

SECURITY AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ROMANIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract: *The article analyzes the evolution of the international security environment and highlights the interdependence between global security and national security, in the context of recent geopolitical transformations and diversification of contemporary threats. It also examines the role of international organizations and their implications for Romania's security, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and membership in NATO and European Union for ensuring stability and security. A particular emphasis on this matter is placed on Romania's national security, from the perspective of its geostrategic position in the Black Sea region and its involvement as a member of NATO and the European Union. The main directions of Romania's security policy are highlighted, including the modernization of military capabilities, strengthening resilience, and participation in collective security mechanisms. The article's conclusions emphasize that, in the current context, security can no longer be approached in isolation, but requires an integrated approach based on international cooperation, strategic partnerships, and adaptability to new types of threats.*

Keywords: *national security, international cooperation, hybrid threats, cybersecurity, resilience.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 21st century has brought major transformations of the international security environment through technological development and intensified geopolitical competition, such as the rivalry between the United States and China—which is playing out on all fronts, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the competition for influence in the Middle East, the competition for the Arctic. If during the Cold War security was defined primarily by military and state terms, today it encompasses economic, energetic, technological, and social dimensions, being closely linked to the process of globalization. Recent events, particularly the conflict that started in Ukraine in 2022, have highlighted the vulnerabilities of the international system and the need to adapt security strategies to new challenges.

The current geopolitical context, marked by strategic competition among major powers — particularly the United States, China, and the Russian Federation — has reshaped the international security architecture. Thus, strategic competition worldwide has led to an expansion of the range of security-relevant risks, shifting the focus to economic, energetic, cyber, and information pressures, although conventional conflict remains a decisive factor.

In this regard, international cooperation and affiliation with organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) have become essential elements for ensuring the stability and security of states. The ongoing war actions started by Russia against Ukraine in 2022 have demonstrated the return of conventional conflict to Europe and reinforced the perception of a contested international order. At the same time, China's rise as a global actor and its developments of emerging technologies (artificial intelligence, autonomous drones, cyber warfare) have redefined the instruments of power and competition.

The purpose of this article is to study the relationship between global security and Romania's national security, as well as the impact of changes in the international environment on states' security policies. In this regard, we have addressed fundamental concepts such as global security, security through cooperation, and national security, highlighting their interdependence. We have paid particular attention to Romania, analyzing how it shapes its security policy in the context of its membership in NATO and the EU, as well as its role in the regional security architecture, particularly in the Black Sea region.

The methodology employed is based on the analysis of official strategic documents, reports from international organizations, and specialized literature, with the aim of drawing relevant conclusions regarding security developments in the current geopolitical context.

2. THE DYNAMICS OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Given the rapid changes in the international environment—marked by intensifying strategic competition, regional conflicts, and hybrid threats—security systems have been strengthened through increased cooperation among states and solidifying the role of international organizations [1].

The fundamental framework of international relations remains the United Nations Charter. Still the UN Security Council continues to bear the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, although in nowadays conflicts there have been instances where states or coalitions have acted without its approval or in defiance of its positions. Under these circumstances, its effectiveness has been and continues to be frequently undermined by rivalries among major powers, particularly in the context of contemporary conflicts. Cooperation between the EU and NATO has intensified significantly since 2020, particularly as a result of the deterioration of the European security environment, culminating in the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine in 2022. NATO has strengthened its deterrence and defense capabilities, particularly on the eastern flank, by deploying additional troops (in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltic states) and enhancing operational readiness (logistics hub, such those in Germany).

Decisions adopted at recent summits, such as those in Madrid (2022) and Vilnius (2023), reflect the Alliance's adaptation to new strategic realities [2]. A defining moment is the EU–NATO Joint Declaration of January 10, 2023, which marks the transition to “a new phase of the strategic partnership” [3].

In the current context, particularly following the outbreak of war in Ukraine, EU–NATO cooperation is no longer limited to crisis management inside or outside of the organizations, but aims to address global geostrategic competition and hybrid threats. Furthermore, the two organizations act in a complementary manner, utilizing political, economic, and military instruments to support international security.

Relations between NATO and Russia have deteriorated significantly since 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, an action considered illegal by the international community and perceived as a serious violation of the principles of international law [4].

This development marked a paradigm shift in the relationship between the two parties, with Russia being viewed as a major source of instability in the Euro-Atlantic area. The situation worsened significantly following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a moment that reinforced the perception of a direct threat to both regional and international security.

