

## **Romania's Approach to the Negotiations over NATO Defense and Deterrence Strategy at the Wales and Warsaw Summits**

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The Soviet Union became a potential revisionist state in 1990, when the idea of President Mikhail Gorbachev on the post-Cold-War European collective security system was excluded from the post-Cold War European international order in the negotiation process on the German unification. Owing to the non-realization of his idea, the Soviet Union could not keep its voice in the post-cold war European security structure based on NATO and the European Union, and it became an unsatisfied state. Like this, Russia was a potential revisionist state since its independence from the Soviet Union, but it turned into a real revisionist one in 2007, as the speech of President Vladimir Putin in Munich in February, the creation of the 'Russian World' Foundation in June, and the suspension of the CFE treaty in December suggested. This happened as President Putin had reviewed Russia's foreign and security policy due to the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003 and 2004 respectively as well as the enlargements of the EU and NATO in 2004. He did it, because these events thrust two serious challenges to him. One was against Russia's traditional sphere of influence over the space of the former Soviet Union, and the other was against his authoritarian regime in Russia. The diplomacy of the EU and NATO based on such values as democratization, rule of law and market economy caused conflicts between reform-minded forces and status-quo forces within some former republics of the Soviet Union such as Georgia and Ukraine, and these conflicts might penetrate beyond their borders into Russia. The effects of such conflicts in a neighbor country on Russia could become stronger if it would have, like Ukraine, close historic, cultural, linguistical and economic bonds with Russia.

Thus, he embarked on a more assertive foreign and security policy in his second term as President of Russian Federation, and intensified the struggle with the EU and NATO over the regions of Western New Independent States and South Caucasus. Immediately after the NATO Bucharest Summit declared that Georgia and Ukraine would become members of NATO, he issued a presidential decree on 16 April in 2008, and ordered that Russia should establish its official relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, instead of assuring the territorial integrity of Georgia. Furthermore, Russia recognized the independence of these two regions after the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008, annexed Crimea in March 2014, and started to support the secessionist movement in the eastern part of Ukraine on 7 April 2014. Like this, Russia became an obvious revisionist state, and the West imposed sanctions on Russia. Consequently, as the First World War, the Second World War, and the Cold War began as the result of the struggle among the powers over the region between the Baltic Sea and the

Black Sea, a new Cold War broke out as the result of the struggle between the West and Russia over Ukraine.

In this situation, NATO started to review its defense and deterrence strategy at the Wales and Warsaw summits in September 2014 and in July 2016 respectively. The article examines these summits, focusing on Romania. There are two reasons why this article focusses on Romania. Firstly, Romania has been paying more attention to the security in the Black Sea region after it acceded to NATO in 2004. President Traian Basescu declared ‘Washington – London – Bucharest Axis’ and the strategy on the Black Sea region in his inauguration speech in January 2005. Romania also held the Black Sea Forum in Bucharest in June 2006, and it contributed to introducing, together with Bulgaria and Greece, the Black Sea Synergy as an EU policy towards the Black Sea region when it became the member of the European Union in January 2007. By pursuing these policies, it attempted to change the Black Sea from the Russian-Turkish sea into a more opened sea to the European Union and NATO. Secondly, Romania was confronted with serious security threat after the crisis in Ukraine. Romania has common borders with Ukraine and Republic of Moldova, and it is in the proximity of Transnistria, Odessa and Sevastopol, where Russia’s Black Sea Fleet is stationing. Thus, this article analyses what objectives Romania - a junior partner within NATO - established to pursue at the Wales and Warsaw summits, what kind of negotiation strategy it used to obtain them in the decision-making process of the defense and deterrence strategy of NATO, and which outcomes it achieved in the end<sup>1</sup>.

## **1. The Objectives of Romania, Its Negotiations and the Outcomes at the Wales Summit**

### **(1) Objectives of Romania for the Wales Summit**

When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs receives a draft of NATO Summit Declaration prepared by NATO staffs, the Ministry distributes it to the state organs, which constitute the Supreme Council of National Defense (CSAT: Consiliul Suprem de Aparare a Tarii) — Ministry of National Defense, Presidential Council for National Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Public Finance, Department of Romanian Service for Information, Department of External Information Service and Chief of State Major General<sup>2</sup>. Firstly, these state organs separately analyze the draft, and then the CSAT examines it and establishes the main objectives, which Romania should attempt to realize at the NATO summit.

The CSAT assessed the threats which the annexation of Crimea by Russia brought to the Black Sea region, and it discussed how NATO should respond to them. Then it decided the objectives of Romania, which should be reflected in the final declaration of the NATO Wales summit. The most

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<sup>1</sup> This article was written on the basis of the interviews which the author made in Brussels, Vilnius, Warsaw, Berlin, Bucharest, Ankara and Sofia in March and September in 2017. Due to the Chatham House rule, the names of the persons with whom the interviews were made are not indicated in the article.

