Role and Position of Bulgaria and Romania in the Black Sea Region

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Abstract

The end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union led to important changes in the Black Sea Region; three more countries (the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Georgia) emerged and these countries with Bulgaria and Romania entered into a political and economic transformation period. During these processes, the Russian Federation was in attempt to re-establish her sphere of influence over the post-Soviet countries. At the same time, a new development occurred outside the Region: the NATO enlargement and then EU enlargement. This dual enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions expanded towards to the Black Sea Region in the second decade of the post-Cold War period. Within the framework; Romania and Bulgaria among others started to establish relations with the NATO and the European Union and managed to become member states. As countries which had located in the Soviet sphere of influence, then entered into the European Union and joined NATO Alliance; Romania and Bulgaria have a specific positions in the Black Sea Region. They with Turkey have been neighbor to a giant state, the Russian Federation and countries in her Near Abroad. Their positions towards Russian Federation and their policies –either revisionist or pro-status quo have been effective in competitive stances of great power towards the Black Sea Region. In this study, Romanian and Bulgarian integration process into the Euro-Atlantic institutions and transformation of their policies towards the Region; which are parallel to each other; and its effect on security are aimed to be laid down in four parts (during the Cold War, the first decade (1991-1999), (2000-2014), after 2014) with a specific attention to the Romanian engagement into missile shield system.

Keywords: Romania, Bulgaria, membership process, missile shield system, sphere of influence

Özet

Soğuk Savaşın bitimi ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması özellikle Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde önemli değişimlere yol açmıştır. Bölgeye üç yeni ülke (Rusya Federasyonu, Ukrayna ve Gürcistan) daha eklenmiş ve bu ülkeler Romanya ve Bulgaristan ile beraber siyasi ve ekonomik dönüşüm süreçlerine girmişlerdir. Bu dönüşüm süreçlerine paralel olarak Rusya Federasyonu dış politikada da eski Sovyet coğrafyasındaki ülkeleri kendi etki alanına sokmaya çalışmaktaydı. Aynı zamanda bölgenin dışından bölgeye yönelik yeni bir gelişme, NATO genişlemesi ve daha sonrasında da AB genişlemesi gündeme gelmekteydi. Bu çerçevede Romanya ve Bulgaristan diğer devletlerle beraber NATO ve AB ile ilişkiler kurdu ve en son 2007 AB üyelikleriyle bütünleşme süreçleri tamamlanmış oldu. Eskiden Sovyetler Birliği'nin etki alanındaki ülkeler Soğuk Savaş'ın bitimini takiben 16 senede AB ve NATO üyesi olacak kadar dönüşüm geçirmişti. Bu özellikleri ile iki ülke Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde özel bir konuma sahiptirler. Türkiye'yle beraber Rusya Federasyonu'na ve onun Yakın Çevresi olarak kabul edilen/tartışılan ülkelerin komşusu olarak; Rusya'ya karşı statüko yanlısı ya da revizyonist politikaları 2000'lerden sonra bölgede görülecek büyük devletler mücadelesinde hem etkilenmiş hem de bu süreci etkilemiştir. Bu çalışmada Romanya ve Bulgaristan'ın bütünleşme süreçleri ve bu süreçte politikalarının geçirdiği değişim ve bunun bölgedeki düzene etkisi dört bölümde incelenecektir: Soğuk Savaş dönemi, 1991-2001, 2002-2013 ve 2013 sonrası dönem. Kırım'ın işgaliyle başlayan süreçte bu iki ülkenin tutum ve politikalarına bakılacaktır. Bu süreçte özellikle Romanya'nın ABD füze savunma sistemine eklenmesi 1990'larda Rusya'ya NATO tarafından verilen taahhütlere değinilerek ele alınacaktır.

Ana Kelimeler: Romanya, Bulgaristan, üyelik süreci, füze kalkanı sistemi, etki alanı

Introduction

After end of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon; Romania and Bulgaria among others started to establish relations with the NATO and the European Union and managed to become member states. Thus, they experienced an exchange of blocs and transformation of their domestic political and economic systems, accordingly their foreign policy. Therefore their domestic transformation and its reflections on their foreign policy in the Black Sea Region during the Cold War and after the Cold War should be looked into to understand effects of harmonization or splits of policies of a dominant state and its partner state on the order of a Region.

In this study, first of all political and economic transformation of Romania and Bulgaria during the Cold War is to be looked into in brief; and then their integration process into the Euro-Atlantic institutions are to be laid down. At the end, change of their policies towards the Region and its effect on status-quo of the Black Sea region will be discussed.

