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**SECURITY RISKS AND THREATS –
AN OVERVIEW OF FROZEN CONFLICTS
IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**

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Abstract:

South-Eastern Europe, which Europe’s geostrategic node, has been and will continue to be in the future an area of confrontation of major interests. Therefore, there is always a risk of resuming the politics of exclusive influence and confrontations in this region. In spite of the fact that inter-ethnic intolerance is invoked as a cause of conflicts – which is true, in fact – there are also other aspects that sustain a high level of instability and conflict in south-eastern Europe. By means of the current great powers’ direct involvement in this area’s geopolitical issues, the regional security has a major impact upon Europe’s security as a whole, as well as upon the Euro-Atlantic and world’s security in general.

Key words: *security, frozen armed conflicts, threats, risks, South-Eastern Europe*

1. Introduction

The security environment of the early 21st century displays substantial manifestations and transformations which require new analyses and the adaptation of the classical analysis tools. The new challenges posed to security resulted from the opposing phenomena, i.e., globalization and fragmentation, are accompanied by the classical risks and regional vulnerabilities. At the same time, the traditional tensions are still present, but their manifestations are directly influenced by the occurrence of non-conventional risks such as the asymmetrical and border ones, as well as the economic crisis, international terrorism, cyber-terrorism, organized crime and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As an essential component of international security, ensuring regional security in the Balkans to the Caucasus, the Carpathians and the Mediterranean Sea to the northern part of Asia, that is, ***The South-Eastern Europe***, is a permanent and complex process involving all the countries in the region and amplified by the opposing mix of globalization and fragmentation. Romania is a responsible contributor to preventing and overcoming regional security threats fueled particularly by the traditional tensions, instability and crisis, as well as by the tendency to geopolitically redesign south-eastern Europe. This area is a border between cultures, religions, mentalities, ideologies, political and national interests and spheres of influence, all of them being multiple, individual, diverse and inter-

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related at the same time. There are two major sources of people's insecurity, which may trigger social disasters: disadvantageous geographical location and poor governance. Mathematically speaking, geographical location is fix and perennial, and the Balkan political leaders must strictly obey the sacred character of their legacy – nation, understanding the role of their people's geographical location and the careful management of their relationships with the rest of the world.

The speech delivered by the former NATO secretary general, Manfred Woerner, on 4 July 1991 on the occasion of the symposium entitled “Security perceptions and conceptions in Eastern Europe” held in Bucharest illustrates the importance of security in south-eastern Europe: *„Security in eastern Europe, particularly in the Balkans, is not only a major issue now, but it also brings back disturbing memories. This region with its complex ethnical and cultural legacy and overwhelming hardships of the past centuries has never been easy to manage from the security point of view. At the same time, it has never been disregarded by other Europeans if they take into consideration their own security. Few significant events of the recent European history could be imagined without the repercussions that this region's events have had in terms of the rest of the continent”* [1].

One of the features of south-eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Cold War is the existence of strong conflicts and volatile overall situation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia which preceded the collapse of the state authority in the neighboring countries of the USSR are accompanied by the explosion of ethnical, political, economic, social conflicts in regions that had been apparently stable or appeared to display the necessary conditions to preserve this stability in terms of inter- and intrastate tensions. Many western politicians who could have influence the historical unfolding of events seem to be unaware of the fact that continental security and welfare largely depend on the political and military situation of south-eastern Europe. In the '90s, armed conflicts played the domino effect and threatened to extend beyond this region. We witnessed in disbelief the conflicts between Serbia and Croatia, Russian Federation and Georgia, the Serbian-Croatian-Muslim vendetta in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbian-Albania vendetta in Kosovo, the chaos of Albania, the conflict in Transnistria, the tensions between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and the fights in the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia. If we add to these the atrocities committed in Targu Mures in 1990 and the act of savagery committed during the miners' riot, we realize that Romania is but a piece of the south-eastern Europe' puzzle, which can be trapped in the whirl of regional insecurity at any moment.

2. The frozen conflicts of south-eastern Europe

The term “*frozen conflict*” is as suggestive as possible. The definition provided by the specialized literature refers to “an acute conflict situation which has not involved armed violence at a large scale due to the mutual exhaustion of the combatants in a previous stage of a military conflict and/or the discouragement exerted by the presence of a regional power or of an outside power” [2]. These conflict are not solved, they are just suppressed at a certain moment in time because of the extreme risk it poses to that particular area, as well as to the international security as a whole.