<sup>2</sup> <http://csat.presidency.ro>

important concern of political elites in Romania was that the initial draft of NATO for the Wales summit attached greater importance to the defense and deterrence in the northeast than to the southeast of NATO's eastern flank. Therefore, the priority of objectives of Romania for the Wales summit was determined to correct the imbalance of NATO's defense and deterrence strategy between the northeast and the southeast of NATO's eastern flank<sup>3</sup>.

## **(2) Romania's Negotiations with the Allied Partners**

In order to realize this objective, Romania laid emphasis on the negotiations with the states, which can be classified into three categories. One is the United States of America, which is the most influential state within NATO ally. As President Barack Hussein Obama entrusted the U.S. relations with the Baltic States as well as the Central and East European States to Vice-President Joseph Robinette Biden, Romanian President Traian Basescu talked to Biden. The Romanian Presidential aid for National Security also discussed with his counterpart in the White House. The negotiations with them went smoothly, partly due to good personal relations between President Basescu and Vice-President Biden, and partly due to increased interests of the U.S. in the European security such as the introduction of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). A Romanian political elite highly evaluated the ERI as a policy which contributed to reorienting European allies to strengthening the collective defense of NATO.

Once it was sufficient to consult only with the US. But now it is necessary to discuss with several important European allies as well. Thus, President Basescu also had meetings with Chancellor Angela Merkel. According to a Romanian official, Germany used to expect good relations with Russia, but the annexation of Crimea by Russia turned Germany's policy towards Russia tougher, although there were divergences between Merkel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier on its foreign policy towards Russia

The third group with which Romanian political elites attempted to negotiate is composed of two Black Sea littoral states - Bulgaria and Turkey. The negotiations with them did not go smoothly in contrast to those among the three Baltic States and Poland, as Bulgaria and Turkey had different perspectives and attitudes from Romania in relations with the security in the Black Sea and their policy towards Russia. Turkey wants to keep the Black Sea closed, while Romania wants it open to the US and Europe. Bulgaria wants to avoid the conflicts with Russia, partly because it feels threatened by Turkey more than by Russia, and partly because many Bulgarian people and a few political parties feel sympathy with Russia.

Romanian officials discussed with their counterparts as follows. It is true, they said, that possibilities of the 'hybrid war' cannot be denied in the Baltic States and Poland, as they are connected with Russia through lands, many ethnic Russian lived in Estonia and Latvia, and the concept of 'Russian World' could easily be applied there. Indeed, the militarization in Kaliningrad, in particular, the Iskander missiles, has been added to the security threat in the northeast region of NATO. However, the southeast

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with a former official in the international security, Bucharest, 13 March 2017.

region of NATO has also faced the threats no less than the northeast region. The militarization of Crimea by Russia dramatically changed the balance of power in the Black Sea, and Russia started to use the Black Sea as an exit to the East Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Sea. Owing to the invitation by Ukraine, warships of China and Iran came into the Black Sea. As a result, the conflict between Euro-America and Russia in the Black Sea turned into a global conflict, and the Black Sea became more important from the strategic point of view. Furthermore, Russia has pretended to attack the Baltic State, but actually it has aimed to establish a hegemony over the Black Sea. It is not so easy even for Russia to attack the Baltic States, as Russia might remember that Finland fought with it by itself in the winter of 1939 and 1940, and that the Northern Europe is much more stable and united. On the contrary, as the Balkan people are the Orthodox Christians just like Russians and the Balkan is quite unstable, Russia would easily penetrate and even invade the region. Therefore, Romanian officials said, NATO should take into consideration the security in the southeast seriously as well as in the northeast, and it should increase its presence in the Black Sea as well.

### **(3) Outcomes of the Negotiations of Romania at the Wales Summit**

Political-security elites in the Baltic States and the Central and East European States consider the Wales and Warsaw summits as the most important ones since the end of the Cold War<sup>4</sup>. It is because the essential objective of their accession to NATO – the collective defense based on the article five of the Washington Treaty – was concretized in the strategic plans in those summits' declarations for the first time since the end of the Cold War. They insisted that the concrete plan to realize the collective defense should be created immediately after their accession to NATO, and they increased their demand after the Russia-Georgian War. Nevertheless, their demand was not realized, as NATO began to improve the tense relations with Russia in the autumn of 2008, and the Obama administration started the 'Reset' policy towards Russia at the beginning of 2009<sup>5</sup>.

