



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# The Evolution of the National Security Concept in Romania in the Euro-Atlantic Environment

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### Abstract

The present article aims to provide a distinct approach of the concept of national security in Romania, since the term has been used with an increasing frequency after the communist regime was abolished in December 1989. From the structural point of view, the study follows the classic pattern of reviewing the previous research reports within the field, in order to analyze the available data corpus and establish useful connections in anticipating the new security challenges. Thus, our main purpose is to contribute to the understanding of the national security's evolution in our country, relying on both the development of intelligence and security culture and on the attempt of predicting the future risks and threats. Using the scenario method as the main research methodology, the current paper emphasizes the fundamental transformations that have taken place within the Romanian intelligence, the improvement of the national defense strategies, the high level of adaptability and the recently adopted transparency policy, in order to establish three possible scenarios. Moreover, it outlines the main improvements that have occurred during the last 30 years, in terms of the Romanian diplomatic relations and geopolitical status, considering its integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in 2004 and European Union, in 2007. Consequently, the reader would be able to understand the main concepts associated to the national security, intelligence and security culture, while learning which are the main security risks and threats, as well as the legal framework in force and national defense strategies. In other words, one would comprehend the fact that, nowadays, in order to guarantee a stable environment from the economic, political and social point of view, the Romanian Intelligence Service founds its activity on protecting the democratic values, respecting human rights and ensuring the rule of law, each of us being able to support its activity towards a common goal: national security.

**Keywords:** *national security; diplomacy; intelligence; security culture; cooperation.*

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### Introduction

Since the outburst of the 1989 revolution, Romania came to know an entirely different perspective, in terms of the methods used in order to maintain a secure environment of its people. From the historical, political and social point of view, the fall of the communist regime represented the end of an era characterized by terror, oppression and constant atrocities committed by the ruling political party, but, at the same time, a new beginning for the Romanian politics' representatives, who have written our recent history through the decisions they made and the strategies that they implemented. Thus, for Romania, the informational era associated with the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century represented a multitude of new opportunities and development directions, in close connection with the emergence of several unfamiliar risks and threats.

In order to genuinely understand the transformations which have taken place since the removal of the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu from our country's leadership, the reader has to be firstly aware of the actual meaning of a few essential concepts, such as: national security, security culture, intelligence and intelligence services, opportunities, vulnerabilities, risks and threats, national defence strategy or intelligence strategy.

Despite the fact that, throughout the history, one country's ability to assure its integrity, security and independence was mainly perceived as its capability to efficiently react against any military threats, in order to defend its people's freedom and rights, after learning the continuous evolutions of the geopolitical context, the researchers have given a much more complex significance to the concept itself. Accordingly, nowadays when talking about the defense capability of a country, we are actually talking about the specific procedures that are used by the responsible authorities in order to achieve and maintain the state of national security. Being a complex process, the achievement of the state of national security can be defined, in short, as the the whole assembly of the means and measures that the institutions in charge use with the aim of preventing and counteracting not only the military, but also the economic, political, cyber or hibryd, internal or external threats, approached either individually or partially combined.

At the present day, in Romania, the National Defense Strategy of the Country represents the main official document to specify the applicable mechanisms for realizing and protecting the national security status. The program is based on the existence of the constitutional democracy and the mutual respect relationships established between the State and its people (Presidential administration, 2015:5). Also, the strategic document is characterized by a multidimensional and holistic approach, aiming to reach the common objective of ensuring the state of equilibrium within areas such as defense, public order, intelligence, counterintelligence and security, education, health, economy, energy, finance, environment or critical infrastructure. Since, in order to reach such a complex goal, the authorities must collaborate, the specific means and methods involve the participation of all the above-mentioned activity sectors' representatives, backed by the diplomatic relationships and the crisis management principles.

