ФАКТОРИ НА СИГУРНОСТТА В ЧЕРНОМОРСКИЯ РЕГИОН

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

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Abstract: *The following paper is an overview of the determining factors for the security environment in the Black Sea region for 2017. The growing actuality of the problem is connected with the tensions between Russia and the "western" communities, including EU and NATO, after the Crimea annexation. Another point are various geopolitical interests referring to energy and transport corridors from the new Eurasian supply countries to the world richest EU market. The research shows a clear correspondence between the current processes and the political, military and economic factors which proved to have major impact on the security environment in the Black Sea region.*

Key words: *Black Sea region, security environment, factors for the security in the Black Sea region.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the Black Sea increases related with the perspective that it might become an original transportation, energy and communication center of the region. The lack of consistent maritime policy and the existence of a vicious circle between undeclared or unrealized national goals related with the sea create some uncertainties. Processes like the regress in civil and military relationships in using the state sea power and the inefficient management of state maritime affairs and the lack of an efficient national system for control in the national maritime space (NMS) become more obvious. The globalization of threats and risks arising from or related with the sea which makes them even more diverse and more abstract and their subjects become even more depersonalized.

The challenges vary and include the missing common "identity" of the Black Sea countries, the significant differences in political legitimacy and economic status, "frozen conflicts" that create a quite different strategic security environment and attempts to preserve the dominant role of Russia. Revealing the factors that form the security environment and their impact on national policies will solve **the research task** of this article, namely to **overview and prioritise the factors that form the security environment in the Black sea region.**

The research is conducted under the following restriction: Because of the dynamics and the duration of developments in the Black Sea region, general conclusions can not be drawn from the analysis of some of the factors and impacts on the security environment. The goal is to reveal certain trends and guidelines rather than to analyze specific events that are high dynamic during a national, regional, or international dispute, crisis and / or conflict, and can not be covered within this development.

2. METHODS

2.1. Content analysis

The most commonly used approach to security research literature is the system analysis because of the complex and wide-ranging security features. From a political point of view, the five levels of security - personal, group, state, regional and global - include complex social constructs, including that of international relations. This makes the application of system analysis and synthesis adequate to encompass the widest possible range of security environmental factors. This allows the study of the interactions between the objects of the environment and the actors and the drawing of assumptions about their behavior and results from the use of different political instruments in different situations.

It is assumed that the factors are an independent variable, and the dependent variable is the security environment in which national policies are formed. To determine the impact of the independent variables, different sources are used to find a solution to the research task. This will be done through the "content analysis" method: *"An empirical method for systematic and inter-subjective description of the content and formalities of various statements"*(author's translation)¹.

The systemic characteristic of the method is expressed in following some basic signs in the empirical study of the problem. The results must be verifiable. **Analysed are the topics and key thesis of more than 50 presentations from two scientific events on European and Black Sea security in 2017.**² For this purpose, key words, statements and conclusions (decomposition) are sought to determine the positive or negative impact of independent variables (the factors) on the dependent variable (the security environment).

¹ In: Frue, W. Inhaltsanalyse:Theorie und Praxis. Konstanz, 2005, p. 25.

² International Conference "NATO Strategy for Security in the Black Sea region", 28-29 September, Varna Bulgaria; and ESDC course with international participation "The challenges of securing maritime areas for the EU", 2-6 October, Constanta (Romania).

Emphasis will be placed on the regional dimension of the security environment. The main features of the study are an analysis that includes (1) a study of factors affecting security; and (2) synthesis and grouping of information in view of its importance for national policies.

2.2. Factors forming the security environment in the Black Sea region

The analysis of the main factors forming the security environment in the Black Sea region is required due to the circumstance that the factors affect directly the ability of the states to defend their interests related with the specific regional environment. The main challenge to the countries within the region is how to increase their capacity to achieve security while carrying out policies directed to improvement of the common security environment.

Many factors form the security environment in the Black Sea region. The high degree of intensity in the region, due to the highly desintegrated development and divergence of the interests of the states, makes the analysis of the environment diverse and difficult to predict. Contemporary and emerging processes are considered and assessed, and several possible development scenarios could be outlined on the basis of declared and followed long-term goals of the most important actors in them. The main purpose of solving the research task is to formulate the main factors that form

the security environment in the Black Sea region.