However, the Wales and Warsaw summits put an emphasis on the collective defense for the first time since the end of the Cold War, and introduced the strategy of the Enhanced Forward Presence in the northeast and the Tailored Forward Presence in the southeast under the NATO Readiness Action Plan (RAP). They also adopted the creation of the NATO Force Integrated Units (NFIU), Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) composed of 5000 armies, and NATO Response Force (NRF) composed of 50,000 armies. NFIU will be stationed in eight countries situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, and it will prepare for the logistics for the VJTF and the NRF, and their connections of the national army of each state. In addition, the Headquarters of a Multinational Corps Northeast and

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<sup>4</sup> The interviews at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Vilnius, Warsaw and Bucharest on 6, 8 and 13 March 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Shigeo Mutsushika, "Transformation of Relations among the Big Powers over the Black Sea Region after the Georgian War," in *The Japan Global Forum, Report of the Third Japan-Black Sea Area Dialogue, Prospects of Changing Black Sea Area and Role of Japan*, Tokyo, January 2010, pp, 15-27.

the Headquarters of a Multinational Division Southeast will be created in Poland and Romania to take command of the NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) and to provide flexible command and control in the Baltic States, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia and in Bulgaria and Romania respectively. They will be controlled under the Brunson and Naples respectively<sup>6</sup>.

Judging from the above, Romanian security elites assess that the NATO's defense and deterrence strategy towards Russia in the Wales Summit Declaration became more balanced between the northeast and the southeast in comparison with its original draft, as the result of the negotiations at different level which Romania's officials made in order to persuade the counterparts of its allies<sup>7</sup>.

## **2. Romania's Diplomatic Efforts and Its Results in Warsaw Summit in July 2016**

### **(1) Romania's Diplomacy for the Warsaw Summit**

Romania continued its active diplomacy. It organized the summit in Bucharest in November 2015, by inviting the head of states from eight states – 3 Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), 4 Visegrad states (Poland, Czech, Slovakia, Hungary), and Bulgaria. It attempted to institutionalize 'Bucharest Format,' by organizing the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the above-mentioned nine states in Bucharest in November 2016. They agreed to cooperate within the Bucharest Format in order to obtain approval at the Warsaw summit to strengthen the defense and deterrence of the eastern flank. In addition, the Romanian Foreign Secretary of State took initiative to organize the trilateral framework of Poland, Romania and Turkey at the NATO Chicago summit in 2012. They have continued to consult within this framework about issues such as missile defense, 'frozen conflicts', energy security and the crisis in Ukraine<sup>8</sup>.

Moreover, Romanian political and security elites asked the United States for support to improve the imbalance of defense and deterrence strategy of NATO between the northeast and the southeast of the NATO eastern flank, as the Baltic States and Poland were making efforts to realize the stationing of the multilateral battalion there, including the framework nations. The United States held the Black Sea Forum in Naples in the spring of 2016, and it proposed the idea of the Black Sea Flotilla to the Chief of Staffs of five littoral states of the Black Sea such as Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine<sup>9</sup>. The U.S. embarked on the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla to strengthen the presence of NATO in the Black Sea, as Russia started the building-up of military forces in Crimea and the increase of the capability of A2AD. There were also the other two reasons that caused the U.S. to propose the creation

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<sup>6</sup> Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014.

<sup>7</sup> As regards the assessment of the President Traian Basescu, "Comunicat de presă (5 septembrie 2014) Ref.: Declarația de presă a președintelui României, domnul Traian Băsescu, la finalul lucrărilor Summitului Tratatului Atlanticului de Nord (NATO) de la Newport (Tara Galilor, Regatul Unit al Marii Britanii și Irlandei de Nord).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with a former secretary of state in Bucharest, 16 March 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Interview in Bucharest, 30 September 2017.

of the Black Sea Flotilla. The NATO Standing Naval Forces were not permanent operations, and the tonnage, types and days of stationing in the Black Sea of the fleets of non-littoral states were limited by the Montreux Convention in 1936.

The responses of the representatives of those five states were as follows. Romania welcomed the U.S. proposal enthusiastically, and Georgia and Ukraine agreed on it. But Ukraine lost its fleets when Crimea was annexed by Russia, and also the Georgian fleets were destructed by Russia during the Russia-Georgia war. Bulgaria replied neither 'yes', nor 'no', while Turkey categorically opposed it. The meeting in Naples was held just when the relations between Turkey and Russia was drastically deteriorated due to the shot-down of Russia air force by Turkish one. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned in April 2016 that the Black Sea would become a Russian lake without the presence of NATO. Nevertheless, the representative of Turkish navy opposed to the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla.