Besides a whole new range of advantages and opportunities, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century also brought along quite many unfamiliar challenges in regard to the risks and threats in terms of national security. Therefore, the *actors* responsible for their prevention and counteraction were forced to adapt to the new realities. Nowadays, in accordance to the legal framework in force, the main institutions responsible for realizing and preserving the state of national security in Romania are the intelligence services and the specialized internal structures of the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of

Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, their activity being organized and coordinated by the Supreme Council of National Defense.

During the last thirty years, the majority of the research studies conducted on this subject revealed the fact that the intelligence services have experienced certain transformation phases, in order to overcome the emerged challenges. The Romanian Intelligence Service, for instance, switched its paradigm from the *need to know* to the *need to share* pattern (Coldea, 2016). Its first approach towards the data's usage might have been based on the classical belief that the right piece of information known by the right person, at the right place and at the right time would guarantee its optimum management and results. But, did this stipulated *path* really lead to the best potential outcomes? Since they have recently changed the working pattern, it seems it did not.

Under the given circumstances, the current article aims to conduct a detailed research in terms of the evolution of the concept of national security in Romania, as a democratic country, within the Euro-Atlantic environment. Thus, establishing the emergence time of the term and emphasizing the key-moments of our country's development as a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, later on, of the European Union, the author tries to answer to some of the most frequently asked questions in regard to the national security issues.

After consulting a wide proportion of the research works that have been conducted during the last 30 years on this subject, as well as the legal framework in force and the official specific documents, we will use of the scenario method in order to both understand the fundamental concepts and to try to predict the future changes and challenges in terms of national security. Will the responsible authorities be able to predict the potential challenges with plenty of time ahead, so that the Romanian citizens would not be exposed to the materialization of any major risks? Which ones could be the future threats that we must focus on at most? How *blind* should our confidence be and how much can we expect from the intelligence representatives?

### 1. Literature review

In Romania, the concept of national security was comprehensively defined for the first time within the law No. 51/29.07.1991, which describes it as the condition of legality, equity, social, economic and political stability. Accordingly, these are the essential factors to guarantee the existence and development of the Romanian national state as a sovereign, unitary, independent and indivisible state, as well as the maintenance of the rule of law and a climate of unrestricted exercise of the fundamental rights, freedoms and duties of citizens, according to the democratic principles and norms established through the Constitution. The stated legal framework in force stipulates the fact that the state of national security in Romania is achieved through the means of identifying, preventing and eliminating any of the internal or external threats that could bring any harm to the national values or interests of our country. Moreover, the Romanian citizens have the moral duty of contributing to the process of attaining the national security, as an expression of their loyalty towards our country (Law no. 51, 1991).

The main internal and external risks and threats to the Romanian national security were established within the same law, and, later, completed by the Law no. 14/24.02.1992 regarding the activity and organization of the Romanian Intelligence Service. In accordance with the legal framework and the National Defense Strategy of the Country, among the internal threats that could have significant repercussions on

Romania's state of equilibrium, were listed the following: the plans and actions aimed at suppressing or undermining Romania's sovereignty, unity, independence or indivisibility, the incitement of war or civil war, the support of a foreign military occupation, the betrayal by cooperating with the enemy or the armed actions / any other violent actions aimed at weakening the state power.

As respects the external challenges, the authorities noted the espionage, transmission of state secrets, documents or data to foreign organizations or their agents, sabotaging or any other actions that can threaten the life, physical integrity or health of the persons who have important responsibilities towards the state or initiating, organizing, committing / supporting in any way totalitarian or extremist actions. Nevertheless, there were added the terrorist acts, as well as the initiation or any kind of activities aiming to commit such acts or attacks on a community, the theft or smuggling of weapons, ammunition, explosive or radioactive, toxic or biological materials, their production, possession, alienation, transport or use in conditions other than those provided by law.

Aiming to fully meet their objectives, the Romanian intelligence services became aware of the fact that since 1991 a lot of things have changed, especially the challenges that they had to face and overcome, by embracing the right approach and using the most appropriate means and methods. Beyond the fact that the number of the newly identified transformations kept growing, they have also developed into more complex ones. Therefore, in addition to keeping under control the risks and threats that they were familiar with in the nineties, the authorities had to adapt and develop new strategies to surpass the contemporary ones and also to try to predict any possible dangers which could bring any harm to the state of national security.