Various **factors classifications** that influence the formation of the security environment are found in the literature. They have different origins, time of manifestation, force of influence, degree and mechanisms of action. By their origin, the factors that influence the formation of the security environment can be viewed as objective and subjective: Objective factors manifest independently of the subjects of management of the domestic/foreign affairs - they may be political, economic, social, information, power, natural and others. Generally, they arise from the environment and may have different parameters. The subjective factors derive from the decisions and behavior of the governing bodies and contractors involved in the maritime policy of the country and therefore may be organizational, professional, legal and moral. **According the time of their influence**, destabilizing factors can be classified as temporary and permanent: Temporary factors may occur in certain circumstances at the beginning or in the course of the researched processes. By the **degree of their influence**, the factors are major and minor: The major ones are those who are alone capable of disrupting the state of security. The role of each factor depends on the particular state of the environment.

Depending on **the level of environmental research**, they are considered as global, continental and regional³.

Method for assessment of the security environment in the Black Sea region

Main features	Security environment in the Black Sea region		
Study levels	Global	Continental	Regional
Analysis	Research of the main factors affecting security		
Synthesis	Group summary of the main factors affecting security		
Assessment	Determination of the impact degree of the main factors affecting security		

The schematic division of factors do not represent the complexity of the current geopolitical architecture in the Black Sea region. Choosing the level of environmental research as a classification approach it covers and in the same time clearly divides the main influencing factors. For

example the already mentioned increasing military-political presence of NATO and the US in the region (continental), as well as the energy geopolitics and the transformation of the main routes of transport lines and communications (global).

³ In: Avramov, J. Maintaining security in multinational (national) joint operations. Sofia, 2004.

3. RESULTS⁴

3.1. Factors determining the security environment on a global scale

Factors are grouped as follows:

The *process of globalization* is determining - it is characterized by the increasing speed of political, technological, social and economic changes in the contemporary world and the so-called "fall of borders". It can be also presented as an original compression of time and space.

The *military aspects* of the global security environment are related with the decrease of the national military potentials, limitation of armaments and strengthening of trust on a global scale; there is a dramatic decrease of the possibility of appearance of global and regional conflicts; there is a preserved possibility of escalation of the contradictions between the countries in bilateral conflicts; there is an increasing threat of terrorist attacks.

The *political aspects* are related with: the trend for deepening of the cross-national dependency; establishment of the principles of democracy and market economy, in which the problems during their establishment cause a

serious negative effect on the security within the studied region.

The *economic aspects* are related with the increase of the opportunities for development of the individual countries; the increasing role of the international economic and financial institutions; the fight for markets which, though having inter-state nature, is increasingly turning into an inter-regional fight.

The *social aspects* are determined by the trend that globalization turns the social inequality inside the countries into an inter-state and inter-regional inequality.

The *ecological aspects* are related with the disturbed ecological balance on a global scale; the uncontrolled consumption of natural resources, the deficiency of food and fresh water. The world ocean, as an ecosystem, is increasingly happening to be subjected to negative impacts resulting in depletion of its capacities for self-recovery.

The *humanitarian aspects* are related with the internationalization of the problems to guarantee the human rights and freedoms, the fight against discrimination and violence against representatives of ethnical minorities, the mass refugee and migration flows.

3.2. Factors determining the security environment on a continental scale

Factors are grouped as follows:

The *NATO politics* is based on the following principles:

Black Sea is a part of the Mediterranean region and to a great extent, the factors for its security are the same as for the Mediterranean Sea; security in the Black Sea region is discussed in the context of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture; the strengthening of the regional security is a part of the wider efforts to consolidate democracy and economic development in the region and unite the region with the Euro-Atlantic community; the littoral countries are responsible for the security in the region but at the same time, the involvement of organizations like NATO and EU can optimize the existing regional cooperation; the cooperation in the field of security should develop in a way that is beneficial for all countries within the region; any initiative to intensify the regional security should be implemented with full adherence to the international law and the national

legislations.

The *EU politics* is determined by two trends. *The process of extension* and the full EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania since 01.01.2007 turns the Black Sea into an EU anterior maritime boundary; and *the implementation of the European security strategy* is based on the idea that though a large-scale attack against any EU Member State is unthinkable, in our day Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, hardly noticeable and more unpredictable. The strategy discusses the new risks and threats for European security related with the international terrorism, proliferation of weapons for mass destruction, regional conflicts and humanitarian crises.

The *fundamental question* concerns restructuring of NATO military structures and development of EU independent defensive capacities and powers.