Romania and Bulgaria during the Cold War

On the eve of the Cold War, the general environment of the Region was determined by the Soviet efforts to establish the Eastern Bloc with the Eastern and Central European countries. This period began during WW II, when these countries were invaded first by Germany and then by the Soviet Union to end the German occupation. Then, the left-wing coalitions in these countries were replaced by Communist Party governments, other parties and politicians were totally discharged and the economic, social and political systems were re-designed according to the Soviet model,[1] that will be looked into this process in the following sub-sections:

Military Relations of Romania and Bulgaria with the Soviet Union

In 1949, the Soviet Union had signed twenty-year bilateral treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance with Bulgaria and Romania. As pointed out by Glenn E. Curtis, these treaties "prohibited the Eastern European countries from entering into relations with hostile [countries to] the Soviet Union, officially made these countries as Soviet allies"[2] and legitimized Soviet military presence in those countries. During the Stalin period, Soviet control over East European military was widespread. Mark Kreamer also verified the existence of this situation, by commenting that "the East European armed forces were little more than an extension of the Soviet armed forces."[3]

The East European states and the Soviet Union signed the Warsaw Pact Treaty- the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance in May 1955, thus their alliance system was institutionalized. Curtis asserted that the Soviet Union used the Warsaw Pact as a tool for subordinating the East European states' armies under Soviet control. After the Hungary Revolution in 1956, Khrushchev tried to strengthen the position of the Soviet Union and began to transform the Warsaw Pact into a military tool, preventing defections in the future.[4]

The Prague spring 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia also showed that one of the missions of the Warsaw Pact was to keep the East European communist party regime in power. After the crisis in Czechoslovakia, as a reaction to it, the Brezhnev doctrine was announced, declaring that the East European countries had "limited" sovereignty to be exercised and if the

[1] Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, Alkım Kitabevi, İstanbul: 1983, pp. 525-529.

[2] "The Warsaw Pact", *Czechoslovakia: A Country Study*, edited by Glenn E. Curtis, Federal Division of the Library of Congress, Washington DC: 1992, www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/WarPact.html, (accessed on 04.03.2011).

[3] Mark N. Kramer, "Civil- Military Relations in the Warsaw Pact: The East European Component", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-),* Vol. 61, No. 1, Winter 1984-1985, p.55.

[4] Curtis, *op. cit. Warsaw Pact*

Communism/Socialist Commonwealth was threatened, the Soviet Union had the right to protect and define communism by all means, including intervention.

Within this framework, Bulgaria had a harmonious position with the Soviet Union but Romania pursued policies challenging the Soviet Union. In 1958, Romania demanded the withdrawal of all Soviet troops and advisers from its country; reduced its participation in the Warsaw Pact, including joint exercises, refused to allow Warsaw Pact forces to cross or conduct exercises within its territory and stopped sending its army officers to Soviet military schools for higher education.[5] Finally, Romania reasserted full national control over its armed forces and military policies and found non-bloc sources of armament; gradually established her own arms industry.[6]

After 1989, in all the Eastern European countries, demonstrations and the collapse of the Communist governments (the so-called velvet revolutions) took place, and the USSR did not follow Brezhnev Doctrine policy towards these countries. The Soviet Union did not intervene there as it had in 1956, 1968 and 1981. During this term, Gorbachev announced the end of the Brezhnev doctrine or socialist internationalism regarding his Soviet client states.[7] While all Warsaw member states started to establish non-Communist governments, Moscow did nothing. After the collapse of the Communist governments in the Warsaw Pact member states, the Warsaw Treaty Organization of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance was dissolved (on 1 July 1991, in Prague) after 36 years.

Economic Relations of Romania and Bulgaria with the Soviet Union

After WW II, during the 1948-1953 period, the political and economic systems of all the Eastern European countries changed and were reconstructed according to the Soviet model, especially the Stalinist pattern. Romania pursued an extensive economic development model and started its socialist economic transformation, closely imitating the Soviet precedent.[8] The manufacturing, mining, banking, insurance and transportation industries were all nationalized, a State Planning Commission was established, and the collectivization of agriculture was begun in 1948 and completed in 1965.[9] According to Walter M. Bacon, the economic priorities of the first decade of Romanian Communist Party rule were typically Stalinist: rapid multilateral industrialization, capital accumulation and the exploitation of labour.[10]

In Bulgaria, according to Patrick Moore, three basic components of a socialist economy (but in the Stalinist model) were dictated to Bulgarian Communists: the establishment of the institute for Centralized Planning, the collectivization of agriculture (completed by 1958) and the development of heavy industry.[11] The first five year plan was begun in 1949. Industrialization was started despite lack of natural resources, skilled labour and technology in Bulgaria.[12] Natural resources and equipment were come from the Soviet Union, but with a steep price;[13] thus dependency of the country increased with industrialization.

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[5] Curtis, *op. cit. Warsaw Pact.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Michael L. Dockrill and Michael F.Hopkins, *The Cold War*, Palgrave, New York: 1983, p. 154

[8] Walter Bacon, "Romania", *Communism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Terasa Rakowska- Harmstone, Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1984, p. 169.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Patrick Moore, "Bulgaria", *Communism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Terasa Rakowska- Harmstone, Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1984 p. 203.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[13] Encyclopedia of the Nations, "The First Five Year Plans", Bulgaria Country Study, edited by Glenn E. Curtis, Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1992, http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1939.html, (accessed on 25.03.2011).