In the ex-Yugoslavian area: Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo; in the ex-Soviet area adjacent to the Black Sea: Republic of Moldavia - Transnistria and Georgia - South Ossetia, and Abkhazia, and in the

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Mediterranean: Cyprus, we have such frozen conflicts. They can explode any time, because the collective memory, the mix of populations and the previous tensions cannot and will not be easily dismantled. Unfortunately, in almost all of these areas there are interests of the great powers or of other states that cannot be harmonized.

2.1 The ex-Yugoslavian region

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the birth of new states that replaced the state created by Iosip Broz Tito after the Second World War complicated the western part of the Balkan peninsula, and also triggered unexpected consequences in other south-eastern European regions. More actors on the political arena led not only to a change in the regional force balance, but also to the appearance of a new geostrategic axis and new power centers. The decrease of the ethnical and political tensions after the war of the '90s did not eliminate other crisis points, and so the region is still active from this point of view. This war posed numerous and special features of a conflict with which Europe would become familiar.



The war whose first stages unfolded in Slovenia as a mere confrontation between the military authority of a state in the process of dissolution and a new civil society escalated to bloodshed in Croatia by initiating the ethnic cleansing and the development of the paramilitary forces, which reached a peak in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The three communities confronted violently and destroyed the towns and villages in which they had lived peacefully only several years before, they put one another in concentration camps and repeatedly broken the promises they had made during the various truces secured throughout the years. Present there, the international community was mostly a passive witness of the events, or interfered too late, inefficiently or against the course of events. The change in the US politics, from non-intervention to active involvement in solving the Bosnia crisis, resulted in a change in NATO's option for direct and efficient action. NATO air strikes and the treaties initiated as their direct consequence followed the steps taken by the UN and other European states to bring the three communities together in order to make them reach a solution to the conflict. The contradictions regarding the interior border, which reflect Bosnia's ethnical division, are addressed by the Dayton Agreement, which allow the refugees to return to their homes and guarantee free circulation of the people across Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The crisis of Bosnia-Herzegovina emerged due to the three communities' internal disputes and the frustration left behind by the previous regime of authoritarian-centralized power and collective principles. Moreover, since the beginning of the Yugoslavian crisis, the Muslim community of Bosnia-Herzegovina supported the birth of a unitary and independent state, whereas the Serbian and Croatian communities supported the unification of their territories with Serbia and Croatia. This conflict was also triggered by the international community which had supported the dissolution process for various reasons and interests, and subsequently acted against this trend. The war begun in 1991 posed many challenges to the European states, regardless of whether they were NATO members or not. The treaty of Dayton, Ohio, ended the military confrontation and open the way to institutional confrontations and creation of the structures of the new state.

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Although the conflict was restricted to the former Yugoslavian region, its political, economic and military implications were felt all over the Balkan peninsula and then all over Europe. Its complex character and the plethora of territorial, ethnical and religious factors faced by the entire region led to the necessity to coordinate the efforts at the Balkan and European level in order to identify methods to rebuild the political, economic, social and prevention tools to deal with future potential crises. The conflict of Kosovo, 1999, demonstrated that the region did not exhaust its instability sources and that the efforts made by the economic and security institutions, both European and Euro-Atlantic, did not provide the viable solutions for which they had been set up.

At this time, the Republic of Macedonia preferred to stay neutral despite of making some territorial compromises that favored the Serbians. However, the country was destabilized by the 1999 war in Kosovo, when more than 300,000 Albanians from Kosovo fled to Macedonia. They returned after the war, but shortly after that the Albanian radicals from Macedonia demanded autonomy or independence from the areas inhabited mostly by Albanians. The confrontations between the government and the Albanian insurgents took place between March and June 2001 preponderantly in the north and west of the country, and ended after the NATO monitoring of the truce and signing the Agreement of Ohrid, which stipulated that the Macedonian government would offer more political power and cultural independence to the Albanian minority. In return, the Albanian party waived the separation demands and recognized the Macedonian state institutions.

Serbia and Albania continue to issue claims concerning the Kosovo matter. Nationalist visions and ethnical-religious tensions are magnified by the economic scarcity.

