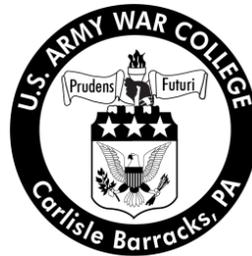


# Strategy Research Project International Fellow

## Bulgaria In The Current Geopolitical Situation

by

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United States Army War College  
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## **Abstract**

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The purpose of this Strategic Research Project is to examine the current geopolitical situation and provide guidelines for the development of the security of the Republic of Bulgaria. This project will explore the relationship between different geopolitical positions of major global "players" and the current global situation. The focus will be on: Eurasian space between Black Sea-Caspian region, United Europe, Russia, the United State and the Balkans. This paper will define the place of Bulgaria in the current geopolitical situation, revealing the advantages and disadvantages derived from this. The research will present the effects of the current geopolitical situation on the security policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the protection of the country's interests set out in national strategic documents. Due to the large volume of the subject matter this paper will only examine those states and unions whose geopolitics have decisive influence on Bulgaria.



## **Bulgaria In The Current Geopolitical Situation**

The geographical position of Bulgaria plays a most important role in its development and existence. A country's geopolitical location determines its destiny. However, to strongly emphasize that along with the advantages and benefits that it brings many hidden defects - evils and dangers. It is the main basis of the strength of the Bulgarian state, but also its weakness....<sup>1</sup>

—Professor Ivan Batakliiev, 1937,  
named the father of Bulgarian geopolitical Science.

Geopolitics is a scientific theory that lays the foundations of the political concept, and uses natural geographic approaches and data to justify national and coalition interests of states and military alliances.

Geopolitics often explains both the foreign and domestic policies of countries in terms of geographical factors, such as: the nature of the boundaries, the presence or absence of natural resources, continental or insular location, climate, topography of the area, etc. It could also be seen as the study of the influence of space on policy objectives and interests of the state. Gradually, however, geopolitics evolves towards exploring space as an environment that transformed the economic and political relations between states.<sup>2</sup>

Today, along with the traditional concepts of "spheres of influence", "balance of power", "buffer", "member satellites" in scientific use entered new categories such as integration, disintegration, national interests, and the dynamic balance of interests. The concept of a "state-gateway" is often seen recently.<sup>3</sup> This means that a small state with an advantageous geographical position in at the dividing line between large countries and their blocks, with a transitional structure and economy is capable of acting as a facilitator for the approximation of its far more powerful partners. Bulgaria plays such role as state-gateway for the European Union.<sup>4</sup>

Located in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, Bulgaria is crossed by the interstate and intercontinental transport links and resources that shape its destiny.<sup>5</sup>

Geopolitical literacy on Bulgarian intellectual elite is crucial in the formulation of right foreign policy goals. This knowledge will help to assess the geopolitical position of Bulgaria in the Balkans, Europe, Eurasia and the world as a whole.

Bulgaria now has a clear international orientation - an active and equal member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU). These two organizations are the key elements in Bulgarian geopolitics in the coming years that will not be changed. More than half of our trade is with EU countries and this number can only increase in the coming years. Bulgaria shares the energy policy of the EU, and its major energy projects determine the strength of our country as a geopolitical player in Europe and the Balkans. These projects include the Nuclear Power Plant-NPP "Belene", the pipeline "South Stream", and Burgas-Alexandroupolis (with Russian participation) and pipeline "Nabucco" (without Russian participation) that must ensure gas transit to European countries.<sup>6</sup>

Disagreements concerning these projects have produced ambiguous assessments both internally and internationally. At present there is no uniform policy regarding energy and a new strategic plan for the next 10 to 15 years to realize such large energy projects. It is clear that Bulgaria is one of the key countries for the implementation of these energy projects and can have significant geopolitical influence and contribute to ensuring energy security in Europe. The main trends affecting the fate of Bulgaria in recent years are the foreign policies of the European Union, United States and Russia.<sup>7</sup>

The specialized literature still lacks comprehensive studies examining the issues of the current geopolitical situation and its impact on the foreign and security policies of the Republic of Bulgaria.

This research paper intends to examine the current geopolitical situation and provide guidelines for the development of the security of the Republic of Bulgaria.

This purpose is revealed in three major steps. The first step explores the relationship between different geopolitical positions of major global "players" and the modern global situation. The focus will be on: the Eurasian space between the Black Sea-Caspian region, United Europe, Russia, the United States and the Balkans. The second phase defines the place of Bulgaria in the contemporary geopolitical situation, revealing the advantages and disadvantages derived from this. The last part presents the reflection of the current geopolitical situation on the security policy of the Republic of Bulgaria. The research manifests the risk and security threats and determines strategic objectives and guidelines for development the security policy of the country.