After Khrushchev came to power in 1956, he inaugurated a new economic program in Eastern Europe aiming at integration through multilateral institutions – COMECON. The COMECON Charter (1960) explicitly foresaw a Division of Labour and Co-ordination of Economic Plans as the principal means of successfully developing and extending International Socialist Division of Labour.[14] This framework made food processing, agriculture, chemical fertilizers and small electrical equipment were given to Bulgaria's responsibility for greater East European trade and Bulgaria had great export obligations to the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in the late 1950s.[15]

Romania, on the other hand, rejected Moscow's division of labour and economic integration policies, which relegated Romania to the role of supplier of foodstuffs and raw materials for the more industrially developed members.[16] Instead, Romania continued to pursue the Stalinist way of development.[17] The West also supported Romania, supplying technological and economic assistance.[18]

Romanian trade partners began to change and by 1964, nearly 40 percent of Romania's imports and almost one-third of its exports were conducted with the West.[19] When Ceausescu came to power in 1965, the West was supplying almost half of the machinery and technology needed to build a modern industrial base.[20] Despite this, Romanian trade with the COMECON countries remained an important amount till 1980.

In 1971, the COMECON Member countries except Romania, adopted the Comprehensive Program for Further Extension and Improvement of Cooperation and the Further Development of Socialist Economic Integration.[21] According to the Program, all member states restructured their economies, gave more importance to industry, transportation, communication and material-technical supplies and reduced their funds allocated to the agricultural sector.[22] During this term, all Eastern European countries were dealing with high debt to the Western institution as a result of trade deficits.[23] Bulgaria managed to eliminate trade deficits and debts with considerable help from the Soviet Union.[24] This provided better leverage for the USSR and made it more influential over East European countries, except Romania.

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[14] "The COMECON Charter 1960", trans. by R. Nötel (Geneva) from the Russian, German and Hungarian texts in Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, no. 15, 1960 cited by Michael Kaser, *COMECON Integration Problems of the Planned Economies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto: 1965, p. 190.

[15] "The First Five Year Plans", *Bulgaria, op. cit.,* http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1939.html, (accessed on 25.03.2011).

[16] Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Romania: A Country Study", edited by Ronald D. Bachman, GPO for the Library of Congress, Washington: 1989, http://countrystudies.us/romania/56.htm, (accessed on 03.04.2011).

[17] Bacon, *op. cit.,* p. 172

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Bachman, "*Romania: Country Study", op. cit.*, http://countrystudies.us/romania/56.htm, (accessed on 03.04.2011).

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] "COMECON- The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance", edited by Glenn E. Curtis, Washington DC: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1992, http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/CMEA.html, (accessed on 12.08.2012).

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Paul Marer, "East European Economies: Achievements, Problems, Prospects", *Communism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Terasa Rakowska- Harmstone, Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1984, p. 322.

Romania was among the first countries to establish economic relations with the Western industrial countries. She became a member of Western economic organizations such as the GATT, the International Finance Corporation and the International Monetary Fund.[25] While she managed to develop her own industrial complexes in various sectors, she faced serious balance-of-payments crises in 1981.[26] After 1983, Ceausescu refused to seek additional loans from the IMF or the World Bank and severely curtailed imports and maximized exports, but this led to a serious reduction in the quality of life.[27]

After 1985, Gorbachev decided to use the COMECON to realize his economic plans under the perestroika. According to David Mason, Gorbachev based his economic revitalization plan on high technology and investment in new equipment.[28] In 1985 COMECON Moscow Summit (Extraordinary 41st Council Session), the Comprehensive Program for Scientific and Technological Progress up to the Year 2000 was adopted and ratified in 1986.[29] After 1987, according to Mason, Moscow was "calling on the East Europeans to consider reforms as well."[30] Among the Eastern European countries, Mason asserted that "Bulgaria and (surprisingly) Czechoslovakia have accepted the Soviet challenge and have begun their own process of reform. The East Germany and Romania have, for different reasons, resisted the pressure to initiate domestic reform."[31] Romania resisted the introduction of Gorbachev style reforms[32] until Ceausescu was forcibly removed from the office in 1989. The economic reform and restructuring process and implementation of long-term Program was ended with 1989 revolutions in the Eastern European countries and the COMECON dissolved in 1991.