Unfortunately, another element that contributed to this situation was the set of sanctions imposed after the Yugoslavian crisis. One proof that the Albanian nationalism is still active is the attempt to create the Great Albania. It is well known that Albanians are widely spread in the region. Their presence in Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece has always been used to support nationalist movements such as Kosovo Liberation Army or National Liberation Army or to initiate violent acts justified by demanding rights for Albanians. In the history of this conflict many actors have been involved both nationally and internationally.



At the international level, there have been interactions with European or world organizations. The conflict involved the UNO by means of three resolutions of the Security Council, which were labeled by the Serbians as interference in their internal affairs. NATO offered UN their combat equipment in order to enforce the resolutions of the Security Council. The European Union manifested by imposing sanctions on Yugoslavia for a short period of time. One should also mention the OSCE intervention, which involved the participation of a large number of observers from the member states. Other international actors were the US, Russia and Albania, which recognized Kosovo as an independent state. Under these circumstances, and in spite of the fact that Belgrade continues to claim that this is an internal affair, one cannot ignore the possible extension of this conflict, given the position adopted by the neighboring provinces, where the Albanians still fuel separatist animosities. We should also remind that Kosovo has the highest percentage of a minority population in Europe: 90%. Furthermore, an approach to the crisis must take into consideration the long-term intentions of the Albanians living in Kosovo. Although one

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may consider the unification of Kosovo and Albania after the separation from Yugoslavia, this is unlikely to happen in the near future due to Albania's poor economic situation, even poorer than Kosovo's. This makes this possibility unappealing to the people of Kosovo. Moreover, the Albanian refugees from Kosovo have no intention to flee to Albania, but to other parts of Europe.

These ethnic-religious conflict from former Yugoslavia have no immediate solutions, and neither can they be solved by classical means. Such a conflict cannot be solved by treaties or air raids. Instead, it requires political means because these ethnic-religious tensions have been lasting for centuries and it calls for the public will and sanctioning of the terrorist acts and gangs that dominate the areas with sensitive security issues.

2.2 The ex-Soviet region adjacent the Black Sea

While the Black Sea has become the main link between the Far East, Central Asia and the main river connection with central Europe via the Danube River, western interests for the Caucasian-Caspian area, rich in strategic energy resources, have increased. We can state that Europe is redefining its south-eastern area on political-economic criteria. At the same time, the 21st century has made Russia redefine its latest, widest and most complex vision of south-eastern Europe. Following geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic rules, Russia's vision has been illustrated under complex and subtle circumstances in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Crimean peninsula by actions that were both unpredictable and hard to overcome. In this context, the problem of Transnistria is fundamental to Russia's security, which was explicitly declared by Russia's State Duma. The Nistru river is the strategic line that divides the two main geopolitical areas – the Slavic one and the European one.

As a result of the USSR collapse, Moldavia declared its independence and at the peak of nationalism it also declared Romanian its national language. The will to unite with Romania gradually increased, which fueled the ethnic tensions particularly in the regions where Russian was spoken. The political leaders of Transnistria understood their opportunity to separate from Moldavia and decided to use it in order to secure popular support on linguistic grounds.

Transnistria declared its independence on 2 September 1990 and easily managed to resist the Moldavian attempts to cancel the regional separation by force. The armed conflict was brief and resulted in the region's separation from Moldavia. The presence of Russian active and reserve military helped Transnistria to defeat Moldavian forces. Basically, this conflict has a two-fold source: territorial and political-ethnic.



The regional conflict fueled by Russia in Transnistria was an experimental laboratory in terms of political manipulation and strategy changes regarding the independent evolution of the national states emerged after the collapse of the USSR. By force, Russia attempted to apply the techniques of this conflict in Georgia, Estonia and Crimean peninsula, but also in other regions of the community of the Independent States. As far as Transnistria is concerned, Russia aimed at maintaining Moldavia under the political influence of the same

Soviet / post-Soviet decision center by using the region between Prut and Nistru as a fuse always ready to be set on fire. This state of events is also sustained by the continuous

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political crisis from Moldavia, the economic transition, the costs of implementing the mechanisms of market economy and democracy – all of these weakening the state and making it incapable of exerting its sovereignty all over its territory.

