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Context

In the wake of the 29-30 June 2022 summit, NATO has adopted a new Strategic Concept that marks a significant shift in the organization's approach. This includes the acceptance of Finland and Sweden into the alliance, a commitment to expand military presence in Europe with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and a steadfast pledge to provide long-term support to Ukraine. The summit also showcased a remarkable unity and revitalized sense of purpose among member states, recognizing the urgent need to address escalating Russian aggression and threats to collective security.

Unlike the previous NATO Strategic Concept in 2010, which sought a strategic partnership with Russia, the new concept unequivocally identifies Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." In response, NATO is embarking on a comprehensive strategy to counter this threat, with plans to augment existing battle groups, enhance air-defense capabilities, and pre-position new equipment in the Baltic states. Notably, the United States will establish a permanent command base in Poland, deploying additional troops and equipment, and deploy a new rotational brigade to Romania. Furthermore, NATO-wide decisions, such as the expansion of the NATO Response Force (NRF) to over 300,000 soldiers, the review of deterrence and defense plans, and commitments to strengthen the common budget and reinforce Western Europe with additional U.S. forces will greatly benefit the CEE region.

The agreed accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO represents a significant development that will bolster the alliance's posture in the Baltic Sea region and enhance the defense capabilities of more vulnerable Baltic states. On 5 July 2022, Finland and Sweden signed their accession protocols These decisions signify a profound step towards fortifying the security architecture in the region and ensuring a stronger defense against common threats.



Introduction &

Contributors

This policy brief provides an overview of the key points discussed during a high-level conversation about NATO's new Strategic Concept and its implications for the Black Sea security. The briefing highlighted the important changes in the strategic landscape since the last concept in 2010 and identified key areas for further development. The brief emphasizes the significance of the Black Sea region and the challenges it presents, particularly in the context of operationalizing the Strategic Concept.

This policy brief is the result of the roundtable organized on the 17th edition of the **International Scientific Conference**" **Defense Resources Management in the 21st Century**" co-organized by the Regional Department of Defense Resources Management Studies (DRESMARA) – NATO Center for Education and Instruction (PTEC) in partnership with the POLITICAL RESEARCH GROUP, between 27th – 28th October 2022 in Brasov, Romania.

The Roundtable participants:

Special address: **Ruben-Erik DIAZ-PLAJA**, Senior Policy Adviser in the Policy Planning Unit in the Office of the Secretary General at NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium – chair of the Roundtable.

Moderator: Liliana FILIP, PhD, President Political Research Group, Romania.

Discussants:

- Joshua BURGIN Warsaw Security Forum, New Security Leaders Program Coordinator, Poland;
- TJ CLUFF, Director, Economic Security Department, Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc., USA;
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- Col. Ing. Prof. Ian DROZD, PhD Dean Faculty of Military Leadership, University of Defense, Czech Republic;
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- Alin GHERAN, Managing Partner, Adamo Technologies, Romania;
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 Director, Global Market Investments, US Department of Defense, Under Secretary for Defense Acquisition and
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GENERAL IDEAS

A NEW STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

Context and Strategic Adaptation:

NATO has undergone a strategic adaptation process since 2014, focusing on collective defense responsibilities and preparing for emerging geopolitical realities. The NATO 2030 agenda, endorsed at the Brussels summit in 2021, aims to strengthen NATO's political tools and address strategic competition and shocks. This larger context sets the stage for the new Strategic Concept, the first in 12 years since the Lisbon Summit in 2010.

Shifts in the Strategic Concept:

Compared to the previous concept, the new Strategic Concept reflects a fundamental shift while maintaining some elements of continuity. The concept acknowledges a contested and unpredictable world, highlighting a volatile Euro-Atlantic area. It emphasizes collective defense as the key purpose of the Alliance, marking a philosophical shift from safeguarding freedom and security.

