

Romania's NATO Membership

A Monograph
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Abstract

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Romania represents a reliable NATO member and an emergent democracy among the Eastern European countries. In 2004, Romania became a NATO member and will be integrated in the European Union in 2007. However, these achievements required Romania to go through challenging reforms and to implement Western standards. NATO membership represented the first challenge after the fall of communism in the early 1990's. The process for NATO developed along three main dimensions: NATO's evolution after the Cold War, Romania's historical position toward Western integration and Romania's military reform after the Warsaw Pact dissolved.

After 1990, NATO's own evolution represented the main process that influenced decisively Romania's development. NATO had to confront two policy issues: the relevance of the Alliance after the fall of the Soviet Union and the rationale for including former Eastern European countries. NATO's approach was to encourage former Warsaw Pact countries to cooperate within NATO's security forum to maintain stability in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Eastern European countries could develop policies and plans for NATO membership. At the same time, the possible NATO enlargement could redefine NATO's role and preserve its relevancy.

Romania's communist domination for almost five decades after World War II limited its opportunities for becoming a democratic country. Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship produced negative political, social and economic effects and influenced the West's perception of Romania. However, Romania started to review its servitude to the Soviet regime in the mid 1960's. The West responded positively but remained skeptical after Ceausescu's failure to improve social and economic conditions. After the 1989 Revolution, Romania struggled to create the conditions for NATO and EU membership. Political consensus and proper resource allocation remained the constant issues for the post-1989 Romanian governments.

Besides addressing social issues to demonstrate a commitment to democracy, Romania had to reform its military forces to implement NATO's standards and interoperability objectives. The military reform had to restructure the military bureaucracy, adjust the size and design of the force, and implement NATO assessment processes to measure efficiency. Additionally, Romania had to participate actively in NATO combined exercises and exploit the training opportunities of NATO's Partnership for Peace.

The combination of changes in NATO's perception of the Eastern European countries and the process of integration provided the conditions for Romania to demonstrate its commitment to both democracy and NATO. Romania's strategic position along with the events of 11 September 2001 accelerated the process of integration. Today Romania is a new member in NATO but still faces challenges in maintaining its contribution to the Alliance.

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Introduction

In December 1989, the violent end of Ceausescu's authoritarian regime in Romania and the subsequent collapse of the Warsaw Pact opened the road for Romania to pursue NATO integration. Fourteen years later, Romania became a NATO member. Today, Romania is a security contributor and an emergent democracy. Moreover, the USA and Romania derive the dividends of a beneficial strategic partnership while the process of European integration advances. However, Romania's current security status has been achieved through a challenging process. Considering itself a European nation, Romania has always struggled to become a part of the so called West. This paper describes the path Romania took to achieve the goal of NATO membership. There are three dimensions which proved relevant to describing Romania's road toward NATO membership: NATO's reform process and posture toward enlargement after 1989; Romania's historical relationship with the West after 1965; and Romania's military reform process after the fall of Ceausescu's communist regime.

First, NATO's own approach toward enlargement influenced decisively the foreign policy of every candidate for membership. Before the fall of European communism, NATO was largely a robust military instrument to counter the Soviet expansion toward the West. Consequently, NATO enlargement occurred whenever opportunities arose to counter the communist threat. After the early 1990's, the European security environment changed drastically and NATO faced different challenges in accepting new members. Moreover, NATO remained the only security alliance that could guarantee stability in the former communist countries. Some experts considered NATO's new security role in Europe the answer to the question addressing NATO's relevancy after the Cold War. NATO had to reform itself while developing policies for intervention in response to security threats in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the enlargement process after the 1990's proved infeasible without adequate organizational changes within NATO. Also, NATO had to develop policy instruments to strengthen cooperation with the

former Warsaw Pact members. The new NATO-Russia security relationship and the political developments in the Eastern European countries fostered candidate participation in NATO activities and combined military exercises. Thus the countries seeking membership developed the policies, structures and capabilities to implement NATO's membership requirements. NATO enlarged twice, in 1999 and in 2002, but the selection criteria differed each time. NATO recognized that candidates had to implement not only political but also economic, social, legal and military reforms. Also, the terrorist attacks in September 2001 influenced NATO's decision to enlarge in 2002. NATO's summit in Prague developed the concept for new capabilities needed to counter-terrorism and the new emergent threats. In short, NATO's enlargement process after 1990 helped maintain stability in the former Eastern European countries and ensured the security environment the candidates needed to implement democratic reforms.

Next, Romania's relationship with the West after the mid 1960's influenced its post-Cold War commitment to NATO membership. Also, the Romanian governments' ability after the fall of Ceausescu's regime to implement NATO's requirements for membership was critical. Historically, Romania sought to balance its foreign policy objectives between 1965 and 1989. Ceausescu's regime, while still authoritarian and despotic, moved toward economic cooperation with the West after 1965. Also, Romania focused on improving its relationship with the U.S. However, Romania's security strategy before 1989 relied on its membership in the Warsaw Pact. This duality produced confusion in the West over Romania's commitment to democratic changes. The West remained skeptical about Ceausescu's regime and Romania faced isolation. The Romanian Revolution in 1989 offered Romania the opportunity to escape the Soviet influence and to open the road for cooperation with the West. After 1989, the dominant constant in Romania's security strategy was NATO integration¹. High Romanian public support for NATO

¹ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 188.

membership and the stable political consensus confirmed that Romania was committed to becoming a NATO member. The Romanian government's struggle was to generate the proper resources to support the reforms needed for NATO membership. Additionally, the Romanian governments after 1989 had to prove to NATO that Romania would be a security contributor. Romania had to solve any regional security issues with its neighbors and to manage internal social and ethnic problems. Also, Romania benefited from its strategic position when NATO considered Romania's relevancy for membership. Romania's proximity to the emergent threats the Middle East and to the economic opportunities in the Caucasus ultimately proved to be strong reasons when NATO considered Romania's candidacy.

Romania's ability to develop and support military reforms represents the third dimension of Romania's path toward NATO membership. Romania's military reform developed during four phases between 1990 and 2004. Romania had to reform its massive armed forces to develop a more flexible, deployable and sustainable military force. Also, the programs for restructuring the military forces focused on achieving NATO interoperability with NATO member's forces. Romania's participation in NATO's security cooperation programs proved critical for Romania's military forces to develop the needed expertise. NATO's combined exercises allowed Romanian forces to define, understand and implement NATO's interoperability objectives. While implementing NATO's Partnership Goals, Romania improved its command and control, deployability, and logistics support capabilities. Also, Romania reviewed its combat effectiveness standards and human resource policies and plans. Additionally, Romania had to ensure it understood and implemented the processes NATO developed for candidate assessment. NATO developed first the Partnership for Peace to allow countries seeking membership to develop their requirements for military reform. However, NATO developed a better assessment tool after the Madrid Summit, in 1999. This was the most important tool for Romania's military reform. These NATO processes also required Romania to develop the proper structures needed for the military reform. Lacking experience during the initial Membership Action Plan cycles, Romania

improved its military reform efforts between 2001 and 2004. The paper reviews the priorities the Romanian military reform established during the last three Membership Action Plan cycles. This will reveal the progress Romania achieved and the problems the Romanian military reform encountered.

In summary, there were three dimensions to Romania's evolution toward its current security status. First was the transformation of NATO's security and political goals to move NATO beyond a military alliance to counter the Soviet Union. Next, was the transformation of Romania to prove its worthiness for membership. Last were the difficult military reforms needed to provide relevant military capabilities at a cost Romania could afford. However, NATO's enlargement approach after 1990 was the most decisive factor in Romania's NATO membership process.

NATO's enlargement – building new security nexuses

The fall of communism and the changes it brought among the former Warsaw Pact Eastern Europe members fueled NATO's internal debate over enlarging NATO membership. First, NATO had to adjust to address the relevancy of an alliance historically designed to cope with a communist military block. Absent Soviet satellite states and the threat of invasion, the new NATO had to redefine itself. Moreover, in 1990 several Eastern European countries declared their aspirations to Western values and integration into North-Atlantic security and economic organizations. Consequently, NATO members entered into a political debate to address the feasibility of enlargement and to set criteria by which to evaluate candidates for membership.

Since 1949, NATO has considered enlargement as a core value of its existence. The North Atlantic Treaty addresses membership in Article 10. That article invites the membership of "any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty." The process allows each aspirant

country to deposit “its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America”. The U.S. then notifies the Alliance and the forum collectively to determine whether the aspirant receives membership. There naturally has been a debate on how open NATO’s door should be for admitting new members. Although the evaluation criteria should remain constant, some experts assert any European democratic nation should be allowed membership because openness would foster cooperation. On the other hand, NATO needs to maintain military standards to preserve security and alliance capabilities.