Inference: The increasing interest and active politics by EU and NATO related with the region present the main positive continental factor for its security.

⁴ The factors' are grouped according B. Mednikarov, Protection of Maritime Sovereignty, Varna, 2008.

The *USA politics* concerning the region is mostly related with the extraction and transit transportation of energy carriers, military security, challenges of the fight against terrorism as well as with the fight against trafficking in drugs, arms and persons. For Washington, the region is

exclusively important for the recovery and stabilizing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (and potentially, in Iran) as well as for protection of energy communications between the Caspian region and the Western markets.

3.3. Factors determining the security environment on a regional scale

Factors are grouped as follows:

The *geo-political factors* are related with the specific geographic characteristics of the region which is nowadays a center of both positive cross-border activities, like trade, tourism and transfer of energy carriers, and of increased criminal activity.

Participation of Southeast and Central Europe countries incl. Bulgaria and Romania, in the new eurasian economic projects depends on their activities and the ability to combine the restrictions related to EU membership with the protection of their national interests. The analysis of the situation in the Eurasian space and the potential of the aforementioned projects reveal certain opportunities for benefiting our country.

The realistic prospects for the region concern above all the interconnection of the Eurasian transport corridors in the Caspian Sea (Azerbaijan - Georgia) - the Black Sea.

It should be emphasized that in the context of the two major transport corridors One Belt, One Road (China) and North-South (Russia) the Caspian-Black Sea region, in particular Azerbaijan and Georgia, are becoming strategically important.

The *political factors* are associated with: the vacuum in the field of security of the region, mostly characteristic for the 90s of the past century; the lack of democracy, of

working market economics, of civil rights and freedoms in part of the states in the region and the existence of high levels of corruption and organized crime; the unabated old controversies and their related acting, smoldering and frozen conflicts.

The *economic factors* are determined by the circumstance that important maritime communications are crossing the region, and they are used for delivery of fuels to the countries from Europe and America. On the other hand, the economic instability, the business, financial and social difficulties, the problems of the transition to market economics, the unemployment, migration of qualified personnel, etc. have negative impact on the regional security environment.

The *ethnic factors* are mostly interwoven with the issue of the religious and cultural and civilization differences. In regard to that, the Islam remains a key political factor for the domestic and foreign policies of the countries from the Eastern part of the region.

The *demographic factors* are conditioned by the continuous increase of the population along the Southern and Eastern coastlines of the Mediterranean Sea which, combined with the economic uncertainty and social tension, leads to hardly controllable migration processes.

The *ecological factors* are conditioned by: the alarming condition of the Black Sea as an ecosystem; the high degree of contamination of the influent rivers; the plundering of biological resources; the transfer of some of the environmentally hazardous productions from Western Europe to the region.

3.4. Discussion

The defined factors impede the development of the region and to one or another extent; they endanger its security by stimulating directly the increase of the inter-regional tension and leading to an increased risk of occurrence of a crisis.

1. The impact of the above defined factors on the security in the Black Sea region allows to consider the region in the following three aspects:

- as a source of challenges, risks and threats for security;
- at the same time as a barrier to those negative impacts;
- as an outpost in the global and European system for fight against them.

2. Diverse factors influence the formation of the setting in the Black Sea region with priority given to the economic factors which, together with the activation of illegal activities (including political), stimulate dangerous economic, legal and political contradictions.

3. The increasing interest and active politics by EU, NATO and USA in relation with the Mediterranean and Black Seas is a main positive factor for the security in the region. At the same time it can be considered as challenging in regard with compromising russian influence in the region.

So, the "dual meaning and use" of various influencing factors goes beyond schematic factors' analysis and definitely refers to a wide range of expressing views, the so called "speech acts", propaganda, hybrid dimensions of information presentation etc.

4. CONCLUSION

The growing impact of political and economic factors on the security environment of the Black sea region corresponds with the current challenges, risks and threats that arise from the influence of the researched factors. The formulation of national interests in all spheres of socio-economic life, their conceptual and organizational provision as well as the definition and adoption of comprehensive policies requires an in-depth analysis of the environment in which they operate and change. Political guidelines and priorities are linked to the changing security environment at global, continental and regional level, whose specificities have a direct impact on the dynamics of political, economic and social processes.

Planning national, regional or international responsible policies and their implementation will ensure maximum use of all economic opportunities and, on the other hand, those policies legitimate instruments, resources and capabilities to ensure a safe and secure environment in the dynamically changing Black Sea region.

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