

The Post-Cold War Era: Romania and the Stability in the Balkans

Constantin Hlihor

*A*fter the end of Cold War, the most severe threats to the peace and security in Europe and, also, in the Balkans were instability and lack of security generated by the new risks and challenges. Religious intolerance and nationalism-extremism, interethnic conflicts, especially terrorist attacks as the September 11, 2001 ones, made international community to become extremely fluid with imprevisible evolutions. The former director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), James Wollsey, characterized this reality in a suggestive way, saying that "we have killed a giant dragon (the communism), but now we live in a jungle full of poisonous snakes"¹.

Therefore, in the last ten years Europe witnessed lots of crises and conflicts that have burst in the area, such as those from Transnistria and Slovenia in 1991; Croatia between 1991 and 1995; Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995; Kosovo between 1998 and 1999 and Macedonian conflict in 2001².

It is easy to see that in the center of instability of South-Eastern European space was Yugoslavia. The (in)stability ratio in the 20th century in the Balkans alternated in time, security being in a precarious state. Trying to hide this state of facts, the communism deepened and acuted the causes that generated insecurity in the area³. The efforts made by both the countries from the region and the international community, in the last ten years, have not solved the Balkan problem.

By this study I want to make a few suggestions that could generate some further arguments and possible directions in order

to support the region to become a stability area for the European continent. This study follows two objectives: on the one hand, it tries to demonstrate that for applying effective programs and strategies in the Balkans a sustained effort in security level projection is necessary. This projection should take into consideration the necessity to have knowledge of the peculiarity of this area which is characterized by an ethnic, cultural and religious mosaic; numerous conflicts made this region the "powder barrel of Europe"; a lot of demarcation lines which cross over the Balkans (Catholicism/Orthodoxism/Islam; Western/Eastern civilisations; instable borders, etc.⁴). Referring to this, Macedonia's President, Boris Trajkovski, at the opening of the "Crises Management in South-East Europe from PfP Consortium" working group, declared that "history of our region, which today is called South-East Europe, was marked by many particularities that cannot be found to any other region of the world"⁵.

The discussion about the adequate security model for the Balkans states is situated not only in the searching process for better solutions for the efficient construction of a stabile security environment, but it, also, subscribes at the scholars' efforts to find a new paradigm to overpass the actual models of security. Because the specialists, analysts and decision factors did not have a rigorous research and projection basis effort on interdisciplinary studies – from the international relations theory to mentalities study and ethno-religious sociology/psychology phenomenon – they could not always offer viable solutions for the area's problems.

Unfortunately, many times inadequate strategies were adopted. These strategies did not consider the area's particularities. This could be a possible explanation for the pessimistical or disastrous visions launched by some analysts, in theoretical disputes. For some analysts, Kosovo meant "the relope of Cold War in Europe"⁶; for others Kosovo could become the hitch for a stronger conflict that could involve regional countries like: Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Russia⁷. The American analyst, Sean Kay, from Wesleyan University, Ohio, highlighted that "yet in spite of both the increased theoretical and policy attention to Europe's security institutions, the track record to date does not support the basic assumption that institutions necessarily increase security"⁸.

To build up a durable stability in the Balkans implies, first of all, models and strategies to be applied in order to conduct to the elimination of the security dilemma⁹ and to a new paradigm for regional security. Security dilemma is not a characteristic for the Balkan; it, also, characterized the international relations during the Cold War period¹⁰; when national security was based on military defence, the use of force and threats being enrooted in the international relations system. As Roberts Osgood observed, a fundamental contradiction, in the sense that the main instrument for getting security – military force – became, automatically, the first threat to another state or region's security¹¹.

After the end of the Cold War and after the disintegration of Yugoslav Federation, the Balkans' states fell into a similar dilemma, when they used force, and not diplomacy, as a solution in solving problems. The result was a bloody war and not the peace in the Balkans¹². There are some opinions that affirm that the Balkans' states will not get ride of this security dilemma as long as in this area there are forces capable of offensive or defensive operations¹³. I consider that if we build the trust among the neighboring countries through a control of the military expenditures, through the civilian control on the army and the struggle against terrorism, that generates insecurity, we will be able to increase security and stability in the region.

