

## TRENDS REGARDING THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL THREATS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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**Abstract** *Nowadays, in the context of a security environment that becomes more and more turbulent, the threats to nations' security seem to be more intense than ever. International security organizations are making efforts to maintain peace on the Blue Planet at least at the present stage, but little is known about their chances of success.*

*In this unstable environment, in the framework of globalization, some nations do not seem able to find, at least for the time being, the right ways of action so as to handle the new global and regional threats.*

*The authors of this paper show their opinions on the current global and regional threats, the ways in which they might affect Romania's national security and how decision-makers should react in order to preserve national integrity and sovereignty.*

**Keywords:** *increased globalization; unstable security environment; threat; economic destabilization; possible aggression; national security.*

**T**he current leadership theories suggest that the management of a specific firm/company can react to the external environment influences either by adapting to the environment, or by predetermining the influence factors themselves, in the desired way, by the exposed organization and, whenever those two directions of action are not possible, the firm/company management must take into consideration changing its object of activity. Till an appropriate decision is made in regard with the direction of action, the firm/company management is forced to sense all the mutations produced in the external environment, mutations which can be materialized in risk

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factors or threats to its own existence. Of course, every country, as a regionally and internationally recognized macro-organization, by studying its security environment, tries to sense both global and regional threats, in order to assure the continuity of social progress. The political risk can be perceived as the probability to confront an unpredicted situation of being engaged in an unsafe activity, even a dangerous one, in which the chances of winning or losing are not quantified with a big level of certainty. Managerial risk situations offer more action options, in the specific cases in which each of them do not guarantee the reaching of a final result. In the last months, it looks like the overall environment in Romania has suddenly become more turbulent. In this regard, we believe that the following situations are more and more emphasized as generating global and regional risks and threats, as follows:

- The nowadays political and economic conditions have been shaken by the major tendencies resulted and highlighted after the World Economic Forum, organized between the 17th and 20th of January 2017 at Davos, tendencies which apparently will affect the evolutions and developments of the future decades of mankind. In this context, the new American administration clearly declared that it had become an adversary of the global economic globalization and the US is going to focus on aspects preponderantly related to national interests. As a direct response to that, China's president himself warned that nobody should play with such an option, because now, mankind problems are not generated by the evolution of globalization. China itself is now the result of globalization, assuring wage for some hundred million people, and the elimination of the basic principles of the economic globalization – free capital movement and circulation, free trade and free labor circulation – would inevitably lead to a serious destabilization of the world economy. The world economic instability will negatively influence the social stability in a certain way, which will put under question global peace itself. In turn, the European Union is obliged to adapt itself to the new challenges, the political decisions being expected to have consequences even in the social peace realm and common security building process.

- STRATFOR 2017 Annual Forecast suggests the following immediate predictions: the US will continue to be a global superpower, but a tired, a decrepit one. The US will redirect its own actions from international component of its policies to their national side. It is expected

that the US would replace some supply sources from Euro-Asia area with others more related to its domestic market, including the initiation of the extraction process. Those disapproving of the hazardous policies of the US major implication in countries situated at NATO territories outskirts, as Ukraine, Georgia etc. are more and more vocal. England will politically align with and forge its traditional ties with the US. The European Union faces an increased difficulty to find its way to common prosperity, which makes the discontent feelings toward this political construction become even higher. Inside the EU, the nationalist trend increasingly becomes more and more accentuated. Moreover, it is possible that in the near future the overall EU functioning mechanisms will be readdressed and revised. For Russia, there are some predicted actions meant to re-discuss and favorably re-approach the international sanctions against it. There are, also, on the radar some predictable Russian actions of consolidating a Custom Union that could involve some states from ex-Soviet space. Also, Russia could benefit from the increased-price tendency, applicable for some natural products, especially for oil and gas. Romania is seen as being highly dependent on EU and showing a lack of confidence in its own forces. In order to be able to exploit its own national interest its geo-political position – since it is situated between the EU, the unique Russian market and Levant's gates – Romania is advised to take relevant actions in the following directions: using its own, domestic outlets, reducing its dependency on the EU, consolidating the confidence in its own forces, stimulating the access to Balkan's markets, Ukraine's market and Mediterranean Sea's market, and overcoming its fear regarding Russia. Of course, Romania is aware of these predictions, but it looks like being unable to find some specific forms of a brave manifestation, and by this to fend the trends of turning all those regional and global trends into real aggressions.