Between 1952 and 1981, Greece, Turkey, the Federal Republic of Germany and Spain received invitations and joined NATO.² NATO considered membership for each aspirant based on different historical and security aspects. The enlargement process addressed both security and democratization efforts. The Greek and Turkish governments faced efforts from internal forces to establish communist regimes. The communist threat was the main argument for granting early membership for Greece and Turkey. Next, to counter the Soviet influence in Western Europe, NATO invited the Federal Republic of Germany to join the Alliance in 1954. This second round of NATO enlargement also triggered the Soviet Union in 1955 to establish its mirror security organization, the Warsaw Pact. Spain was the last country that joined NATO before the end of the Cold War. Before 1975, Spain had been an authoritarian regime. However, following General Franco’s death, Spain committed itself to Western integration. NATO recognized the opportunity and signed the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of Spain in December 1981.

NATO’s enlargement between 1949 and 1989 emphasized NATO’s military character within the European Security. The focus was more on countering the conventional Soviet military forces than on promoting democratic values throughout Eastern Europe. The *raison d’être* changed drastically when the Cold War ended and new Eastern Europe fault lines emerged.

² Romania’s process for NATO membership. March 2004. Internet, <http://www.mapn.ro/pfp.php>

Export stability and address enlargement after 1990

The enlargement process continued even after the Cold War ended. However, NATO faced different circumstances within the new European security environment. First, NATO had to clarify the new security issues with Moscow in order to ensure a constructive dialogue for the future of Eastern Europe. Both President Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze supported the relevancy of the Warsaw Pact and denied initially any chances for German unification.³ Moreover, the Soviet argument was that the Warsaw Pact and NATO could continue together to manage European security. Despite Moscow's attitude, the Eastern European countries did not consider the Warsaw Pact relevant anymore and sought its disablement. Also, the new administrations in Eastern Europe affirmed their aspirations toward NATO integration. Hence, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia met in February 1991, in Visegrad to establish common policies for NATO integration (the Visegrad Group).⁴ The Warsaw Pact finally dissolved in 1991 freeing the Eastern European countries to pursue NATO membership.

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO had to develop new institutions to address the enlargement issues. The North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's supreme decision and consultation forum, had to open a dialogue with Eastern Europe aspirants. The U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, and the German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher had already suggested NATO create an "exchanging partnership" with Eastern Europe new actors.⁵ This dialogue focused on exchanging information between the NAC and the former Warsaw Pact countries on issues related to security policies, and military strategy and doctrine. Furthermore, the NAC agreed in October 1991 to establish a North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) within which non-member states could develop a robust exchange addressing a wide spectrum of

³ Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997 Blessings of Liberty*, (Washington, D.C., Praeger, 1998), 6

⁴ *Ibid.*, 8

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13

security issues including enlargement efforts.⁶ However, the NAC considered opening the door to membership in the early 1990's infeasible. There was a need to develop a more practical dialogue because the NACC became too large to reach timely decisions. By the end of 1992, the NACC included thirty six members, including Russia, and given the diversity of opinions, gaining a consensus proved difficult. Consequently, in 1994 the NATO Summit in Brussels established the Partnership for Peace (PfP).

Cooperation instruments to shape the enlargement approach

The PfP focused on continuing the dialogue developed during the NACC and allowed non-member states to actively participate in NATO activities. In the same time PfP prepared the path for aspiring countries to acquire the expertise needed for developing policies and plans for NATO integration. From the former Warsaw Pact countries, the Visegrad group presented the most coherent aspiring efforts. Additionally, six more countries expressed their NATO integration commitments: Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania. President Clinton's administration recognized the need for NATO to adjust its policies to accept the debate on further enlargement.⁷ Initially, NATO faced difficulties in corroborating the PfP and the enlargement process. The NAC believed that the PfP would prevent further divisions in Eastern Europe and maintain the constructive dialogue. The goal was to postpone NATO's action on enlargement so the Alliance could develop proper policies. However, the PfP helped address a multilateral approach to stability and cooperation within Eastern Europe. It allowed the partners to participate in NATO/PfP multinational exercises and activities. When launched, the PfP vaguely suggested NATO Eastern enlargement but did not specify any military criteria or step toward membership. Neither did PfP allow for full NATO member benefits for the partners.

⁶ Ibid., 14

⁷ Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, "The New NATO and Central and Eastern Europe: Managing European Security in the Twenty-First Century," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 21.

Practically, NATO allowed partners to establish NATO liaison elements and a Partnership Coordination Cell under the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE). Each partner country had to focus on the following NATO/PfP objectives:⁸

- Establish a transparent defense planning and budgeting system;
- Ensure the democratic control over the armed forces;
- Contribute to multinational operations under UN or OSCE mandate;
- Develop cooperation with NATO to address operations including peacekeeping, search and rescue and humanitarian support;
- Develop plans to focus on the interoperability with NATO forces.

Each partner selected cooperation areas and submitted their Individual Partnership Program (IPP). The IPP listed also the capabilities made available for each cooperation area. NATO prohibited the participation in article 5 missions (NATO collective defense) by partner country because this was a full member attribute. In terms of enlargement, the PfP encompassed another positive aspect. It allowed partners to participate in the Planning and Review Process (PARP) – a defense planning tool similar to the NATO defense planning process. The PARP allowed aspirants to coordinate their NATO integration policies and plans with NATO's assessments and guidance. NATO benefited from PARP also because the Alliance had annual opportunities during bilateral sessions to understand each candidate's defense policies, plans, resources and capabilities. Despite the positive dialogue developed within the PfP, NATO had no forum that permitted aspirant countries to participate to NATO's political structures. Most Eastern European partners requested a further development of PfP to include participation within NATO's political forum. This presented opportunities for each candidate to reaffirm its devotion to NATO integration and to help NATO decision makers develop concrete criteria and plans for enlargement.

The Enhanced PfP was introduced in 1997 and focused on three main objectives:⁹

⁸ Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997 Blessings of Liberty*, (Washington, D.C., Praeger, 1998), 37

- Strengthen the political consultation between members and partners;
- Develop a more operational role for PfP;
- Provide partners better opportunities to participate in PfP decision making and planning.

NATO established the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) to develop a robust political forum for consultation between members and partners. The EAPC replaced NACC and added quality to the cooperation mechanism. EAPC became a permissive organization allowing partners to engage collectively with NATO in political decision making before committing to specific areas within the PfP. The process enabled each partner to select and agree with NATO on cooperation areas. This improved each partner's ability to prioritize the activities within IPP and allocate adequate resources. However, EAPC did not eliminate the differences between a member and a partner. Instead, EAPC allowed partner countries, and especially those seeking NATO membership, to politically cooperate with NATO's decision making body – the NAC.

The EAPC introduced the concept of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) to improve the operational capability of the PfP. This allowed partners to expand their NATO mission range to include peace enforcement and crisis management. Although the new missions required partners to provide more robust force packages and to improve their training programs, NATO restricted partners to train their nominated forces for article 5 operations. This ensured aspirant partners gradually developed their contributing capabilities toward future membership and NATO retained the difference between a full member and a partner.

NATO's decisions between 1990 and 1999 focused on developing cooperation with the Eastern European aspirant countries. Therefore, the NATO 's main goal was to ensure former Warsaw Pact countries seeking NATO membership generated regional stability through

⁹ Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, "The New NATO and Central and Eastern Europe: Managing European Security in the Twenty-First Century," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 24.

participation in PfP, IPP and EAPC. All these political-military processes fostered a NATO consensus on Eastern enlargement and helped NATO gain time to develop admission criteria.

The 1999 Enlargement

NATO's Summit in 1999 confirmed that the enlargement debate within NATO was over. Held in Madrid, the summit officially invited only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join NATO. NATO based the decision of its fourth enlargement round since 1949 on each candidate's accomplishments within several areas:¹⁰

- Settlement of regional disputes;
- Progress in the overall democratization process;
- Progress in developing adequate civil-military relations;
- Commitment to contribute to NATO's strategic interests.

Considering these selection criteria for NATO membership, NATO judged the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as the most successful aspirants. However, some experts argued that the selection of just these three aspirants represented only NATO's skeptical attitude toward eastward enlargement. Additionally, the NATO assessment of these countries focused on the progress of the military reform, the status of implementation of the NATO interoperability goals and the commitment of adequate defense resources to ensure the sustainability of the reforms. However, the Madrid Summit placed greater weight on political goals than on an in-depth evaluation of each new member's military capabilities.