### The Modern Geopolitical Situation

Swedish political scientist and parliamentarian Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922) is considered to be the father of the concept of "geopolitics". According to him the state possesses a unique identity that is based on more than strictly geographical characteristics that bind its population and affects interstate relations.<sup>8</sup>

The best known and long standing influential theorist of geopolitics is a British scientist, Halford John Mackinder (1861-1947). According to him maritime states (UK, USA) and land states (Russia, France, Germany) are eternal rivals in world history. Mackinder depicts in his successive concepts of the Eurasian "pivot area" and, later, of the central-east European "heartland" as the vital springboards for the attainment of

continental domination to which strive naval forces. He popularized his heartland concept by the famous dictum:

- Who rules East Europe commands the heartland;
- Who rules the heartland commands the world-Island;
- Who rules the world-island commands the world.<sup>9</sup>

In the dawn of the twenty-first century the world has entered a new phase of global geopolitical confrontation. U.S. operations in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) marked the beginning of this new phase, which will probably be the last global geopolitical struggle of the industrial age - that of controlling Eurasia and its energy resources.

In different historical eras or periods geopolitical "dimensions" can acquire virtually any geographic "area" (i.e. geographic region or country). This means that different types and configurations of geopolitical situations may appear in different parts of the globe as part of the global geopolitical space.<sup>10</sup>

The main elements of global space are geostrategic regions, themselves geopolitical regions, but also large regional countries, many of which have the status of "pivot" states for their civilizations.

Non essential elements of world space are those that can link the mentioned above basic elements, called "regions-gateway", performing the role of communication zones. Or vice versa - elements which create barriers along this road called "dissociative belts", "buffer" regions and countries.<sup>11</sup>

In this paper, I will look only at those items that have a direct impact on the geopolitics of the contemporary situation in Bulgaria. For this reason, I will focus on Central Asia, Eurasia, United Europe, Russia, the United States and the Balkans.

### Eurasian and Eurasian space between Black Sea-Caspian regions

The problem of control over Eurasia remains crucial for any serious contender for world domination. For half a millennium, world affairs have been dictated by Eurasian powers and peoples who fight each other for regional supremacy and seek global power. The crucial importance of Eurasia is due to the fact that there contains up to about 60 percents of world GNP and about three - fourths of known energy resources in the world today. There lives 75 percents of the world's population. All but one of the world's overt nuclear powers and all but one of the covert ones are located in Eurasia.<sup>12</sup>

Zbigniew Brzezinski compares Eurasia with a chess board on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played.<sup>13</sup> The only difference is that players are not two, but many in numbers, focused on its western, eastern, central and south parts. Each "player" has different potential and their own ambitions and together form a space worthy of the aspirations of each one claiming to be a global force. The power of the region is due to the fact it that controls two-thirds of the most advanced and productive economies. Here are concentrated the most politically active and dynamic states.<sup>14</sup>

The access to use and control the resources of the Black Sea-Caspian region is the most desired goal of the "great powers." In the region there are at least a few significant geo-economic and geopolitical issues around which "local" and regional outside players build today's system of interstate relations, both "horizontally" and "vertically". Leading among them are the following problems:

- The Black Sea-Caspian region is transformed from dull "world province" into a crucial juncture in global business and economic relations. As part of this process control of the current transport corridors and ensuring their normal functioning is lucrative for outside regional players;
- Access (mostly through the South Caucasus) to oil and gas resources of the Caspian region and its absorption is particularly important for the energy security of Western countries as the question of the organization and ensure uninterrupted transit of energy and other vital resources to Europe;
- Lastly in the region emerged many complex international legal issues concerning of the situation in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea basins. Such is the status of the Caspian Sea and the determination of the mode of operation as a unique water-transport system. The question of the need to determine the status of the Navies of Russia and NATO in the Black Sea waters

### European Union

In the second half of the twentieth century, European states gradually recognized the need to integrate into a single economic and political union. They will be allowed to consolidate their potential abilities to broad terms of resistance to outside interference and influence. In 1989-1991 the bipolar division of the continent was rejected in its eastern half.

Despite its central position among the global land and benefits from the proximity of the sea, Europe has a number of geo-strategic and geo-economical disadvantages. This fact subcontinent could hardly trust only their own potential and is destined to always be turned out - to other cultures and other raw material bases in order to

develop and maintain it as one of the global centers.<sup>15</sup> To overcome most of their natural weaknesses today, the European Union has two possibilities for development: Atlantic (U.S.) and Eurasian (focused on Eastern Europe, North, West and Central Asia).