Romania also took initiative to create the Allied Black Sea Flotilla. The Ministry of Defense made it public on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 that the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla was a strategic priority for 2016<sup>10</sup>. President Klaus Werner Iohannis proposed the idea to create the Black Sea Flotilla to President Petro Oleksiovich Poroshenko after the Black Sea Forum in Naples, and the latter agreed to it<sup>11</sup>. Then President Iohannis visited Sofia in the middle of June, and he and President of Bulgaria Rosen Asenov Plevneliev agreed to increase compatibility through joint exercises and trainings of fleets among Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and to attempt to convince the NATO member states in near future that they would recognize this policy as NATO's official security strategy in the Black Sea<sup>12</sup>. According to President Iohannis, Bulgaria and Romania started to discuss the security cooperation in the Black Sea at the presidential level, when President Plevneliev visited Romania in February 2015. Since then, both countries continued to consult about the security cooperation in the Black Sea.

## **(2) The Achievements at the Warsaw Summit**

In contrast to the Wales summit led by big allies, small and middle member states of NATO played important roles at the Warsaw summit. They advocated the strategic importance of the eastern flank in

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<sup>10</sup> Ministerul Apararii Nationale, Strategic Priorities, k-22

[http://gov.ro/fisiere/programe\\_fisiere/MApN\\_Plan\\_strategic.pdf](http://gov.ro/fisiere/programe_fisiere/MApN_Plan_strategic.pdf). Tudor Despina, "România vrea măsuri NATO suplimentare în Flancul Estic Concentrare pe Marea Neagră, Revista 22, 2016-01-22, \_  
<http://m.revista22.ro/70251478/romnia-vrea-msuri-nato-suplimentare-n-flancul-estic-concentrare-pe-marea-neagr.html>

<sup>11</sup> Declarația de presă comună a Președintelui României, domnul Klaus Iohannis, cu Președintele Ucrainei, domnul Petro Poroșenko, 21 aprilie 2016. <http://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/declaratii-de-presa/declaratie-de-presa-comuna-cu-presedintele-ucrainei-domnul-petro-porosenko>. Yordan Bozhilov, "The brief life of the idea for the creation of NATO black sea fleet,"

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/brief-life-idea-creation-nato-black-sea-fleet/>

<sup>12</sup> Declarația de presă comună a Președintelui României, domnul Klaus Iohannis, cu Președintele Republicii Bulgaria, domnul Rosen Plevneliev, <http://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/declaratii-de-presa/declaratie-de-presa-comuna-cu-presedintele-republicii-bulgaria-domnul-rosen-plevneliev>

the decision-making process at all levels, and they succeeded in letting their proposals filled in the final declaration of the summit. The followings were the points which Romanian officials emphasized in the negotiation process, and which were filled in the final declaration of the summit. 1) strengthening of defense and deterrence in the eastern flank of NATO; 2) NATO's support for increasing defense capabilities of its neighbors –Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova - as instability of the neighbors will have negative impacts on the security of the Baltic States and Central and East European States; 3) protest against annexation of Crimea by Russia, respect for the principles of the international law such as territorial integrity and prohibition of change of the state borders by force, suspension of cooperation with Russia as well as continuation of dialogue with Russia to reassure transparency of the situation in Ukraine and the military exercises of Russia, 4) cooperation of NATO and the EU for hybrid threats; 5) support for accession to NATO of the Balkan states such as Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Macedonia<sup>13</sup>.

Romania was partly successful as regards more balanced security policy of NATO in the northeast and the southeast of the eastern flank. One is that NATO decided to create multinational brigades led by Romania in Craiova in Romania. It was said in March 2017 that soldiers of Bulgaria and Poland as well as officers of several NATO member states would participate in the Craiova multinational brigade. Romanian diplomats told that the participants of the NATO member states in the multinational brigades in Craiova are very important to show the solidarity of NATO in the security fields.

### **(3) The Challenges at the Warsaw Summit**

However, Romania failed to realize in the southeast region the same defense and deterrence policy that NATO adopted in the northeast region. One reason comes from the divergent threat perceptions and security policy in the Black Sea region among Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey in contrast to the case of northern part where Poland and three Baltic states have had the same threat perceptions and security policy. Thus, Romania could not persuade the European major states so that NATO would adopt the same strategy of the Enhanced Forward Presence in the southeast region and dispatch the framework nations there as well.

The other reason derives from the security policy of European major states such as Germany, France and Italy. The security interests of Germany towards the Black Sea region have not been high, and Germany opposed to the institutionalization of the Black Sea Synergy at the negotiation process to create the Synergy in 2007. As Germany has attached much more importance to the northeastern region than to the southeastern region, and Lithuania cooperated well with Germany within the EU as well<sup>14</sup>, Germany sent its troops to Lithuania as a framework nation. In contrast, France and Italy gave greater

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<sup>13</sup> Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, 13 March 2017. Montenegro became a member of NATO on 5 June in 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 6 March 2017.

importance to the southeastern region. France supported the accession of Romania to NATO, and Italy did it for Slovenia at the NATO Madrid summit in July 1997, augmenting that the geo-strategic balance between the northeast and southeast should be kept<sup>15</sup>. However, neither France nor Italy were enthusiastic for the security in the southeast region at the Wales and Warsaw summits, as they focused on the security in Africa and the Mediterranean<sup>16</sup>.