Following Madrid enlargement, NATO identified several problems when trying to integrate the new members' defense capabilities. The expertise among the pre-1999 allies relied on almost five decades of collective defense planning and integrated development of military capabilities. The new members lacked such expertise and had no institutional bureaucracy to ensure implementation of NATO standards. Moreover, ongoing political, economic and social

¹⁰ Ibid., 26

transitions created problems in addressing NATO interoperability objectives.¹¹ For instance, the implementation of NATO Standardization Agreements (STANAGs) required a rather large experienced staff. Practically, each STANAG should have been translated first and then implemented to generate the required changes in the force. NATO recognized after Madrid that all three new members had difficulties in developing efficient measures for the timely implementation of NATO goals. From the Alliance's perspective this also meant that the process for selecting additional aspirants needed criteria with which to assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the aspirant's defense planning system. At the same time, NATO realized that each aspirant had to develop efficient national security systems capable of close coordination between national governments and NATO political-military bodies.¹²

The war in Kosovo was the first instance when NATO could confirm the new allies' commitment to the Alliance's strategic interests. Both the Czech Republic and Hungary refused to support the NATO intervention. This produced perplexity within NATO because the new allies were expected to support the political consensus. However, both countries presented arguable reasons for not supporting the Operation Allied Force. The Czech Republic believed that the NATO air campaign fueled the ethnic cleansing and the Kosovars' exodus. Hungary was also concerned about the impact of the NATO intervention. Hungary's concerns were for the Hungarian border with Serbia and the NATO operations' effects on the Hungarian minority living in Northern Serbia. In contrast, Poland supported NATO's intervention while still expressing its concerns for the regional security.¹³ This divergent approaches made NATO reevaluate its policies for further enlargement. The premise was that NATO's open door policy should carefully evaluate the future members. The Czech Republic's and Hungary's political postures revealed the security burden any future member could bring in the Alliance. Consequently, the

¹¹ Ibid., 27

¹² Ibid., 28

¹³ Ibid., 29

Kosovo crisis debate made NATO reevaluate the enlargement process for the remaining aspirant countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

For the other eight aspirant countries, the Madrid Summit produced disappointing results. Each of them had declared its readiness to receive invitations. At the same time, the summit represented a source of hope for some of the aspirants. NATO's Madrid declaration specifically identified Romania, Slovenia and the Baltic countries for future consideration. The first accession round also confirmed the aspirant's expectations that NATO membership was an attainable national security objective.¹⁴ NATO did not consider offering invitations to other aspirants at the Washington Summit in 1999. Instead, NATO established robust procedures for evaluating the aspirants' readiness for membership: the Membership Action Plan (MAP).

The events in September 2001 forced NATO to approach the further enlargement process from a rather different perspective. The terrorist attacks impacted NATO's policies dramatically. NATO activated, for the first time in its history, article 5 – collective defense – based on the principle that “an attack against one member is an attack on all members.” Moreover, NATO had to ensure it enlarged rapidly to expand its security umbrella. At the same time the more aspirants granted full member status the more effort NATO gained in the fight against terrorism. President George W. Bush called for a “robust” round of enlargement at the NATO Prague Summit in 2002.¹⁵

The Prague Enlargement

NATO invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to become full members during the Prague 2002 Summit. September 11 influenced NATO's criteria for granting membership. Mainly, the U.S. was concerned with integrating the remaining aspirants faster, in order to benefit from declared niche capabilities in the fight against

¹⁴ Ibid., 31

¹⁵ Ibid., 32

terrorism.¹⁶ Additionally, the U.S. sought new force projection capabilities within the Black Sea basin to address more efficiently the emerging threats in Asia and the Middle East. However, while NATO recognize the change in its strategic posture to respond to out-of-area threats, few members were ready to shift from a territorial force design to a deployable projection force concept. Furthermore, NATO had to ensure the post-1999 enlargement problems had been solved so the new allies presented no surprises. The new seven allies also presented a strong pro-American attitude strengthening more NATO 's Atlantic strategic dimension. This raised political concerns from the European Union (EU). Focusing more on a robust strategic partnership with the U.S., most Eastern European members remained skeptical about the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Strategically, NATO had to rely on its Eastern flank members to promote the advantages of NATO membership to countries like Ukraine and Belarus.

The NATO cooperation and enlargement process after 1990 shaped the Eastern European security environment. On the other hand, each aspirant's efforts focused on rapid integration in the Western security and economic organizations. Ensuring robust democratic development was the fundamental concern of the new governments in Eastern Europe. Following more than four decades of painful communism, Romania's current status relies on its critical security relationship with NATO. However, Romania achieved this position through a rather challenging process.

Romania's international posture before and after 1989

At the time of the Madrid summit in 1997, NATO showed interest in offering Romania a path to integration. The West had been skeptical of Romania's sincerity during the period 1989 and 1997. There were several reasons for NATO's skepticism. NATO remembered Ceausescu's opportunist policies in 1965 and 1971. Then, the violent overthrow of the regime in 1989 and the political unrest gave reason to question Romania's post-1989 political development. From 1965

¹⁶ Stephen F. Larrabee, NATO's Eastern Agenda in a New Strategic Era, (RAND, 2003), 45.

to 1971, Romania had enjoyed favorable relations with the West because Romania had distanced itself from Moscow and had made some important economic gains. The bloody Revolution in 1989 and the unstable political and economic environment that followed drove the West to distance itself from Romania and its internal affairs.

Foreign policy, 1965-1971

Romania was occupied by Soviet forces at the end of World War II and the Soviet Union helped establish a communist regime when the war ended. The regimes postwar security policies focused on strengthening the relationship with Moscow. In the same time, the communist apparatus implemented policies to limit Western influence. Nicolae Ceausescu emerged as a prominent communist leader in the early 1960's. Ceausescu's regime dominated Romania's political development for the next three decades. Before 1965, Romania's international relations were limited to cooperation with communist states in Eastern Europe. Ceausescu's policies ensured strong control over the population and focused on serving the Soviet Union. However, Ceausescu's megalomania made him dream of establishing a Romanian semi-independent status within the Eastern communist block.

In 1965, Romania's international position improved somewhat. Ceausescu promoted diplomatic actions to elevate Romania's standing within the international community . Romania established diplomatic ties with Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli six-day war, and economic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany. The Romanian Jewish Community joined the World Jewish Congress and the Romanian government blocked Romanian military participation in Warsaw Pact exercises.¹⁷ In August 1968 Ceausescu denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and characterized it as “a terrible mistake and a great danger to European peace.” These actions increased Ceausescu's popular support among Romanians and his international

¹⁷ Ioan Bolovan et al., *A HISTORY OF ROMANIA*, ed. Kurt W. Treptow, 3d ed. (Iasi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Foundation for Romanian Culture and Studies, 1997) 539

reputation. The Romanian Communist Party's popularity increased and an average of 40% of the intellectuals joined the party voluntarily.¹⁸ Moreover, in 1969 the President of the United States of America visited Romania in recognition of Ceausescu's accomplishments. In 1971 Romania started negotiations to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Ceausescu's policy of independence from Moscow managed to make him "the West's favorite communist." Ceausescu also asserted military independence from Moscow by establishing of a national military education architecture independent from the Soviet control.

The beginning of the end, 1971-1981

Unfortunately, economic concerns caused Ceausescu's foreign policy to turn back toward the Soviet Union. Romania had become a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1972. The United States offered Romania the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status in 1975. Romania became the only Warsaw Pact country to benefit from MFN status. Ceausescu sought to improve relations with countries from both Asia and Africa and the other communist regimes in Europe. However, Ceausescu regime's oppressive social policies and violations of human rights soured relations with the West. The energy and raw material shortages caused Romania to seek improved relations with Moscow and the Soviet Union started to export oil to Romania in 1979. Consequently, Moscow achieved a certain economic control over Romania and started to criticize Romania for its previous economic openness toward the West.¹⁹

Internally, the Chief of the Romanian Foreign Intelligence, Mihai Pacepa, fled Romania in 1978 and unmasked the regime's harassment of the Romanian diasporas.²⁰ Romanian sport successes helped to maintain Romania's international reputation. The wonderful gymnast Nadia Comaneci won three gold medals at the Olympic Games in 1976. Tennis stars Ilie Nastase and Ion Tiriac and canoeist Ivan Pataichin also contributed to Romania's international reputation. Meanwhile,

¹⁸ Ibid., 540

¹⁹ Ibid., 546

²⁰ Ibid., 547

Ceausescu introduced Stalinist policies based on an aggressive personality cult and the oppressive Romanian Securitate. Most of the Romanian intellectuals became disenchanted and criticized the regime's external and internal policies. Consequently, the West grew more distant.