Key Changes and Challenges:

The new Strategic Concept recognizes Russia as the most significant threat to allied security, outlining its goals, tactics, and challenges to NATO's interests. It also acknowledges China as a challenge to the Euro-Atlantic security and identifies China's partnership with Russia as mutually reinforcing attempts to undermine the rules-based international order. The concept emphasizes strategic competition and includes updated language on hybrid, cyber, and space domains, as well as the importance of resilience and capacity-building efforts.

NATO's Evolving Strategic Concept:

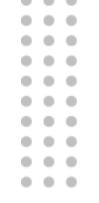
The policy brief acknowledges the shifting nature of NATO, emphasizing its transformation into a political alliance alongside its military role. It suggests incorporating non-military aspects into NATO's strategic concept to address emerging challenges. These aspects may include defending against the coercive use of energy resources and building resilience against non-military threats. The brief underscores the need for NATO to adapt to the evolving security landscape and strengthen its capacity to respond effectively to a wide range of challenges.

Black Sea Security:

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The Black Sea region is of vital strategic importance to NATO, with several littoral states and close partners. The concept elevates the Black Sea as a region of strategic importance, emphasizing allies' commitment to its security. Given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the significance of the Black Sea security becomes even more evident. Operationalizing the Strategic Concept requires addressing deterrence and defense posture, crisis management and prevention, and cooperative security in the Black Sea region.





For Euro-Atlantic Community

Comprehensive Approach:

Adopt a comprehensive approach that integrates defense, deterrence, and resilience measures to address the multifaceted security challenges in the Black Sea region. Strengthen cooperation and capacity-building efforts with aspiring partner countries, such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, while maintaining partnerships with like-minded countries that share NATO's values and commitment to the rules-based international order.

NATO should emphasize the principles of DIME, ensuring coordination and synergy among the various domains. Diplomatic efforts, information sharing, military preparedness, and economic resilience (DIME) should be integrated to effectively counter emerging threats.

Defense Posture and Vigilance:

Several participants emphasized the need for NATO allies to remain vigilant in the face of the growing threat posed by Russia. The discussions highlighted the importance of reinforcing the message that a nuclear attack is not acceptable and cannot be compensated for. While acknowledging Russia's provocative nature, psychological dimensions must also be considered in responding to the threat.

Readiness and Rapid Mobilization:

Prioritize the development of infrastructure and capabilities to enable rapid mobilization and defense of the first mile, considering the potential challenges and limitations of U.S. forces' build-up in Europe. Enhance the readiness of continental partners to ensure effective defense capabilities in the early stages of a conflict.

Recognize the need for substantial economic investments in infrastructure to support the expansion of NATO forces and capabilities, including fossil fuels, power grids, and military infrastructure. Address the strategic investments made by China in Europe, particularly in critical infrastructure, to ensure readiness and practicality.

Strengthening Readiness and Resource Allocation:

To effectively confront evolving security challenges, participants emphasized the need for NATO to enhance its readiness and resource allocation. This includes reassessing military capabilities, considering infrastructure requirements, and ensuring strategic, operational, and tactical alignment.

NATO members should engage in open dialogue regarding resource limitations and align defense budgets with national security priorities.

For Euro-Atlantic Community

Nuclear Threats and Tactical Weapons:

The discussions voiced concerns about the potential for nuclear attacks, even with the use of tactical weapons. Drawing on historical events like the Chernobyl catastrophe, participants emphasized the need to address the broader impact of such attacks, considering the nuclear wind and its potential to affect multiple countries. NATO should include provisions in the Strategic Concept to address and deter any nuclear threats effectively.

NATO's Role in the Balkans:

NATO's involvement in the Balkans is of paramount importance for regional stability and security. The policy brief emphasizes the need for continued engagement and cooperation in the region. By working closely with partners in the Balkans, NATO can address challenges such as ethnic tensions, political instability, and border disputes. The brief stresses that NATO should seize every opportunity to enhance security in the Balkans through joint exercises, capacity-building initiatives, and information sharing. NATO, in collaboration with partners and organizations like the European Union, should focus on identifying concrete steps to address emerging security threats in the region.