Political Relations of Romania and Bulgaria with Soviet Union

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union managed to constitute an international mechanism within the Eastern Bloc which enabled her to intervene in political developments in the Eastern European countries by establishing loyal governments in these countries. Christopher Jones also argued that "Soviet influence in East Europe depends on Soviet control over appointments to the upper echelons of the East European party leadership"[33] and she prevented empowerment of local Communists.[34]

After the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty, other political factions and pre-1945 parties were eliminated.[35] After the Communist triumph in Romania, members not loyal to Moscow, including Ana Pauker and Luca were purged from the Party.[36] Gheorghiu-Dej was a strong Stalinist who held party leadership on the basis of his Stalinism; therefore, Soviet influence had been very high in Romania at that time. After 1947, the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) was established and it managed to eliminate all institutionalized opposition groups by 1948. In 1949,

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[25] Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Eastern Europe in World Perspective", *Communism in Eastern* Europe, edited by Terasa Rakowska- Harmstone, Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1984, pp. 30-31.
[26] Marer, *op. cit.,* p. 324.
[27] Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Retirement of the Foreign Debt", Romania A Country Study, edited by Ronald D. Bachman, Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1989, http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-11208.html, (accessed on 24.03.2011).
[28] David S. Mason, "Glasnost, Perestroika and Eastern Europe", *International Affairs Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3, Summer 1988, p. 432
[29] Curtis, COMECON, *op.cit*.
[30] Mason, *op.cit*., p. 434.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 437.
[32] *Ibid*, p. 445.
[33] Christopher Jones, *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact*, Praeger, New York: 1981, p. 1.
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] Bacon, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Valko Chervenkov -"little Stalin"- became the new leader of the BCP and managed to outmaneuver local Communists[37] through intense party purges (disqualifying nearly 100,000 of the 460,000 Bulgarian communists).[38] In foreign relations, he pursued policies very similar to those of the Soviet Union to the extent that it was claimed that there was no such thing as Bulgarian foreign policy.[39]

After Stalin's death, in Bulgaria, Chervenkov was replaced by Zhivkov, especially because of "a shift in Soviet support to Zhivkov."[40] Romania still remained in the Eastern Bloc but rejected the de-Stalinization process and looked for more autonomous foreign policy options. In order to reduce Soviet penetration in domestic affairs, they expelled the Soviet advisors on economic, political and security issues, terminated subordination of Romanian intelligence services to the KGB,[41] liquidated Sovroms and pursued a foreign policy different from that of the Soviet Union.[42]

Till 1986, many leaders managed to preserve their position in their countries; this means that the Soviet Union leadership had pro-Soviet leaders in the Eastern European countries. However, the leader in the USSR changed and started to carry out new policies in economy and political arena. At the beginning of the reform process, he also declared that "the principle of equality would henceforth govern relations between Russia and the East European states, and that outside interference in their affairs would not be tolerated."[43] This new Soviet stance gave the East European countries communist parties a clear message – relations between the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries were to be restructured. There was no longer any Soviet tank factor[44] or Soviet financial support in order to prevent a change in the political system. This started new processes in these countries, ending with collapse of the regimes in 1989.

Within this regional structure, there has been relative security in the Black Sea Region based on the preservation of status-quo and order in the Region. During the whole Cold War years until Gorbachev, within the given framework of the regional structure, the Soviet Union tried to preserve the status-quo.

During the Cold War, for countries under the strict control of a dominant country such as the Eastern Bloc countries, including Bulgaria and Romania, they made no effort to regain their autonomy because of unbalanced power differences between the USSR and them.

After 1953, Romania attempted to pursue policies different from the USSR but she could not escape from the Soviet system. For example, after the Sino-Soviet split, Romania opposed the economic and military integrative policies of the USSR. Romanian leadership visited France, did not directly oppose China and accepted a neutral position between China and the USSR. While opposing the existence of Soviet military personnel in other Eastern Bloc

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[37] Moore, *op.cit.,* p. 195.

[38] Encyclopedia of the Nations, "The Early Communist Era", Bulgaria Country Study, edited by Glenn E. Curtis, Federal Research Division Library of Congress, 1992, http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1979.html, (accessed on 24.03.2011).

[39] Moore, *op.cit.,* p. 206.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 196

[41] Bacon. *op. cit.,* p. 173.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-176.

[43] Anatolii Cherniaev, "Gorbachev and the Reunification of Germany: Personal Recollections", *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1991 a Retrospective*, edited by Gabriel Gorodetsky, Frank Cass, Portland and London: 1994, p. 158.

[44] According to Tom G. Palmer, in Gorbachev period, "the communist leaders in Central Europe were told that they would get no further support from Soviet tanks and soldiers.", Tom Palmer, "Why Socialism Collapsed in Eastern Europe", CATO Institute Commentary, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/why-socialism-collapsed-eastern-europe, (accessed on 05.07.2013).

countries, Romania finally established diplomatic relations with West Germany in 1967. However, Romanian opposition against the USSR did not extend to withdrawing from the Eastern Bloc, so it can be defined as a friction rather than a split.

Finally, as Walt points out, balancing or any other similar attempts were unwise for these countries because the Soviet Union was geographically very close, had more offensive capabilities than the sum of the capabilities of all of the Eastern Bloc states, was significantly more powerful than them and had the capacity and control system to make them obey.[45] Therefore, they could only pursue bandwagoning policies with the Soviet Union.