The crisis of the communist regime, 1981-1989

Between 1981 and 1989, Ceausescu's regime was characterized by domestic austerity and international isolation. Two major factors diminished the Romanian economy: underdeveloped agriculture and increasing external debt and the debt related interest.²¹ To support his domestic policy, Ceausescu decided to pay back the Romanian foreign debt by implementing drastic social measures. He decreed rationalization of the basic food products and limited the gas allowances per individual. Consequently, the Romanian population's frustration increased as Ceausescu's Securitate implemented drastic measures for control and supervision. The West recognized that Ceausescu was a tyrant and denied any international support. Relations with France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States deteriorated. Moreover, Ceausescu renounced U.S. Most Favored Nation status which added economic rigidity to the internal condition. Isolated, Romania maintained friendly relations only with North Korea, Cuba, Libya and Iraq.²² Soviet support also declined as Moscow pursued Perestroika. More open friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the West made it impossible for Moscow to support the increasing dictatorial Romanian regime. Repressive measures in Romania led to social unrest and isolated revolts. While other European communist regimes gradually loosen their grip on society and instituted liberalizing reforms, Romania's government struggled to maintain control which set conditions for a violent overthrow. In December 1989, following a period of drastic social and economic measures, demonstrations against the communist regime erupted in Timisoara. The pretext was that Ceausescu's oppressive apparatus, Securitate, wanted

²¹ Ibid., 548

²² Ibid., 552

to arrest a Hungarian preacher. Rumors of massed civilian casualties spread the revolt to the capital. A military court accused Ceausescu and his despotic wife of genocide and destruction of national economy and sentenced them to death. It was the end of the communist regime that isolated Romania and brought the country on the edge of economic collapse.

New security concerns and challenging isolation 1989-1993

The violent end of Ceausescu's regime convinced the West that Romania was socially and politically unstable. Additionally, the collapse of the Eastern Europe communist governments left a political vacuum that created a security crisis in areas around Romania. The outbreak of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and the possibility of armed conflict in Transnistria influenced the West to maintain Romania's isolation.²³ The West was also concerned that Yugoslavian minorities living in Romania and Romanian historical ties with Moldova might drag Romania into nearby conflicts. Despite all these security concerns, Romania realized that breaking isolation would require both regional and internal stability and a new path for cooperation with the West. Ion Iliescu, the leader of the Romanian National Salvation Front, declared in both 1991 and 1992 that Romania could become a democracy only through Euro-Atlantic integration. Also, the Romanian Parliament undoubtedly affirmed that Romania needed to focus its strategy toward Western democratic values. The political declarations were heard in the West and Romania became a member of the Council of Europe in 1993.²⁴ Economically, Romania also regained the Most Favored Nation status in 1993. Additionally, Romania sought to improve regional cooperation by focusing first on the Romanian-Hungarian relations. Political and security cooperation efforts thawed relations between those two countries and established a constructive partnership.²⁵

²³ Ibid., 563

²⁴ Ibid., 564

²⁵ Ibid., 566

Internally, political challenges and competition between former communists confused Western interpretation of Romanian politics. The first democratically elected president Ion Iliescu received 85% of the votes which proved to Western observers that after more than four decades of communism the electorate lacked the political culture to support competitive democracy.²⁶ The Romanian post-1989 political competition developed differently than in other former communist countries like Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria. Most Romanian politicians justified their communist participation before 1989 because of the coercive character of the Ceausescu's regime.²⁷ Consequently, in Romania it was difficult to identify the real ideologues and the West maintained the perception of massive communist presence in the political parties. The analysis in the West remained subjective as long as there was no independent database to evaluate the political development.

The Path for Reform 1993-1995

Following the model of Western democracies Romania adopted a new Constitution in 1992 and President Iliescu won the first free elections. In 1993, the NATO Council invited president Iliescu to address the forum. It was the first occasion when Romania officially declared its strong commitment to join NATO. Romania recognized that NATO was the only security architecture which could ensure its security and stability and promote democratic values in the region.²⁸ Despite internal political challengers to President Iliescu in November 1993, the Romanian political forum unequivocally supported the administration's effort to achieve NATO integration in the Snagov Declaration. All political agents reached a consensus supporting NATO integration as a key constant for Romanian security policy. Internally, there was a need for strong

²⁶ Ibid., 557

²⁷ Ibid., 559

²⁸ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 189

military reform measures because the military became the main component for pursuing integration. To support its political declarations Romania took several measures:²⁹

- Abolished the entire political communist control network within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and reorganize the strategic and operational command and control levels.
- Defined and implemented the civil democratic control over the military. General Nicolae Spiroiu, as Minister of Defense, appointed the first civilian as Deputy Director of the National Defense College and then the first civilian as Deputy Minister of Defense. In 1994, Gheorghe Tinca became the first civilian Minister of Defense.
- Educated politicians, parliamentarians, civilians, media senior representatives related to the new defense issues. Romania established the first postgraduate institution in Central and Eastern Europe to serve as a communication platform between the military issues and civil society representatives – the National Defense College.
- Reviewed the status and values of the military to mirror traditions and heritage. The Ministry of Defense changed the name of the institutions and military uniforms to eliminate any communist influence.
- Retired the military personnel who completed studies in Soviet Union and sought Western assistance for educating a new wave of professionals. Romanian officers and noncommissioned officers started to attend education in the U.S.A., Great Britain, Italy, Germany and Canada.
- Reintroduced religious services within the military system and human rights considerations.

In 1994, NATO instituted the Partnership for Peace to improve cooperation and to offer opportunities for non-member countries to contribute to security and stability initiatives.

Romania was the first country to sign the Partnership for Peace and recognized this as a reliable and necessary platform by which to reach membership. In September 1994, Romania participated for the first time in a Partnership for Peace Exercise organized in Poland. Subsequent Romanian major contributions to the Partnership for Peace led NATO to a better appreciation of the Romanian candidacy.

NATO considered Romania as a leading candidate for membership. Romanian polls revealed that more than 80 percent of the population supported the decision to seek NATO

²⁹ Liviu Muresan, “Defense Reform in Romania: An Ongoing Process” in *Post-Cold War Defense Reform*, ed. Istvan Gyarmati, Theodor Winkler, Marc Remillard and Scott Vesel (Brassey’s Inc, Washington, D.C., 2002), 309

integration.³⁰ The ratio remained almost the same even when the cost of integration and of implementing the initial military reform objectives reached \$4 billion. The Romanian commitment was so costly that skeptics within NATO doubted that the Romanian public understood the economic implications of the integration costs. The defense budget allocation remained at 2 percent of GDP until after 1996, an adequate allocation for a NATO member state.

However, Romania lost important financial resources through its participation in the 1991 Gulf War (just medical units) and its support of the EU embargo of Yugoslavia during the Bosnia conflict. Iraq owed Romania almost \$2 billion and participation in the embargo of former Yugoslavia produced another \$7 billion in financial losses.³¹ Despite the costs, Romania continued to seek membership and to support NATO's decisions because not to have done so would have made the integration goal unreachable. On the other hand, Romania's attitude made NATO members reconsider their policy towards Romanian membership.

Ready or not? 1995-2000

Arguably, during President Emil Constantinescu's administration, 1996 to 2000, the Romanian economy shrank. The decline in Romania's economic development stalled efforts toward integration into NATO. Romanian membership did not seem credible to NATO for several reasons. First, domestically, inexperience and corruption under the new Romanian coalition government, the Democratic Convention, produced a 25 percent economic decline compared to the previous years.³² The political coalition lacked the vital connection between declarations and actions. Additionally, refocusing the national policies on internal issues lowered the priority of NATO integration within the legislature. Next, President Constantinescu's

³⁰ Ioan Bolovan et al., *A HISTORY OF ROMANIA*, ed. Kurt W. Treptow, 3d ed. (Iasi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Foundation for Romanian Culture and Studies, 1997), 585

³¹ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 163

³² *Ibid.*, 164

promotion of a large number of senior active and reserve officers undermined military reform goals and shrank the already limited defense resources.³³ The government also reduced the defense budget to below 2 percent of the GDP. The reduction severely restricted participation in the NATO Partnership for Peace. These factors renewed NATO's skepticism toward Romania's candidacy.

NATO's decision to invite only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join the Alliance produced a certain degree of confusion within the Romanian political arena. It also spurred Romania to implement its reform programs. President Bill Clinton had to refocus Romanians during his visit in July 1997. Mr. Clinton emphasized that Romania remained a strong candidate for NATO admission and that the bilateral strategic partnership would be further enhanced. To prove it remained committed to NATO integration, Romania decided to close its airspace when Russia sought to project its forces to the Kosovo enclave. That decision counterbalanced the previous actions that had made Romania a less attractive candidate. However, following Romania's decision to support NATO during the intervention in Kosovo, Romanian public support for NATO fell below 60 percent because Romanians did not believe military action was an appropriate solution to the ethnic crisis.³⁴ The Partnership for Peace program remained a strong link for improving the capabilities of the aspirant countries but, in 1999, Romania dropped dramatically its defense resources to just 1.77% of GDP. The reduction in defense spending jeopardized the integration efforts and limited Romania's resources for achieving the Partnership for Peace interoperability goals.