The other result concerning to the balanced security policy in the eastern flank of NATO is that the strategic importance of the Black Sea for the defense and deterrence policy of NATO was written in the final declaration of the summit<sup>17</sup>. However, the declaration did not mention any concrete strategy of its defense and deterrence of NATO in the Black Sea. One reason is that Prime Minister of Bulgaria Boyko Metodiev Borisov said immediately after the press conference of President Iohannis and President Plevneliev that he never agreed on the initiative of the Black Sea flotilla. Borisov said, “I want to see boats, yachts, tourists, peace and love. ----- I never want to see frigates in the resorts. ----- The confrontations with Russian frigates would go beyond the line<sup>18</sup>.” President Iohannis immediately replied that Romania did not discuss the Black Sea Flotilla with Bulgaria, but both states only agreed the military exercises and trainings by three littoral NATO member states. He said, “Nobody will make NATO flotilla. It’s absurd. NATO cannot keep its own proper NATO float in the Black Sea, and it does not want it either<sup>19</sup>.” President Plevneliev emphasized that it was true that Bulgaria discussed with the representatives of Romanian state organs on the creation of the Black Sea flotilla, but they never made any decisions on it.

Bulgaria was quite cautious on the creation of the Black Sea flotilla, as the vulnerable naval forces of Bulgaria inevitably would be placed under the control of the dominant Turkish naval forces in case that the Black Sea flotilla would be established. Bulgaria historically was occupied by the Ottoman Empire for a long time, and this bitter experience of Bulgarian people would not permit the repeat of its own history. On the other hand, Bulgaria has held strong ties with Russia historically, linguistically, culturally, economically and politically. Therefore, the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla by Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey would exceed the permissible limits from the perspectives of the Bulgarian people, as it would clearly target on Russia as a potential enemy<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp.212-250.

<sup>16</sup> Chihaya Kokubo, “France and NATO Warsaw summit 2016,” and Thomas Flichy de La Neuville, “Having Tea in Warsaw When Your Sprit Is in Bamako,” papers presented to the conference “Intra-Alliance Diplomacy and the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit: The Goals and Tactics of European Allies,” sponsored by Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Oxford, December 12, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Warsaw Summit Communique, 9 July 2017.

<sup>18</sup> “Razgandire la Sofia. Bulgaria nu mai sprijina crearea flotei comune NATO la Marea Neagra.” <http://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/ue/razgandire-la-sofia-bulgaria-nu-mai-sprijina-crearea-flotei-comune-nato-la-marea-neagra-529594>.

<sup>19</sup> “Reactia lui Iohannis dupa ce Bulgaria a refuzat sa participe la coalitie impotriva Rusiei in Marea Neagra.” <http://evz.ro/iohannis-.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews with Ognyan Minchev, Director, Institute for Regional and International Studies, 26

Therefore, both Presidents Iohannis and Plevneliev never mentioned the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla at the press conference. However, Prime Minister Borisov mentioned it, and various rumors spread in the world. Why did Prime Minister Borisov issue the statement to refuse the idea of Black Sea Flotilla? There seemed to be the other two reasons in addition to above-mentioned two reasons. As the presidential election was scheduled to be held in autumn in 2016, he had to pay attention to the opinion polls in Bulgaria and the Socialist Party, which usually felt the sympathy to Russia. Furthermore, he might encounter the pressure from Russian Government or he might be concerned about the attempt by Russia to overthrow his minority government. Borisov said, “any neighbor countries and any homologue did not support me, when President Putin warned me at the front of Erdogan in Ankara that Bulgaria had lost everything in relationship with the South Stream<sup>21</sup>.” It is broadly known that President Putin declared to give up the construction of the South Stream in December 2014.

The rapprochement between Turkey and Russia since the end of June 2016 also made the creation of the Black Sea Flotilla difficult. President Erdgan sent an apology letter to President Putin on 27th June in 2016, and the relations of both countries started to improve. Therefore, Turkey became more cautious than before of regarding the NATO’s increased defense and deterrence policy in the Black Sea. In addition, the coup d’état by the Turkish military in the middle of July and a series of purges against the military might have some effects on the negotiation on the security policy in the Black Sea.

In this way, the final declaration of the Warsaw summit referred only to the strategic importance of the Black Sea region and the necessity of increased presence of NATO in the Black Sea. The concrete strategy of NATO in the Black Sea would continue to be discussed at the meeting of the Defense Ministers in autumn of 2016.