Recognizing NATO Member States as the Determinants of Power:

Member states themselves determine NATO's power. The commitment of member states, even during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic or financial crises, is essential to strengthening the alliance. This commitment should extend to meeting defense spending targets, as it demonstrates a collective commitment to enhance NATO's capabilities and ensure the security and sovereignty of member states.





For Romania

<u>Understanding the Significance of the Black Sea:</u>

The ownership and control of Crimea have always been critical for Romania's independence and geopolitical position. With Russia's presence in Crimea, Romania faces challenges in maintaining its freedom and independence. This issue requires attention from NATO and calls for a comprehensive approach involving diplomatic, economic, and military considerations.

Coalition Building and Regional Leadership:

To address the challenges in the Black Sea region, Romania and Poland should take the lead and form a coalition. However, it was acknowledged that leadership can manifest in different ways, not limited to military or economic dominance. Romania should identify areas where it can lead, such as technology and energy sectors, and build dependencies among partner nations to exert soft power influence.

<u>Short-Term Solutions and Military Presence:</u>

Considering the urgency of the situation in the Black Sea, the participants discussed the need for short-term solutions to deter potential aggression. Deploying additional troops in the region would help ensure freedom of movement and defend against emerging threats. Short-term solutions should be developed in coordination with NATO, the EU, and other relevant stakeholders.

Leveraging Soft Power and Innovation:

The private sector representatives emphasized the importance of leveraging Romania's expertise in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and defense innovation. The use of soft power instruments, such as technological advancements and innovation, can enhance Romania's role and influence in the region. Expanding programs like the NATO Defense Innovation Accelerator and promoting collaboration between the private sector and defense industry would be beneficial.

<u>Analyzing Misinformation and Disinformation:</u>

Recognizing the influence of misinformation and disinformation in shaping public perception and political dynamics, it was stressed that countering these threats should be a priority. Enhancing cybersecurity measures and fostering resilience against hybrid threats, including misinformation campaigns, is crucial for Romania and the wider region.

For Romania

Romania's role in the Black Sea area- bilateral engagement

Romania could strengthen its role in assuring Black Sea security by enhancing bilateral engagement with neighboring countries, particularly Georgia and Turkey. By seizing the opportunities presented in the Ukrainian context and actively monitoring Russian influence, Romania can contribute to regional stability and reinforce its position as a key player in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, by supporting Azerbaijan's position, Romania can contribute to a unified approach against potential threats to regional security.

Strengthening Cooperation with Turkey:

Recognizing Turkey's crucial role in the region, Romania should actively seek to enhance cooperation with Turkey. Despite Turkey's complex relationship with Russia, Romania can leverage opportunities for collaboration in areas such as security, energy projects, and countering terrorism. By building stronger ties with Turkey, Romania can benefit from its leadership position in the Black Sea region.

- Seizing Opportunities in the Ukrainian Context:

Romania should also seize opportunities in the Ukrainian context, particularly in the reconstruction and development efforts in Ukraine. The ongoing situation in Ukraine presents a chance for Romania to play a more proactive role in the region. By leveraging its strategic location and the port of Constanta, Romania can actively engage with Ukraine and contribute to its reconstruction and development process.

Romania can offer support to Ukraine by sharing best practices, expertise, and resources in areas such as infrastructure development, economic cooperation, and capacity building. The port of Constanta can serve as a vital gateway for trade and commerce between Romania and Ukraine, facilitating the flow of goods, investments, and people. This collaboration can contribute to Ukraine's economic recovery, strengthen regional stability, and foster closer ties between the two countries.

Furthermore, Romania can play a significant role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation between Ukraine and other Black Sea countries. By actively engaging in diplomatic efforts and promoting regional integration, Romania can help build trust, enhance communication channels, and foster collaboration among neighboring countries. This engagement will contribute to the overall security architecture of the Black Sea region and reinforce the collective defense capabilities of NATO.