The stability in the Balkans can also be established, through modification, or even replacement of military doctrines or security strategies based on exclusive force using a modern paradigm such as the cooperative security one¹³. In 1994, writing in *Foreign Policy*, the former Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, described Cooperative Security as tending "(...) to consultation rather than confrontation, reassurance rather than deterrence, transparency rather than secrecy, prevention rather than correction, and interdependence rather than unilateralism"¹⁴. Michael Mihalka believes that through adopting cooperative security model, states will not be any longer the prisoners of the security dilemma. "States in a pluralistic security community expect other states in the community not to use or threaten to use military force as means of resolving disputes. Such a community develops through extensive transactions and communication that aid and abet the consolidation of shared norms and values. This continued interaction is reinforced by cooperation, which further develops shared norms, which then create more interaction, in a positive feedback loop"¹⁵.

The application of this security model in the Balkans supposes first of all to create the proper conditions for the new elements that compose its substance. In the first instance it should guarantee the individual security through ensuring the respect for the human right by the state¹⁶. "The essential basic value upon which a Cooperative Security system rests in unquestioned conviction by its members to uphold and maintain the Individual Security of its own citizens and those of their fellow members. This is the inner ring of the Cooperative Security system, which will ultimately hold it together over time under inevitable pressures and stresses, internal and external. Only the ideal and values of liberal democracy can keep this vital nucleus together"¹⁷.

Barry Buzan discerns a major contradiction between individual and collective security assurance. Although states are assuring a certain security for their citizens, they do this using high level of threats. This direct or indirect threats, having

deliberate or involuntary co-lateral effects, are often severe enough to dominate the fragile universe of the individual security¹⁸.

The American analyst is right, when we deal with states in which the fundamental liberties of the citizens are limited, and when the individual perceives the state and its institutions as constraint element or stranger to his aspirations. The Balkans' events, from the last 10 years, are full of many such examples in which individuals or national and religious communities did not trust the state, and which are actually fighting against the State. That is the reason for which I believe that NATO's intervention was necessary and that NATO's humanitarian presence in Kosovo represents an enforcement action of cooperative security. "NATO acted without a UN mandate. This occurred in part because the norm for action did not exist at the UN Security Council, while it did exist among NATO members"¹⁹.

A second objective of the present study is to present the political and the diplomatic actions taken by Romania in the framework of the diverse and, sometimes, contradictory actions taken by the political actors of the South-East Europe. The Romanian diplomacy understood even since the collapse of communism that there is no East-European country to stay aside while in the region conflicts, crisis and other acts of terrorism take place.

After the collapse of communism in Romania, the Romanian government decided to join the efforts of the international community in the fields of security and peace. In this sense, Romania joined lots of the UN and OSCE peace operations, the last years, 2001 representing a decade of full Romanian participation in these kinds of operations. Romania, also, contributed to missions of civilian police and it is determined to diversify its contribution in this field.

The creation of the Romanian military structures for peace keeping missions and their participation in the neighboring countries are both a direct consequence of the reforms that took place in the army and a proof for Romania's determination to continue to bring its contribution to peace keeping operations.

The active participation of Romania in such operations underlines Romania's will to be integrated in Euro-Atlantic structures. The idea of joining the international community in such missions was strongly supported by the Romanian political class. Starting with 1991 more than 6000 Romanian military have been participated at diverse UN and NATO operations, or at the operations of the international community such as "Storm in the Desert", UNIKOM, UNAMIR II, UNSOM II, UNAVEM, MONUC, UNMEE, UNTAET, UNMIK, IFOR, SFOR, KFOR, "Alba" operation. In the recent years, the Romanian participation in the international peace keeping and conflict preventing initiative concentrated on the region of South-East Europe. Units of the Romanian army took part in IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina (March-Dec. 1996) with a battalion of engineers formed of 200 peoples²⁰.

The Romanian military participated in the 1996 *Engineer* "Josef Kruzal". It was constituted and took action based on the decisions No. 23 and 45 from 1995 of the Romanian Parliament, on the decision No.63 from February 7, 1996 of the Romanian Government and based on the decision of the Romanian Major State from December 27, 1995. The battalion was placed in Zenica and took action within the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) under the direct command of the British General Sir Michael Walker. It participated in actions of mine clearing, bridges and roads building. For example, the first bridge built with the participation of the battalion was opened on April 21, 1996.

The Romanian engineers placed in Zenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, were involved in several humanitarian projects. All the projects materialized in the Federation of Croats and in Srpska Republic in all the three area of responsibility of the multinational divisions: the North division (American), the South-West division (British) and the South-East one (French). Roads to isolated villages from mountain region such as Gladovic and Plahovic were built; the stadium from Sarajevo was repaired for the Athletic Games of Solidarity and books and other humanitarian aids were distributed in Zenica

and in the neighboring area. The Romanian engineers, also, contributed to the repairing of 150 km of railway that connects Zenica to the Dobož and Lukavac (in the center of Bosnia-Herzegovina). On October 28, 1996 the Petrovo Selo railway bridge was opened.

