highlighting is the fact that, in the struggle for the accomplishment of the national ideal, our troops were accompanied by more than 200 military confessors. Being under the coordination of the newly established Religious Service of the Army (1916-1921), led by archpriest Constantin Nazarie, most of them fulfilled their assigned mission with maximum responsibility. They managed to meet the spiritual, educational, cultural and medical needs of the soldiers, and by raising their morale, they had the ability to enhance the combative spirit and give them extra immunity in the face of enemy propaganda. Also, in conditions of retreat, defeat or epidemiological siege, the army priests were endowed with the ability to plant in their souls the confidence in victory and the wholeness of the nation.

In the limit situations of the evolution of the front, the mobilized clerics crossed the demarcation line of church canons and sometimes used weapons to defend the country’s precious land.

One of the characteristics of the Great War was that it affected not only economic and social life, but also the church life (Popescu, 2011). In those years full of strong drama, in all the Orthodox places of worship in the Old Kingdom, fervent prayers were raised for the Romanian soldiers who had gone to the front and their families who remained at home, for those who were suffering, hospitalized in civil hospitals or soldiers, war orphans and widows (Drăghiceanu, 1920, p. 53).

Out of the desire not to leave their churches, liturgical and pastoral-missionary service, many priests preferred to stay with their faithful in the territories occupied by opposing armies and endured the hardships and privations characteristic of belligerent situations. Some of them were persecuted by the authorities of the Central Powers and were sent to the camps established internally or to those in Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary and Germany, where, due to various diseases, they perished alongside the Romanian military prisoners.

On the other hand, an appreciable number of priests from Dobrogea, as well as from the other affected areas of the country, took refuge in Moldova from the fear of the enemy and managed, with the precious support given by Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu (1909-1934), to continue their sacerdotal mission in various parishes and monasteries.

The choice of the exodus as a saving solution, by an important segment of the clerical body, was debated in the meeting of the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the summer of 1918 and was considered inappropriate for the sacrificial position of the priestly mission (Cotan, 2014, pp. 49, 62)

It is a well-known fact that, in the tradition of our people, the Friday of the Sacred Passion of the Redeemer has been called, since ancient times, “Black Friday”. It is also called so because on this day humanity, gripped by the dominion of the darkness of sin, crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God and “The Light of the World”, between two robbers (John 8:12). The slaughter took place on the hill outside the walls of Jerusalem known as Golgotha (Heb. “skull”, “head”) or Calvary.

By extension, within this scientific approach, I have associated the suffering endured by the Romanian nation, under the harsh regime of foreign military occupation, with a real “Golgotha” on which our national being was “crucified”. I have condensed that period of agony, which lasted according to a raconteur of the time, Virgiliu Drăghiceanu, 707 days, and “baptized” it suggestively “Black Friday” of the millennial history of our country.

As a whole, the study presents sequentially some of the events of the two years of occupation, which marked, in general, the church life, with strict reference to the Kingdom of Romania.

As a case study, I have focused on the heroic deeds, sufferings and forms of resistance of the clergy from the Bishopric of Buzău. The choice of this diocese was made on the basis of the canonical, geographical and spiritual affiliation of the author of this article. Another reason for this choice was the particularly illustrative examples found here, through the archival documents and edited reference works, which the author was interested in and had access to.



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The material proposed for publication represents an original contribution by consistently enriching the information base related to this subject, by renewing the interpretation of the studied phenomenon, as well as by synthesizing and systematizing the available information, up to the present moment.

The predominantly used scientific research method is the analysis of available documents.

### **“THE SPIRITUAL MOTHER OF THE ROMANIAN NATION” IN THE YEARS OF CALVARY AND RESURRECTION 1916-1918**

During the period of occupation of the Central Powers in Romania, the supreme military authority was entrusted to the Great Military Headquarters, based at the “Athénée Palace” Hotel in Bucharest. Its hegemony was exercised over three Romanian provinces (Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea), totalling 21 counties, 1156 towns and approximately 2304 localities, where the most important agricultural regions and industrial centres of the country were located.

At its command was Field Marshal August von Mackensen, seconded by infantry general Tulff von Tschepe und Weidenbach and having as chief of staff Colonel Richard Hentsch, the real leader and brain of the entire military administration (Stan, 2008, pp. 62 -63). The other states allied to Germany were represented by: General Sandler, then replaced by Colonel Kontz (Austria-Hungary), Osman Nizani Pasha (Turkey) and General Petăr Tantilov (Bulgaria).

The occupied territory was organized into four military zones, divided as follows:

- The territory of the military administration (*Gebiet der Militärverwaltung*) was the largest (it included 14 counties of Oltenia and Muntenia, less Buzău, Brăila and Râmnicu Sărat) and the most important in terms of economic potential;
- The stage area (*Etappengebiet*) included the territories positioned along the Buzau River, from the bend of the Carpathians to the Danube, ensuring, in particular, the supply of the troops on the front;
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Army Area of Operations (*Operationsgebiet*) had in its area of responsibility the counties of Buzău, Râmnicu Sărat,

Putna and Brăila and was under the direct command of Field Marshal August von Mackensen;

- The military occupation zone of Dobrogea benefited from a separate military administration, located under the condominium owned by Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey (Cotan, 2018, pp. 228-229).

Until the fall of 1918, the channel of communication of the decisions issued by the management of these structures, addressed to the Romanian institutions plus the population remaining in the territory, was the ordinances (Pherekyde, 1918). Having a predominantly economic character, “they have become a real Bible” for receivers (Urse, 2012, p. 163).

As a result of some of the decisions, the main edifices of the cities were transformed into spaces reserved for the occupation administration. Also, school and college classes were suspended, and their buildings were used as barracks, hospitals, offices, prisons, and even horse stables.

Primarily, through the German Economic Staff (*Wirtschaftstab*) and its local auxiliary bodies (Platon, 2003, p. 450), the conquering authorities instituted a rigorous and systematic programme of exploitation of the country’s wealth and resources, focused on increasing oil production, the intensification of coal and salt extraction and the use of all arable land. Regardless of its will, Romania became the “granary of the Central Powers”. The financial sector also benefited from a capital interest, one of the targeted objectives being the issuance of new banknotes – the so-called “*occupation lei*” –, which were not backed by gold and amplified the state of inflation.

The ordered measures of spoliation, of which I have listed only a few, greatly exposed the population to poverty, malnutrition and a series of epidemics (smallpox, influenza, relapsing fever, scarlet fever, typhus, rash).

In parallel, the inhabitants of the Romanian provinces, under the control of the Central Powers, were subjected to permanent control by means of the military, rural or political police apparatus. The citizens who did not approve of the occupation administration and who displayed a hostile attitude, especially peasants and intellectuals, among whom



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*Donici's pastorate coincided with the most difficult moments of the existence of the Romanian nation. In the context in which, a few days before entering the capital, the German armies brutally bombed the city, the venerable bishop miraculously survived the enemy shells, which hit the cathedral and destroyed the right wing of the metropolitan palace.*

there were also priests, were fined, arrested and imprisoned in the 7 main and 33 secondary camps, organized for this purpose. Some of them even got in touch with specialized units in Bulgaria, Germany and Austria-Hungary (Drăghiceanu, 1920, p. 27).

The economic and social difficulties deeply affected church life too. Against the background of the accelerated military offensive of the Central Powers, on 20 November/3 December 1916, the king and the government withdrew to Iasi. At the request of the Romanian political leaders, Metropolitan Primate Conon Arămescu Donici (1912-1918) remained in occupied Bucharest (starting on 23 November/6 December 1916), as a symbol of national resistance (Șerbănescu, 1959, pp. 822-824).

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Hoping for the disclosure of some compromising documents, related to the first hierarch of the country, the occupation authorities arrested his secretary, the priest Hrisant Popescu (Vasilescu, 2018, p. 53). Also, on the grounds that he supported the project of Romania entering the war for the achievement of our national ideal, he was stigmatized in the pages of the newspaper of the German Command in Brăila *"Donau Armee Zeitung"* (*"Danube Army Sheet"*), no. 127 of 25 July 1917. The accusatory article was entitled *A metropolitan warrior* (*"Biserica Ortodoxă Română"*, 1924, pp. 168-169).

Certainly, the greatest disappointment and indignation provoked to the hierarch, Conon, who was almost ninety years old, was the signing of the manifesto by which, in the summer of 1917, he urged the Romanian soldiers to non-combat on the Moldavian front (Alimăneștianu, 1929, pp. 101-103).

The document titled *The Calling of the Metropolitan Primate* was drafted by the clerics Grigorie Pișculescu (Gala Galaction) and Iuliu Scriban (Nistor, 2003, p. 298) and put the Orthodox clergy in a negative light (Boia, 2010, p. 86). On a personal level, it brought him the label of collaborationist, anti-Romanian and even traitor, and forced him to resign at the end of the following year.

An entirely admirable aspect was the fact that the Romanian Armed Forces and the population of the free territory remained immune to the call to make a pact with the enemy. Metropolitan Pimen of Moldova and other Orthodox hierarchs and priests, including military confessors, urged the soldiers to fight on for the unity of the nation. For example, the army priest Neculai V. Hodoroabă noted in his diary that he read it *"with disgust"* (Hodoroabă, 1926, p. 262.).

Beyond the often-critical rhetoric, developed over time on this subject, we subscribe to the point of view of the military historian Aurel Pentelescu according to which the gesture of the Primate Metropolitan Conon Arămescu Donici to deny the defeatist act falls into the category of unforgivable errors committed by the high hierarchy and *"still remains to the judgment of history"* (Pentelescu, Preda, 2014, pp. 211-231) and, above all, of God.

On another note, the Roman Catholic Archbishop Raymund Netzhhammer (1905-1924) assures us that Field Marshal Mackensen, Commander von Heinrich and Governor Tulff von Tschepe und Waidenbach expressed their interest in the region, from the first days of their arrival, of the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, its practices and clergy, about which they knew very little (Netzhhammer, 2005, pp. 696-697, 701).

The coexistence relationship between the authorities of the Central Powers and the ecclesiastical ones was very often based on convenience. Particularly tense was the episode consumed on 24 December 1916/6 January 1917, when the German side decided through a military ordinance that the Gregorian calendar<sup>1</sup> and Central European time would come into force in the occupied territory (Marghiloman, 1927, p. 356). As a result of this imperative act, through which a subtle moral blow was given to both the population and the Orthodox Church (Vasilescu, 1978, p. 1118), Metropolitan Conon convened an assembly at the Metropolis, on 2/15 January 1917. The meeting was attended by all the bishops in Bucharest, the members of the Superior Consistory and all the important clerics or those who had taken refuge in the capital of Romania. Following the discussions, a protest was drawn up expressing the point of view of the Romanian

<sup>1</sup> The provision was published in *"Gazeta Bucureștilor"*, no. 210 of 17/31 December 1916.