Therefore, in regard to Romania and its post communism evolution, besides a multitude of development benefits and opportunities, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has also been characterized by a completely different perspective in regard to the security risks and threats. Under the given circumstances, after 1989, the newly established Romanian Intelligence Service (March, 26, 1990) has started to increasingly adopt the American model, to the detriment of the Soviet one, which had been previously followed with a remarkable strictness.

The decision to change its allies represented a great challenge for both Romania, as a democratic state, and its people (simple citizens, entrepreneurs, politicians, diplomats, military, international organizations or businesses), not only from the economic, financial or political point of view, but also in terms of its ability to ensure the protection against the newly emerged dangers, out of which some proved to be inherent even for the most developed countries. The *echo* and significance of the terrorist attack from 9/11, when two hijacked airplanes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, in New York and a third one hit the Pentagon (Onion, Sullivan and Mullen, 2010) represents one of the strongest arguments of this statement. In opposition with the plain and short name which defines it within the world's recent history, the so-called suicide bombing led to dramatic and unforgettable consequences that completely terrified dozens of states and shook the whole globe from the grounds.

Thus, even for this only reason alone, one can easily ascertain the fact that September, 11, 2001 definitely represented the moment when the American secret services realized how important the data and information and its appropriate usage was. Under the given circumstances, they also became aware of the benefits of the civic and security culture's development on the safety of the local community and, further on, on

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the security environment. For sure, there were not only the Americans the ones who understood the huge significance of these elements, but the whole world, through every single nation who realized the fact that a similar disaster could be, one day, theirs. Therefore, in our opinion, the above mentioned incident answered at least three questions, that is to say: when, why and how the concepts of intelligence and security culture were born.

Similar to the development stages which were experienced within the pioneer states, in Romania, the emergence and evolution of the concept of national security was fundamentally based on the progress of the intelligence and the expansion of the security culture. At first, the concept of *intelligence* was defined as one's ability to learn and to think, completed by the process of putting all the known pieces of information together, as in the technique of building a puzzle for getting the big picture. Subsequently, the meaning of the term became that of the whole assembly of data and information classified as *secret*, respectively of the secret services' workers who carried out specific activities in order to reach the established tactical or strategic objectives. Some of the experts within this field believe that *intelligence* can be also understood as the information processing with the purpose of obtaining an informational product or even the final informational product itself.

Tănase (2009) considers that *intelligence* represents a complex concept, since it can be perceived from at least three perspectives, that is to say: as a process, whole organization with everything that it implies or as simply an informational product. As a process, the intelligence brings together the operations of collecting, filtering and analyzing the relevant data and information so that to disseminate value-added intelligence products which should meet the needs of a specific consumer. As an organization, it refers to all the structures, units and agencies which are responsible for implementing the above mentioned processes and developing the final informational product. And last, but not least, as a product, intelligence represents the outcome of the procedures and entities involved in collecting, selecting, evaluating, analysing, integrating and interpreting the pieces of information (either secret or originating from open sources), for providing the political or military leaders with needed the information in order to make decisions of national interest.

The intelligence process is considered to have two different components, being analyzed from the strategic or operational point of view. Strategically speaking, its main role is to support the legal beneficiaries in defining the national policy, taking decisions on the long-run or carrying out forecasts and analytical studies. On the other hand, the operational component represents the process of continuous and immediate information of the political or military leaders, through the means of the newsletters or short-term analysis reports.

In NATO terminology, intelligence is defined as „the final product derived from surveillance and reconnaissance, fused with other information” (NATO, 2018), more precisely the outcome of processing the information regarding hostile or potentially hostile nations, forces, elements or regions where operations take place or may take place. Yet, according to the provisions of the National Doctrine of Security Information, the informational product is still defined as the result of the security information processing carried out by specialized analytical structures and finally materialized and individualized within specific documents which are put at the disposal of the decision-makers established by law (The Supreme Council of National Defense, 2004).