By the Decision No. 25 from 1996 of the Romanian Parliament and by the Decision no. 73 of the Romanian Government from 14 March 1996 Romania was part of the new military structure SFOR for a period of 18 months (from Jan. 1997-Jun. 1998). The structure of the unity was changed, the number of soldiers decreasing to 180. For the first time, a connection structure between the battalion and LANDCENT (NATO's land force that replaced the ARRC) was created.

From the beginning of the Romanian military presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the 1996 "Joseph Kruzel" Engineers Battalion participated 691 military (84 officers, 250 military foremen, and 357 sub-officers) and more the 200 missions took place. The battalion's activities took place on more than 600 square km., in a risky mountain area with forests, some of these missions were not accepted by the other participants at the mission. In average, in the two years of activity, the Romanian battalion executed a number of 30,000 working days, within 1,800 million km with more than 30,000 hours of functioning of engineers' machines. The participation of the Romanian Missions to IFOR and SFOR missions costed Romania as much as an expenditure for an Army Corps.

As a consequence of the appreciation of the Romanian soldiers for their participation in diverse missions, Romania obtained all the credit in the participation of other important peace keeping missions and stabilization in the Balkans. Since November 14, 1999 the Romanian army is present in NATO's mission in Kosovo. Starting with August 20, 2000, Romanian observers are part of the "UNMIK Mission" in Kosovo. Since July, as a consequence of the Decision No. 22 from June 27, 2000 of the Romanian Parliament, in the mission of the SFOR II takes action the detachment formed of 68 military, "Bosnia".

In the framework of these operations for the support of peace the Romanian military collaborated with military belonging to other armies. Presently, Romania collaborates with Netherlands within SFOR (*The Netherlands Detachment*) and with Greece within KFOR mission. *The Netherlands Detachment* (formed of 49 military) actions under a NATO mandate and as a consequence of the Decision No. 22 from June 27, 2000 of the Romanian parliament and the Decision No. 188 from October 19, 2000 of the Romanian Government. The Romanian collaboration with Greece is under the MOVCON mission (one platoon of road traffic control).

On September 26, 1998 in Skopje the Third Meeting of the Ministers of Defense of the Southeast European Countries an agreement – a "memorandum for the Creation of Multinational peace Forces in Southeast Europe" (MPFSEE) – was signed. This agreement provided the ground for the establishment of a multinational brigade, which should be used for humanitarian assistance, conflict-prevention, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement under a UN or OSCE mandate and under the leadership of NATO or WEU. The headquarters of the MPFSEE is the Bulgarian town of Plovdiv and a Turkish General is chief of the brigade. Each participant's share in the common budget is proportional to the participating military units, i.e: Albania 11.76%, Bulgaria 23.53%, Greece 17.5%, Italy 2.94%, Macedonia 8.82%, Romania 11.76% and Turkey 23.53%.²¹

The peace keeping and the humanitarian missions at which participated the Romanian Army highlighted the unanimous appreciation of all the NATO member states regarding Romania's constant effort to contribute to solving the major crisis from different parts of the world. It also demonstrated that Romania has a lot of potential to participate at these missions. Those directly involved in such missions proved that they are able to apply the standard UN and NATO procedures.

In the last year of the last century, a wave of potential risks and dangers from the Balkans got to be identified and controlled. During the Kosovo crisis, through the joined efforts of the

international community, a conflict that could endanger peace in the South-East Europe was limited and stopped. Although it was considered a great success, the international community went further elaborating a policy based on realistic measures of integration of the region in the Euro-Atlantic structures. At the European Union (EU) initiative, on June 10, 1999, in Koln, the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe was adopted.

In the founding document, more than 40 partner states and organizations decided to sustain the South-East European states in their efforts to maintain "peace, democracy, the respect for human rights and the economic prosperity aiming to gain stability in the region"²². In this sense, Jack Seymour and Rick Rust consider that "the Stability Pact is a tremendous victory for advocates of peace keeping and conflict prevention. It represents a movement away from the traditional military-centric approach of reacting to crisis situations. The United States and the European Union have finally realized that allowing crisis to explode in the Balkans is much more costly – both in terms of life and money – than taking initiatives for the construction of long-term peace"²³. In its turn, Bodo Hombach, the co-ordinator for the Stability Pact, underlined that "in so far the approaches on Balkans were directed to the resolution of crisis. The Stability Pact is the first attempt to eliminate the structural, political and economical insufficiency of the countries from the region by a preventive diplomacy"²⁴.