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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*A sensitive moment, which caused a lot of bitterness and revolt among the hierarchy, the clergy and the population, was the campaign to confiscate, for economic interests, the majority of church and monastery bells, as well as their accessories. The rationale for such an abominable action was to melt and use them as raw materials for the production of Germany's weapons and munitions of war.*

Orthodox Church and through which the measures to be taken were brought to the attention of the population (Vasilescu, 2018, p. 46).

As a result of the numerous petitions, but mainly due to the fear of the uprising of the masses, the initiators of the reforming project allowed to hold according to the old Julian calendar only the Christmas of 1916 and the Epiphany of 1917, following that the other holidays, during the church year, would be celebrated according to the new calendar (Netzhammer, 2005, p. 697). Overcoming those prohibitions and commitments, the Orthodox Romanians celebrated Easter in 1917 according to the tradition existing until then (Drăghiceanu, 1920, pp. 79-80).

In this context, we also emphasize that attempts of this kind, especially with regard to keeping a paschal (date of Easter) common with the Western world, have taken place before in history and appear on the agenda even today. They have often been viewed with suspicion and reserve by a representative sample of the church hierarchy and the laity, as a Roman Catholic *Trojan horse* introduced into the citadel of Orthodoxy, producer of great disturbances and stylistic schisms (Bichir, 2023). Despite all these reactions, the revised version of the calendar was adopted by the Romanian civil society on 1/14 April 1919, and by the church in October 1924<sup>2</sup>. An exception to the rule was made in the case of the feasts connected with the Paschal cycle<sup>3</sup>, which have remained to this day in the old style, as a sign of the unity of faith of the Orthodox world.

Another sensitive moment, which caused a lot of bitterness and revolt among the hierarchy, the clergy and the population, was the campaign to confiscate, for economic interests, the majority of church and monastery bells, as well as their accessories. The rationale for such an abominable action was to melt and use them as raw materials for the production of Germany's weapons and munitions of war, and it was the prerogative of the "*Abnahme Kommando der Glocken*" established for this purpose (Cotan, 2018, p. 241).

With the intention of countering that humiliating plan, Metropolitan Conon tried to buy back those goods by organizing

<sup>2</sup> Following the *Pan-Orthodox Conference in Constantinople* in 1923.

<sup>3</sup> The Lord's Entry into Jerusalem, the Healing Spring, the Lord's Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity.

a national collection. His initiative met with a categorical refusal from the "*injured*", on the grounds that metal was more valuable than money (Cotan, 2014, p. 38).

In order to better understand the situation and introduce ourselves to the atmosphere of those times of austerity, we reproduce, for edification, a scene with valences of ancient tragedy, which took place on the occasion of the requisition of the bells from the "*Saint New Spiridon*" Church in Bucharest: "*From the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month (April 1917, a.n.), an <Abnahme-Kommando der Glocken>, composed of an officer and armed soldiers, climbs into the belltowers and begins the operation of removing or breaking the bells. The long, shrill, terrifying sounds, produced by the impact, find their pitiful echo in the hearts of the population of the entire Capital. More and more quiet, the bells die in a muffled sob, falling down to pieces..., the great bell of Brâncoveanu brought from the Dealu Monastery to the church of Saint Spiridon is smashed with Hungarian fury by two Hungarians ... But wonder! Both profaners remain crushed under the fragments of the bell upon which they laid their sacrilegious hands... From the fragments left in the bell are seen the filaments of gold and silver; they are the remains of gold and silver rings, brooches, earrings that the Romanian piety had thrown away during their casting. That is why it is said that their acoustics are unsurpassed until today*" (Drăghiceanu, 1920, p. 94).

One gratifying aspect, however, was the fact that the protests of the clergy and the faithful eventually led the occupation authorities to desist from confiscating bells of historical or symbolic value.

Keeping the same note, we also remember that some places of worship were also uncovered by the copper sheet covers, which were transferred across the border. As a result of public vigilance and protest demonstrations, the roofs of the Royal Church in Argeș, the Cathedral in Târgoviște, but especially that of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Bucharest were saved (Cotan, 2014, p. 42).

Another incident, which held the front page of the newspapers at the time, was that of 17 February 1918, when, by order of General Petar Tantilov, at 2 o'clock in the morning a commando consisting of about 20 Bulgarian soldiers managed to steal for shortly the relics of Saint New Demetrius, from the Metropolitan Cathedral in Bucharest, claiming him as their national saint. As a result of the inflamed state



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According to Bacalbaşa, “of all the vexations endured by the occupier, two were the ones that impressed the Bucharest population the most: the lifting of church bells and the theft of Saint Dumitru. All other pressures went almost unnoticed, while the two acts of defiance brought to the religious feeling raised the population”.

of mind of the inhabitants of the capital and the memorandum addressed by Metropolitan Conon directly to Field Marshal Mackensen, the operation was finally stopped. The whistle-blowers were caught by German soldiers, led by Lieutenant Rhefeld, near the village of Daia in Giurgiu.

To the astonishment of the Germans, the success of recovering the reliquary with the holy and much-loved relics brought an enormous ray of joy to the faces of the people of Bucharest, mobilized to meet them at the Belu barricade. It also came under the specific incidence of divine miracles, given that the criminals did not manage to leave the country in a timely manner, and the car carrying the priceless gifts achieved the “performance” of breaking down 3 times (Vasilescu, 2018, pp. 50-52).

Staying connected on this issue, we also note that in order to be saved from the Bulgarian troops, on 20 November 1916, the relics of Saint Filofteia as well as those of Saints Nifon, Serghie, Vah and Tatiana, which belonged to the Diocese of Argeş, were housed, for almost a year, in the “All Saints” Church, in the premises of the Antim Monastery (Cotan, 2018, p. 215).

A keen observer of the two events, closely followed by public opinion and to which I have referred in the previous lines, Constantin Bacalbaşa opined that they marked the collective mind more than all the other challenges that left their mark on the physiognomy of the occupation: “Of all the vexations endured by the occupier, two were the ones that impressed the Bucharest population the most: the lifting of church bells and the theft of Saint Dumitru. All other pressures went almost unnoticed, while the two acts of defiance brought to the religious feeling raised the population” (Bacalbaşa, 1921, pp. 169-170).

Although they had their own church in Bucharest, on 21 February 1917, the leadership of the Bulgarian army decided “ostentatiously” to make two Tedeums for the royal family from Sofia, in our metropolitan cathedral. With the initial approval of Metropolitan Conon, and in the second phase with his total opposition, for canonical reasons<sup>4</sup>, the projected activity could no longer be prevented (Cotan, 2018, p. 272).

<sup>4</sup> The Orthodox Church of Bulgaria was catalogued as a heretic at that time, following its condemnation for “phyletism” by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1872. Also called “ethnophyletism”, this concept considers that there is a primacy of the nation over humanity as a whole and that would operate even over divine ordinances.



Among the measures taken by the Central Powers against the Orthodox Church, we highlight the closing of some churches or their transformation into warehouses or stables for the horses of their own troops, sporadically setting up garbage platforms and even latrines in their premises (Sima, 2012, p. 242). The rooms of the monks and nuns were not “neglected” either, being “metamorphosed” into camps, hospitals and other utilities. All those practices caused a series of protests by the clergy and fuelled the state of agitation and discontent of the population.

Another aspect, which we believe should not be overlooked, was the order given by the Command of the Mobile Squad in Râmnicu Vâlcea that, after every Holy Liturgy, on Sundays and holidays, the list of those condemned to death should be read, followed by its display on the church door (Cotan, 2018, p. 261).

Changing the geographical area of the research a little, we also point out that in the Jiu Gorge the German soldiers camped for a while at the Lainici Monastery. After they used the church as a stable, the painting of the place of worship was scratched and blackened by the smoke from the burning of the furniture and the archive of the monastic establishment. Moreover, some of the survivors were deported to Germany.

They showed similar behaviour at the Cozia Monastery, which they devastated. They did not even ignore the tombstone of the place of eternal belonging to voivode Mircea the Elder, which was seriously damaged (Ib., pp. 260, 262).

We also highlight that a multitude of churches were stripped of their religious objects, especially those made of silver (Gherasim Piteşteanu, 1983, p. 763), but also of brass, bronze, copper and pewter, to be transformed into cannons or projectiles.

The extreme weather conditions at the beginning of 1917 and the indolence of the occupation authorities required the establishment of a commission appointed by Alexandru Marghiloman, whose mission was to requisition firewood from the homes of the refugees in Moldova and distribute it to the poor population. Among its prominent members were bishops Meletie Dobrescu, Evghenie Humulescu and Teofil Mihăilescu (Cotan, 2018, p. 239).

During the counter-offensive of the Central Powers, at the end of 1916, the bishop of Râmnicu, Sofronie Vulpescu (1913-1918), retired

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As a consequence of the offensive initiated on the front in Dobrogea by the German-Austro-Hungarian-Bulgarian-Turkish forces, under the leadership of Field Marshal August von Mackensen, the Romanian armed forces suffered great defeats, resulting in the occupation of the entire province, starting on 5 January 1917.

to Bucharest. A vehement critic of the occupation, by order of the German Command, he was arrested on Descent of the Holy Spirit Sunday in 1917 and imprisoned at the Military Circle in the capital. Later, he was forced to reside at the Cheia Monastery, in Prahova County, then at the Hermitage of Ialomicioarei Cave, in the Bucegi Mountains, where he was forced to live in more than precarious living conditions. Due to his deteriorating health, he wrote to Mackensen, informing him of his predicament. In his answer, the latter allowed him to settle at the Căldărusani Monastery and then with his relatives in the capital.

Reasoning that he was too *“physically weak”*, after what he endured during detention, on 8 June 1918, he officially retired from his seat, his resignation being accepted by King Ferdinand and Simion Mehedinți, the Minister of Worship and Instruction (Cotan, 2018, pp. 129, 150, 151, 154).

As a consequence of the offensive initiated on the front in Dobrogea by the German-Austro-Hungarian-Bulgarian-Turkish forces, under the leadership of Field Marshal August von Mackensen, the Romanian armed forces suffered great defeats, resulting in the occupation of the entire province, starting on 5 January 1917.

During the three months of their administration, our southern Danube neighbours showed a constant xenophobia towards the Romanian population and the autochthonous Orthodox clergy. In order to further temper such excesses, following an agreement, Dobrogea was placed under the direction of a German governor, who had under his command a Bulgarian general with the rank of prefect (Ib., pp. 175-176).