By extrapolating this situation to the regional context, we notice that the severe forms of nationalism which emerged simultaneously with the dissolution of the USSR generated violent tensions in most of the countries at the periphery of Russia, especially in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldavia. By maintaining its influence beyond its territorial limits, Russia allowed and even determined these tensions.

Similarly, the Russian-Georgian war of the summer of 2008 demonstrated the instability of a frozen conflict that had been poorly managed, easy to manipulate and prone to escalation in the form of a military conflict. The stake of this conflict is mainly geopolitical and refers to the control over the ex-Soviet areas. Moscow attempts to regain control over these areas which it lost in the fall of 2003, when the “roses revolution” took place.

The relations between Russia and Georgia after the revolution became more and more tense. In September 2006, Russia restricted the financial flows from Georgia and put pressure upon the Georgian population living on its territory as a response to arresting four Russian spies in Tbilisi. Furthermore, Kremlin withdrew its diplomatic representatives from Georgia and expelled Georgian citizens from Russia. The economic pressures exerted by Russia on its neighbor continued until November 2006 with doubling the price for the gas which the Russian company Gazprom delivered to Georgia. Also, Russia encouraged the separatist movements from Abkhazia and South Ossetia by claiming that Georgia’s territorial integrity was not respected. An important source of dissension between the two states was Georgia’s intention to join NATO, which triggered severe reactions from Moscow, because the Kremlin officials regarded the Alliance’s presence at Russia’s border as a threat. In April 2008, after the NATO summit of Bucharest, Vladimir Putin – who was still Russia’s president at that time – asked the Russian government to establish official relations with the separatist regimes and increased the number of military staff deployed to Abkhazia.

Moscow has every intention to reiterate its geopolitical supremacy in the area which is traditionally regarded by the Russian elites as Russian legitimate sphere of strategic influence. The Kremlin lives and reacts as if it were guided by a post-imperial syndrome meant to regain the geopolitical capital lost in 1990. By overreacting in the Georgian issue, Moscow showed that it had the political will to use its power in order to intimidate its neighbors. In the long run, the message conveyed to the western countries is clear: Ukraine and Georgia must remain outside NATO and the influence of the US. Tactically, Russia used Georgia to issue a strategic warning.

Last but not least, Russia tends to unilaterally delineate the multi-pole model of international relations and continues to impose its control over the ex-Soviet regions.



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2.3 The Mediterranean region

The division of Cyprus into two parts – the Greek one and the Turkish one – is one of the EU's unsolved problems. De facto, the two parts of Cyprus have existed since 1983, but they have been separated since 1974 after a Turkish military intervention in a coup that took place in Greece for the purpose of taking over the island.

Cyprus is the destiny of two communities with two fears, as the conflict has resulted in more than 5,000 victims since 1963. While the Greek are afraid of the Turkish military stationed in northern Cyprus, and also of the potential abuses similar to those inflicted during the invasion, the Turkish people are afraid that they will be victims of exclusion and violence as they were before the Turkish military came onto the island. Since 1964, UN troops have been stationed on the island as a buffer between the two rival parties. In 1974, the coup plotted by the Greek military in order to unite the island with Greece offered Turkey a pretext to intervene. In 2004, the European Council made the mistake to support Cyprus's accession to the EU before the unification. The Greek people of Cyprus accepted the accession, but they refuse the plan of reunification made by the UN secretary general. The reunification negotiations were reluctantly resumed in February 2008 and supported by the president of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish community from Cyprus, who both support Turkey's accession to EU as they hope this would put an end to this long-lasting conflict. The dissensions that still exist refer to the withdrawal of the 35,000 Turkish military stationed in the northern part of the island, as well as to the future state form: a federation with a central government for the Greek population or an alliance of states with two separate governments for the Turkish population.



3. Risks and threats to the states' security

In today's world, most of the south-eastern European states focus on the European trend of integration, which is perceived as a means to create tools for the economic and political development which are necessary to build sustainable stability at regional and European level. Despite these breakthroughs, there are still factors that may destabilize the region. From an economic-social stance, there are still some weak points deriving from: scarce soil and underground resources, poor management of national industries, industrial giants that eat up resources and pollute the environment, poor infrastructure, lack of internal investments and lack of attractiveness for foreign investments etc. these weaknesses are accompanied by traditionalist mentalities, underground economy, corruption and the negative impact of local armed conflicts. It is concerning that the process of territorial and political redesign has not finished yet. On the other hand, there is a high level of political and military instability in this part of the world, as well as conflict potential which have gradually resulted in political, economic, social, military, ethnic, religious and cultural tensions: Voivodina, southern Macedonia, Cyprus, the island of the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, southern Albania etc.