In those years from 1985 to 1991, all states in the Eastern Bloc, including the Soviet Union, were unsatisfied with what they had. In this way, the Soviet system and this regional structure was challenged and then dissolved.

Relations with the European Union and the NATO 1991-1999

After the end of the Cold War, the European countries were engaged in the transformation of the European Economic Community into the European Union and signed the Treaty on European Union – the Maastricht Treaty – in December 1991. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, its non-Soviet members applied for EU membership. After their application, the EU Council decided to launch an enlargement process. In 1993, the EU announced the Copenhagen criteria for the full membership.

Romania signed a trade and cooperation agreement with European countries in 1990, an association agreement in 1993, and formally applied for membership in 1995. When the first group of candidates was evaluated in 1997, the EU did not invite Romania, but she was invited with four other countries to begin negotiations in 1999.

In contrast, Bulgaria, during period from 1990 to 1996, since she could not properly define her foreign policy priorities, tried to develop her relations with the West while taking care to keep her ties with the Russian Federation.[46] Within this framework, Bulgaria signed trade agreements with European countries in 1990, then the EU Association Treaty in 1993, a Free Trade Agreement with EFTA countries (except Austria, Sweden and Finland) (World Bank, 1991) in 1994 and formally applied for the EU membership in 1995.

According to the Europa World Plus Bulgaria Report, relationships between Bulgaria and the EU did not develop till 1997, when the Kostov government was established.[47] This government relaxed the policy of closeness with Russia, solved Bulgaria's disputes with Macedonia and Romania, and tried to strengthen Bulgaria's ties with the EU. Bulgaria has been placed on the list of applicants invited to begin membership talks at the meeting of EU leaders in Helsinki in 1999. Then the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was signed in 1999.[48] Indeed, the EU put the integration of the Central European countries on its agenda during the first decade of the post-Cold War period; of the Eastern European countries during the second decade.

The USA Policies and NATO Enlargements

NATO's relationship with the Central and Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union started with the London Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of NATO members in July 1990. With this announcement, NATO invited the governments of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania "not just to visit, but to

[45] Stephen Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Order", *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Spring 1985, p. 11.

[46] Mustafa Türkeş, "Geçiş Sürecinde Dış Politika Öncelikleri: Bulgaristan Örneği", Türkiye'nin Komşuları, edited by Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel, İmge Yayınları, Ankara, 2002, pp. 192-193

[47] Richard Crampton, History (Bulgaria), *Europa World Plus*, Routledge, London: 02 February 2012, http://www.europaworld.com/eng/bg.hi, (accessed on 06.02.2012)

[48] Türkeş, *op.cit.*, p. 197.

establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO."[49] In December 1991 with the Rome declaration, NATO announced the adoption of a new Strategic Concept which envisaged a broader security understanding and invited these countries to broaden their relations and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established to serve as a forum for further cooperation and dialogue.[50]

In 1994, NATO under US leadership launched the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) which has been a major programme of bilateral cooperation between NATO and individual partner countries.[51] Almost every Central and Eastern European county and former Soviet republics joined the programme. The National Salvation Front which ruled Romania till 1997 became a member of the NATO PfP in 1994, signed the "Status of Forces Agreement" between NATO members and other PfP participants in 1995, allowed NATO's aircraft usage of the country's air space for possible military action against Yugoslavia in 1999.

The Bulgarian government, unlike Romania, had a "Gorbachevian vision of European security"[52] and preferred to preserve close relations with the Russian Federation and to take Russian concerns regarding the NATO enlargement into consideration. However, after the establishment of the NATO Russia Permanent Council in 1997, Russia reduced its opposition against NATO enlargement[53] and in December 1997 Russia clearly expressed a positive attitude towards Bulgarian NATO membership.[54] After that date, the Kostov government tried to strengthen Bulgaria's relations with NATO, adopted the National Programme for Preparation and Accession to NATO on 17 March 1997 and participated in the Stabilization Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997 and in the KFOR- the NATO Kosovo Force in 1999.[55] In 1999 at the Washington Summit, Membership Action Plans (MAP) was signed with Bulgaria and Romania.

Within this framework, the US established relations with the former Warsaw Pact and the post-Soviet states and pursued a strategy of integrating them into the world capitalist system. While doing this, she preferred to pursue a balancing strategy and tried to cooperate with Russia rather than to undermine her position in her sphere of influence, thus refrained from provoking Russia during this important transition process. Therefore, she limited her engagement with regional countries and left a free manoeuvre space for Russia in the former post-Soviet geography except the Baltic republics.