In the first days after the Stability Pact was launched, at the initiative of the Romanian Foreign Affairs minister Mr. Andrei Plesu, the Romanian Government decided the creation of a Inter-parliamentary Group for Collaboration at the national level of the Romanian Projects and Priorities for the participation at the reconstruction and the economic development in the Balkans. This group established a National Plan for reconstruction and regional economic reconstruction in South-East Europe that was approved by the Romanian Government. In this way Romania participated actively in all three Working Tables.

In the realization of the document Romania started with the premises that "the Stability Pact is a prior exam of European integration that has as basis not only the accomplishment of political, economical and social criteria but also a prior for elementary behaviour before being accepted into European Union or NATO"²⁵. A country can be a member of an Euro-Atlantic structure unless it proves that it has strong co-operation ties with its neighbors and that it is able to harmonize its national interests with the international ones. As a proof of gratitude for Romania's role in this "Marshall Plan" may be considered the fact that a Romanian, Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, is the Special Emissary of the Coordinator for the Stability Pact. In this way Romania has an important role in the mechanism which connects Brussels (the Secretariat of the Stability Pact) to national co-ordinators of the Pact.

Holding, in this period, the co-presidency of the Working Table 1 for democratization and human rights, Romania is determined to bring its full contribution using its profound knowledge of the region, its experience in the area, and by its entire conception with regard to the cooperation in this region. This concept has already been experienced within the activity of the regional cooperation mechanisms in which our country is part, such as: the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the South-East European Cooperation Process and the South-East European Cooperation Initiative.

Romania also considers that the specific aims the three Working Tables – through which the Stability Pact functions – want to achieve are equally important and intermingled. At the same time, I have to admit the fact that the fulfilling of tasks of the other two working tables depends, in a crucial way, on the putting into practice of the objectives of the Economic Working Table and, hence, on the establishment of stability, cooperation and security in South-East Europe. The economic component of the pact has registered an important progress during this year. This progress meets Romania's efforts and goals which my country, and the other Balkan states, invested in this new structure

meant to settle the regional cooperation. For example, a meeting in Skopje (10-11 February 2000), the European Investment Bank considered feasible and worth to finance 23 out of 40 infrastructure projects included in the Romanian National Action Plan. At the same time, the First Regional Conference of the Donors, held in Brussels, by the end of March, approved 9 infrastructure Romanian projects, worth of 1,042 million Euro. Participating at the Economic Working Table, Romania – also an active member of the Memorandum of Understanding on Trade Liberalisation and Facilitation²⁶ – stressed again the necessity of immediate and concrete measures for the de-blocking of the Danube. In order to underline the necessity of political, diplomatic and economic measures aiming free navigation on this important European waterway, I will make use of the words of Bodo Homach, who said that “we have institutions which can decide within two days which bridges over the Danube we should bomb, but we need two years to start repairing the damage and make the river navigable again, even though every day the blockage is costing Bulgaria and Romania more than the international help can provide. The politicians must grasp these terrible contradictions, not just for the sake of Southeast Europe but for the common European good”²⁷.

Coming back to the Working Groups, at the Third Working Table, that approached lots of current issues, Romania presented three projects: the Financing of the Center for

Fighting Organized Crime (SECI) and supplementing its prerogatives concerning the problems of the small weapons, the Establishing of a Regional Center for Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, the drawing up of a joined document concerning the security risks for South Eastern Europe. Support of the Defense Reform and mitigating the human consequences of defense rightsizing is an example of the synergy created by the Stability Pact between specialized institutions such as NATO, the World Bank and the regional countries, in this case, Romania and Bulgaria. Romania and Bulgaria, with NATO's expertise, set up retraining programs for officers whose jobs were cut to help reintegrate them into the civilian activities. So far, around 2000 military personnel underwent through such training and the program is now expanded to the other countries from South-East Europe.

In conclusion, I wanted to underline, in the first part, the necessity to have scholarly research of the environment for security in order to have the possibility of drawing some security scenarios. I also wanted to highlight the role of Romania within the framework of common efforts to establish an environment of stability and security in this part of Europe. For these reasons we consider the Stability Pact as a solution for the speeding up of the peace reconstruction process. In the same time it is a way for building up partnerships which are mutually profitable among the country members of the European Union and among the states in this region.