The latter basic pillar of the process of maintaining the national security, namely the security culture can be defined as the volume of knowledge related to a state's security issues and the active involvement of the society in solving them, by supporting the actions of preventing and counteracting the risks and threats to the national security. Giorgi and Raicu (2017) consider that the security culture is founded on a cognitive approach, actually representing an „assembly of information, attitudes, beliefs and values through which the individual relates to the political, military and economic system that characterizes society.” Moreover, they suggest the fact that the security culture within a society oughts to be a moral, educational and formative landmark, as well as an example of civic conduct.

Calangea (2017) believes that intelligence activity needs to be tailored in order to cope with and, in particular, prevent the newly emerged challenges through the means of the early warning technique on the long run. Since security represents an asset that all the nations should benefit from, the analyst claims that „developing a strong security culture among the civil society and political decision-makers alike and by increasing transparency within the national security realm” could be the key to achieve the major common goal.

Further on, in order to fully comprehend the dramatic changes which have taken place in terms of the challenges that the intelligence services decision-makers have to come up against nowadays, let's simply consider the amplitude of the impact and probability which were/ are connected to the occurrence of a cyber-attack, then and now. Since the bases of the Internet as we all know it today were established only in the late eighties, it is quite easy to imagine that, in the following (at least) 10 years, the likelihood of a cyber-attack to take place was very little. Of course, on the other hand, its impact could have been huge. And so it proved to be. According to the history of cyber-attacks (Rog and Condrut, 2019), the very first such case was registered in 1988, in the United States of America, when the so-called Morris worm reached its objective and attacked almost 6000 systems (representing approximately 10% of the total number of the computers connected to the internet). That was the first malware application which successfully carried out a Denial-of-Service (DoS) attack and it caused the complete shutdown of the entire global Internet network for several days in order to be neutralized.

Following the chronological axis of the subsequent cyber-attacks, the NATO Review magazine places the earliest event of this kind within the European borders, in April 2007, in Estonia. At that time, the Estonian government networks “were harassed by a denial of service attack by unknown intruders, following the country's spat with Russia over the removal of a war memorial”, which had as immediate repercussions the temporary disruption of the government online services, as well as the interruption of the online banking services, both of the mentioned dysfunctions being resolved efficiently over the next few days. In the years to come, this recently emerged type of threat started to become more and more persistent at a global level and has developed to such a high degree, one of the members of the US Secretary of Defense emphasizing the fact that nowadays “a cyber-attack perpetrated by nation states or violent extremists groups could be as destructive as the terrorist attack on 9/11”.

In these circumstances, on 23 May 2013, the the Romanian government the adopted the Decision no. 271/2013 for the approval of the Cyber Security Strategy of Romania and the National Action Plan regarding the implementation of the National Cyber Security System. The strategic document has set among the main objectives the

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substantiation of the efforts regarding the development of our country's own capabilities to counteract any potential cyber-attacks, the establishment of the framework for action, the improvement of the cooperation relationships which could possibly be developed between various governmental entities and, last, but not least, the highlighting of the non-governmental measures that could be applied in order to decrease the probability of registering any destructive consequences (Romanian government, 2013). According to its contents, the sum of the worldwide nations' joint efforts generally focus on implementing certain security measures which could improve the cyber infrastructures' protection, especially of those that support the critical national infrastructure.

A second example of the recently emerged threats to our national security is represented by the actions or inactions that harm Romania's strategic economic interests or have the effect of endangering, illegally managing, degrading or destroying natural resources, forestry, hunting and fishing funds, water and other such resources, as well as monopolizing or blocking their access. According to some of the previously conducted research works in regard to the economic resources of our country, the percentage value corresponding to the forested areas has followed an obvious descending trend in the recent years. Practically, the measurements carried out in 2010 revealed the fact that the actual forested area represented only 26.7% from the entire country's territory, more precisely a number of 6.38 million hectares, in comparison to the one that we had at our disposal during the communist regime, that is to say 7.7 million hectares representing a percentage of 32.3% (Sigheartau, 2020).