For Romania, a member state of the EU and NATO, national security is based both on its own capabilities and on the guarantees provided by membership in these organizations. Ensuring an integrated national security system requires effective cooperation among defense institutions and coordination with international partners. In this context of transformations in the international security environment, it becomes necessary to analyze the concept of global security, which reflects how these developments influence international stability.

3. GLOBAL SECURITY

Globalization, viewed as a process to increase economic, political, and technological interconnection, has had a profound impact on security. In its early stages, globalization meant economic liberalization and a decrease in interstate conflicts, but recent developments point to a shift towards "secured globalization" and "resilient globalization." Thus, after 2022, every state began to prioritize the support and development of chain security, strategic autonomy, and also to decrease the dependence of critical needs [5]. This shift reflected the growing awareness of interdependencies that can be exploited as instruments of coercion, a phenomenon noticeable in the energy sector, where Russia has used gas supplies as a geopolitical lever.

Strategically, this phenomenon has contributed to the expansion of the concept of collective security. NATO and the EU have evolved from traditional defensive organizations into complex actors capable of managing multidimensional crises. NATO documents, such as the "Strategic Concept 2022," [5] emphasize that security environment is characterized by "the most serious deterioration since the end of the Cold War."

In the current context of accelerating globalization and ever-deepening interdependence among states, the individual and human communities are considered to be at the center of international security concerns. The well-being of populations depends not only on economic factors but also on access to essential services such as health, education, energy security, political participation, and freedom of movement, all of which are affected by global instability. Especially, since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the concept of "human security" has evolved and gained strength, emphasizing the protection of individuals against traditional and non-conventional threats, such as armed conflicts, health crises, climate change, and economic insecurity [6]. The complexity of contemporary threats has required a collective approach to security, as no single state can manage global risks on its own. Consequently, states have increasingly relied on alliances and strategic partnerships to maintain stability and prevent conflicts.

Global security is influenced by a wide range of risks, including transnational organized crime, terrorism, cyberattacks, disinformation, and competition for strategic resources, all of which contribute to the destabilization of states. International partnerships, including "Partnership for Peace" initiatives and expanded cooperation with states outside the Euro-Atlantic area, contribute to increased interoperability and the management of common threats, including the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction [7].

Recent experiences, such as the international operations in Afghanistan and the support provided to Ukraine after 2022, highlight the importance of logistical, military, and political cooperation between states and international organizations. Both the EU and NATO are intensifying their cooperation to effectively respond to current threats, acting in a complementary manner through political, economic, and military instruments [8]. These developments confirm the integrated nature of global security and the expansion of the actors involved in managing it. Consequently, key security institutions are increasingly relying on cross-border cooperation and strategic partnerships, at the regional and global levels, to ensure international stability and security.

All of which necessitate the creation and development of coordinated responses tailored to the complexity of these new risks. In addition to the military dimension, contemporary security encompasses economic, social, energy, environmental, and technological components, prompting states and international organizations to adopt integrated policies for managing global risks.

The spread of transnational threats has underscored the need for collective, internationally coordinated responses (such as the response to global terrorism, global cooperation during pandemics, international cybersecurity, or the fight against organized crime). Thus, given the relationships between nations, security mechanisms based on cooperation have been developed, aimed at regulating the use of force in accordance with international law, arms control, preventing nuclear proliferation, military transparency, and building trust between states. These mechanisms are based on multilateral and regional partnerships and promote balanced conflict resolution, reducing the use of force. Given these considerations, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, NATO, and the EU play an essential role in promoting cooperative security at the global and regional levels. For Romania, its membership in NATO and the EU offers significant opportunities to participate in cooperative security initiatives, strengthening its role as a stabilizing factor in the Black Sea region and on the Alliance's eastern flank.

Taking all of these in consideration, security through cooperation is a central element of the contemporary security architecture, based on interdependence, strategic partnerships, and international coordination, with a view to effectively managing global challenges. Therefore, national security must be analyzed in relation to developments and mechanisms of international cooperation.

4. ROMANIAN NATIONAL SECURITY

Currently, the relationship between globalization and security is characterized by a transition from “globalization of efficiency” to “globalization of resilience.” In other words, the focus is no longer exclusively on economic optimization, the just-in-time model, or technological dependencies, but rather on diversification, strategic risk management, and the acquisition and retention of additional and alternative resources. NATO and EU strategic documents demonstrate that resilience and essential services have become central components of defense after major powers have come to use global interdependencies (energy, cyberspace, migration) as instruments of coercion, subversion, and hybrid warfare.