Among the local priests subjected to Calvary, we particularly mention Atanasie Popescu from the Agighiol commune in Tulcea, father of 8 children, 2 of whom were mobilized on the front. While he was in the church at the service of the Baptism of the Lord, he was arrested, together with 41 parishioners, on 6 January 1917, and charged with espionage. After an odyssey of 10 and a half months, in which he grazed the cattle of the Bulgarians through the Balkans and endured an acute famine as well as the darkest miseries and persecutions, on the occasion of the feast of Saint Demetrius the Great Martyr (26 October), he was pardoned from Sofia. Returning home, in the village of Domnița Maria, he found the household completely

destroyed, and the parish place of worship devastated and desecrated. The Mother of God in the royal icon of the church pediment was shot in the chest, and the eyes of the Baby Jesus in her arms were taken out with bayonets. At the sight of such sacrilege, the priest felt sick and fainted (Popescu, 1940, pp. 331-333).

Without having such aspirations, the community of the Rooster Monastery entered the circuit of deportations to Slava Rusă, then Bulgaria, through the monks Damian Nenciu, Agatanghel Chiriac, Varasiil Luca and 6 other monks, who died in the camp. Also, on 10 May 1917 the priest Vasile Aftenie, from the town of I. Gh. Duca, was killed by the Bulgarians, because he officiated the divine service in the Romanian language (Ib., p. 340).

A host of other servants of the Holy Shrines in the occupied territories suffered as a result of the most furious attacks of their transitory masters. Within this article we limit ourselves to nominating only a few of them. For example, in the Dedulești commune of Argeș, the Germans fixed a squad in the house of the priest Gheorghe Dobrinescu. The repeated violence to which he was subjected caused his paralysis and finally his death (Ib., p. 25). Beaten by Hungarian soldiers, on 8 November 1917, the priest Gheorghe Popescu, from Puchenii-Moșneni, Prahova County, also passed away (Ib., p. 218).

An extremely impressive case, which aroused our interest, is that of Father Constantin Păunescu, from Mihăești - Olt, who, at the age of only 28, was shot by the occupation troops. The motive for this odious assassination, which took place on 21 February 1917, was the following: a housekeeper working in his house discovered a grenade, which she took and secretly hid in the kitchen of the servant of God. Out of curiosity and carelessness, on 15 February, at 3 p.m., she handled it irresponsibly causing an explosion, which claimed her life and damaged part of the building. The noise produced by the explosion alerted not only the neighbours, but also the German police station. Although he was innocent, the young priest was arrested and sentenced by the court to capital punishment on the charge of insubordination to the imperial order regarding the regime of arms and ammunition and of plotting against the German armies.

As a divine sign of his innocence, the horses that were carrying him to the place of execution stopped at a bend in the road and did not want to go any further. Only after a generous consumption of nerves



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After almost 53 months of apocalyptic fighting, with a victorious Entente and a Central Powers camp exhausted and losing on all fronts, the First World War ended on 29 October /11 November 1918, by the armistice signed by Germany in wagon 2419 from Compiègne. Preceding and similar political acts were initialled by the Entente, in the same year, in Thessaloniki with Bulgaria, in Mudros with Turkey, in Padua with Austria-Hungary and in Belgrade with Hungary.

and swearing and a long work of persuasion, submitted by those mandated to carry out the sentence, the speechless and, many times more sensitive than humans, animals agreed to move.

In the testamentary dispositions, drawn up on 18 February 1917 and addressed to his priestess, the martyred priest wrote: *“Dear father, mother, brothers, sisters, beloved wife and my beloved children. If I am going to die, you know that I am innocent, as I absolutely did not know that in the house where I was staying there was left from the German soldiers, to the misfortune of my family, a German grenade which was brought by some harm, and caused my misfortune. I was sick with sadness and ill-treated in prison.*

*Take care of the children, Zino – let them learn to become well-known people all over the country, help them and spend everything with them. Deposit all the money for the children and stay with dad. Do not be wasteful and too smiling. You have some church money with you, give it to the Epitropia (Trusteeship) and get a certificate.*

*Prepare me a pompous funeral and pretend to the priests a rare angelic service, you know how I like it. You will buy all the new clothes from the church and pay 300 lei for them, that is, more than they cost, or you will take other ones instead. You will bury me with them.*

*Make me a nice vault, with a good cross and my photo in it at Mihăestii-de-Jos. May God protect you”.* Left prematurely widowed and with “3 young offspring”, the deceased’s wife would serve 6 months of detention herself for this unfortunate and regrettable accident (Bobulescu, 1930, pp. 110-115).

Instead of an epilogue, we record that, after almost 53 months of apocalyptic fighting, with a victorious Entente and a Central Powers camp exhausted and losing on all fronts, the First World War ended on 29 October /11 November 1918, by the armistice signed by Germany in wagon 2419 from Compiègne. Preceding and similar political acts were initialled by the Entente, in the same year, in Thessaloniki with Bulgaria (16/29 September), in Mudros with Turkey (17/30 September), in Padua with Austria-Hungary (21 October/3 November) and in Belgrade with Hungary (31 October/13 November).

Internally, after the withdrawal of the government led by Alexandru Marghiloman (24 October/6 November 1918) and the appointment of a transitional cabinet headed by General Constantin Coandă, the executive from Iasi gave an ultimatum to Field Marshal

August von Mackensen, by which he was asked to withdraw his troops from the occupied territory.

On 12/25 November 1918, Bucharest was free, and shortly after, the Romanian Armed Forces, led by King Ferdinand and Queen Maria, made their triumphal entry into the restored capital. That great day of 18 November/1 December 1918 also coincided providentially with the proclamation in Alba Iulia of the happy end of the constitution of Great Romania, considered as a veritable day of the Resurrection of the nation.

### “BLACK FRIDAY” OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE CENTRAL POWERS IN THE DIOCESE OF THE CURVED CARPATHIANS

The ancient city of Buzău, attested from a documentary point of view with the martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Sava Gotul, from 12 April 372, came under German occupation, starting from the night of 1/14 - 2/15 December 1916 (Buzău Archives, file 24/1919, p. 16).

Similar to other regions of Romania, the area under the occupation of the 12<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Cavalry Division was quickly and systematically organized out of the yearning of the enemy military authorities to exploit the natural, material and human resources as judiciously and profitably as possible.

Thus, Squad no. 264, which included the submontane area of the county, was based in Unguriu commune and was led by Major Radke. In turn, Squad no. 271, had its command point in the city of Buzău, and the one bearing no. 225, covered the Râmnicu Sărat area and was at the disposal of the famous General Erich von Falkenheim (Nicolescu, Stan, 1999, pp. 272-273), Chief of the German General Staff and Commander of the 9th Army.

Referring strictly to the church issue, we specify that the Buzău Diocese, an old hearth of Orthodox spirituality and Romanian culture, founded in 1502, had Bishop Dionisie Climescu (1894-1921) at its head during the war. The brave hierarch stoically endured the wave of offenses coming from the occupation troops, who appropriated the entire complex of buildings of the diocesan centre, except for two rooms that remained at his disposal (Cocora, 1986, pp. 187-189).

According to the assessments of Iuliu Scriban, he did not leave the community of believers entrusted to him for shepherding: *“Bishop*



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*Some of the Orthodox churches in Buzău were assigned a different destination than the one for which they were originally designed and built. While some places of worship served as warehouses for ammunition, equipment, prison camps and even slaughterhouses, the "Banu" Church in Buzău was transformed into a hospital, and the "Holy Angels" Church became a German garrison church.*

*Dionisie was the only one of the three bishops of Muntenia who stayed in the diocese during the German invasions of 1916. He was satisfied with himself that he stayed at his job and was happy to testify at the Church House in 1917 that the Hungarians praised him for not having left his role during the plague" (Scriban, 1921, p. 492). It should also be remembered that the archives of the Buzău Diocese were destroyed during this period (Cotan, 2018, p. 155).*

By virtue of the unwritten right of the occupier to take everything that could be taken, they did not even overtake the bells of some churches in the Diocese of Buzău, which they confiscated and turned into raw material, for the purpose of producing weapons and ammunition, needed on the battlefield troops of the Second Reich. Among the better-known urban places of worship that were damaged by such priceless objects of worship, we highlight the churches "Merchants" (today "Greeks") – 2 bells, "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" – 2 bells, "St. Nicholas" – 1 bell, the cemetery "Dumbrava" – 1 bell (Stan, 2008, pp. 77-78).

Some of the Orthodox churches in Buzău were assigned a different destination than the one for which they were originally designed and built. While some places of worship served as warehouses for ammunition, equipment, prison camps and even slaughterhouses, the "Banu" Church in Buzău was transformed into a hospital, and the "Holy Angels" Church became a German garrison church.

In turn, the "Saint Archangels" Church in the village of Nișcov, founded in 1830, was used by the Germans as a stable for their cavalry structures.

Regarding the situation in the city of Râmnicu Sărat, occupied by the Germans on a festive day, on 14/27 December 1916 (Kirițescu, 1922, p. 460), of the 8 places of worship that were active, the "Saint Apostles" church was used as a stable, and "Saint Paraschiva" was assigned to soldiers of the Protestant denomination (Nicolescu, Stan, 1999, p. 275).

We also note that at the "Chesarie Episcopul" Theological Seminary, a Romanian hospital, a Russian one (Cocora, 1988, p. 48) and a German one (Nicolescu, Stan, 1999, p. 272) operated consecutively.

Among the sacred spaces that were affected because of the serious damage caused by the attackers, we bring to mind the case of the Ciolanu Monastery, where the Bavarians devastated part of the rooms of the inhabitants and stole appreciable amounts of food

and hay. An identical phenomenon also happened at the Rătești nunnery, subjected by the occupants to a treatment of plundering important quantities of food, drinks and other basic necessities (Stan, 2008, p. 78).

In such circumstances, an important segment of people in Buzău and Râmnic showed patriotism, dignity, courage and solidarity and obstinately opposed the coercive measures adopted by the occupiers, which drastically limited their civil rights and freedoms, often of a religious nature.

On 20 March 1917, Field Marshal August von Mackensen signed an ordinance in which the main Christian-Orthodox holidays were fixed (the Baptism of the Lord, the Annunciation, the Ascension of the Lord, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the Assumption of the Mother of God, the Nativity of the Mother of God, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Saint Nicholas and Christmas), as well as their performance in accordance with the peculiarities of the Gregorian calendar. Those who did not comply with those requirements were liable to punishment "up to five years in prison and a fine of up to 50,000 lei or one of these punishments" (Nedelcu, 1923, pp. 191-192).