The latest Greenpeace report on the Romanian forested areas and their evolution during 2016-2017 certifies the fact that, in the mentioned period, our country has been losing its forest potential at a rate of 3 hectares per hour, the authorities registering approximately 62 cases of illegal logging per day. Overall, it was established that the region of Transylvania has been the most affected area, with a percentage of 80% of the total damage created (Greenpeace CEE România, 2018). Thus, the legal framework which establishes the attributions and the limits of action of the intelligence workers was modified on January, 17, 2016, in order to include this new threat on the list of the classic ones and establish the proper means and methods of preventing its occurrence or diminish its consequences. Even though the Romanian Intelligence Service does not represent the main institution responsible for the environmental or the illegal logging issues (legal duties of the Forest guards or the police), the illicit deforestation represents an actual threat to the national security, therefore a helping hand of the intelligence services is always useful.

Given all these multidimensional transformations, it has become obvious that living within a global community is much more different compared to the one that the Romanian citizens were familiar with during the communist period. The recently emerged political, military or socio-economic challenges require higher qualified and more experienced intelligence workers, capable of performing all sorts of activities, in order to support a competitive economy, legal and equitable working conditions, as well as to ensure a high cross-border security and the required protection against any terrorist activities or cyber-attacks.

In our opinion, one of the most important characteristics of today's society is given by its facility to both create and benefit from the security culture developed within the local communities, each of us having the opportunity to become either a producer or a consumer of intelligence. Generally, one could easily become part of the basic intelligence-creating process, starting by simply exploiting the handy options of

developing his / her individual or collective civic culture. During the last years, there were plenty of situations that proved the fact that the civic culture development of each citizen has a major role to play within the process of creating and ensuring the security culture of a community, and further on, of a country.

Yet, being an ex-communist country, Romania needed a longer time to adapt to the new challenges that came along with the free trade and frontiers or the global markets in comparison to the Western countries. On the other hand, after more than 30 years from the communist revolution and almost two decades since the tragic event of 9/11, our country is still focusing on finding better and more efficient ways to adapt to the new realities in terms of threats such as: money laundry or *skimming* activities, fake news campaigns or cyber-attacks, hybrid wars conducted by Russia or fighting the risk of the economic exploitation within the European market or the global trade (by importing way more goods and services than the exported ones, at a higher price, despite our national production capacity). Even if the post-communist leaders succeeded in improving our country's geopolitical status and enriched the spectrum of its development opportunities, it is still highly recommended that, alongside with the resulting benefits, the authorities responsible for the national security issues should closely keep an eye on the potential risks and threats.

Undoubtedly, the official acceptance of Romania as a full-fledged member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2004 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020), in the context of the new global-scale conflicts paradigm, represented our country's undeniable separation from the ex-Eastern Bloc states and, especially, from the Moscow' politics. It goes without saying that once belonging to the above mentioned political and military alliance, Romania started to benefit from an extra guarantee in terms of freedom and security as, from the political point of view, the alliance "promotes the democratic values and enables the members to consult and cooperate on defense and security related issues" and in the military perspective, it is "committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes" (NATO Basic points, 2020).

Likewise, afterwards Romania's admittance within the European Union on January 1st, 2007 (Chamber of Deputies, 2005), alongside with the entire range of advantages and opportunities, our country's political shift is out of question. Moreover, taking over the idea of a well-known historian (Burduja, 2016), we strongly consider that our country's reconsidered diplomatic strategies definitely represented a huge step forward in terms of economic, financial, political, social and environmental opportunities or better anti-corruption mechanisms available, their whole assembly representing a cornerstone in strengthening the Romanian democracy.