- Changing the center of gravity of the global policy. For a very long time, mankind was under that „cupola” of two power poles – the Western power and the Communist power – a cupola that deeply polarized the security strategies of all the other states. Even the so-called non-aligned states, individually aligned themselves to one or another pole, based on their momentary interest and on the dominating powers' interest. Along with the victory of the West over the Communist East, the US self-entitled the great global power and believed that it would be unconditionally followed in all

involvements and endeavors required by the world order, that was an increasingly globalized one. As a consequence, the traditional organizations addressing the world order, especially the UN and its Security Council, had started to be ignored and the American exceptionalism had been emphasized, which had led to the radicalization of some aspects that define the international climate. Nowadays, the US looks like a tired superpower that intends to take care of itself in a big way, rather than to watch and monitor the defense of an American type world order. In such circumstances, it is assessed that the history is not over, but it is being reinvented and rewritten. The current political trends highlight the emergence and consolidation of three major poles of global power: a first one that is getting its framework from the Anglo-American traditionalism, a second pole specific to European Babylon that is geographically delineated by the European Union, and the third one given by a more visible and undeniable Euro-Asian cohesion, in which Russia, China and India try to express themselves in a common way. A tri-polar geo-policy is about to emerge, each power pole having in its area of influence another polarizing support structure. The US and the United Kingdom are declaring their readiness to come back to their privileged alliance, in which the national interest is the first and number one goal, and NATO looks like an obsolete organization, since it has been called that way by its main founding member – the US. China and Russia have become the most ardent and enthusiastic defenders of globalization and internationalization, implying the subsequent respect for global agreements, and the EU is trying a political coagulation, further continuing to recognize and emphasize NATO's importance, but in a modified formula. Even in the EU Global Strategy, this is clearly stated: „*In this context, the EU must be consolidated as a security community: the European efforts in the defense and security realm should allow the EU to act autonomously, contributing at the same time, also through taking actions in cooperation with NATO. A more credible European defense is essential, also, for a solid trans-Atlantic partnership with the United States of America.*”<sup>1</sup> In this grandiose process of reconfiguring the world power poles, it is possible that some countries located at the outskirts of the area of interest might endure aggressions against their sovereignty, security and territorial security, as it has

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<sup>1</sup> According to *Foreign Policy Romania*, no. 1/2017, p. 11.

happened so many times throughout history. Without a significant position and heavy-weight status in the European context, with a destroyed economy, with an army reduced to symbolic elements, with a more obvious social lack of union, with a political arena obedient to multinational companies' interests, with neighboring countries dissatisfied with the common historic past, Romania looks like a country that ignores in an unpardonable way possible risks, even some that are more likely than others, which for the moment being are hidden behind some strategic commitments, unknown to so many people.

- At the back-up edge of our Western security and development strategy is the US. From overseas, the strategic action directions of our strategic partner have been developed and disseminated, as following: the US interests will be first in all cases; now, the US is designing a historical fiscal reform, that will reduce the tax rates for American companies, therefore these are going to be able to compete and prosper anytime and with anybody; there are promises of launching the country reconstruction, supported by a legislation that will trigger thousands of billions US dollar investments in domestic infrastructure, action that will constitute the framework for creating millions of jobs for the Americans; also, it is preparing the radical reformation of the US immigration system, in accordance with a meritocratic-based system of accepting immigrants with some professional abilities, capable to sustain themselves and their families; the firm support of NATO is continued and the US leader role in this organization must be increased, concomitantly with the raising contribution of the other states, especially in the financial field, and the world security management; the anti-terror fight will get an immediate major importance; it is mandatory to urgently reestablish the state integrity and rule of law prerogatives at US borders. When the US declares that its commitments with other states start from the principle of the first and foremost US interest, all countries around the world are entitled to believe that, currently, a big part of the once in-place common commitments among all relevant parts are not so feasible, and a portion of the past covering aspects may become your own vulnerabilities, even risk factors on medium and long term.