For Romania

Expanding Cooperation with Georgia:

Romania should capitalize on the increasing interest shown by Georgia in interoperability with NATO countries. By deepening its cooperation with Georgia, Romania can support its efforts in modernizing its defense capabilities, promoting democratic values, and enhancing regional security. This cooperation can include joint exercises, information sharing, and capacity-building initiatives.

- Monitoring Russian Influence and Capital Exports:

Given the evolving dynamics in the Black Sea region, it is crucial for Romania to closely monitor Russian influence and capital exports in countries like Georgia. Romania should actively engage with international partners to gather intelligence, share information, and coordinate efforts to counter any destabilizing actions by Russia. This proactive approach will help maintain regional stability and safeguard Romania's interests.

- Supporting Azerbaijan's Position:

By expressing solidarity with Azerbaijan, Romania can contribute to a united front against any potential threats posed by Russian aggression. This support can be demonstrated through diplomatic channels, public statements, and cooperation in regional security initiatives.

<u>Learning from the Past and Taking Security Seriously:</u>

Recognizing the significance of historical experiences, the policy brief highlights the importance of Romania learning from its past and taking security seriously. Strategic thinking, unity among NATO allies, and allocating adequate budgets for military equipment are essential components of ensuring national and regional security. The brief emphasizes that Romania must adopt a comprehensive approach, involving diplomacy, information, military capabilities, and economic considerations, to effectively address security challenges across multiple domains.

New forces on the eastern flank, but multi-domain:

The deployment of new forces on the eastern flank calls for effective collaboration among nations in developing common defense capabilities. This question highlights the potential for Romania and Poland to act as a core partnership in the region. It examines opportunities for joint initiatives, interoperability, and cooperation in multiple domains to bolster the collective defense posture and regional security.

For Romania

Romania in Infrastructure Development and Strategic Planning:

- Invest in Infrastructure:

Given the concerns raised about the strain on infrastructure during the expansion of NATO, Romania should prioritize public investments in infrastructure development. This includes ensuring adequate resources for fossil fuels, power grids, and transportation networks to support the mobilization of forces in the region. By investing in infrastructure, Romania can enhance its military capability while simultaneously addressing the economic demands associated with NATO's priorities.

- Strengthen Continental Defense:

Recognizing the potential vulnerabilities in European infrastructure, particularly in relation to China's strategic investments, Romania should work closely with its continental partners to bolster continental defense capabilities. This includes fortifying critical infrastructure, such as ports and runways, to accommodate military aircraft and support rapid mobilization. By taking measures to defend the first mile, Romania and its partners can mitigate risks and ensure the practicality and readiness of NATO's outlined plans.

- Assess Economic Readiness and Consider China's Role:

Romania should closely evaluate the economic implications and readiness factors associated with NATO's plans. Understanding the strategic investments made by China in European infrastructure, Romania should assess the potential risks and dependencies that could be exploited by hostile actors. This assessment should inform strategic planning and include considerations for diversifying economic dependencies, building resilience, and securing critical resources.

Incorporate Strategic Considerations in Planning:

The policy brief stresses the importance of considering the relationship between China and Russia across all strategic planning efforts. Romania should not underestimate the strategic partnership between these two nations and the potential implications it may have for NATO's activities. Given Russia's ownership of key resources, there is a risk of aggression and power manipulation. Romania should factor in these considerations to develop robust strategies that account for potential disruptions and ensure the ability to project power and maintain a strong position.

efforts with NATO's goals, enhance its own security, and contribute to the collective defense of the alliance.



For Romania

Long-Term Planning and Collaboration:

Romania should adopt a long-term perspective in strategic planning, considering the practicality of the outlined concepts over the next five years. This includes ongoing collaboration with NATO allies, evaluating potential risks and opportunities, and continuously assessing the changing geopolitical landscape. By engaging in comprehensive strategic planning, Romania can align its efforts with NATO's goals, enhance its own security, and contribute to the collective defense of the alliance.