Showing firmness, a group of priests in Buzău, among whom we mention Ion Guriță – Vadu Pași Parish, Nicolae Efrimescu – Săgeata Parish, Voicu Constantinescu – Zilișteanca Parish, C. Angelescu – Lapoș Parish, defied the prescriptions of the mentioned official document (Stan, 2008, p. 109).

On a different note, one of the sources of income for the temporary masters in Buzău and Râmnicu Sărat was the obligation to perform forced labour. Surprisingly, the students were not spared from such chores either. As it appears from Report no. 68 of the Buzău Diocese to the City Hall, dated 17 January 1919 "Their attitude (of the German military authority, a.n.) during the execution of the chores towards the students and towards the teachers was merciless, insulting and brutal. Under the control of four soldiers, the students were made to dry the puddles around the city, exposing them to malaria, or to clean and dig the maidans in the city. One day, as the students showed up in small numbers for the chore, Lieutenant Leringen, the assistant of the city commander, called all the teachers to the headquarters and, not wanting to hear the explanations we wanted to give them, he ordered us to bring them 100 students per hour, and if we do not comply with the order, he will lock us up in the commandery's churches.



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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*The students who had presented themselves with us were whipped with a whip and locked up until the evening in the cellar of the National Bank, together with gypsies and vagabonds, exposing them to the contamination of typhus fever that was haunting the city among the population weakened by hunger and uncleanliness”.*

Very succinctly, the analysed official address also characterizes the reference period approached through the present research, concluding that: *“the German occupation left sad memories about the civilization and the soul of the German people, from the years 1916-1918”* (Buzău Archives, file 37/1919, pp. 15-16).

There are sources that certify that some prelates were arrested because they offered prayers and services for the victory of the Romanian Armed Forces, because they mentioned the king and the refugee authorities in Iași at the officiated religious services (Popescu, 1940, p. 311) or because they had made propaganda and had acted against the Germans.

Related to the chapter of national resistance, it is quite well known that, along the front line, from the Mountains of Buzău to the land of Vrancea, there operated a vast and effective information network created and led by the patriot Vasile Chilian, from the commune of Tichiriș, Putna county. Among his collaborators, villagers, priests and teachers, who took care, between December 1916 and May 1917, of housing, feeding and organizing the crossing of over 2000 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, escaped from prison camps, or who had lost contact with their units, we mention the hieromonk Iosif Ionescu from the Găvanele Hermitage, who served as a guide for some of them (Nicolescu, Stan, 1999, pp. 283-284). Disguised as a servant and using an oxcart as a means of transport, he collected a series of extremely useful information from the enemy, which he made available to the Romanian Armed Forces (Stan, 2008, p. 127).

The case of the priest Traian D. Popescu from Nehoiașu commune, who was imprisoned between 29 June and 12 July 1917, being accused of espionage and for facilitating the passage of fugitive Romanian prisoners to Moldova, is also worth mentioning. He was initially sentenced to death, but later his sentence was commuted to house arrest, together with his family in the town of Scărlățești, in Brăila county, until 5 April 1918, when he was released (Popescu, 1940, pp. 58 -59).

The priest Constantin Georgian, parish priest in the commune of Gura Teghii, *“a patriarch of his land”* and *“true Romanian”*, was also accused of favouring the passage of some Romanian soldiers to Moldova. He did not limit himself only to exhorting his parishioners, both in the church space and outside it, to support them *“as best as / they can”*, but he personally involved himself in this kind of saving, but, equally, extraordinarily risky initiatives.

At the end of December 1916, the Hungarians picked him up and took him to a *“red house in the Varlaam commune, where he was imprisoned for three weeks, suffering all the rigours of those imprisoned, until, thanks to the people’s perseverance, he gained freedom, not from Hungarians, but from the Germans”*. Even after his release, at the Holy Liturgy and the other services he officiated, he was guarded by a German soldier with a bayonet (Ib., pp. 60-61).

Archimandrite Eftimie and Vartolomeu from Tisău also ran through the gauntlet of detention on the grounds that they sheltered and fed several Romanian soldiers and officers, refugees from the occupied territory and eager to fight on the Moldovan front (Stan, 2008, p. 126).

Addressing in this scientific approach, with predilection, the cases of *“church personalities”*, we also evoke here the monk Eftimie Obrogea, the former abbot and treasurer of the Ciolanu Monastery, who was imprisoned and beaten several times for the courage to have defended his monastic settlement from the violations and abuse of foreign robbers (Popescu, 1940, pp. 59-60).

We benefit from information according to which some clerics stood up to the aggressors even with a weapon in hand, as did the priest Vasile Iliescu-Buzoianu from Homoești Parish. Forced by circumstances, he opened fire on a large group of German soldiers, who planned to attack his daughters’ chastity. The account of the armed intervention of the brave cleric recorded the killing of 4 enemy soldiers and the wounding of 20 others. His heroic attitude had a huge impact on public opinion at the time, impressing even the great historian Nicolae Iorga, who wrote the following: *“He was a priest with original ideas and willingly in their service, who upon the approach of the Germans, whom <good Romanians> were waiting for, took the rifle and fired at them until the last cartridge and the last breath. He deserves a monument and certain people should be invited to the inauguration”* (Ib., p. 230).



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*The command that settled in the area approved the archpriest's request to provisionally appoint available priests instead of the ones mobilized on the front or refugees and agreed to the holding of the Easter divine service. On the other hand, the ringing of bells was not approved, which was prohibited and punished, in order not to obstruct air alerts. It is unusual that, in January 1917, the Germans installed an observation post on the "Saint Nicholas" Church to give the alarm when enemy planes approached.*

During the confrontations at Râmnicu Sărat (9/22-14/27 December 1916), called by the Germans the *"Battle of Christmas"* – *"Weihnachtsschlacht"* (Tănase, 2011, pp. 287-298), priest Vasile Iliescu from Homoiesti was fatally shot, by the troops of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The atrocity was committed in the parish house, located near the church, under the assistance of Elisaveta Teodorescu, the niece of the deceased, only 8-year old, who managed to escape alive (Stan, 2008, p. 59).

A similar *"treatment"* was also applied to the priest Ghiță N. Giurgescu, from Bălănești commune. A widower for a month and with two boys on the front, he was killed in his house with bayonets in December 1916. In the chapter of human losses, we also record the daughter of the priest Nae Vasilescu, from Unguriu commune, *"one of the most beautiful girls from Valea Buzăului"*, who was shot on Easter in 1917, *"because she did not allow herself to be raped"* (Popescu, 1940, pp. 58-59).

As it was stipulated, among others, in the *Law for the organization of New Dobrogea*, issued on 1 April 1914, Brăila county figured, from an ecclesiastical jurisdictional point of view, in the configuration of the Eparchy of Buzău (Cotan, 2018, p. 174). The occupying troops, made up of Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians and Turks, entered the well-known Danube port city on 23 December 1916/5 January 1917, between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. (Urse, 2012, p. 158). Although according to articles 8 and 17 of the *Declaration on the Religions and Customs of the War on Land*, published in 1874, the occupying military authority was obliged to protect religious objectives, in Brăila those provisions of international humanitarian law were flagrantly violated. And there, as in the rest of the occupied territory, the churches suffered destruction caused by bombings and were exposed to robberies by Turkish soldiers.

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Three months later, the same military institution, which also had administrative responsibilities, required the leaders of the parish units to declare on their own responsibility the current situation of all stocks of wax and paraffin. It ignored the protest of the priests who blamed the lack of candles for deaths, relics and memorials of the deceased.

Another measure applied by the German Command was that of requisitioning the bells, belonging to the 11 Orthodox churches in the city, allowing only a medium-sized one to remain in position. Following the intervening protests, a certain concession was made that benefited the *"Saint Apostles"* Church. The place of worship in Brăila was allowed to keep a massive bell, previously manufactured in Munich, which had a special artistic value and was also difficult to dismantle.

The Germans' *"rush"* for metals caused a new ordinance, dated 2 March 1918, to impose the lifting of the other remaining bells at the cult units. A month later, the copper roofs of the churches were also targeted (Ib., pp. 169-171).

Among the priests in Brăila who suffered a multitude of hardships and sometimes paid with their lives for not aligning themselves with the demands of the occupiers, we mention the priests Gheorghe Balaban, from Viziru, killed by the Bulgarians together with his wife, and Dumitru Danielescu from Gemenele, accused of espionage and sent, up to November 1919, in the Hellberg camp (Germany). They were joined by Stan Apostol, from Movila Miresei, who suffered beatings from Turkish and Bulgarian soldiers because he did not agree that they should use the church where he served as a cattle stable. And in order for the persecution to be complete, the Hungarian troops expelled him from the house he owned (Popescu, 1940, pp. 62-63).

A trio of priests from Jirlău Parish, consisting of Grigore Popescu, Radu Anghelache and Voicu Ionescu, were taken to Surdila Greci and brutally beaten. After they were released by the German military authorities for lack of evidence, they soon passed away (Gaiță, 2002, p. 142).

Constantin Filotti, the mayor of Buzău, also demonstrated a very commendable conduct. In the atmosphere of patriotic effervescence, created around the great event of the union of Bessarabia with Romania (27 March /9 April 1918), the mayor had the courage to submit a request to the German squad command requesting permission

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*Seven months later from this event and the day after the departure of the German troops from the city of Buzău, on 8/21 November 1918, a religious service was held at the City Hall in memory of the great voivode Mihai the Brave. The troops of the 9th Infantry Brigade marched "under a splendid triumphal arch, decorated with flags, flowers and greenery, and in the middle having designated a map of Greater Romania". Commanded by Colonel Lascăr Caracaș, they were the first Romanian military forces to enter the liberated city.*

to officiate, in all the churches in the city and county, "a Tedeum of gratitude that would be attended by schoolchildren and the people" (Stan, 2008, p. 151).

The demonstrations took place on 8/21 April 1918 and had as points of interest a Tedeum, officiated at 09.00 in the Episcopal Cathedral by a council of priests, a procession in front of the City Hall and a historic speech delivered by priest Constantin Proviaan, director of the Theological Seminary "Chesarie Episcopul" (Stan, 2008, p. 151).

Exactly seven months later from this event and the day after the departure of the German troops from the city of Buzău, on 8/21 November 1918 (the feast of Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel), a religious service was held at the City Hall in memory of the great voivode Mihai the Brave. The troops of the 9th Infantry Brigade marched "under a splendid triumphal arch, decorated with flags, flowers and greenery, and in the middle having designated a map of Greater Romania". Commanded by Colonel Lascăr Caracaș, they were the first Romanian military forces to enter the liberated city (Bianu, 1926, p. 107).