- On the strategic Euro-Atlantic axis of national security, the central, both structural and functional element is assured by the European construction. Romania gained its EU membership status in 2007, being convinced that the prosperity and security level of the country will be

accelerated by the specialized European bodies. At that moment, decision-makers brought into discussion a political future, an economic future, a common security future. Since then, a lot of events have taken place, events that led to the erosion of the support of the European project, as follows: the rejection of the European Constitution by some important states, the 2008 financial crisis, BREXIT, the painful management of the budget deficits etc. In this context, EU's leadership publicly announced the message of the necessity of an essential change of the Union functioning, suggesting five scenarios that are worth considering:

1. Maintaining the current course, but assuming a decision making process that is more and more complicated.

2. Focusing all the efforts on the direction of Unique Market (supporting the freedom of circulation of merchandises and capital) and giving up solving problems that divide the Union (the freedom of circulation of the labor forces).

3. A Europe with more speeds, that currently has turned into “*different paces and intensities*”<sup>2</sup> concept– at least three categories of them being obvious: the countries from the Eurozone that will do more toward defense, interior security, fiscal and social policies directions, the countries from the Eurozone that will insist more on fiscal and social policies, respectively countries that despite the fact that they are not included in the Eurozone, implement the unionist policies. A Europe with more speeds is a Europe with more degrees of integration and this can be defined as an attitude of sanctioning some countries by some other countries. This is a Europe in which the decisions are made by a part and are put in practice despite the fact that the other part speaks about other priorities. This is a Europe in which some states do feel entitled to develop faster and deeper cooperation relationships, a process that would not include the other states. This does look like a risk to the idea of unity.

4. An EU with fewer priorities – the consolidation of the unique market and a lasting economy.

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<sup>2</sup> Declaration of the leaders of 27 member states and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission at the European Union Summit, Rome, 25th March 2017.

5. Delegating the power to the central leadership bodies, a real federalization, in which the main political decisions are made abroad. The strategic direction toward the EU will steer and point has been already predicted by the French president Hollande, who is cited by many different European publications: „There is no alternative to a European Union with more speeds to avoid its disintegration. The *Europe of the 27 can no longer be the uniform Europe of the 28. So many years, this idea of a differentiated Europe, with different speeds, with distinctive paces of progressing has generated plenty of resistance. But today, this is an idea that is necessary. Otherwise, Europe is the one that will explode*”. When he was asked if there was an alternative to this Europe with more speeds, Francois Hollande bluntly responded: “*No. Either we do things in a different way, or we will not do them together*”. “*In the future there will be a common pact, a domestic market with a unique currency for some of us. But on this basis, it will be possible for the member states which are willing to go further in the defense, fiscal or social harmonization realms, further in regard of research, culture, youth to do so*”, declared Hollande. Consequently, for some of the EU members the EU’s mirage can be transformed from a painful delusion into a more painful deception. The painful delusion comes from the adherence decisions which led to the subordination of the national economic resources and to the diminishing of the sovereignty prerogatives, and the painful deceptions are the result of letting some countries, economically and socially disrupted, at the periphery of some regional systems with more different access steps, which for the respective states constitute new vulnerabilities and regional risk factors. When these processes are not under control, the entire situation can easily degenerate into social turmoil, endemic corruption, administrative and state dissolution.

- The Eurozone, the central core of the European project manifests some degree of anxiousness. Now, after Brexit and Donald Trump inauguration and installation at the White House, the main actors of the Eurozone take into consideration even the most pessimistic scenarios. The pessimistic scenarios are fuelled by some concerning trends and tendencies related to some centrifugal movements of the national policies, as follows: The Netherlands analyzes the implications of its exit from the Eurozone in case of a predictable crisis; in Italy, already half of the electors have been supporting the nationalist parties which propose that their country also

follows Great Britain's example; in France, The National Front, a far-right wing political formation, that has been already situated on the first position in polls, declares the imminence of organizing a referendum concerning their affiliation to the Eurozone; in Greece, the austerity measures, perceived as an external brutal interference in national sovereignty domain, are viewed as generating factors for actions that will raise a big question mark about the Eurozone leadership; there are some points of view, which by their nature are more personal ones, both in Germany, and in the Netherlands, that do not exclude the possibility of the reconfiguration of the Eurozone. Obviously, if the Eurozone does fall apart, that is going to endanger the political, economic and security order in Europe. On the other hand, this permanent threat to the Eurozone constitutes a plausible risk to its own durability. As a consequence, the countries that are willing to adhere to the Eurozone have to fundament their roadmap with full precaution, since it is possible that the chosen road may simply drive to an abyss.