The Role of Defense Industry and Economic Considerations:

The policy brief underlines the role of the defense industry in supporting national security objectives. It emphasizes the need for profit-driven innovation within the defense industry, as well as the importance of economic considerations in security planning. The brief suggests that Romania should foster a favorable environment for the defense industry to thrive, driving technological advancements and contributing to the country's security capabilities.

Reinforcing Diplomatic Activities:

The brief also underscores the significance of diplomatic activities, urging Romania to aspire to a leadership role in the Black Sea region by actively engaging with neighboring countries and promoting regional cooperation.

Military mobility is critical for credible deterrence:

The mobility of military forces and resources is crucial for credible deterrence and effective defense. This question focuses on the investments required to enhance military mobility in the Romanian context. It explores potential funding sources and strategies to ensure the timely prepositioning of equipment, munitions, and logistics to strengthen Romania's deterrence capabilities. The Three Seas Initiative could be a good platform in achieving this objective that needs to be more formalized and speeded up.

CONCLUSION

The new NATO Strategic Concept marks a significant shift in addressing security challenges and recognizes the criticality of the Black Sea region for the Alliance. To effectively implement the concept, NATO must prioritize infrastructure investments, overcome readiness challenges, and adopt a comprehensive approach to security in the Black Sea area. By strengthening deterrence, crisis management, and cooperative security measures, NATO can enhance its collective defense posture and ensure the stability and security of the region.

This policy brief has explored additional ideas and perspectives that emerged during discussions on the future of NATO's Strategic Concept. These ideas encompass a wide range of topics, including defense posture, nuclear threats, China's role, and regional security concerns. It emphasizes the need for NATO to reinforce its armed forces, foster a thriving defense industry, and strive for a leadership role in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, the brief underscores the importance of evolving the strategic concept to address non-military challenges and safeguard the security of all NATO member countries.

The recommendations put forth in this brief advocate for maintaining vigilance in the face of Russian aggression, comprehensively addressing nuclear threats, enhancing readiness and resource allocation, and adopting a holistic approach encompassing diplomacy, information, military, and economics (DIME). By actively adapting and refining its strategic framework, NATO can ensure the collective security of its member countries and effectively respond to emerging global threats.

In conclusion, while the Baltic region has demonstrated unity, the Black Sea littoral states—Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania—face challenges in aligning their perspectives on threats and strategies. It is imperative to find common ground among these nations to strengthen NATO's Black Sea security strategy. Romania, as a key player in the region, has the opportunity to enhance its regional leadership and foster collaboration among Black Sea allies. By actively engaging in diplomatic efforts and promoting dialogue, Romania can contribute to a more cohesive and secure NATO presence in the Black Sea region.

Land of ideas!

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Final

Notes

This policy brief has been produced following the discussions that took place at the Round Table event entitled "NATO's New Strategic Concept and Implications for Black Sea Security". The event adhered to **Chatham House Rules**, which permit the use of information from the discussion, but prohibit revealing the identity of the speaker or the organization they represent.

The contributions of the debate participants were integral to the creation of this policy brief, and we would like to **extend our thanks to all who shared their insights**. The high caliber and value of the speakers are evident in the incisiveness of the recommendations presented in this brief.

Our aim was to evaluate the utility of such an initiative, and we directed our focus towards generating recommendations for the Euro-Atlantic community, with a particular emphasis on guidance for Romania, given the context of NATO's New Strategic Concept. Our goal was to underscore the significance of the **Black Sea region** in the design of Europe's **new security architecture** and that of the Euro-Atlantic region.

We would also like to express our deep gratitude to Mr. Ruben-Erik Diaz-Plaja, Senior Policy Adviser in the Policy Planning Unit at NATO HQ, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the critical aspects of the New NATO Strategic Concept and was forthcoming in addressing participants' queries.

Thank you!

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