NATO's summit in Washington in 1999 addressed the main tasks regarding security and defense collective efforts, crisis prevention, deterrence, management, and cooperation through partnerships. It also introduced the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) and the Membership Action Plan (MAP). The DCI addressed issues for better sharing security and defense within the

³³ Ibid., 164

³⁴ Ibid., 165

Alliance and the MAP became an assessment tool for evaluating candidates for admission. The MAP represented better means by which to measure the quality of an aspirant country's efforts because the decisions for the first wave of enlargement had been based more on political criteria than security needs and military capabilities.

Finally members 2000-2004

Most experts would argue that the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 represented a turning point in NATO's approach to admitting new members. While political decisions had determined which candidates should become members before the terrorist attacks, evaluation of the threat after September 2001 revealed the need for the Alliance to reconsider the process for reaching and implementing NATO decisions. The new emergent threats and the need to integrate candidates faster encouraged NATO to push its security umbrella over the remaining candidates in Eastern Europe. Known threats in Trans-Caucasus and Middle East changed the importance of the Black Sea basin and the national security interests of neighboring countries. Also, in response of the terrorist attacks NATO activated for the first time the collective-defense Article 5 and the Euro-Atlantic forum proved cohesive when it came to threats directed toward any of its members.

The period 1996-2000 was characterized by NATO'S doubts about Romania's willingness to implement the declared reform programs.³⁵ The December 2000 elections returned the Party of Social Democracy of Romania (PDSR) to governance. Provided a second constitutional mandate President Iliescu refocused on the goal of NATO and EU integration. The Romanian administration understood that the status of full member would further influence internal economic development and consequently produce a more reliable security environment.

³⁵ Ibid., 166

The PDSR programs improved Romania's economic performance and offered a strong argument that Romania had recommitted itself to reform programs. By announcing a goal of 4.1 percent GDP growth in 2001 and achieving 4.8 percent growth at the end of the first quarter of 2001 Romania forced NATO and EU experts to reconsider their pessimistic assessment of Romania's economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) improved Romania's credit rating, unemployment declined to 8.6 percent and inflation dropped by 11 percent in 2001 and by an additional 20 percent in 2002, falling to an annual rate of 20 percent.³⁶ These improvements in the economy allowed the Romanian government to recommit to the defense reforms and to support those reforms with adequate resources. Furthermore, the availability of needed financial resources improved Romania's candidacy.

The new Romanian Minister of Defense, Ioan Mircea Pascu revised the military reform programs to speed progress toward NATO integration objectives. American, British and German military advisers in the Romanian Ministry of Defense helped the MoD to define and implement better the action directives and objectives within the MAP framework. In January 2001, the Ministry of Defense inaugurated the new defense budgeting system based on the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System (PPBES).³⁷ The new Chief of the General Staff, general Mihail Popescu, noted that the aim was "to realize a robust, supple and flexible force, highly trained and with real deployment and sustainment capabilities, in order to respond to both national defense requirements and to participate in collective defense commitments based on the possible threats and material and financial available resources." The defense budget allocations increased from 2.57 percent of GDP in 2001 to 2.6 percent of GDP in 2002 and the government declared its strong commitment to maintain defense spending at 2.4 percent of the GDP during the 2003-2008 defense program. Properly managing Romanian defense resources depended also on establishing an appropriate size and design for the Romanian armed forces.

³⁶ Ibid., 166

³⁷ Ibid., 169

Romania needed to take the painful step of reducing the size of its armed forces to ensure adequate resources. In short, Romania's overall active military manpower fell from about 320,000 in 1989 to little more than 130,000 in 2002. The Program Force 2003 set the goal for the peacetime authorized strength at 140,000 while the Objective Force 2007 program projected further reduction to 90,000, a total reduction of 70 percent from the 1989 level.³⁸

Externally, Romania positioned itself as a de facto NATO member. The government was committed to regional stability and to participation in countering the emergent threats. Romania offered some of its military installations for use by NATO air and ground forces, supplemented its military stability forces in the Balkans and proved to be a reliable force contributor when it committed troops to Stability and Support Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2002, at the Prague NATO Summit Romania was invited to join NATO along with six other candidates: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Beside the invitations, the summit addressed the new NATO strategic concept which advocated projecting security and defense capabilities out of NATO's Cold War area. The Prague Summit also provided a better framework for integration than the 1997 DCI. The new program, the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), recognized the need for stronger national commitments and a capability-based approach for military forces rather than the rigid territorial defense architectures.

NATO's overall attitude toward Romania considered also the regional security situation and Romania's strategies to address regional and internal risks. Romania had to prove it could develop the policies, plans and capabilities to address any regional ethnic, social or territorial disputes.

Strategic and strategy considerations

The fall of communism affected the European security environment and forced NATO to revise its risk assessments for Southern and Eastern Europe. Consequently, Romania's strategic

³⁸ Ibid., 170

relevance became a critical factor in any decision to integrate Romania in NATO. Romania's population of over 22 millions lives in an area of over 238 square kilometers. As such, it is the second largest country between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea in terms of size, demography and economic output. Romania's control of the Danube river and the Black Sea area provides it considerable economic potential. Regional cooperation and Romania's relations with its neighbors had geopolitical implications and represented NATO integration concerns. Romania's integration in NATO would also provide capabilities needed to respond to ethnic and social crises on NATO's Southern flank. Additionally, some experts argued that the terrorist attacks in September 2001 led to a reevaluation of the Eastern European states' relevance in NATO. US operations against terrorism directed attention to an emergent relevance of the Black Sea and the Caucasus and Caspian basins. In that context Romania became a strong candidate for accession.³⁹

Romania's capability to control the Danube river and part of the Black Sea basin is economically significant. The Danube river is Romania's southern border with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The Danube Delta holds major shipping channels into the Black Sea. The river provides reliable commercial links for Western European countries because Romania is engaged in developing programs for the ports and facilities on the Black Sea shore. Russian economic interest in the Black Sea places Russia in competition for access to the Caucasus and Mediterranean Sea. Danube river shipping combined with the road and rail infrastructure would enable creation of free trade zones at ports like Constanta.⁴⁰ Romania has also initiated commercial shipping service between Constanta and the Georgian port Poti with further connections to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Additionally, there is interest in the Caspian oil exploitation because Romania benefits from the Constanta-Trieste pipeline which delivers 35

³⁹ Ibid., 189

⁴⁰ David Turnock, "Romania: Contemporary Geopolitical Perspectives" in *The Changing Geopolitics of Eastern Europe* ed. Andrew H. Dawson and Rick Fawn (Frank Cass, London, 2002), p. 130

million tons of Azerbaijani oil a year.⁴¹ If Romania obtains the projected economic benefits from trade along the Danube and Black Sea, the Romanian government would have significant additional resources needed to ameliorate social disparities and inequalities and attract foreign investment. Achieving economic stability enhances Romania's capability to project and protect security.

The regional stability and cooperation factors remain critical for the geostrategic perspective. The conflicts in former Yugoslavia and Transnistria exposed ethnic, religious and economic differences that affect the stability of the region. Moreover, separatist and transnational threats started to emanate from the former Soviet territory, the Middle East and Asia. These threats pose serious obstacles to NATO efforts to increase stability and cooperation in the area. The same threats provide Romania a good opportunity to increase its role in containing and defusing crisis areas. Within this context, Romania had to focus its foreign policy on addressing two dimensions: regional – relations with Russia, Hungary and Moldova – and internal – policies and measures for ethnical minorities.

Regionally, Romania's relationship with Moscow is critical. Ceausescu's independent foreign policy within the Warsaw Pact made dialogue between the Cold-War Soviet Union and Romania difficult. After 1989, Romania's commitment to join NATO and Russia's efforts to dominate Eastern Europe often proved antagonistic. Prior to 2001, a Romania-Russia treaty was impossible because Russian terms stated that neither side would enter into any alliance and no foreign troops that may pose threat to either party could be positioned in either country.⁴² These terms precluded NATO membership and Romania rejected them. However, Russia's successful cooperation with NATO during combined operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and the improved NATO-Russia relations following the attacks during September 2001 have led to

⁴¹ Ibid., 131

⁴² Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 182

reconciliation between Romania and Russia. Also, the Russian administration has admitted that NATO enlargement does not pose a threat to Russian interests. President Iliescu declared that “in order to think of today’s and tomorrow’s security, we must forget a great deal of yesterday’s security rules”; Thus, the two countries were able to sign a cooperation treaty in Moscow in July 2002.⁴³

There was also an ethnic dimension to the Romanian-Russian regional interests after 1989. Romania and Moldova shared a rich historical and cultural heritage and most of the Moldovan population sought reunification with Romania. Moldova, one of the former Soviet republics, declared independence in 1991 and reintroduced the Latin alphabet . However, the Romanian administration feared that unification would make the integration process more difficult because Moldova faced difficult political, economical and ethnic problems.⁴⁴ The conflict in Transnistria was a major security concern for Romania because it involved Russian regional interests. Russia fueled the grievances by providing continuous support to the Russian Fourteenth Army stationed in Transnistria despite the international community efforts to open a path for dialogue and to contain the armed conflict. Additionally, the Moldovan administration was antagonistic. When an anti-NATO Communist Party led by President Voronin returned to power in Moldova, Moldovan politics shifted to reintroducing Russian values, antidemocratic programs and rejection of a common heritage with Romania.⁴⁵ There was also no improvement in the economic situation. These changes in Moldova conflicted with Romania’s efforts to improve the situation in Moldova and Romania’s aspiration for Western integration. Romania had provided military assistance to the Moldovan Army in 1991-1992 and had kept the frontier open to Moldovan laborers. However, Transnistria constituted a serious threat because the forces

⁴³ Ibid., 183

⁴⁴ Ibid., 182

⁴⁵ Ibid., 184

there had strong connections to the arms, drug trafficking and organized crime.⁴⁶ Conscious of its future responsibilities within NATO, Romania had to develop programs for its Eastern border to counter smuggling, organized crime and prostitution networks.