## 2. Research methods

The fundamental informational resources engaged in completing the present article are represented by the data and information available within the official documents regarding the national defense strategies, the legal framework in force, the official websites of the unions and alliances that Romania is part of and, for an enhanced insight and prognosis, we also considered the research work that have been previously conducted by several experts within the field of interest. From the temporal point of view, the sources corpus exploited within the current report date back to 1990, revealing and emphasizing the most significant aspects connected to Romania's national security up to the present day.



The main research methodology used in order to foresee any potential evolutions of the security environment within Romania, challenges in terms of risks and threats that could harm the state of national security or the best means and methods that should be utilized by the Romanian Intelligence Service was the scenario method. This particular data analysis instrument involves running a prospective analysis in the aim of carrying out a probabilistic modeling of the possible implications generated by both validated experiences and present knowledge on the future (Popa, 2015: 157).

The methodology's main purposes are to minimize the degree of uncertainty that hovers over possible and/ or probable future events, as well as to substantiate the knowledge needed in order to make operational or strategic decisions. In order to reach correct and relevant results using this method, the exploited data and information is also analyzed from the point of view of its credibility, objectivity, accuracy and significance. At the same time, the analysis performed through the scenario method assumes the existence of two components, namely the descriptive and the predictive analysis, so that the interpretation of the obtained results can lead to a better understanding of the present situation, but also to the mapping any potential future developments.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Based on the evaluated data and information, as well as on and previous research work performed in regard to the Romanian national security means, methods, legal framework in force and the intelligence's evolution, the present publication outlines the following scenarios to consider:

**The worst case scenario** corresponds to the pessimistic evolution of events which can take place in regard to a certain event or phenomenon. Considering the whole data and information gathered on both the subject of the national security of Romania and its evolution and on the development of the Romanian Intelligence Service, its means and methods used to achieve an economic, political, social and military equilibrium, we believe that the worst case scenario which could materialize in this field would be the uncontrollable growth of the number of security related risks and threats, as well as their complexity.

Yet, in our opinion, this first scenario is characterized by a medium level of credibility, as the Romanian Intelligence Service has all the essential resources at its disposal in order to achieve the established objectives, whether operational or strategic. This evaluation is validated by the permanent correlation which exists between the intelligence activity and the Intelligence Strategy of the Romanian Intelligence Service established every four years, in accordance with the provisions of the current National Defense Strategy of the Country and subjected to the control procedures of the Supreme Council of National Defense.

Moreover, we consider that our assumption is equally objective and accurate, as the increasing number and complexity of the security related issues has an actual high probability of occurrence on the medium or long term, but the risks and threats could never get out of control of the institutions with responsibilities in this field. In addition, another reason why this sequence of events is objectively and accurately analyzed is the fact that Romania is part of some of the most important political-military alliances and political-economic unions, status that guarantees the support of the other member states in any emergency cases. Also, we appreciate that the examined scenario would have a great relevance in terms of national security, because it could dramatically affect the ordinary state of equilibrium that Romania enjoys at the present day.

To conclude, the worst case scenario is characterized by a low probability and a very high impact of occurrence, within a hypothetical map of the potential risks to harm Romania's state of national security, being situated at a medium to high level.

**The most probable case scenario** (also called the basic scenario) represents the situation in which the risks and threats related to the economic, politic, social, military or environmental issues are distinguished by a moderate and predictable evolution, being easily counteracted through the particular means and methods used within the intelligence work. In other words, this scenario is characterized by maintaining the current parameters. Thus, it has a high level of credibility and objectivity, as, up to the present day, the main authorities responsible for promoting the national values and interests and preventing or counteracting the security related risks and threats managed to fulfill their mission and achieve the established goals, at least on a satisfactory level.