The current geopolitical context demonstrates that this reconfiguration of globalization has a significant impact on Romania, for three reasons:

1. Its geographical position on the eastern flank of the Euro-Atlantic region;
2. The strategic importance of the Black Sea region for security, energy, and trade;
3. Exposure to hybrid risks (cyber and information) amplified by digitalization.

From a national security perspective, Romania has been affected on several fronts simultaneously, as follows:

1. Military: The geographical proximity to the war in Ukraine leads to an escalation of security risks, including repeated incidents involving drone debris falling on its national territory or violations of its airspace; [9]
2. Cyber: the rise in cyberattacks targeting critical services (healthcare, energy, IT, security, and public safety and order), rendering them vulnerable. We can recall the 2024 ransomware attack on the HIS healthcare IT system, in which the attack on servers running medical applications led to system failures and a slowdown in medical activities at certain hospitals in Romania; [10]
3. Economy: Romania's economy is becoming a security issue because it faces multiple dependencies. Both the budget deficit and the current account deficit are enormous; the International Monetary Fund forecasts a severe deterioration of both by 2024, with a slight improvement in 2025 but without a major impact on the economy.
4. Logistics: Romania has become a key transit hub (European Commission's Solidarity Lanes) due to the war in Ukraine, as trade routes have shifted. Consequently, the country's strategic role has been strengthened, transforming it into a key hub for supplying Ukraine, but this has also led to greater pressure on infrastructure (ports, railways, roads).

In this context, Romania's national security can no longer be addressed and sustained solely through military means; rather, it requires the simultaneous use of both military and non-military instruments. For Romania, regional and Euro-Atlantic interdependencies directly influence its defense capabilities, institutional resilience, and crisis management. The experience of recent decades, particularly in the context of recent conflicts and the war in Ukraine, has demonstrated that unilateral actions are insufficient, and that national security depends fundamentally on international cooperation and collective security.

In accordance with the principles of the United Nations, states enjoy both the right to self-defense and mechanisms for collective security, designed to prevent aggression and maintain international peace. In addition to the UN, organizations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe contribute to strengthening national security through mechanisms for conflict prevention, crisis management, and the promotion of regional stability [11]. NATO plays a central role in ensuring national security through its collective defense system and by strengthening its deterrence and defense posture, particularly on the Alliance's eastern flank. Furthermore, in addition to external pressures, the country's security can also be affected by forms of radicalization (extremism, separatism) and internal or cross-border instability.

In the fight against terrorism and other transnational threats, states are increasingly operating beyond their own borders, participating in international missions and collective security initiatives. In this context, governments and international organizations have recognized that preventing and managing security crises requires a common approach based on cooperation, coordination, and international solidarity.

In today's context of global interdependence, the national security of states—regardless of their size or position in the international system—is increasingly intertwined with the dynamics of global security and mechanisms of international cooperation. Global security is integrative in nature, encompassing regional and national dimensions, contributing to the stabilization of the international environment, and directly influencing the security policies of states. Decisions regarding military and security commitments are made, in the case of NATO member states, through a collective process based on consultation and consensus, and in other contexts through bilateral or multilateral cooperation within international organizations.

In this sense, global security influences national security through states' participation in international structures and mechanisms, which become an integral part of the collective security architecture [8].

The role of the United Nations remains essential in managing global security, through actions aimed at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and the promotion of international stability. Furthermore, international organizations and multilateral coalitions contribute to addressing major global challenges, such as combating poverty, managing armed conflicts, supporting fragile states, controlling migration, combating terrorism and organized crime, and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Nowadays, global security also involves managing emerging risks, such as climate change, energy security, health crises, and technological transformations, which have a direct impact on national security. At the same time, the international community is promoting increased cooperation in the areas of humanitarian aid, the protection of human rights, the fight against discrimination, and the strengthening of democratic control over the armed forces. As global security takes on increasing importance, the role of national security is being redefined, becoming integrated into broader mechanisms of collective security, particularly in areas such as border control, combating illegal migration, preventing asymmetric threats, and managing transnational risks. The geopolitical and geostrategic transformations of recent years, marked by the resurgence of competition among major powers, the war in Ukraine, and the intensification of hybrid threats, have led Romania to continuously adapt its security policies and institutions to new international realities [1].