- Nobody doubts the power of the information anymore. Information has an important role in supporting the scientific hypothesis, but it also plays a huge role in supporting the political decisions that give a direction to the specific way chosen by one nation or another. Nevertheless, people find out, so many times too late, that some real facts that had been presented as being unspoiled realities had been accompanied by a large spectrum of fake news, or that the fake news simply substituted some parts of the hidden truth. During the visit made to an artwork named „Babel 2001”, displayed at Tate Modern Museum in London, consisting of a circular tower formed by hundreds of layered analogues radios emitting at the same time, the scientists warned that the human mental mechanism had become vulnerable to manipulation. Concerning the information received, it is very good when people go through two essential stages before taking for granted some information, as follows: understanding the information and establishing its specific true value. Connecting information to the truth requires considerable efforts, though. Therefore, especially in the context of the less prepared crowds, but so emotionally played off, it is assumed that everything that could be understood from the information is real. People have the illusion that understand all things by default, are satisfied with some nonconformist generalizations and reject the effort of controlling the veridicality of the information, feeling some comfort in the fact that they

accumulate information with a fake status of being real information. Because of that, obedience and common behavior become the result of other people's decision. Therefore, somebody succeeds in making decisions for somebody else, for other people. The empathy, respect, and trust, based on the process of cultivating collective emotion, determine us to act in a synchronized way with the other people. Even the fear of not being considered stupid or at least associated with a stupid person is a good incentive for taking part in actions which are not sufficiently clear. People are manipulated in that way, but they do not believe that, because they do believe that a piece of fake news is the truth, and this is the reason for which it is good for them to manifest themselves. This gives way to the risk of manipulating the crowds with fake news, because it is well-known that fake news can radically influence behavior. Fake news get control over crowd behavior during elections, at sports and cultural events, during public/popular protests, and also lead to the dilution of cultural and national believes. This kind of underground actions are obvious afterwards, usually during a post-factum analysis of the contribution made by television, radio, and newspapers to some public endeavors. It is easy to understand the reason that stands behind any mass-media vehement opposition to any attempts to norm and legalize all media activities. Everything is portrayed as an attack to the freedom of speech, but the possibility of the tendentious use of any fake news is ignored. Apparently, from a global perspective, the victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential elections, after a campaign full of allegations regarding the manipulating effect of fake news, has generated the intensification of the debate over the public danger presented by them. Also, with respect to Romania, it looks like our country has faced several situations of public opinion manipulation by using fake news, fact that is totally aligned with the global, regional and domestic threats over national security.

**Conclusions:** Of course, it is more and more obvious that, lately, there have been a lot of statements, made not only in a colloquial manner, which are interfering the notorious, permanent security alliances with global security communities. NATO has launched the global partnership concepts, and recently the EU has just considered and portrayed itself as a global security community. In these circumstances, interpretations are emerging having both semantic and political substance, between allies and strategic

partners. For example, in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US and NATO have realized that sometimes the number of allies had been smaller than that of the NATO members, and other times the number of the action partners had been bigger than the number of the NATO allies. That has brought into attention the need of rethinking NATO construction, an action that has been triggered simultaneously with the installation of the new administration at Washington DC. Suddenly, an issue that also appeared on the table is the EU reconstruction issue. All these trends are turning into real turbulences and even turmoil for those states which have started their admission process in the EU framework and, implicitly had thought that could hope to enjoy a first class product as an Audi, Mercedes or other luxury vehicle brands, but instead they can bitterly find out that the real offer is in fact a dusty and rusty, second-hand Trabant, one of the cheapest, poor quality Eastern German era car, extremely famous and popular in the Communist block market.



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