Its high ability to adapt to the recently emerged security challenges, especially in the Euro-Atlantic environment, as well as to predict their future evolutions, gave the Romanian Intelligence Service the opportunity of generally being one step ahead of the potential critical situations and enabled its agents to fully counteract or diminish the consequences of the critical situations. Taking into consideration the whole corpus of data and information, the official documents, legal framework and the activity reports of the Romanian intelligence, we credit the basic scenario with a high level of accuracy, highlighting the fact that its occurrence would have a pretty low level of relevance, since it does not involve major changes in comparison to the current state of affairs.

Summing up, the most probable case scenario has a really high probability of occurrence and quite low impact on the Romanian state of national security, as it mainly implies maintaining the same parameters of the specific intelligence activities that are efficiently performed at present, the proof being the relevant outcomes achieved over the years.

**Best case scenario** is characterized either by the diminishing of both the number and complexity of the current risks and threats to Romania's national security, or, at least, of their complexity. Considering the studied evolution of the types of the risks and threats that were registered during the last 30 years, as well as the one of the impact that their materialization could have on our country state of equilibrium, we anticipate the fact that this scenario has a medium to low level of credibility.

For instance, since in the nineties, Romania neither experienced any cyber-attacks, nor did have this type of threat defined by the legal framework or within any official documents or strategies, and nowadays the authorities keep investing considerable amounts of money in research and development programs designed to ensure the ability to prevent and counteract this type of danger, we appreciate that, on the long run, the probability of having to deal with way more complex threats or even with completely new ones (almost impossible to predict at present), is quite high. Therefore, this scenario has a medium level of objectivity, as it relies on several examples of the unpredictable evolutions of the current threats. From the relevance point of view, this particular situation is quite significant, because, although at first its occurrence could generate a potential will of softening the security measures, the intelligence representatives must remain cautious and highly prepared for any possible development. The scenario is not quite accurate though, as the transformation of the current threats is almost impossible to predict, while, on the long run, there can emerge some new ones that nowadays we are completely unaware of.

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In respect to the aspects detailed above, the best case scenario has a low probability and a low impact of occurrence, showing us, once again, that intelligence represents the type of commitment that requires not only a thorough and punctual training within the specific field, but also utter and permanent dedication, even when the things seem to take a good turn.

### Conclusions, limitations and future research

The practical contribution of the current research is provided by the synthesis of the official or open source data and information, as well as of the research contributions within this domain from 1990 up to the present day, fact that highly strengthens the reliability of the study. In a nutshell, the paper provides an objective point of view regarding the concept of national security in Romania in the Euro-Atlantic environment, as well as its evolution and potential transformations on the short, mid or long run. Moreover, it defines the two fundamental elements that had an enormous contribution to the achievement of the economic, politic, social, military and environmental current state of equilibrium, namely the intelligence and the security culture.

By the means of revealing the essential factors that led to the adjustment of the legal framework or to the creation of the national defense and intelligence strategies, in the context of the security challenges which have evolved during the last 30 years, the current article also points out the most important strategic decisions made by the Romanian leaders, from the point of view of its accession to the political-military alliances (NATO, 2004) or to political-economic unions (EU, 2007).

However, the main limitation of our research consists of the fact that, given the unpredictable evolutions of a significant number of the potential security risks and threats, it is quite impossible to establish which would be the most suitable approach to completely avoid their occurrence. Yet, we can certify that the Romanian authorities responsible for the security issues have put a lot of effort in developing the intelligence strategy, adapting its capabilities and adjusting the legal framework to its needs, so that they can achieve the established operational and strategic goals at the highest level. Intelligence representatives may not be completely sure of the current security environment's evolution, but they certainly gather, analyze and interpret a wide range of informational resources so that they have a *lucky ace* in any situation.

In close connection with a future research direction, on the long run, the author considers that it could be both necessary and useful to extend the present research in terms of the managerial transformations demanded within the intelligence services in order to cope with the new upcoming challenges. Still, it remains her strong belief, that, no matter the chances to come, the intelligence activity represents a completely distinct profession, since any fiasco means a loss, but, any success stays totally anonymous, the same way as its author.

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