From a geostrategic perspective, Romania lies at the intersection of several areas of major interest: the eastern region, marked by the influence of the Russian Federation and the conflict in Ukraine; Central region, integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures, the Southeast European region characterized by persistent vulnerabilities, and the Black Sea region, which is of growing strategic importance for Euro-Atlantic security. Since 2022, the Black Sea region has become one of the main areas of strategic interest for NATO and the EU, marked by militarization, competition for resources, and security risks stemming from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Romania's national security relies on its membership in NATO and the EU, as well as on its strategic partnership with the United States, which are essential pillars of its security architecture. The missile defense system at Military Base 99 in Deveselu, integrated into NATO's defense architecture, contributes to regional security and the deterrence of ballistic threats. Furthermore, Romania has continued the process of modernizing its armed forces by increasing the defense budget to over 2% of GDP (approximative 2.5% in 2026) and by acquiring modern equipment, including F-16 aircraft and Patriot-type air defense systems, thereby strengthening interoperability with NATO allies [12]. Furthermore, through the EU's SAFE program, Romania will develop its defense industry and modernize its military equipment through new acquisitions. At the same time, Romania is paying increased attention to cybersecurity, combating disinformation, and protecting critical infrastructure, particularly in light of the intensifying hybrid threats in the Black Sea region. Following recent NATO summits, Romania has strengthened its role on the eastern flank by hosting allied forces and actively participating in deterrence and collective defense initiatives.

The National Defense Strategy emphasizes the importance of an integrated approach to security, in which the citizen is placed at the center of public policy, and security is linked to economic development, societal resilience, and the effective functioning of state institutions.

Domestic security objectives aim to strengthen defense capabilities, protect critical infrastructure, combat cyber threats and organized crime, and ensure the rule of law and fundamental rights.

On the international front, Romania seeks to strengthen security in the Black Sea region and the Balkans, enhance its role within NATO and the EU, develop its strategic partnership with the United States, and support cooperation between NATO and the EU. At the same time, Romania promotes regional stability by supporting the Republic of Moldova's European path and through active engagement in international security and cooperation initiatives [13].

5. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the contemporary security environment highlights the fact that global and national security are deeply interdependent, being influenced by the dynamics of international relations and the evolution of modern threats. In this context, international cooperation, membership in alliances, and the strengthening of state resilience are essential elements for ensuring stability and security. Romania, as a member state of NATO and the EU, is constantly adapting its security policies to respond to current challenges, strengthening its role in the regional and Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Furthermore, the international security environment is undergoing a continuous process of transformation, characterized by increasing complexity and the diversification of threats. The resurgence of competition among major powers, regional conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, as well as the emergence of hybrid, cyber, and information threats, have led to a new definition of the concept of security, extending beyond its traditional military dimension.

In this context, global security takes on a central role, encompassing multiple dimensions — political, economic, social, energy, and technological — and highlighting the profound interdependence among states. No state can ensure security in isolation anymore, which underscores the need to strengthen international cooperation and collective security mechanisms.

International organizations, particularly NATO and the EU, contribute to regional and global stability through common policies, deterrence and defense mechanisms, as well as through the development of tools for crisis management and combating emerging threats. Cooperation between these organizations has intensified significantly in recent years, becoming a fundamental pillar of Euro-Atlantic security.

The article also highlights the fact that cooperative security is one of the most effective ways to address current challenges, as it is based on strategic partnerships, dialogue, and coordination among states and international organizations. This approach contributes to conflict prevention, crisis management, and the building of trust among international actors.

With regard to national security, it is profoundly influenced by developments in the global environment and is increasingly dependent on collective security. The interaction between the global and national levels requires the constant adaptation of security strategies in order to respond effectively to new types of risks and threats.

For Romania, being a member of NATO and the EU, as well as a strategic partner with the United States, constitute the fundamental pillars of national security. Its geostrategic position on the Black Sea gives Romania an important role in the regional security architecture, but also entails increased responsibilities in managing risks and threats in this area.

At the same time, Romania has made significant progress in modernizing its defense capabilities and strengthening national resilience, but current challenges require these efforts to continue, particularly in areas such as cybersecurity, the protection of critical infrastructure, and countering hybrid threats.

In conclusion, contemporary security must be addressed in an integrated and multidimensional manner, based on international cooperation, solidarity, and adaptability. Only through a sustained and coordinated joint effort states can address the complex challenges of today's security environment and ensure the stability and prosperity of their societies.

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