### **3. Negotiations among Three Littoral NATO Member States on the Security in the Black Sea at the Defense Ministers’ Meetings in October 2016 and in February 2017**

#### **(1) Proposals of Romania**

According to the Romanian officials, the annexation of Crimea by Russia made again the security in the Black Sea an important agenda in the Wales and Warsaw summits after a long time since the Istanbul summit in 2004 had treated it as an important subject. Russia invaded Georgia, Crimea and Donbas, and it has been increasing the A2AD capability through the militarization of Crimea. The crises come to Romania from the northern part of the Black Sea such as Ukraine and Moldova, while Turkey faces serious crises at the Middle East. Thus, the priority of the Black Sea is quite high for the security of

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September 2017, and Yordan Bozhilov, President, Sofia Security Forum, 27 September 2017.

<sup>21</sup> “K.Iohannis: A aparut o intelegere gresita a conceptului de flota NATO. Am propus doar exercitiu si training comun al flotelor romane, bulgare si turca.”

<http://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/evenimente/k-iohannis-a-apatut-o-intelegere-gresita-a-conceptului-de-flota-nato-am-propus-doar-exercitiu-si-training-comun-al-flotelor-romane-bulgare-si-turca-529709>.

Romania. Romania has been playing an active role for the security in the Black Sea and has been making efforts to increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea through joint maritime military exercises by the fleets of littoral and non-littoral NATO member states.

The Romanian Defense Ministry said that they never discussed the NATO Black Sea Flotilla, but that it attempted to strengthen the presence of NATO in the Black Sea through the coordination of military exercises of the fleets of the NATO member states<sup>22</sup>. Indeed, Romania proposed the creation of the NATO Combined Maritime Framework at the meeting of Defense Ministers in October 2016. This is a regional coordination organ for the security in the Black Sea, and it plays a role in the Black Sea just like a control tower for the airplanes to coordinate the take-off and landings of airplanes and their traffics in the sky. It is compatible with the Montreux Convention in 1936, which is the most important trump card for the security of Turkey in the Black Sea. It is neither the headquarter for the fleets of the NATO member states, nor the command and control for them, but it is an organ to plan and coordinate the maritime exercises of the fleets of NATO member states in the Black Sea, respecting the Montreux Convention. Romanian officials said that they had discussed these issues with Turkish officials very frankly. 90 percent of the negotiations with them was concerning military issues.

## **(2) Position of Turkey**

According to the information from Ankara, Bulgaria and Romania did not offer any concrete proposals at the Warsaw summit, and these three countries had serious discussions for the first time at the meeting of the Defense Ministers in October 2016<sup>23</sup>. They did not have different opinions at the air and land, but their policies on the sea were quite divergent. They discussed the security in the Black Sea, focusing on two points. One is the proposal of Bulgaria and Romania to create the flotilla composed of littoral and non-littoral NATO member states as the permanent structure in the Black Sea or permanent maritime framework. Turkey opposed this proposal due to the following three reasons. Firstly, Turkey had a strongest naval force among them, and it had been promoting its maritime activities in the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea as well as in the Black Sea. Thus, it is difficult for Turkey to make permanent commitment to its maritime activities in the Black Sea. Secondly, it would unnecessarily provoke the littoral countries in the Black Sea, including Russia. Frankly speaking, a Turkish official said, it is a clear challenge to the A2AD of Russia, and the situation in the Black Sea will inevitably become tense. Thirdly, the security environment in the Black Sea would be tremendously deteriorated, as objectives of non-littoral NATO members entering the Black Sea might be obscure. Therefore, Turkey expected to construct a security mechanism in the Black Sea rather than a NATO permanent flotilla.

The second point of dispute is the issue concerning the Black Sea Permanent Maritime Framework proposed by Bulgaria and Romania. Turkey also opposed it, because it not only conflicted

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<sup>22</sup> Interview, Ministry of Defense, Bucharest, 17 March 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 19 March 2017.

with the Montreux Convention, but also targeted a littoral country. According to Turkey's officials, the Montreux Convention had to be respected, as it had been contributing to the stability and peace in the Black Sea. In addition, Turkey doubted why a new permanent structure was necessary to be created in the Black Sea in spite that the fleets of NATO member states had already been presented in the Black Sea. The Standing NATO Naval Group 1 and the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 already had been operating in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, while the Standing NATO Naval Group 2 and the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 had been operating in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. These had started their activities before the crisis in Crimea, and they were not hostile to any countries, including Russia. Therefore, they did not disturb the security environment in the Black Sea. In this way, Turkey supported the operation of the NATO Standing Naval Forces in the Black Sea at the Defense Ministers' conference, without creating a new structure, including the NATO Combined Maritime Framework.