Notes:

¹ Sec, STANLEY HOFFMAN, *Le monde nouveau et ses problèmes*, in “Commentaire” No.53/1991.

² LYUBICA JELUSIC, VLADIMIR PREBILIC, *Between Old Ties and New Challenges: Slovenian Policy towards Crises Situation in South-Eastern Europe*, in volume

Ten Years After: Democratization and Security Challenges in South-East Europe, PfP Consortium, National Defence Academy, Vienna, Mai, 2001, page 69; UN Peacekeeping in Trouble: Lessons Learned from the Former Yugoslavia, Edited by Wolfgang Biermann and Martin Vadset, Ashgate Publishing, Brookfield, Vermont, USA, 1999.

³ JAFFREY SIMON, *Sources of Balkan Insecurity: The Need for a Comprehensive Strategy*, in “Strategic Forum”, No. 150, October, 1998, <http://www.rdn.edu/inss/s>.

⁴ Captain GHEORGHE CIASCAL, *The Consequences of NATO Enlargement for South-Eastern Europe Regional Security*, in "Romanian Military Thinking", new series, year X, No. 1/1999, page 51.

⁵ BORIS TRAJKOVSKI, *Adress to Ohrid Conference*, in volume "Ten years after..." page 6

⁶ LAURENCE FREEDMAN, *The Future of International Politics in the Wake of Kosovo*, in "Janies Defence Weekly Feature", wyswyg/home.45/http/defence.james.com.

⁷ NARCIS ZARNESCU, *Quo vadis, Kosovo?* in "National Defence College Journal, year V, no. 2, Bucharest 1999, page 63-64.

⁸ SEAN KAY, *Security Regionalisation in the New Europe. International Institution and Balkan Crises*, in volume "Globalisation, Regionalisation and the History of International Relations", 4th General Assembly, Oslo, 11-12 August, 2000, page 209.

⁹ BARRY BUZAN, *People, States, and Fear*, translated by Vivia Sandulescu, Bucharest - Chisinau, 2000, page 274-297; Panayotis Tsconas, *Creating Conditions of Stability in Balkans* in "Romanian Journal of International Affaires", vol. II, 1996, page 113.

¹⁰ BARRY BUZAN, *People, States, and Fear*, translated by Vivia Sandulescu, Bucharest - Chisinau, 2000, page 286-287.

¹¹ ROBERT OSGOOD, ROBERT W. TUCKER, *Force, Order, and Justice*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1967.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ GARETH EVANS, *Cooperative Security and Intra-States Conflict*, in "Sovereign Policy", no.96, Fall 1994; from Richard Cohen, "Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order, page 4, 2001.

¹⁵ MICHAEL MIHALKA, "Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order", *Cooperative Security: from Theory to Practice*, page 37; 2001.

¹⁶ RICHARD COHEN and MICHAEL MIHALKA, "Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order", page 13-14; 2001.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ BARRY BUZAN, *People, States and Fear*, translated by Vivia Sandulescu, Bucharest - Chisinau, 2000, page 61.

¹⁹ RICHARD COHEN and MICHAEL MIHALKA, "Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order", page 55; 2001.

²⁰ See *Romanian Armed Forces in Peacekeeping Missions* (Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998).

²¹ Dr. JORDAN BAEV, "Bulgaria's Experience in Peace Support Operations", *Ten Years After: Democratization and Security Challenges in South-East Europe* (Vienna: National Defence Academy) Vienna, 2001. page 88.

²² *Koin Document*, June 10, 1999.

²³ JACK SEMOUR & RICK RUST "Stabilizing South-East Europe: When Action Must follow Words", Basic Publications, July 2000 (<http://www.basicint.org/Notesjuly12.htm>).

²⁴ *Mondorama*, issue 102, May 2nd 2000.

²⁵ MIHAL RAZVAN UNGUREANU, *O cheie pentru enigma balcanică*, "Bacalnii", Bucharest No. 1 5-1 5/2001, p. 7-10.

²⁶ The Memorandum of Understanding on Trade Liberalisation and Facilitation (MoU) was signed on 27 June 2001 in Brussels. The major goal of the MoU is to complete the network of free trade agreements in the region by the end of 2002, creating a market of up to 55 million consumers. The agreements will be fully in line with the WTO rules and with relevant obligations of each signatory country vis-à-vis the EU.

²⁷ *Mondorama*, issue 102, May 2nd 2000.