Another relevant regional security issue was Hungarian-Romanian relation. Hungarian-Romanian relations had both regional and ethnic dimensions. Hungarian-Romanian relations were built primarily by dialogue. Historical tensions between Romania and Hungary revolved around the status of 1.6 million ethnic Hungarians living in Romania. Romania recognized that ethnic dialogue was an important ingredient for regional stability and had to encourage a majority-minority dialogue.⁴⁷ Both countries committed to reconciliation to prevent the emergence of an ethnic conflict urged on by extreme nationalists. Romania created the Council for National Minorities in 1993 and in 1996 Hungary and Romania signed the Basic Treaty 16 September 1996. The Basic Treaty was the first treaty in the modern history signed between the two nations without great power involvement.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Hungary became a full NATO member in 1997. Hungary's NATO membership strengthened the cooperation between the two countries and Romania asked Hungary to support Romania's quest for NATO membership. The Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania gained representation in the government and its party, the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania, has joined every governmental coalition since 1996. Additionally, the Law on Public Administration stipulated that in areas with a minority population greater than 20 percent the minority people may use its maternal language in the conduct of official business.⁴⁹ In June 2001 Hungary passed its Law on the Status of Hungarians Abroad. In response, the Romanian government sought the assistance of Western powers in

⁴⁶ Ibid., 185

⁴⁷ Ibid., 185

⁴⁸ Ioan Bolovan et al., *A HISTORY OF ROMANIA*, ed. Kurt W. Treptow, 3d ed. (Iasi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Foundation for Romanian Culture and Studies, 1997) 585

⁴⁹ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 186

arbitrating the impact of the law. The law asserted privileges and advantages for Hungarian minorities in countries neighboring Hungary. Romania arguing that the law could fuel revisionism and discrimination brought the issue to the European Union (EU) for debate.⁵⁰ The Venice Commission's resolution decided that Hungary ought to seek to improve the effect of the law by changes in the legislature and Romania and Hungary ought to cooperate to solve related issues. Again, both governments approached the debate through an open dialogue and bilateral amendments defused the conflict.⁵¹

Another issue used to evaluate Romania's capability to address ethnic issues and directly promote regional stability was the status of the Roma minority. Roma (gypsies) represent the second largest ethnic group in Romania with a census population of 400,000, although the unofficial total is close to one million. The majority of the Romanian population regard the Roma as the source of illegal and black market activities. Following some isolated examples of local violence against Roma, Romania approached the issue through an European institutional framework.⁵² Romania requested EU's assistance in developing a legal framework to address the Roma problem. Romania did so to prove it had adopted an European attitude toward solving ethnic minority problems. With external financial support Romania developed programs to improve the education and local status of this minority and prevented social-ethnic conflicts.

Lastly, Romania had to complement its regional cooperation and internal stability efforts with a feasible and sustainable military reform. Romania acknowledged that a robust military reform would boost its credibility when NATO considered its readiness for membership.

The military reform

NATO's transformation itself was decisive factor in the reform processes in the aspirant countries. The launching of the Partnership for Peace in 1994 and the MAP introduced in 1999 at

⁵⁰ Ibid., 187

⁵¹ Ibid., 186

⁵² Ibid., 187

the Washington Summit shaped the decisions and measures candidate countries implemented in reforming their respective military forces. NATO's Partnership Assess and Review Process (PARP) became one of the main Partnership for Peace tools designed to improve the interoperability of force contributors in combined operations. PARP included a series of Interoperability Objectives or Partnership Goals (PG) designed to provide standards for units participating in NATO/Partnership for Peace operations. However, the Partnership Assess and Review Process lacked the details needed to assess each aspirants' political, economic and social capabilities related to integration. The MAP became a real evaluation instrument after the first round of enlargement. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland received membership mostly because of political considerations. Their military capabilities and the relationships between the political, economic and social and the defense sector could not be evaluated properly. There was also a commonality between NATO and EU because efficient decisions for the defense sector depended on successful political, economic and social measures.

The Romanian army implemented reform measures as early as 1990 but the process recorded ups and downs whenever political decisions influenced the reform's level of efficiency. Between 70 percent and 85 percent of the Romanian population considered the army the second most trusted national institution, second only to the church. The army's reputation rose when it did not respond to Ceausescu's decision to repress the Revolution in December 1989.⁵³ Reforming the military was an essential condition for achieving compatibility and interoperability with NATO forces. Both important geopolitical and strategic changes and global and regional trends contributed to defining the reform objectives and direction. The ultimate goal was to set

⁵³ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 168

up a modern, modular, efficient and NATO compatible military force. To achieve this military reform, Romania focused on several dimensions:⁵⁴

- A new force structure appropriate for the security requirements and the status of NATO member.
 - Reorganization of the Ministry of Defense to focus decision making on integration and restructuring goals.
 - Improved resource allocation and management through the PPBES.
 - Institution of a reliable personnel management system to address better the care needed by soldiers separated from service and resources needed for training and modernization.
 - Reassessment of the major acquisition programs to eliminate unneeded systems and to provide relevant capabilities for Romanian forces in partnership with NATO.
- Between 1990 and 1993, military reform focused on the rapid reduction of military

structure, development of a new legal framework to support the new structure and the initial phases of modernization and acquisition programs. The second phase, between 1994 and 1996, began when Romania became the first country to sign the NATO's Partnership for Peace program. This marked the first cycle of the PARP and Romania adopted 19 PGs with which to begin the interoperability process. The third phase, between 1997 and 1999, introduced the Intensified Partnership Concept at the Madrid Summit and marked the second PARP cycle. Romania adopted 84 PGs. By the end of 2000, it was clear that there was a major discrepancy between the Partnership for Peace commitments and Romanian internal realities and resources. The strategic arguments for Romania's integration were less convincing when Romania's defense spending declined. Nevertheless, Romania committed more resources to participation in NATO and PfP activities which meant internal military reform measures lacked adequate resources. Consequently the military reform stagnated. Of the 84 assumed PGs, Romania partially implemented two. Both NATO and Romanian military analysts suggested that military reforms were 14 months behind.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Romania's military reform*. November 2003. Internet, <http://www.mapn.ro/desprenato/index.htm>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The second Iliescu administration and the decisive efforts by the new Minister of Defense, Ioan Mircea Pascu, refocused military reforms on attaining the goal of NATO integration. In 2002, at the Prague Summit, NATO invited Romania to join the Alliance. This was a significant achievement even though Romania continued to make progress toward fundamental reform and restructuring process. Continuing previous force reduction plans, Romania adopted the Objective Force 2007 program which focused on improving interoperability and combat effectiveness for forces offered to NATO operations. Also, the military reform directed modernization and training efforts to the force package offered to the Alliance. NATO called on all its members to consider the non-deployable forces as resource consumers. Romania noted the guidance and reviewed the internal unit structure to offer some financial headroom to improve the capabilities for the forces nominated to participate in NATO-led operations.⁵⁶

Command and control architecture down to the battalion level mirrored NATO's modular unit and headquarters organization. All NATO-led operations nominated forces received interoperable communication equipment and some deployable units had integrated Communication and Information Systems (CIS). Deployability and mobility capabilities improved with acquisition of some military strategic transportation aircraft. Additionally, commercial civilian contracts with the Minister of Defense addressed force deployment for the deployable force package offered to NATO-led operations.