### **(3) The Position of Bulgaria**

According to the information from Sofia, the creation of NATO Black Sea Flotilla was discussed at the meeting of the Defense Ministers in October 2016<sup>24</sup>. However, it was not compatible with the real situation of three littoral NATO member states in the Black Sea, and the strengthening of military exercises in the Black Sea is more realistic and suitable for the actual international situation in the Black Sea. Thus, Bulgaria supported the strengthening of joint exercises and trainings by the fleets of NATO member states in the Black Sea.

The other agenda at the Defense Ministers' meeting was the creation of the coordination center or coordination unit in the Black Sea. This was a sensitive issue for Bulgaria. As regards this issue, Bulgaria emphasized that the regionalization of security in the Black Sea should be avoided, and that the security in the Black Sea should be entrusted to NATO as a whole. That is to say, Bulgaria insisted that the security in the Black Sea should not be implemented through the cooperation among three littoral NATO member states, but among all the NATO member states. In addition, Bulgaria asserted that the security in the Black Sea should not be discussed by three littoral NATO member states, but within NATO as a whole.

Bulgarian officials said that the threat perception and the policy towards Russia of Bulgaria and Romania were not in perfect harmony. However, they had frequent consultations to adjust each other their security policies in the Black Sea, and Bulgaria agreed on the Romanian proposals on the whole. On the other hand, the negotiations with Turkey advanced very slowly, and they did not still reach the final agreement. According to Bulgarian officials, it was because Turkey had completely different views from Bulgaria and Romania on the security in the Black Sea. Bulgaria and Romania wanted to increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea, while Turkey expected to use the existent security frameworks in the Black Sea such as Blackseafort and Black Sea Harmony. But these two had failed to function due

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<sup>24</sup> Interview, Ministry of Defense, Sofia, 27 September 2017.

to the Russia-Georgia War and the crisis in Ukraine, they said.

#### **(4) The Gist of Arguments of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey**

The arguments of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, as for the Black Sea Flotilla, the United States seemed to take initiative of it. Romania said that they did not officially discuss it at any meetings, but Bulgaria and Turkey said that they did. Turkey opposed it, and Bulgaria considered it as unrealistic and did not accept it. As a result, all three countries agreed that the NATO Black Sea Flotilla would not be created, and that they would increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea by strengthening military exercises of fleets composed by the littoral and non-littoral NATO member states.

Secondly, Romania proposed the NATO Combined Maritime Framework to coordinate the fleets of NATO member states in the Black Sea. Bulgaria agreed on it, but it insisted that the member of the Framework should not be limited to three littoral states, but that all the member states of NATO should be invited to it. Romania attempted to persuade Turkey, explaining that the Framework was a simple coordination organ, and that it never contravened the Montreux Convention. However, Turkey opposed it, asserting that it conflicted with the Montreux Convention, and it advocated that the NATO Standing Naval Forces in the Black Sea should be used in the Black Sea instead of creating the NATO Combined Maritime Framework. Turkey also advocated that the SNF should be subordinated to the MARCOM.

The source of the polemics among these three countries consists in their different idea on the security policy in the Black Sea. Bulgaria and Romania want to establish a special security structure in the Black Sea in order to increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea. Yet, Turkey does not want to create it, but to use a universal framework of NATO, which is not specified in the Black Sea, as Turkey does not want NATO to increase its influence in the Black Sea and to provoke Russia. The basic idea of Turkey on its policy towards the Black Sea is to keep the Black Sea closed and dominated by Russia and Turkey in order to keep the balance of power in the Black Sea region. Therefore, Turkey created the Black Sea Harmony composed of the Black Sea littoral states, and prevented the extension of operation "Active Endeavor" of NATO from the Mediterranean Sea into the Black Sea. However, Bulgaria has not participated in the Black Sea Harmony. Due to the information in Sofia, the Black Sea Harmony is not the activity of NATO, but the military activity of Turkey to attain its state objectives. In addition, the Black Sea Harmony is an organ which includes a state which violated the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of its member state, and the security in the Black Sea should be strengthened by NATO. Furthermore, Bulgaria and Turkey cannot promote any military cooperation as they do not share any classified information.

In spite of these differences, three countries reached the following agreements at the Defense Ministers' meeting in February 2017. The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg mentioned at the press conference, "Today, we agreed on two additional maritime measures: an increased NATO naval

presence in the Black Sea for enhanced training, exercises and situational awareness, and a maritime coordination function for our Standing Naval Forces when operating with other Allied forces in the Black Sea region<sup>25</sup>.” They also agreed that the coordination function of the SNF in the Black Sea would be made not by the NATO Combined Maritime Framework proposed by Bulgaria and Romania, but by Marcom in the United Kingdom. However, it is said that this might be reviewed by 2019.

## **Conclusion**

This article examined what were the objectives of Romania for the Wales and Warsaw summits of NATO, how Romania attempted to realize them in the negotiation process towards the summits, and what were the outcomes of its efforts. The results of the analysis are as follows.