In the liturgical space of the same Episcopal Cathedral in Buzău, on 11/24 November 1918, prayers of thanks were offered to the Almighty for the help given to the Romanian nation to become whole and to see its secular desire to unite in one Christian country (Ib., p. 114).

## CONCLUSIONS

The Romanian Orthodox Church, called by Mihai Eminescu "the spiritual mother of the Romanian nation, which gave birth to the unity of the language and the ethnic union of the people", participating in all the crucial, glorious or fateful moments in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic space.

The failure of the first military campaign of the Total War, carried out for 3 months by the Romanian armed forces, in the summer and autumn of 1916, generated its painful retreat towards Moldova, the abandonment of 2/3 of the national territory, including the capital, in favour of the Central Powers.

Between December 1916 and November 1918, the occupying armies forced the population of Romania, the church hierarchy and the monastic order to carry their national cross on a real Golgotha.

Like the members of the Christian communities they shepherded, the servants of the Holy Shrines had to endure material limitations, moral suffering and the vexations of the conquering authorities.

Orthodox priests offered prayers and church services for the victory of the Romanian armed forces over the enemy and, at the same time, raised the morale of the countrymen, who felt miserable because the deplorable condition in which they found themselves.

The ecclesiastical life of Bucharest and the temporarily occupied territories was affected by various episodes from the "breaking news" category: the attempt to change the Julian calendar to the Gregorian one, the requisition of church bells to be used in the armament industry of The Second Reich and the planning of the theft of the relics of St. Pious Demetrius the New, with the intention of their relocation to the Bulgarian space. This gloomy landscape was completed by the destruction and desecration of some places of worship of patrimonial importance and the confiscation of church assets, with spiritual, historical and symbolic value.

The echo of the terrorist regime and the robbery organized in detail also reached the plains of the Diocese of the Curvature of the Carpathians. And in this geographical and ecclesiastical space, the attempts of Germany and its allies to interfere with the "modus vivendi" of the Orthodox Church faced the brave opposition of some representatives of the clergy and some living in the monastic environment, as well as parishioners, guided by a vigorous Christian, national and civic conscience.

Some protested vigorously against the inhuman acts committed by the invaders and suffered physical and moral aggression, arrests, convictions, hard years in prison and even the ultimate sacrifice, because they hid and helped the Romanian soldiers who escaped from captivity or went astray during the retreat, to reach Moldova.

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ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

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## ACTIONS OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> OILFIELD GUARD DETACHMENT TO DEFEND THE PLOIEȘTI AREA BETWEEN 23 AUGUST AND 1 SEPTEMBER 1944

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*When the Second World War broke out, Romania was undergoing in a rather difficult economic, political, military and especially diplomatic situation. Germany's territorial expansion triggered the fall of the system of alliances Bucharest was relying on, given that France signed the armistice in April 1940.*

*That is why the pressures exerted by Germany forced Romania's entry under Berlin's sphere of influence, an actual example being that the German Military Mission was sent into our country, with the clear purpose, among others, to take over oil resources and processing capacities in the Ploiești area.*

*The act of 23 August 1944, through which Romania turned its weapons against Germany, with the clear intention of joining the United Nations, led to a state of confusion among Romanian and German troops deployed in Valea Prahovei. However, the dynamic orders of the Romanian General Staff were to annihilate any German resistance in the area, even by the force of arms, if needed. This mission was assigned to the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, commanded by Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru. This large unit was subordinated to the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Army Corps, commanded by Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu. The conclusion of this study illustrates the effort and heroism of Romanian troops, who annihilated, between 31 August and 1 September 1944, sometimes after heavy battles and human losses, any resistance of the German units who were thus forced to retreat to the North and lose all control over the oil resources in the Ploiești area. These aspects are highlighted from a military, economic and socio-historical perspective, by using the documentation technique.*

*Keywords: 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Army Corps; Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu; 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment; 5 Flak Division; Major General Julius Kuderna;*

English version by Iulia SINGER.

No. 3/2023

226

Actions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment to Defend the Ploiești Area  
between 23 August and 1 September 1944



## INTRODUCTION – THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE ECONOMIC-MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND GERMANY BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In the interwar period, the Great European Powers, especially France, the UK, and, starting from 1938, Germany, fought constantly, through economic and political methods, mostly through the intelligence services, to bring Romania under their sphere of influence. In the first part of this period, the winner seemed to be France, with which Romania concluded a Mutual Assistance Treaty on 10 June 1926, strengthened by the Convention of 22 November of the same year (Monitorul Oficial/Official Gazette no. 14 of 20 January 1927, pp. 471-479).

However, the outbreak of the Second World War, on 1 September 1939, with the attack on Poland by the Wehrmacht, changed the balance of power in Europe. This state of affairs was emphasised by the occupation of France in June 1940, which is why Romania's entire system of alliances, which revolved around France and Great Britain, collapsed. In this context, Germany obviously saw fit to impose a rapprochement of Bucharest with the expansionist interests of Berlin, in the conditions of the annexation of Austria in 1938, and the bilateral agreement signed on 23 August 1939, in Moscow, by Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov by which, practically, they divided their spheres of interests in Europe.

Moreover, the attention of the German decision-makers, Hitler in particular, was held both by the special geostrategic position in the Black Sea basin and at the mouths of the Danube, as well as by the economic resources available to Romania, mainly oil and cereals. That is precisely why the evolution of international relations during this period brought Romania to its most difficult moment, both its territorial integrity and the very existence of the state being threatened.

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227

MILITARY HISTORY





*In 1939, the German capital in Romania was insignificant, and Berlin exerted economic, political and military pressure on Romania. A memorandum of the German Army Administration Staff, drawn up in April 1939, is edifying in this respect, stating that “the economic agreement with Romania does not provide an adequate guarantee for actual delivery availability in wartime. Germany’s monopoly position in the Romanian oil economy failed”.*

In this context, Germany increased its interest in attracting Romania under its sphere of power. This materialised through the signing, on 23 May 1939, in Bucharest, of the *Treaty on the promotion of economic relations between the Kingdom of Romania and the German Reich*, published in Monitorul Oficial/Official Gazette no. 125 of 2 June 1939 (pp. 3460-3462).

It is interesting that Article I specifies that *“the economic plan, on the one hand, will take into account the German import requirements, and, on the other, the development possibilities of the Romanian production, the internal Romanian needs and the needs of Romania’s economic exchange with other countries”* (Ibid.). In the same article, the treaty clearly specified the economic fields in which Romanian-German collaboration would take place, namely the development and orientation of Romanian agricultural production, as well as *“the development of existing agricultural industries and the establishment of new agricultural industries and processing facilities”* (Ibid., p. 3461). These provisions of the treaty emphasise Germany’s special interest in Romania’s resources. Thus, special attention was paid to forestry and mining through the establishment of Romanian-German joint companies *“for the opening and exploitation of chalcopyrite in Dobrogea, chrome ores in Banat, manganese ores in Vatra-Dornei – Broșteni area”* (Ibid.). The Germans were also interested in exploiting bauxite deposits, as well as in creating an aluminium industry (Ibid.).

But the most important stake for Germany in this treaty was related to oil resources. Precisely for this reason, the 4<sup>th</sup> point of Article I stipulated the establishment of a Romanian-German joint company *“which will deal with oil exploitation and will carry out a program of crude oil drilling and processing”* (Ibid.). Last but not least, this document paid special attention to military relations, which is why the 7<sup>th</sup> point stipulated that Germany was to deliver weapons and equipment for the Romanian army, navy, aviation, as well as for the weapon industry. All this in the conditions in which, in 1939, the German capital in Romania was insignificant, and Berlin exerted economic, political and military pressure on Romania. A memorandum

of the German Army Administration Staff, drawn up in April 1939, is edifying in this respect, stating that *“the economic agreement with Romania does not provide an adequate guarantee for actual delivery availability in wartime. Germany’s monopoly position in the Romanian oil economy failed. The subordination of Romania by means of foreign policy has not been achieved until now. However, military means are currently the only real guarantee for the possession of Romanian oil fields. Their application must be aimed at maintaining the operational capacity of the Romanian oil industry”*. (Istoria militară a poporului român, 1989, pp. 301-302).

### ORGANISATION OF THE ROMANIAN-GERMAN DEFENCE SYSTEM AROUND THE PLOIEȘTI OIL AREA

Under these conditions, in accordance with General Order no. 877 of 30 October 1940, signed by Army Corps General Ion Antonescu, as Minister of National Defence, a German military commission arrived in Romania with the aim of training the Romanian troops, as follows: *“The German troops, made up of several officers instructors, A.C.A. and planes, as well as a motorised division, were called by the country’s leadership, so they did not come without our consent; they did not come to conquer or occupy, but came with fraternal thoughts. I have called in the German troops to teach you to use the new weapons we will receive from Germany; I called them to teach you their fighting methods, very successful in the last wars”* (AMNR, file 124, p. 138).

On 12 October 1940, the first German troops arrived in Romania, namely the 13<sup>th</sup> Motorised Division and air forces, most of them deployed in the Bucharest area and in the Ploiești oilfield area. That is why the 7<sup>th</sup> Section was created within the Ministry of National Defence, which was assigned with both keeping track of the German troops on Romanian territory and all the goods placed at their disposal, as well as with ensuring the links between the senior leadership of the Romanian Army and the German courts (Ciobanu, Șerban, 2011, p. 112). During this period, 22,430 German soldiers arrived in Romania as part of the German Military Mission, of which 17,561 belonged



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*The command of the German Military Mission in Romania was not content with the forces of the Romanian Army deployed in this region, which is why General Alfred Gerstenberg, in his capacity as head of the German Military Mission for the Air Force and commander of the Luftwaffe in Romania, aware of the importance of Romanian oil for the German war machine, ordered that German troops were also included in the defence disposition in the Ploiești area.*

to the Land Forces, and 4,869 to the Air Forces (AMNR, file 1789, p. 217).

The defence system built around Ploiești or *Festung (Fortress)*, as it was called at the time, was formed, in early 1940, by the 6<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Defense Group, with three AA gun batteries, one searchlight battery and one machine gun section (AMNR, file 1877, p. 9). Towards late 1940, at the insistence of the German side, General Ion Antonescu, as the head of the state, ordered the deployment of the forces of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Division in the Ploiești area, to which an armoured company and seven gendarmes companies were added, the latter being assigned military police missions (Ib., p. 119).