Combat effectiveness was improved through implementation of NATO training standards for the nominated deployable units and by giving priority to those units for modernization. The operational field training days, flying hours and days at sea were increased to reach NATO standards. The Romanian Army reached and maintained over 45 days of field training annually and devoted proper resources to its deployable units.⁵⁷ The major modernization programs for the Romanian Army included the main battle TR-85 M1, the improved Infantry Fighting Vehicle

⁵⁶ *Romania's process for NATO membership*. March 2004. Internet, <http://www.mapn.ro/pfp.php>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

MLI-89, the MLRS system APRA-40 LAROM, the German GEPARD ADA system and some UAV capabilities. Although the Romanian Army faced challenges coping with some excess equipment, the Romanian Navy acquired two refurbished frigates from the United Kingdom to improve its capabilities in the Black Sea basin. Romania agreed to pay for the frigates and the British government declared that it will seek ways to reinvest those funds in the Romanian Defense Industry. The Romanian Air Force continued to modernize its MIG-21 LANCER and to improve flying standards, reaching 150 flying hours annually for pilots nominated to participate in NATO-led operations. The MIG-29 airplane was too expensive for the modernization program and did not meet NATO standards and thus was dropped. Additionally, the Romanian Air Force modernized 25 IAR-PUMA helicopters by installing the SOCAT system to meet NATO interoperability standards.⁵⁸

Improvement in logistic support capabilities also concentrated on sustaining the deployable force package. A Joint Logistics Command will manage the non-organic logistics support elements for the deployable force package. Acquisition of a containerized military hospital will further improve the medical capabilities. Logistics personnel train by NATO standards and procedures and can contribute to NATO 's Multinational Integrated Logistics Units (MILU). Host Nation Support (HNS) has improved and NATO has received details related to Romania's HNS capabilities and installations. At the national level, Romania set up an integrated Movement Control Center (MCC). NATO has also evaluated possible Sea/Air Ports of Debarkation/Embarkation within Romania.

The size of Romanian army has been significantly reduced since 1989. Active military and civilians numbered 320,000 in 1990 and will decline to 90,000 in 2007.⁵⁹ This severe reduction was accompanied by adjustments to the personnel structure. First, the officer to NCO ratio has shifted from three to one after 1990 to a projected one to 2.4 in 2005. Second, there is a

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Romania's process for NATO membership*. March 2004. Internet, <http://www.mapn.ro/pfp.php>

serious effort to rethink the officer pyramid. In 2001, more than 4,100 officers became redundant and additional 2,300 were scheduled to exit the system in 2002. General officer positions decreased from over 450 in 2000 to 90 by the end of 2002.⁶⁰ Additionally, the Objective Force 2007 will have only professional military personnel because Romania has chosen to review its Constitution and eliminate conscription by 2007.

The missing evaluation tool – the Membership Action Plan

NATO Summit in 1999 launched the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to provide a more efficient process for evaluating candidates' policies and capabilities. The forum took place in Washington and introduced MAP to support the overall goal of the integration process. NATO had recognized the deficiencies in its evaluation of the candidates after the Madrid Summit. During the first wave of NATO enlargement, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, NATO lacked an adequate instrument for preparing each candidate's military sector for reform and integration. MAP offered a list with the action domains so each candidate could develop its own compliance plan. Romania prepared the National Plan for NATO Adherence (PNA) addressing a series of feasible and sustainable objectives for NATO integration.

MAP further developed the DCI on issues related to obtaining full member status and identified in detail the military reforms needed to achieve the initial goal of Romanian interoperability with NATO forces. The action domains provided by MAP guaranteed the credibility of the enlargement process, quantified the performance and evaluated the planning and management capabilities of Romania's military forces.⁶¹ Furthermore, MAP added additional dimensions to the NATO PARP. While PARP was designed to provide NATO an instrument for assessing Romania's military interoperability with NATO forces, MAP elaborated related

⁶⁰ Larry L. Watts, "Romania and NATO: The National-Regional Security Nexus," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security* ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 170

⁶¹ Dorel Pietroreanu, "De la Washington la Istanbul, via Praga." *Gandirea Militara Romaneasca* 2 (May 2004) : 172

requirements for political, economic and social reform. The MAP provided also a framework for recording the progress in Romania's reforms and for identifying the additional support NATO could provide to help overcome reform difficulties.

MAP included a political consultation framework to ensure Romania's political process remained committed to the military reform. NATO's Steering Permanent Committee (SPC) conducted annual sessions with Romania's senior representatives on the progress of the assumed PNA objectives and the readiness status of NATO integration. MAP contained five chapters setting standards to be considered when evaluating each candidate: political, economic and social domain, defense and military, resources domain, information security and legal domain. Each area introduced objectives for which candidates had to develop implementation plans. SPC-candidate sessions provided NATO feedback on the implementation status of each objective.

Romania assigned coordinating responsibility for each of the five chapters to departments of the government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) managed the political, economic and social domain. MFA developed the policies and measures to evaluate the status of Romania's economy, social quality and political programs. The second chapter fell under the coordination of Ministry of Defense (MoD) and addressed the restructuring of Romania's Armed Forces and the implementation status of NATO military standards and objectives. The Ministry of Public Finance (MPF) became responsible for the resource domain and developed plans to ensure the proper allocation of resources for implementing NATO objectives. In the domain of information security the Romanian Intelligence Service (RIS) received coordination authority to ensure proper management of NATO classified information. The last domain, addressing legal aspects, referred to adjustments in the legislative framework to allow Romania to participate in NATO collective defense. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) held the coordinating responsibility and provided plans and measures including proposals for reviewing the Constitution.

Within MAP, Romania based its PNA on the following core principles:

- Continuity (respect the preceding commitments and continue to consolidate the accomplishments from one cycle to another);
- Credibility (select the objectives and ensure the political commitment for allocating adequate resources for implementing these);
- Predictability (develop the capability for realistic planning and respect the plan for implementing each objective).⁶²

Romania developed and implemented five PNA cycles within MAP between 1999 and 2004. The last one marked the transition from a candidate country to a NATO member and ended the MAP. Romania had to ensure the successful implementation of MAP to develop internal organizations with the expertise required to efficiently participate within the NATO political and military processes after accession. For what most NATO experts call the “most relevant MAP domain”, the military domain, Romania’s MoD had to shape its taxonomy to respond to MAP dynamics.

The second MAP domain’s actors and process

Coordinating the second MAP chapter, the Romanian MoD based its policies and plans on the following principles:

- Continue irreversibly the military reform and prevent latency of the overall process;
- Select priorities based on the required NATO interoperability objectives;
- Improve the defense planning system;
- Ensure correlation while implementing PNA objectives and NATO PGs.

However, Romania faced challenges in implementing the MAP during its early stages. NATO representatives provided the needed expertise related to defense and military issues during NATO-Romania MAP sessions. The process evaluated the progress of the military reform and provided a prospectus for Romania’s military forces especially those offered for NATO missions. On the other hand, the bilateral forum also helped identify deficiencies in Romania’s plans and policies. After 2000, the main gaps were:

⁶² Ibid., 174

- The military reform faced slow progress and stagnation due to a precarious management of resources;
- Despite the declared objectives of restructuring and force reduction, over 60% of the defense budget remained allocated to personnel costs and redundant acquisition programs with insufficient funds dedicated for training;
- Romanian MoD had no priorities for selecting only the PfP activities related to the military reform; in fact, in most NATO/PfP activities before 2000, Romania focused more on quantity than quality;
- Romania implemented too few PNA objectives in the first MAP cycle and this influenced negatively the overall interoperability with NATO forces.⁶³

To improve the efficiency in implementing the PNA objectives, the Romanian MoD established new internal structures.⁶⁴ The Defense Planning Council (DPC) became the supreme authority for decision making and coordinating MAP's second chapter issues. The DPC also issued the Defense Planning Guidance (DPG). The chairman of the DPC became the Minister of Defense. The Reform and NATO Integration Council (RNIC) was responsible for developing the detailed plans for implementing each PNA objective and was headed by the State Secretary for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Defense Policy. The Reform and NATO Integration Subcommittee (RNIS) represented the linkage between the political and the military. The Chief of General Staff chaired the RNIS and was the coordinating authority for each service. The Interoperability and Standardization Council (ISC) developed detailed plans for implementing the PGs and ensured the proper evaluation of needed resources. Externally, the Romanian Mission to NATO, through its Military Representation of the General Staff, managed the NATO coordination measures and Romania's MoD feedback flow. To manage resources properly, MoD also created the Integrated Defense Planning Directorate (IDPD). The DPG and the PPBS assisted the IDPD in correlating and allocating resources for each PNA objective.

Absent clear priorities, the Romanian MoD needed to establish a series of feasible PNA objectives for implementation. NATO suggested that the selection process was critical to the success of the military reform. The risk was that the available resources could not support the

⁶³ Ibid., 176

⁶⁴ Ibid., 177

cost of implementing multiple PNA objectives and the military reform would stagnate. The selection criteria depended on the priorities the Romanian MoD developed. Hence, the Romanian MoD established the following priority domains after the second MAP cycle:

- Force restructuring and improvement of operational readiness of the forces nominated for NATO/PfP missions;
- Airspace management and air defense;
- Human resource management;
- Personnel training and education;
- Fight against terrorism and related capabilities;
- Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) capabilities;
- Interoperability with NATO forces through implementation of PGs;
- Host Nation Support capabilities;
- Logistics capabilities and sustainment of the Romanian deployable forces;
- Participation in NATO-led peace support operations;
- Participate in regional security initiatives through forces capable to integrate in multinational units.