Firstly, the most important objective of Romania for the Wales and Warsaw summits was an increased and balanced defense and deterrence in the northeast and the southeast of the eastern flank of NATO.

Secondly, Romania’s political elites in the foreign and security fields negotiated with their counterparts of the United States of America, major powers in Europe, in particular Germany, and three littoral NATO member states in the Black Sea. They also created the regional groups such as ‘Bucharest Format’ and the triangle group of Poland, Romania and Turkey to discuss, consult, and achieve their common goals. As regards the measures to increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea, Romania negotiated with Bulgaria and Turkey in order to materialize it with the support of the United States.

Thirdly, Romania succeeded in obtaining the following results as fruits of these negotiations.

1) The Wales and Warsaw summits became the first summits to materialize the collective defense of NATO since the end of the Cold War. According to a Romanian political elite, small and middle member states of NATO played important roles in the decision-making process of the Warsaw summit, while the Wales summit was led by the big powers. In this point, Bucharest Format seemed to have the same effects as the ‘Vilnius Ten’ group, which contributed to the accession of the Baltic States and Central and East European States to NATO in 2004.

2) However, the imbalance of the defense and deterrence strategy of NATO in the northeast and the southeast of the eastern flank has not been completely resolved. The inequality of NATO’s security strategy between these two regions still continues, and it is just reflected in the differences between the Enhanced Forward Presence and the Tailored Forward Presence, existence and non-existence of the framework nations, and battalion and brigade in the northeast and the southeast respectively.

3) Nevertheless, the gap between these two regions was fairly corrected. The Headquarters of a Multinational Division Southeast as well as the Headquarters of a Multinational Corps Northeast were

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<sup>25</sup> Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Defense Ministers, 16 February 2017.

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_141340.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_141340.htm).

created in Romania and Poland respectively. Although the framework nations were not organized in the southeast, the multinational framework brigade has been established in Craiova in Romania. NATO Force Integration Units were also established in all eight countries situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, and NATO has been preparing for the rapid mobilization of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the Very High Joint Task Force (VJTF) impartiality. In addition, the U.S. armies based on the European Reassurance Initiative have been moving around the eight Baltic and Central-East European States in order to increase the defense and deterrence capabilities in the eastern flank. Furthermore, the Warsaw summit referred to the strategic importance of the Black Sea, and the meeting of the Defense Ministers in February in 2017 reached the consensus to increase the presence of NATO in the Black Sea through strengthening of exercises and trainings of NATO Standing Naval Forces (NSF) in the Black Sea.

4) However, neither the Black Sea Flotilla by the U.S. initiative, nor the NATO Combined Coordination Framework by the initiative of Romania was created due to the opposition of Bulgaria and Turkey for the former case, and that of Turkey for the latter respectively.

Fourthly, from what has been mentioned above, we might conclude about the negotiation which a junior partner of NATO implements with its member states of NATO in order to realize its objectives.

1) NATO is an organ composed of 29 sovereign states, and its decision-making is made with the unanimity of all member states. Therefore, a member state should attempt to persuade all the member states through the different levels of negotiations – NAC, Deputy-Head Committee, different meetings within NATO HQ, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and the Presidential offices of NATO members by way of its own diplomatic missions.

2) However, junior partners understand quite well that the voices of senior partners are much more important for the decision-making process within NATO. Thus, Romania as well as the Baltic States and Central and East European States used to consult with its counterparts of the U.S. Government - President, Vice-President, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, National Security Council, the Department of State, the Department of Defense etc.

3) A junior partner should obtain agreement from European senior partners as well. Lithuania cooperated well with Germany, and the latter sent its troops to the former as a framework nation.

4) A junior partner also needs to receive agreements from its neighbor countries. The Baltic States and Poland succeeded in establishing the Enhanced Forward Presence strategy in the northeast region, as they shared their common threat perceptions and attitude towards Russia, and succeeded in receiving the active supports for their defense from the U.S., Germany, Britain and Canada.

However, in the southeast region, although Romania seemed to succeed in taking support from the United States, it failed to obtain the consent from its neighbors on its proposals as Bulgaria and Turkey had different threat perceptions and attitudes towards Russia from Romania. In addition, it seemed that Germany, France and Italy did not pay the same attention to the security in the southeast as

they did in the northeast region, Africa and the Mediterranean from the geo-strategical point of views. Because of these two reasons, Romania could introduce neither the framework nation to the southeast, nor the Black Sea Flotilla, nor NATO Joint Coordination Framework in the Black Sea.

In conclusion, we can say that a junior partner should pay attention not only to its senior partner, but also to its neighbor countries within NATO, when it negotiates. Without agreements from the regional partners, a junior partner cannot convince the other European member states of NATO, including European senior partners, even if it could take support of the United States.