After these measures were taken, important forces were deployed at the beginning of 1941 in the Ploiești area and in the neighbouring towns, whose mission was to ensure the safety of the perimeter where the oil installations were located, namely seven AA batteries, a searchlights battery, ten 13.2 mm calibre machine guns sections, while the airspace was covered by three fighter squadrons (Ib., p. 9).

Obviously, the command of the German Military Mission in Romania was not content with the forces of the Romanian Army deployed in this region, which is why General Alfred Gerstenberg, in his capacity as head of the German Military Mission for the Air Force and commander of the *Luftwaffe* in Romania, aware of the importance of Romanian oil for the German war machine, ordered that German troops were also included in the defence disposition in the Ploiești area. Thus, at the beginning of 1944, the 5<sup>th</sup> Flak Division was stationed here, commanded by Major General Julius Kuderna, which had AA units under its command, in the localities of Ploiești, Păulești, Tătărani, Bărcănești, Strejnicu and Valea Călugărească (Ib., file 23, p. 64).

It should be mentioned that the command point of the German troops deployed in the Ploiești area was in the Misleanca Forest, having a large strength of approximately 6,000 troops. Also, a powerful German AA battery was stationed in the Buda Forest, with 2,000 troops, while the Germans had approximately 1,000 troops in the Băicoi area. Around the town of Câmpina, the German troops occupied the oil



*The Romanian military decision-makers correctly identified the fact that the defence of the Ploiești oilfield area required the deployment of a powerful AA system meant to deter possible allied air attacks. That is why the most powerful and newest pieces of artillery, namely the 88 mm and 105 mm Krupp guns, received by the Romanian Army in early 1944, were included in the 8<sup>th</sup> AA Brigade, assigned to defend the Ploiești oilfield zone.*

and sulphuric acid refineries, where more than 1,000 soldiers were stationed. Also, in the area of Strejnicu, Târgșorul Vechi and Târgșorul Nou, around 4,000 German soldiers were deployed in defensive positions. The city of Ploiești was surrounded by AA batteries manned by more than 3,000 Germans, who occupied most of the nearby oil areas, with the possibility to prohibit traffic in the Prahova Valley (Ib.).

Around 23 August 1944, at the height of the Red Army's offensive on Romanian territory, the Ploiești oil zone was defended also by troops of the Royal Romanian Army, more precisely by the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, commanded by Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru. With about 11,000 soldiers, the Great Unit was subordinated to the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, commanded by Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu (AMMN, p. 1 et seq.), appointed to this position on 16 February 1944.

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### THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ROMANIAN TROOPS AND THE GERMAN TROOPS DEPLOYED IN THE PLOIEȘTI AREA BETWEEN 23 AUGUST AND 1 SEPTEMBER 1944

The act of 23 August 1944, after which Marshal Ion Antonescu, the head of the State, was arrested, and Romania turned its weapons against Germany, an event that we will not address in detail in this study, found the Romanian and German troops aligned within the same defence disposition. Under these circumstances, General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu, one of the shadow opponents of Marshal Ion Antonescu, ordered the Great Units and units under the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps to take all necessary measures to isolate and push out the German troops stationed in the Ploiești area.



*In the evening of 23 August 1944, "after the communication made on Radio Romania and Radio Bucharest (...), at 10:30 p.m., by which the alliance with Germany is broken and an armistice is requested of the allies", General Grigore Moșteoru, the commander of the 18th Oilfield Guard Detachment, alerted all the troops in Prahova County and Dâmbovița County by telephone, "giving orders on how to proceed with the German army".*

Starting from this state of facts, in the evening of 23 August 1944, "after the communication made on Radio Romania and Radio Bucharest (...), at 10:30 p.m., by which the alliance with Germany is broken and an armistice is requested of the allies", General Grigore Moșteoru, the commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, alerted all the troops in Prahova County and Dâmbovița County by telephone, "giving orders on how to proceed with the German army" (Ib.).

That is precisely why, immediately after the announcement was made concerning the arrest of the head of state and the return of weapons against Germany, General Moșteoru issued Order no. 1/23 August 1944, which included the missions that the Great Unit under his command had to carry out in the following days, as follows: "In accordance with the telegraphic order of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, the following is ordered:

1. Starting from now, all Romanian units in your guard area will be on alert.
2. Order will be maintained in your guard area at public institutions and oil companies.
3. The German army troops are free to move in order.
4. Any attempt by anyone to set fire to or destroy oil installations will be prevented by all means.
5. Acts of aggression against those who will not provoke us will be avoided.
6. Any event will be reported by phone to this Command.
7. Send 2 mounted agents to this Command" (Ib.).

In accordance with the order issued by General Moșteoru, on the night of 23 to 24 August 1944, the soldiers of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment proceeded to intensify the guard at the telephone and telegraph offices, as well as, in particular, at the refineries and oil companies, in order not to be destroyed, as the Detachment had precise data that the Germans had thoroughly studied the destruction of the most important refineries (Ib.). It is interesting that, during this period of time, the German troops deployed in the defence disposition in the Ploiești area "did not take any action, except those of a animated

movement, which was signalled from the first moment of the breaking of the alliance" (Ib., pp. 1-2).

In the morning of 24 August, the Command of the German troops in Romania ordered the Great Units and their subordinate units to carry out a series of missions that were intended to protect both the troops and the occupied positions. First of all, troops from the German Army barricaded the asphalted road in several points, namely Băicoi railway station, Movila Vulpii, Păulești camp, the Câmpina barrier, located in the northern part of Ploiești, as well as the main entrance barrier to Ploiești, located in the southern part of the city (Ib.).

Also, the German units regrouped on defence positions inside the city of Ploiești, on the Târgșor airport, the Buda bridge and train station, the Păulești forest, the Crângul lui Bot forest and the Sângreș hill near the town of Moreni, an area where members of the German Ethnic Group who were operating here were also reorganised (Ib., p. 2).

Under these conditions, General Grigore Moșteoru ordered a series of measures both to disarm the German troops and to take control of the checkpoints held by them. Thus, the 9<sup>th</sup> Călărăși Regiment, deployed in Liliești, received the mission "to take under orders the recruits of the 10<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Regiment from Cocorăști Mislii and a battalion from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dorobanți Regiment from Lipănești, with which to move on the Tintea-Găgeni-Blejoi-Ploiești itinerary in order to open the entry to Ploiești and maintain order in Ploiești in connection with Colonel Oprescu, the Garrison Commander who does not have sufficient troops available" (Ib.). Also, General Moșteoru paid special attention to the guarding of the oilfield areas, which is why he ordered all the units guarding the oilfield area "to form into combat units", to disarm scattered German elements and to carry out attacks on the German units "with the Romanian units" (Ib.).

In the morning of 24 August 1944, the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, under the orders of General Grigore Moșteoru, carried out a series of missions with the role of annihilating the combat force of the German troops, but also to deny their access to the sensitive points of the area of responsibility. Thus, since the early hours of the morning, the German guards who were on guard duty at the refineries



ROMANIAN  
MILITARY  
THINKING

*In the morning of 24 August, the Command of the German troops in Romania ordered the Great Units and their subordinate units to carry out a series of missions that were intended to protect both the troops and the occupied positions. First of all, troops from the German Army barricaded the asphalted road in several points, namely Băicoi railway station, Movila Vulpii, Păulești camp, the Câmpina barrier, located in the northern part of Ploiești.*





To de-escalate the situation, Brigadier General Moșteoru got in touch with Major General Julius Kuderna, the Commander of the German 5<sup>th</sup> Flak Division, informing him "that it is in the interest of the German troops to take advantage of the free time they had left to go calmly with weapons and luggage".

in the Ploiești area were disarmed because they were the provokers and the first to engage in these operations. It is interesting that "the disarmament was carried out without taking prisoners, and they were left free to go to Germany" (Ib.).

To de-escalate the situation, Brigadier General Moșteoru got in touch with Major General Julius Kuderna, the Commander of the German 5<sup>th</sup> Flak Division, informing him "that it is in the interest of the German troops to take advantage of the free time they had left to go calmly with weapons and luggage". Also, the Romanian General asked his German counterpart for the release of Colonel Radu Grunau who "was taken prisoner in the morning of 24 August this year at 8 o'clock because he had the courage to go to the German Commander to protest that the German troops were preventing him from marching to Blejoi" (Ib., p. 3).

In the whirlwind of events on the morning of 24 August, the German troops stationed in Ploiești resorted to stopping the population and the Romanian passers-by and to taking their cars, a fact reported to the commander of the German 5<sup>th</sup> Flak Division. The discussion between the two commanders was tough, especially when the German General complained that "the Romanian troops are pressuring the German troops to leave the country immediately or to disarm them and that under these conditions it is beneath the dignity of a German general who bled with his troops for the defence of the country to withdraw and that he awaits orders" (Ib.).

The afternoon of August 24 brought with it a slight escalation of relations between the Romanian troops and the German troops stationed in the Ploiești area, even if there was a strong sense of camaraderie enhanced following the rejection of the air attacks carried out by the allied aviation in 1942 and 1943.

In this context, Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu, in his capacity as commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, issued Order no. 23546, at 1:30 p.m. on 24 August, which was the *Action Plan* of all great units and units under its subordination, in which the following aspects were stipulated:

"I. German units in Jud. Prahova, most of them gathered in the city of Ploiești barring the entrances, and the rest stayed in Păulești Forest.

In conclusion:

The German units grouped at Ploiești probably intend:

1. To regroup and organise in the city thus making themselves safe from the aggressions that could be produced by the Romanian units.

2. Or to organise with the aim of attacking the Romanian units in order to disarm them and destroy the telephone, industrial and oil installations in the area.

II. The 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment is assigned with:

a. Being in a position to deal with enemy attacks from the East towards Prahova Valley in the Aricești Rahtivani-South and Cocorăști Capri-North sectors, including both of them.

b. Attacking, with all available forces, on the Prahova Valley towards the Ploiești-Băicoi-Câmpina road, the German troops who sought to destroy the sensitive points on the road or the Ploiești-Câmpina railway in their retreat.

c. Studying a concentric attack plan with all available forces south of the Câmpina-Văleni line in order to encircle the city of Ploiești in order to destroy or disarm the German forces defending the city" (Ib.).

For this purpose, the sectors of responsibility of all units of the strength of a regiment or battalion subordinated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, which were ordered to avoid combat contact with German troops, were established.

Under these circumstances, in accordance with the Order of the General Staff no. 678,563 of 24 August sent with Order of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps no. 23,540 of the same day, the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment issued Order no. 2 of 24 August 1944, which stipulated:

"1. All Romanian land, air and naval forces cease operations against the Soviet armies on the night of 23/24 August.