As to the role of Bulgaria and Romania during this process, they were located in a grey zone. Romania was outside the Russian sphere of influence but not under European or US influence either because she was neither a NATO nor an EU member. Bulgaria was under considerable Russian influence. Therefore, they were not in a suitable position (in contrast to Turkey) to help extending the Western influence over the Region. As a result, they neither challenged nor supported Russian supremacy over the eastern part of the Region and Turkish

[49] "London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance", http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm, (accessed on 15.02.2012).
[50] "Partnership for Peace Program", http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm, (accessed on 24.09.2013).
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Dimitar Bechev, "From Policy-Takers to Policy Makers? Observations on Bulgarian and Romanian Foreign Policy before and after EU Accession", *Perspective on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 26 June 2009, p. 213.
[53] Türkeş, *op. cit.*, 199.
[54] "Are Russia and Bulgaria Finally Starting to Look at Each Other as Equal Partners", *The Sofia Echo*, 12-18 February 1999 cited from *Ibid.*
[55] "Bulgaria- NATO Chronology of Key Events," http://www.nato.int/invitees2004/bulgaria/chronology.htm, (accessed on 22.04.2013).

position on the Southern part of the Region and the Straits thus has an enhancing effect on preserving the status-quo in the Black Sea Region.

Bulgaria and Romania after 2000

Bulgaria and Romania's membership talks began at the 1999 Helsinki Meeting and accession negotiations with them started on 15 February 2000. During the period from 2000 to 2007, Romania fulfilled many legislative and judiciary reforms. In December 2004, at the Brussels European Summit, closure of Negotiation was endorsed and in April 2005, the Accession Treaty was signed.[56] Even though there were shortcomings in the reform process, Romania was accepted as member state in January 2007 with the Commission decision to oversee "safeguard measures and transitional measures, financial correction on EU funds and a control mechanism for the judiciary and fight against corruption."[57]

During accession talks, the EU offered many opportunities to Bulgaria; in turn, the Kostov government promised to close down nuclear power plants; two units in 2003 and two more units in 2006.[58] Moreover, Bulgaria fulfilled economic responsibilities and the EU Commission report recognized Bulgaria as a functioning market economy in 2002.[59] Bulgarian efforts on issues of judicial reform and the fight against corruption was judged by the EU as chapters that needed further efforts but was sufficient for accession[60] and Bulgaria became EU member on 22 January 2007.

In November 2002, at the Prague Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government formally invited Bulgaria and Romania along with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks with NATO.[61] Accession protocols were signed in Brussels in March 2003.[62] On 29 March 2004, Bulgaria and Romania officially became members of the Alliance.

These countries also established bilateral military relations with the USA. She signed military cooperation and defence agreements with Bulgaria which enabled the US to open the Aitos Logistic Center (2005, close to the Black Sea), the Bezmer Air Base (2006) and to use the Graf Ignatievo Air Base.[63] NATO forces were allowed to use the Novo Selo Range military base which is very close to the Black Sea.[64] Romania and the US signed the agreement concerning the status of US military forces in Romania in 2001 and 2005[65] and an agreement allowing the stationing of certain elements (land- based inceptors) of the US Ballistic Missile Defence System within Romanian territory, at Daveselu Air Base in September 2011[66] and

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[56] European Commission, "Romania – EU- Romania Relations", http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/romania/eu_romania_relations_en.htm, (accessed on 28.05.2012)

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Dimitar Bechev, "Bulgaria's Path to EU Membership and Beyond," *Bulgaria and Europe Shifting Identities*, edited by Stefanos Katsikas, Anthem Press, London, New York and Delhe: 2010, p. 123.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[61] "Bulgaria and NATO Chronology of Key Events", http://www.nato.int/invitees2004/bulgaria/chronology.htm, (accessed on 28.05.2012).

[62] "A Chronology of Romania-NATO Relationship", http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2131?page=3, (accessed on 28.05.2012).

[63] "Military Bases in Bulgaria", MilitaryBases.com, http://militarybases.com/overseas/bulgaria/, (accessed on 05.06.2013).

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] "Legal Framework of Bilateral Relations", Embassy of Romania to the United States of America, http://washington.mae.ro/en/node/537, (accessed on 05.06.2013).

[66] "Romania's Participation in the Missile Defence System", Romania Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mae.ro/en/node/2161, (accessed on 19.06.2013).

usage of the Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, the 34th Mechanized Brigade Base, Babadag and Cincu training areas, and the firing ranges in Smardan.[67]

During this period, after completion of their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, it could be seen that Bulgaria and Romania attached importance to the Black sea basin politics. When documents on security and foreign policy, endorsed by states are reviewed, it could be observed that policies regarding the Black Sea have been placing in both Romanian and Bulgarian agenda. For example, in the National Security Strategy of Romania (in 2007), after identifying main threats and other related issues; Romania offered herself as a "dynamic vector of security and prosperity in the Black Sea Region."[68] In its strategy, Romania underlined the importance of the Region and of building a climate of security and prosperity there and noted that "the strategic goal of our country is to give an impetus to the European and Euro-Atlantic involvement in the Region."[69]

Countering various threats, tension and destabilizing factors was an essential responsibility of states neighboring the Black Sea, and a Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Region was needed. Harmonizing and establishing efficient institutional cooperation was given as a priority for Romania, attaching importance to the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, which was "an initiative chiefly aimed at championing democracy and economic development, energy security, confidence building, stability consolidation, peace, and security."[70] As was seen, Romania placed the Black Sea Region her security documents and displayed her will of being a pioneer country in the EU regarding implementation of the Union policies towards the Black Sea Region.