The first and second MAP cycles provided the Romanian MoD with critical lessons learned for improving the tempo and quality of the military reform. At the same time, NATO improved its guidance and evaluation policies because the MAP still represented a pioneering tool for evaluating each candidate. The policy and organizational measures taken by the Romanian MoD, produced more progress than had occurred during the previous three MAP cycles.

The 3d and 4th MAP cycles 2001-2003

The MAP formula continued to be the key instrument for reform and it remained a fundamental planning tool in Romania's reform and restructuring process. The following sections focus on the achievements of the 3d cycle and set out the objectives for the 4th cycle. The Armed Forces concentrated on increasing Romania's level of interoperability to effectively participate

alongside NATO forces in peace support operations, and in the international campaign against terrorism.

The 3d MAP cycle was particularly important for establishing a qualitative approach focused on capabilities. During the 3d MAP cycle, Romania continued to pursue military reform and the restructuring of its Armed Forces. A holistic review of the armed forces was launched, taking into account the new strategic environment and the fight against terrorism. The goal was to build a flexible structure that meets national defense and NATO requirements using smaller, better-trained, better-equipped and more mobile forces. This review envisaged a gradual reduction in force size to reach by 2007 a final structure of 75,000 military personnel and 15,000 civilians.⁶⁵

The most significant objectives included the following:

- Disestablish more than 100 units, restructure other 300 and make operational two brigades (to be continued during the 4th MAP cycle), the Main Operational Air Centre, one air base and one ship squadron.
- Maintain and increase the interoperability level of the forces nominated for NATO.
- Increase participation with more than 100% in KFOR and SFOR, and participate in ISAF and Enduring Freedom Operation providing more than 450 troops.
- Improve the officers/NCOs ratio from 1/1.14 to 1/1.23 by further reducing the number of senior officers and training NCOs.
- Improve the air space management by continuing the implementation of the Air Surveillance Operational Centre (ASOC).
- Acquire modern NATO compatible communication radios for units earmarked for NATO-led operations, and continue the implementation of the Romanian Armed Forces Communication System (STAR).

The 4th MAP cycle continued to devote resources to the priority areas identified in the 3d MAP cycle. Additionally, Romania assumed new PGs which focused on ensuring that the Romanian deployable forces are fully able and ready to assume the responsibilities and accomplish the tasks associated with Alliance membership. Areas of particular importance were: force restructuring and operational readiness, increasing the interoperability with NATO, human

⁶⁵ *Romania's process for NATO membership*. March 2004. Internet, <http://www.mapn.ro/nato.php>

resources management, air space management and air defense, participation in NATO-led operations and multinational formations. Other PGs focused in areas that address especially the development of some new capabilities in line with the new security requirements following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, such as: HNS, personnel training, counter-terror operations capabilities related to counter-terrorism, NBC defense capabilities, logistics and force sustainability in the theatre. For both MAP cycles, proper budget allocations remained critical to the success of the reforms. A defense budget profile reflecting 2.38% of GDP was established for 2002.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the defense budget allocations remained at this level in 2003 and 2004.

The 5th MAP cycle 2003-2004

The process of military reform and restructuring has steadily advanced, following the objectives set in the 4th MAP cycle and those included in the Timetable for Completion of Reforms. The process of restructuring and making forces operational continued. By September 2003, the personnel strength was reduced to 116,873, while the ratio of officers/NCOs improved from 1/1.23 at the beginning of the 5th MAP cycle to 1/1.37.⁶⁷ As provided for in the Timetable for Completion of Reform, a six-phase Strategic Defense Review (SDR) was launched to validate the Objective Force 2007 plans. The review was completed by the end of 2003 and the new force structure will be in place by the end of 2007. The new force structure will be more flexible and effective. It will provide more deployable and sustainable forces and Romania will be able to contribute to the full range of NATO missions.

Special focus was given to improving the interoperability of the Romanian forces participating in NATO or coalition-led operations. Romania continued its participation in NATO-led operations (SFOR, KFOR) as well as in other peace support and anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The personnel deployed and sustained abroad in peace

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

support operations exceeded the number planned for 2003 (planned - 1,200: currently in the theatre or to be soon deployed-over 1,800 troops).

Romania has also made progress in implementing its Host Nation Support (HNS) objectives, as well as in integrating its air space into the NATO air space control system. Personnel training focused on English language and NATO staff procedures. More than 1,000 officers, NCOs and civilians have attended the basic English course and over 200 personnel having attended the advanced English course. The language training capacity increased from 600 personnel/year in 2002 to 1,200 in 2003, and now consists of 4 main and 14 secondary language centers. Priority continues to be given to the NCO's training. 1,799 NCOs have already completed the basic NCO course.

In terms of capabilities, special attention was given to NBC defense capabilities. A new NBC defense concept and doctrine, reflecting NATO standards and procedures, has been completed and is pending approval.

The priority areas for the 5th MAP cycle are consistent with the June 2003 NATO Council Defense Ministerial decisions and guidance. The objectives are also correlated with the Timetable for Completion of Reform and the implementation of the long-term Armed Forces Restructuring Plan. The 5th MAP cycle focused on the following key areas: interoperability, by continued participation in military operations (Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq); force readiness by completing our force restructuring and assimilating the NATO Force Goals' requirements; and effective participation in the NATO defense planning process. Also, the Draft Strategic Commanders' 2004 Force Proposals have been discussed with the NATO Allied Command for Transformation, the International Staff and the International Military Staff. The NATO Force Proposals provide additional guidance for force restructuring and modernization and will, as NATO Force Goals, play an important role in Romania's future reform and restructuring process.

Romanian political and public support for the reform agenda remains high and the Romanian government is committed to ensuring the best conditions for completion of reform

program. To ensure efficient continuation of the defense reform, the level of defense budget will remain at 2.38% of GDP from 2004 to 2007.⁶⁸

The 5th MAP cycle marks Romania's transition from a NATO partner country to a full NATO member. This last cycle concludes the Membership Action Plan but introduces Romania to NATO's full political and military decision making forum. However, the emergent security environment poses new challenges to Romania after becoming NATO member.

Conclusion

Romania's future security status will still depend on the three relevant dimensions: NATO's enlargement approach, Romania's future relations with the West, especially with the U.S., and Romania's future military transformation.

First, NATO's future enlargement will continue to be decisive for Romania's foreign policy decisions. However, some experts have argued that future NATO enlargement to include Ukraine, Croatia and Albania would make NATO's decision making process more difficult. The premise is that as the number of NATO members increases the more difficult building a consensus will become. Furthermore, NATO will face a variety of different security arrangements and requirements owing to each member's security interests. President Basescu has declared that Romania will seek a stronger security role in the Black Sea basin and will focus its foreign policy primarily on a "Washington-London-Bucharest axis." At the same time, Eastern European NATO members provide better proximity to the possible conflict areas in Asia and the Middle East. The U.S. has already decided to reposition its forces from Central Europe toward Eastern Europe to become more efficient in the fight against terrorism. Additionally, NATO has recognized that Eastern European members have recorded better progress in developing new deployment capabilities than some of the Western Europe NATO members. On the other hand,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Eastern European members should maintain positive economic growth to be able to allocate adequate defense resources.

Next, Romania's relationship with the West will be influenced by two factors: Romania's integration in the European Union and Romania's future enhancement of the strategic partnership with the U.S. Greater integration in the European Union will improve economic cooperation with the West and will attract foreign investments needed to develop the Romanian economy. That would ensure constant economic growth and the resources required to support Romania's security strategy. Similarly, improvements in a U.S.-Romanian strategic partnership would enhance the pro-U.S. group within NATO and foster Romanian support for American initiatives. Also, an enhanced bilateral strategic partnership could exploit Romania's offer to host U.S. troops on its territory. This presence would allow Romania to improve its training standards and combat readiness of its deployable units.

Lastly, Romania will have to continue its military reform. Romania focused primarily on the personnel reform until 2004. The Romanian MoD has developed an effective human resource management system and seeks to eliminate conscription by 2007. However, by 2008, Romania will have to identify new acquisition programs to enhance its military capabilities. In priority, Romania needs to develop the operational requirements for a new multi-role aircraft because the current version of Mig-21 Lancer will consume Romania's operational resources if not replaced. Second, the Romanian Navy will have to fully integrate its frigates to be able to contribute to the security of the Black Sea Basin. Consequently, the challenges Romania faced during the five MAP's, namely, providing the resources to achieve the required military capabilities related to Romania's security goals will remain. Fortunately, Romania's dedicated commitment to achieving those goals during the past decade is not likely to wane.

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