2. The subordination of Romanian troops to German troops ceases immediately.

Any conflict with the German troops will be avoided, not causing them any difficulties when leaving the country.



On 25 August 1944, Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru, commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, issued a series of orders by which the troops under his command received clear missions for the annihilation of the German forces deployed in the Ploiești area.

3. However, all units will counter any attempt to be disarmed and will prevent the occupation of public, civil and military institutions.

4. All German telephone and telegraph wires will be removed from Romanian military and civilian telephone and telegraph exchanges.

5. No German soldier or group of German soldiers or units will be allowed to enter oil refineries or enterprises" (Ib., p. 5).

It is interesting that, after 2:25 p.m., the German troops regrouped in the North Bucharest area, attacking the capital from the direction of Pipera and Băneasa. That is precisely why Major General Gheorghe Mihail, recently appointed to the position of Chief of the General Staff, ordered that no German troops were allowed towards Ploiești and Bucharest. Following this order, the German troops were let to move freely from Bucharest or Mizil to Ploiești-Sinaia-Brașov, being completely prohibited from moving from Sinaia to Ploiești-București (Ib., p. 6).

Romanian-German relations became tenser on the evening of 24 August, as the German commanders refused to retreat to Transylvania and formed fixed battle points in the Ploiești area.

That is precisely why, on the second day, troops of the 9<sup>th</sup> Călărași Regiment and the 10<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Regiment disarmed the German guards at the Vega refinery and the Astra Română refinery, taking, at the same time, approximately 2,000 prisoners from among the Germans (Ib., p. 7).

On 25 August 1944, Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru, commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, issued a series of orders by which the troops under his command received clear missions for the annihilation of the German forces deployed in the Ploiești area. Thus, Order no. 2 was issued in the morning of that day, which provided for the following:

"1. Upon receiving this order, the Romanian army is at war with the German army.

2. You will move absolutely all scaffolding guards except for the Refineries, only the guards from army depots, telephones and artwork will be left and reinforced.

3. The rest of the forces will immediately regroup no later than 3 o'clock tonight, in the most suitable place for action against the German troops.

4. Get in touch with all the Romanian troops in your immediate vicinity, with whom you can help if needed; gather and arm all the isolated Romanian soldiers.

5. After regrouping the entire unit, you will immediately proceed to disarm the German troops in your region and those passing by.

For small groups of Germans and small columns, you will proceed to disarm them from now on.

No man under my command will be disarmed.

As for the groups of larger German forces fixed on the ground, they will be countered with forces in constant units" (Ib., p. 8).

However, towards the end of the day, the situation on the ground deteriorated particularly much, which is why the commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment issued Special Order no. 7, at 7:00 p.m., which stipulated that the units of this Great Unit should act on the attack directions Moreni-Sângeris, Filipești Târg-Nedelea-Brătășanca, Târgșor airport, Buda train station, Mislea-Băicoi-Bordeni, Băicoi-Liliesti, Păulești-Mizleanca Forest. An important role was given to the Colonel Oprescu Group, deployed inside the city of Ploiești, composed of the garrison battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dorobanti Regiment, which had to resist inside the city "until the concentric attack that will take place on the city of Ploiești" (Ib., p. 9).

An important sector within the Ploiești defence zone was represented by the Târgșor airport, completely captured by the German troops, in the evening of 25 August, together with the Romanian guard and its commander, Colonel Tănăsescu.

In these conditions, Colonel Petre Hrisafi, the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment Chief of Staff, drew up a report to the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps Command, in which it was specified that Major Victor Popescu from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fighting Vehicles Regiment received the mission to attack Târgșor airport with a subunit consisting of 2 companies on foot from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fighting Vehicles Regiment, a fighting vehicles platoon, four pieces, the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion, the troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Flotilla escaped from the airport (Ib.). the report further showed that, "from the reconnaissance made by him in the afternoon, finding



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On 26 August, the most important confrontations between the Romanian troops and the German forces deployed in the Ploiești area began. Thus, in the Moreni sub-sector, the Major Prună Group operated under the command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion, a company from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, a company from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Motorised Mountain Troops Battalion, to which a company from the Fire Fighters Battalion was added.

*that the Germans are much superior to the Romanian troops that have to attack, he reported to the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, asking to postpone the attack on Târgșor airport, until a group of forces superior to the Germans will be achieved” (Ib.).*

That is precisely why, in the evening of 25 August, the same colonel Petre Hrisafi issued Order no. 485 to Major Victor Popescu, which stated that *“you are appointed Commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Detachment, composed of your unit and the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion. The mission: To take control of Târgșorul Nou airport where it seems that the German forces are outnumbering the Romanian ones. For this purpose, you will immediately move on the route Filipești-Nedelea-Aricești Rahtivani-Târgșorul Nou, where you will stop the vehicles at a convenient distance from where they cannot discover your intention and you will contact Lt. Colonel Govella who will give you all the clarifications in in order to accomplish the mission. You will immediately report on the status of the execution of the mission to the Army Corps” (Ib., p. 11).*

This order was expected given that, in accordance with Report no. 6 issued on the evening of 25 August, at 10 p.m., by the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment to the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, it appeared that the German units were regrouping on the roads leading to Ploiești, being deployed in compact detachments with important firepower, in the Ploiești, Târgșorul Nou airport, Păulești-Misleanca Forest, Băicoi and Moreni sectors.

On 26 August, the most important confrontations between the Romanian troops and the German forces deployed in the Ploiești area began. Thus, in the Moreni sub-sector, Major Prună Group operated under the command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion, a company from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, a company from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Motorised Mountain Troops Battalion, to which a company from the Fire Fighters Battalion was added. Throughout the day of 26 August, following successive attacks, this group conquered, one by one, the Pleașa hill, the Tuicani hill and the Sângeriș hill. In the fighting during this day, Major Prună Group, transformed into Captain Sirca Group, after the wounding and evacuation of the first commander, had among

casualties one dead officer, 4 wounded officers, 4 dead soldiers and 15 wounded soldiers, however taking about 300 German prisoners (Ib. pp. 12-13).

In the Dițesti sub-sector, the German offensive in the direction of Filipești de Pădure, where the Command Point of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment was located, was stopped by the counter-paratroopers platoon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mountain Troops Regiment. By 14.00, this sub-unit was reinforced with two motor-carried companies, supported by two heavy AA guns. This battle formation was commanded directly by Colonel Petre Hrisafi, the Chief of Staff of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment which conquered the entire Sângeriș hill by midnight, making the junction with Major Prună Group (Captain Sirca Group) and Major Andrei Group. Following this mission, the Romanian troops took around 200 German prisoners and destroyed an 88 mm artillery battery, a 20 mm battery, as well as 10 troop transport vehicles (Ib., p. 13).

In the Mislea-Banlok sub-sector and the Câmpina sub-sector, where the 10<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Regiment operated, the Romanian troops opposed the German units that wanted to cross to the North. In the Tintea sub-sector, the 9<sup>th</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion eliminated 5 German AA sections of 20 mm, capturing 143 prisoners and war material (Ib.).

In the Băicoi-Buda sub-sector, *“a German armoured train appeared, travelling between Băicoi and Buda railway stations. Measures were taken to derail it by removing the line from the bolts, near Băicoi station. A train with heavy AA artillery was brought to the Buda station; also, numerous AA fire guns with the mission of shooting at the Romanian troops in the area” (Ib.).* And, last but not least, in the Plopeni sub-sector, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Călărași Regiment captured 250 prisoners (Ib., p. 31).

On 27 August, the situation became tense, so that direct clashes took place between the two combatant forces. Since the early hours of the morning, the enemy continued to group in the Păulești forest, Buda forest, Crângul lui Bot and south of Ploiești. Also, German formations carried out isolated attack actions on the Romanian troops,



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especially on AA units. Due to the interrupted telephone connections, the situation in Ploiești was unclear, so the Command of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment found out that all the Romanian formations in Ploiești under the orders of Commander Colonel Oprescu Spiridon withdrew to Blejoi to avoid a fight in the city with superior German forces. Also, during the night of 27 to 28 August, a German company, taking advantage of the darkness, *“sneak west of Filipeștii de Pădure and tried to attack the locality three times, but was rejected”* (Ib., p. 14).

Under these circumstances, on 27 August 1944, the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps issued Special Order no. 13, signed by Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu, to 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, which stated that the Germans occupied areas in the north and east of the city of Ploiești. Also, in the Păulești forest, but also in the Valea Călugărească sector, the Germans organised motorised columns that were waiting for the order to move in the north direction of Ploiești. Through this document, the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps Command informed the subordinate Grand Unit that the German actions carried out between 24-27 August were aimed at ensuring the freedom of action of the troops on the front.

Special Order no. 13 established that the main mission of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment was to move with all units *“able to occupy a mounted position on the Dobrescu-Călinești restaurant road to block the Ploiești-Câmpina road”* (Ib.).

Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu ordered Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru that the Great Unit under his command should occupy a flank position between canton no. 15-Ploiești-Văleni railway-Km. 25-Cap Roșu. In order to carry out this order, it was necessary to attack and occupy Băicoi railway station, an important strategic point located between Ploiești and the access road to Valea Prahovei.

Next, the order stated that a minimum of forces had to be kept in the first line, with the reserve strong enough to counterattack or manoeuvre in the event they were surrounded. Also, the main forces that were to participate in this mission were set, namely the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Regiment, the 5<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Regiment and the 1<sup>st</sup> Motor

Artillery Regiment, which were to be withdrawn from the Târgșor area and deployed on the new alignment, while the 28<sup>th</sup> AA Division and the artillery battery from the 5<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Regiment, respectively 3 pieces of 76.2 mm calibre, were to provide fire support for the action of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment (Ib., p. 15).

In accordance with the order received from the higher echelon, Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru, in his capacity of Commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, issued an Operations Order that precisely provided the combat missions to be carried out by the subordinate units and subunits, in order to neutralise all the German forces grouped in the city of Ploiești and in the Păulești forest.

The main mission of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment was to intercept the railway and the paved road in the region of Băicoi station and to stop traffic on the railway and the road.

In the first line, the Major Negulescu Group was deployed in its disposition in three distinct sectors. Thus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Battalion was stationed in the centre, with the mission of horseback attacking the Băicoi railway station on the Florești-Băicoi railway station road. The right flank was occupied by the 5<sup>th</sup> Motorised Mountain Troops Battalion, which was to attack *“in the direction of elevation 312 km. 20 by railways securing the right side of the entire attack disposition”* (Ib.). On the left flank, the forces of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion were deployed, with the mission to attack in the direction of Florești-Km. 20.