The "White Paper on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria", accepted three years after she became an EU member country in 2010[71]; underlined the situation in the Black Sea Region and its effect on the security of Bulgaria. The "existence of frozen conflicts, the actions of terrorist groups, sharp ethnic and religious disputes, high levels of organised crime, corruption and the illegal trafficking of weapons, narcotics and humans"[72] were defined as causes of regional security risks, which were similar to the European security discourse on the Black Sea.

Romania and Bulgaria after 2013

On eve of events in Ukraine in November 2013, Romania initially condemned Russian annexation of Crimea and support for separatist in the Eastern Ukraine. Romania also became the first EU state to ratify the EU's Association Agreement with Ukraine.[73] She has fully implemented all sanctions imposed by the EU in March 2014. Besides this, she has also asked for their toughening at the EU summits in July and August 2014.[74]

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[67] "US Military Engagements to Romania", http://romania.usembassy.gov/policy/us-military-engagements-to-romania.html, (accessed on 28.06.2013)

[68] "The National Security Strategy of Romania", Bucharest, 2007, p. 32; http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Romania2007_English.pdf, (accessed on 22.05.2012)

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] "The National Security Strategy of Romania", Bucharest, 2007, p. 34; http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Romania2007_English.pdf, (accessed on 22.05.2012)

[71] *White Paper On Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria*, 2010, p. 14, http://www.mod.bg/en/doc/misc/20101130_WP_EN.pdf, (accessed on 24.05.2012)

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] Tomasz Daborowski and Tadeusz Iwanski, "Breaking Through Distrust in Relations between Romania and Ukraine, 27.04.2016, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-04-27/breaking-through-distrust-relations-between-romania-and-ukraine (accessed on 03.12.2016)

[74] Alina Inayeh, "Romania: Largely Immune to Russian Pressures", *A Region Disunited? Central European Responses to the Russia- Ukraine Crisis*, Joerg Forbrig (ed.), Europe Policy Paper, February

Romania further developed her relations with new Ukrainian government and Ukraine and she also concluded an agreement on small border traffic in 2014 and resumed efforts "on the Ukraine-Romania Joint Presidential Commission, an intergovernmental committee on the national minorities, and a committee on military matters."[75] After the NATO summit in Wales (2014), Five Trust Funds were set for Ukraine and Romania has also became a coordinator state of the trust fund on Cyber Defence for Ukraine.[76]

Under the framework of NATO, Romania asked for increased security measures in the Region and supported and took part in NATO operation in the Black Sea.[77] During the same period, in May 2016, the US activated a land-base missile defence station in Romania, which was said that this shield aimed to protect NATO countries from short and medium-range missiles, particularly from the Middle East.[78] According to BBC news, "The site hosts radar and SM-3 missile interceptors, and will be integrated into Nato's missile shield."[79] Both Nato and US officials failed to reassure Russia that the shield in Romania and Poland did not aim at Russian territory and did not undermine Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent[80] and they are defensive purposes against potential attacks from so-called "rogue states," particularly Iran.[81]

Russia continues to see this system as a direct threat to Russian security and to peace in Europe.[82] At this point, it should be noted that at the beginning of the 1990s, Russia was also concerned about the stationing of nuclear weapons and their supporting infrastructure in the territories of new member states, which meant an eastward movement of NATO military infrastructure.[83] To dissipate her concerns, NATO members devised the three no's formula, which meant that "NATO had no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy."[84] Despite this, Russia today is facing a development of stationing some parts of nuclear infrastructure of NATO on the territories of Romania and Poland.

As it could be seen, Romania, as a staunch ally of the USA and the EU can follow a policy in compliance with the decision, taken by Brussels and NATO due to lack of division between decision makers and population on an attitude to Russia and of energy and economic dependency.[85]

2015, p. 40. http://www.gmfus.org/publications/region-disunited-central-european-responses-russia-ukraine-crisis, (accessed on 1 December 2016)

[75] Daborowski and Iwanski, *op. cit.*

[76] NATO, "Relations with Ukraine Key Areas of Cooperation", http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm# (accessed on 1 December 2016)

[77] Inayeh, *op. cit.,* p. 40.

[78] BBC News, "US Activates $800m Missile Shield Base in Romania", 12 May 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36272686 (accessed on 3 December 2016)

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] Ilya Arkhipov and Marek Strzelecki, "Putin Warns NATO Missile Shield is Threat to Peace in Europe", Bllomberg, 13 May 2016, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-05-13/poland-to-break-ground-on-missile-shield-site-as-russia-fumes (accessed on 3.12.2016)

[82] *Ibid.*.