To sum up, we could mention that macro-economic instability and social disparities, internal and external constraints, monopoly positions, deterioration of the global

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environment, uncontrolled migration phenomena, terrorist-type unconventional threats, social and cognitive polarization worldwide are aggressions that determine conflicts, fierce competition and threat instead of social cooperation and solidarity, democracy, freedom and international stability.

A UN report [3] lists the categories of threats posed to mankind now and in the next decades: social and economic (poverty, infectious diseases, environmental deterioration), conflict between states, internal conflicts (civil wars, genocide, atrocities), nuclear, bacteriological, radiological and chemical weapons, terrorism and organized crime. The current threats to international security are interdependent, and issues such as terrorism, civil wars or poverty cannot be approached independently. Threats to national security derive from capabilities, strategies, intentions or plans that enhance the fundamental attributes of the state, of the society's economic foundation, of the constitutional order and of the citizens' fundamental rights. They manifest by means of attitudes, gestures and deeds that create disparities and instability, which leads to dangers posed to the national fundamental values and interests with a direct impact upon national security.

In the light of the aforementioned aspects, the current and future risks, challenges, hazards and threats can be grouped into four main categories:

- Weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological, bio- and nanotechnologies, weapon systems based on wave amplification and other principles that can severely affect the environment and generate a geo-physical war);
- Terrorist (net and puzzle attacks, which are becoming more and more dangerous and deepen the discrepancies between the democratic world and the world that does not share the same values and especially the offensive interests of the western world);
- Cross-border (organized crime, economic-financial crime, drug dealing and human trafficking);
- Natural (global warming, glacier melting, earthquakes, floods, tsunami, hurricanes, landslides, extreme deterioration of the environment, including the biosphere, lithosphere and ionosphere).

The increase in such potential risks and threats, as well as the vulnerability of the national security is an important aspect to consider at all times. In a context of a fragile and dynamic environment with positive and negative trends, the persistence of concrete risks and threats and the permanent enhancement of their impact upon the state's security lead to an increase in the society's vulnerability in front of such phenomena. The transition in terms of economic, social, military, technological and informational aspects makes the national security system even more vulnerable.

Among the most severe threats to national security, particular attention must be paid to ***Romania's proximity to conflicts***, both unsolved and latent, whose escalation during the last years has illustrated the complex nature of the ongoing processes as well as the inefficiency of some measures. In this context, we find that both in the case of the ex-Yugoslavian conflicts and in the case of the ex-Soviet ones – which are considered mainly ethnical, mostly classical measures have been taken, based on the principles and rules of the military conflict, whose adaptation has not led to the expected results, sometimes on the contrary.

Moreover, there are opinions that support the theory of “geopolitical synchronism” between the Balkans and the Caucasus, two areas linking Europe and Asia as well as Christianity and Islam. Both history and geography support this theory: under physical

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proximity conditions, clashes and events have been more cruel and more violent than in the Mediterranean area, and military conflicts have always characterized the history of the two regions for the last two millennia. [4]

Another risk factor with a direct impact upon Romania's national security and brought forward after the events of 9/11 is **terrorism**. Analyses have shown that terrorism has escalated beyond any expectations, and it has passed from the action phase to the terrorist operation phase with major objectives. On the other hand, after the terrorist attacks from the USA the phenomenon has no longer political or religious connotations, but has gained magnitude and triggered the conflict between the democratic, open, easily accessible societies and the closed, dark and impenetrable societies. Thus, one may expect other terrorist organizations to embrace and improve this type of actions, which will result in more destructive and inhumane terrorist attacks.

Human trafficking, drug dealing, armament dealing, and weapons of mass destruction have reached extremely high levels during the last decades, with potential consequences in terms of the national interest, all of these being the result of the activities developed by organized crime groups. Ten years ago, this type of risk factors found in our country and in the neighboring areas favorable conditions to thrive on the transition period, with unclear legal and administrative structures. Unfortunately, the evolution of this type of threats is still favored by the Romanian society's vulnerabilities and transitions as well as by some Romanian weaknesses which belong to our history and traditions.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another important threat to the states' and peoples' peace and security. The international agreements and treaties regarding the exports control have decreased the speed of their extension. However, the existence and proliferation of nuclear, biological, radiological and chemical weapons is a reality and generated concern and insecurity due to their potential use. The outstanding risks resided from this kind of weapons are given by the fact that a small group of terrorists can use them and cause major damages which previously could be caused only by national armed forces.