Behind the disposition in the first line, more precisely on the Valea Prahova-Călinești alignment, there were the reserve forces of the 10<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Division and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mountain Troops Battalion, which had the mission of carrying out a flank counterattack in case of an enemy reaction (Ib.).

Cover and artillery fire support were provided by the 75 mm Battery from the 5<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Regiment, as well as by the 88 mm Capture Section. Subunits of the 28<sup>th</sup> AA Division also participated in this action, with the mission of attacking the German forces deployed in the Băicoi sector, as well as on the ridge of Dorobanți Hill.



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The particularly strong strategic reserve was composed of Lieutenant-Colonel Pleșoianu Group (forces from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Călărași Regiment, a battalion from the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Renault Fighting Vehicles Company), the 9<sup>th</sup> Călărași Regiment, the 9<sup>th</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion and Colonel Spiridon Oprescu Group (2 battalions from the 7<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Regiment, a battalion from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dorobanți Regiment, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gendarmerie Company commanded by Captain Pricop).

The fighting that took place on 28 August 1944 was particularly strong, as it appears from the Intelligence Report no. 29 of 28 August signed by Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru, commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, and countersigned by Colonel Petre Hrisafi, this Great Unit's Chief of Staff: *"After our troops intercepted the railways and the paved road at the Băicoi railway station, the enemy tried to counterattack at 18:00 on the flank of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion, from the left of the disposition, in the direction of Cap Roșu-Floresti. The enemy counterattack being supported by several German AA batteries, triggered the retreat of the company on the left of the disposition. The situation was restored by the Group Commander, Major Andrei, a fighting platoon and a cavalry squadron"* (Ib.).

It is interesting that General Moșteoru knew the state of mind of the German troops, demoralised by the situation they were in: *"Many Austrians would surrender, but they cannot do this because of the National Socialists and the officers"* (Ib.). They were also afraid of being taken prisoner by the Soviets, as they were known for their harsh treatment of prisoners.

At the end of 28 August, Major Negulescu Detachment managed to take control of the Băicoi railway station and a good part of the oil installations in the area, but the repeated counterattacks of the Germans forced our troops to withdraw and abandon the paved road, as well as Dorobanțu Hill (Ib., p. 19).

Under these conditions, on the morning of 29 August, the fighting was resumed with even greater intensity. That's why the commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps ordered *"the subordination of all units located*

*in the Valea Teleajenului to the Detachment – at the same time, he also provides 7 old model fighting vehicles to be used along the Blejoi-Lipănești road"* (Ib.).

At the same time, troops from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Călărași Regiment, the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Battalion and a platoon from the 9<sup>th</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion were placed into disposition with the mission to intercept the paved road and chase away the German troops from the Țigăneasca Forest and the village of Cotoiu.

At 1:00 p.m., following repeated attacks, Lieutenant-Colonel Pleșoianu's Subgroup managed to clear the paved road and, thus, prevent a possible influx of German troops in the direction of Ploiești (Ib., p. 23).

Because the Romanian troops could not free the Târgșor airport and the Crângul lui Bot Forest, due to the heavy fire opened by the German artillery, the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps returned with the Operations Order no. 19, registered with no. 1675 of 29 August 1944, in which it was clearly specified that this Great Unit received the mission *"to destroy the enemy forces initially in the Buda area and later in the Păulești area in order to take control of the Ploiești communication node as quickly as possible. In order to fulfil the above mission, the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps will attack in the morning of 30 August in the general direction Băicoi Station, Movila Mare, Buda Station"* (Ib.).

The point of departure of the Romanian troops was located on the alignment Liziera Est Nedelea-elevation 270 Movila lui Dobre-Movila Mare 288 at km 75-Liziera Sud Băicoi-Liliești-Tintea-Găgeni-Liziera Sud Boldești. In this sense, three groups of forces were created, with well-established structure and missions. Thus, the General Moșteoru Group, with its subordinate units located southeast of the Ploiești-Câmpina road, between km. 83 and 75, was to attack on horseback on the railway in the general direction of Buda (Ib.).

Colonel Turtureanu's group, formed by the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Battalion, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Călărași Regiment, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion, the 9<sup>th</sup> Călărași Regiment and the 9<sup>th</sup> AA Regiment, was ordered to attack in the general direction of Băicoi-Tufanii lui Berca-Mizileanca



*The point of departure of the Romanian troops was located on the alignment Liziera Est Nedelea-elevation 270 Movila lui Dobre-Movila Mare 288 at km 75-Liziera Sud Băicoi-Liliești-Tintea-Găgeni-Liziera Sud Boldești. In this sense, three groups of forces were created, with well-established structure and missions.*

*At the end of 28 August, the Major Negulescu Detachment managed to take control of the Băicoi railway station and a good part of the oil installations in the area, but the repeated counterattacks of the Germans forced our troops to withdraw and abandon the paved road, as well as Dorobanțu Hill.*



Forest-North-West elevation 215. Last but not least, the Colonel Batcu Group, formed by the units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, had the mission to attack in the Boldești-Blejoi-Ploiești direction (Ib., pp. 23-25).

Under these conditions, in the evening of 29 August, General Moșteoru Group, in fact the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, issued the Operations Order no. 39, in which it was specified that this Great Unit would attack, in the morning of 30 August, in the general direction of Filipeștii de Târg-Buda-Ploiești, in order to capture and destroy the German forces deployed in the Filipești Forest and in the sector Buda.

To initiate this combat action, General Grigore Moșteoru ordered the formation of three subgroups. Thus, Major Andrei's Subgroup, with the main objective of eliminating the German troops from the Buda Forest, had in the first line the troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division from the 10<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion, while in the second line there were the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company from the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorobanți Battalion. Artillery support was provided by AA batteries from the area, as well as from a battery from the Division commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Teodorescu located in the West Nedelea region.

Major Victor Popescu's subgroup, also with the general objective of clearing the Buda Forest, had the first line formed by subunits of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Mountain Troops Battalion deployed in the 279 elevation sector of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion, which covered the sector located between the paved road in the South and Nedelea in the East, as well as the fighting vehicles platoon.

The second line was provided by two companies on foot from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fighting Vehicles Regiment, the artillery support belonging to the Division commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Teodorescu.

Lieutenant-Colonel Dorin's sub-unit consisted of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Company, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Motorised Mountain Troops Company and one company from the 5<sup>th</sup> AA Brigade and the Aviation Flotilla. The reserve troops of this sub-grouping consisted of troops of the Land Forces Company from the Heavy Artillery Regiment deployed in the Filipeștii de Târg sector. This subgroup was ordered to attack in the general

direction Zalhanaua-Târgșorul Nou-Crângul lui Bot to occupy Târgșor airport (Ib., pp. 25-26).

During the night of 29 to 30 August 1944, the Buda-Băicoi railway was destroyed at Km. 15, for the immobilisation of the armoured train, by the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Regiment and a subunit from the Air Pioneer Regiment commanded by Second Lieutenant Cosma.

According to the reports issued by General Grigore Moșteoru, the commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, who had under his command all the Romanian units deployed in this area heavy battles took place from the early hours of 30 August to drive out the German troops: *"The fight is hard. A deadly fire is coming from the trees, barracks and buildings in the forest. In the first line on the main axis Nedelea-Buda Station, the Detachment Commander, General Moșteoru, accompanied by Major Brăileanu, leads and drives the soldiers who do not stop despite all the deadly fire. The Germans are captured one by one, being taken out with grenade and bayonet from trenches, buildings, etc."* (Ib.).

At 18.00, the Buda forest and railway station were conquered by the Romanians, on which occasion 400 German prisoners were taken. This victory was paid dearly by the Romanians who had 3 officers dead and 4 wounded, 2 non-commissioned officers dead and 3 wounded, as well as 35 soldiers dead and 105 wounded (Ib., pp. 27-28).

However, at around 8:00 p.m., an unexpected incident took place, an artillery bombardment being launched on the Major Popescu Group Command Post, preceded *"by live fire from a rifle, a machine gun, which responded with fire in the sector of the 4<sup>th</sup> Motorised Mountain Troops Battalion. The sounds being different from the German ones, suspecting that they are either Romanian or probably Russian, they start shouting from the lines of the Battalion that here are Romanians as well, both in Romanian and in Russian. After about 20 minutes, the fire stops. Russian soldiers appear from the front"* (Ib., p. 28).

By the evening of 31 August, following some stray exchanges of fire, the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment managed to defeat the German resistance and take control of the oil zone, capturing prisoners and materials (Ib.). The 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment managed to fulfil



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The almost 10 days of clashes between the Romanian troops and the German forces resulted in dead and wounded on both sides also due to the refusal of the German commanders, justified up to a certain point, to surrender to the Romanian Army.

the orders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, which is why, on 1 September 1944, the commander of this Great Unit, Major General Constantin Vasiliu-Rășcanu, issued Order of the Day no. 480, which stated: *“The operations that took place between 23 August and 1 September 1944 on the territory of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps ended with absolute success, resulting in disarming all the German units located in the oil zone, capturing a lot of artillery material, automatic weapons and approx. 9,000 prisoners. I bow before the graves of the fallen, who are an example of heroism for us and for future generations. I wish the injured a speedy recovery. I extend my warmest thanks to the officers, non-commissioned officers and to the troops from the units that fought under my orders, and, to reward the high military virtues, proven in battles:*

**I HEREBY ORDER**

*The Commendation by Order of the Day of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and the troops from all the units that fought between 23 August and 1 September 1944, under the orders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps, for the brilliant way in which they carried out the assigned mission”.* (Ib., pp. 30-31).

### CONCLUSIONS

The act of 23 August 1944 led to a paradoxical situation, namely allies suddenly becoming enemies after 10:30 p.m. Under these conditions, in accordance with the orders given by the Romanian General Staff, the Romanian troops deployed in the defence system in the Ploiești oilfield area had to turn their weapons against those with which they countered the allied air attacks against Valea Prahovei refineries and oil wells, with great human sacrifices, in 1942, 1943 and 1944.

The almost 10 days of clashes between the Romanian troops and the German forces resulted in dead and wounded on both sides also due to the refusal of the German commanders, justified up to a certain point, to surrender to the Romanian Army.

1 September meant the annihilation of all German resistance points located in the Ploiești oilfield area and, implicitly, the acknowledgement of the merits of all the units that were part

of the 18<sup>th</sup> Oilfield Guard Detachment, great unit commanded by Brigadier General Grigore Moșteoru, one of the most pragmatic and efficient Romanian commanders who acted in direct contact with German troops on Romanian territory.

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*Carol – King of Romania  
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