[83] Martin A. Smith, "A Bumpy Road to an Unknown Destination? NATO-Russia Relations, 1991-2002", Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy, edited by Rick Fawn, Frank Cass, London and Portland: 2003, p. 64.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] Inayeh, *op. cit.,* p. 41-42.

While Bulgarian leaders have been cautious on a prominent US role on the Sea[86], on eve of recent crisis in Ukraine, Bulgaria's Defence Minister announced that crisis in Ukraine poses a risk to the country and greatest guarantee of security of the country is NATO's membership.[87] She was condemning the annexation of Crimea and joining the sanctions against Russia.[88] However Bulgarian government stayed in a difficult position between obligations to the EU and domestic political and economic considerations.[89] While "non-compliance with the overarching decisions coming from Brussels would mean a freeze of relations with the EU bloc,"[90] Bulgaria opposed further sanctions against Russia.[91] During this crisis, Bulgaria was trying to pursue more assertive stance against Russia in compliance with her Western counterparts, on the other hand she is continuing to treat the issue carefully in order to avoid break in relation with the Russia due to strong public and political opinion divide on relations with Russia, energy dependency, intense economic ties.[92] According to Petrova, "Bulgaria is anywhere near to choosing Moscow over Brussels in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.[93]" It could be stated that Bulgaria, while he is located under the auspices of the NATO and the EU, could strive to find a free manoeuvre space to follow more autonomous policies regarding relations with Russia.

Conclusion

Romania and Bulgaria, during the Cold War, were member states of the Eastern Bloc under the dominancy of the Soviet Union and have been part of the Euro-Atlantic institutions under the US leadership till 2007.

As a specific feature of the subordinate states, they should follow policies in compliance with the positions of the superior states or institutions. While policies that may be considered as a split such as Georgian NATO membership objective or Ukrainian signing of the Association Agreement with the EU may lead more tremendous effect on the country itself and regional security, therefore they are rarely seen; the frictions within a bloc or an alliance may be more possible.

During the Cold War, Bulgaria had been a staunch ally of the Soviet Union and she pursued policies very similar to those of the Soviet Union to the extent that it was claimed that there was no such thing as Bulgarian foreign policy.[94] On the other hand, Romania after Stalin period were in strive of pursuing more autonomous polices. However these frictions were not important enough to lead to a security problem in regional or international environment, only to a discontent within the Bloc.

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[86] Ronald Linden, *Balkanizing Security Romania, Bulgaria and the Burdens of Alliance*, Seattle, National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, 2008, p. 9.

[87] "Ukraine Crisis is Risk for European Security -Bulgaria's Defence Minister", Sofia News Agency, 15.09. 2014, http://www.novinite.com/articles/163388/Ukraine+Crisis+is+Risk+for+European+Security+%E2%80%93+Bulgaria%27s+Defense+Min (accessed on 03.08.2015)

[88] Marin Lessenski, "Bulgaria, Increasingly assertive but not Hawkish", *Central European Responses to the Russia- Ukraine Crisis*, Joerg Forbrig (ed.), Europe Policy Paper, February 2015, p. 7. http://www.gmfus.org/publications/region-disunited-central-european-responses-russia-ukraine-crisis, (accessed on 1 December 2016)

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] Marina Petrova, "Bulgaria and the Ukrainian Conflict at Crossroads with the Russian Federation and the EU", 10 May 2015, http://www.futureforeignpolicy.com/bulgaria-and-the-ukrainian-conflict/, (accessed on 03.12.2016)

[91] Lessenski, *op. cit.*, p. 7

[92] *Ibid.,* p 8

[93] Petrova, *op. cit.*

[94] Moore, *op.cit.,* p. 206.

After the Cold War, Romania and Bulgaria attempted to re-position themselves within the revised international and regional system, trying to achieve integration with the Euro-Atlantic institutions however they, especially Bulgaria were careful not to provoke position of Russia which tried to re-establish dominance in her relations with the post-Soviet countries.

After 2001, the Western countries especially the USA and NATO were challenging the Russian dominance over the post-Soviet countries under the effect of developments after 9/11 and Afghanistan operation which led to increase geopolitical importance of the Central Asia and Caucasus. While Bulgaria leaders have been cautious and different leaders have been changing polices regarding issues of USA presence in the Black Sea or relations with the Russian Federation; Romania, in contrast to the previous period, was also attempting to challenge the on-going Mountreux system by establishing military relations with the USA through allowing the construction of American/NATO military bases on their territory and supporting the discourse of need for change in the Mountreux regime.

During the process after 2014 events, Romania has been in compliance with the EU and US policies while Bulgaria, this time has been in hesitate in pursuing policies that observe obligations imposed by its membership into the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

When factors behind these frictions (in Bulgarian and Romanian cases) are looked into; historical background, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural ties, compliance among decision makers and will of population, economic and energy (in Russian case) dependency should be considered, that may be held in the following studies.

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