The state failure is associated to poor governance – corruption, abuse of power, weak and inefficient state institutions, lack of accountability. It is in itself an alarming phenomenon which feeds regional instability. Also, state failure is the consequence of the societies indulging in their vices: diseases, extreme poverty, education degradation, negative demographic trends, high level of social insecurity, fragile solidarity and civil discourse, precarious state of population's health, inefficiency or inexistence of public health services, immature approaches to security issues.

Ethnic and religious extremism. There are areas of active conflict in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America, Spain, United Kingdom, Caucasus, Balkans, Indonesia etc. nowadays, there are no leaders at the international level capable of approaching these conflicts, but many conflict areas are interrelated and interdependent. Ethnical confrontations can act as a real Trojan horse used by some interested groups in order to put an end to the supremacy of the state-nations, without considering the boomerang effect which some acts may have. Ethnical phenomena are not exclusively a result of globalization; they have multiple historical, cultural and economic connotations. It is easy to notice that areas which do not experience social and economic problems do not have ethnic conflicts, but this does not mean that there are no other ways to prevent ethnic conflicts.

On the other hand, the extremist-religious component existing at a national, regional or international level is a serious threat to international security. Religious movements,

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especially those with supranational dimensions, are politically active organizations based on strong religious beliefs. The main religions of the world are different from the viewpoint of their doctrines, as well as from the viewpoint of the number of their followers, geographical location and the degree of involvement in internal and international politics. The danger they pose to international security consists of the fact that they consider that their religion should be universally accepted and embraced.

In order to affirm the natural superiority of their religion compared to other religions, some denominations make efforts to attract as many followers as possible. This is sometimes done by persuasion, some other times by coercion.

Environmental deterioration. National security can be endangered by massive destructive phenomena of geo-physical or meteorological nature, sometimes resulted from damaging human acts, done either purposefully or from ignorance: natural catastrophes (earthquakes, floods, global warming), exhaustion of vital resources, industrial or ecological disasters, which result in losses of human lives, destruction of the social-economic climate, pollution of the national or neighboring territories, potential pandemics.

Pandemics. Globalization and free circulation of people and goods, including illegal migration, favor pandemics at regional or global scale. By their consequences, pandemics are a major threat to national security, regardless of their human or animal nature.

By putting together all these elements – terrorism aiming at maximum violence, availability of weapons of arms destruction, organized crime, weakening of the state – we may indeed face a radical threat.

4. Conclusions

It is widely shared viewpoint that the risk of a major confrontation in Europe – *the Euro-Asian heartland*– disappeared when the Soviet Union collapsed, but the European dream of peace and tranquility is far from becoming a reality. The concept of *heartland* was introduced by Harold Mackinder (1861-1947) in the article “The Geographical Pivot of History”, presented at the Royal Geographic Society in 1904. In his opinion heartland signified the “the central part of Europe, the pivot region of the world politics, that part of Europe controlled by Russia and which is inaccessible to ships” [5]. Today, we witness a war fought on more than one front. General fight against terrorism, organized crime, economic espionage and weapons of mass destruction are permanent conflicts which will continue to exist throughout this century, which began under the sign of uncertainty and threat of force confrontation. The recent developments suggest the possibility of cooperation in the field of the two trends: the war on terror and the effort to make the international security system more efficient. It is a world of profound transformations, dominated by a mix of past, present and future elements.

As it is well known, the world of tomorrow should be a projection of today’s world. It is certain that in the years to come the current trends, if not properly addressed, may grow into direct dangers or, on the contrary, provided that all the international actors act accordingly, they will be removed from the worldwide arena. It all depends on how we understand to act today for a better tomorrow.

The real perception and adequate reaction to the existent or emerging threats and risks posed to security is but an endeavor with a major impact upon increasing the mutual

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trust between states. This is a sine-qua-non to achieve the team spirit in the fight against the weaknesses of the 21st century and building of a stable international security system.

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