At the summit of December 13, 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal, European Union leaders signed the Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (EU). The treaty entered into force on 1 January 2010, starting profound changes in the work of the union.<sup>16</sup> However, a stronger EU will cause changes in the global geopolitical landscape and will seek answers to the question what impact will it have on the EU's relations with the United States and NATO.

#### Russia

Geographically, the modern Russian Federation is a natural extension of Europe, beyond the line Taganrog- Narva. It is inextricably linked with the spiritual and economic European Christian civilization. So far, the Russian Federation is oriented on the southeast - China, India, and Iran. On the flip side arguably she is not interested from continuing cooperation, because of the jeopardy she to be attracted gradually into the orbit of these uplifting world powers. There is a high risk to be "captured" by them as a necessary spatial and raw material appendage.

Supposing Russia limits its interests only within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it will be merely a regional state. To regain its status as a world power, it probably has to determine the zone of its strategic interests - the territories of the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Moreover Russia would like to play the role of a stabilizer in a changed and changing Eurasian region. Eloquent evidence is its request to participate in the missile defense project,

stated during the summit on November 19, 2010.<sup>17</sup> This is the first ever Russian initiative in this regard.

It should be noted that today Russia is primarily developed as a raw materials state – i.e. modernization it has done mostly at the expense of export of resources. Owing to its raw wealth, Moscow has always managed to be among the leading countries in the world.<sup>18</sup>

Russia has a permanent presence in the Balkan geopolitical scene with old traditions. In different historical periods, its attitudes and behavior were crucial to the fate of the peoples of the region, as well as changes in their political boundaries, polity, economic and cultural development of their countries. In the struggle for geopolitical and geo-economic dominance of "the Balkan geopolitical unit" Russian interests have clashed with those of the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, and later - in Germany and the United States. Russia sees its presence in the Balkans as a specific mission - "protection" of the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and others orthodox and Slavic peoples. This is a country that actively conducts geopolitics from the eighteenth century onwards with military, diplomatic, political, ideological and economic means. Russia will continue to pursue its geopolitics of the Balkans as a region in which to defend its traditional interests and needs. Future relations with the Balkan countries will largely be determined by the "clash" of Russian interests in the region with the EU, the United States and NATO.

### United States

In the twenty-first century, America has the most advanced military technology and the most stable currency in the world. Throughout the twentieth century, the United States patiently built their empire. American hegemony in the world was maintained

more by economic rather than military means. The United States became the sole superpower possessing economic, scientific-technical, political and military power unknown in scale in human history, and consequently - huge opportunity to influence the development of the rest of humanity. Today, about 26 percents of the world's economic activity takes place in the United States<sup>19</sup>. Their armed forces control the world's oceans at any point and also controls and the space.<sup>20</sup> After the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the sole superpower with overwhelming military superiority and influence on the world political scene. Analysts of geopolitical behavior conclude that the use of force in relations between the countries of Europe and much of Asia is impossible without considering the United States position as a key regulator of foreign policy processes in the world.<sup>21</sup>

However, a rapidly expanding economic crisis seriously erodes the resources of America to maintain its status as the sole global player. The United States elite rightly estimated making changes in the world, reaching the conclusion that if the process can no longer be stopped, at least it should be headed by the United States.<sup>22</sup> This is the real state of affairs. Now, other global players are neither not ready, nor do not want to take the burden of a single global state. It is associated with enormous costs to maintain this status, and neither China nor the EU nor Russia can afford them.<sup>23</sup>

This process should be appreciated positively. First, this situation dramatically reduces risks of global conflict because of too strong a position of one party. Secondly the process severely limits the risk of regional destabilization, since now such powerful country will take more measured decisions, taking into account the positions of other regional players. It may be concluded that a possible collaboration between the United

States and the world can have only positive effects for the development of international and global processes.<sup>24</sup>

### Balkans

The situation in the Balkans is determined by its presence as an integral part of the Balkan geopolitical node as a subregion, where cultural and ethnic diversity is notorious. What is really specific in the Balkans is that the region is the center of three civilizations – Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim.<sup>25</sup> Historically each conqueror left behind a nation or a religion, and each one of these detested the other. Each warring group had committed atrocities of monumental proportions against the others, and every one of these atrocities was remembered as if it had happened yesterday. This is not a forgive-and-forget region.<sup>26</sup> The peninsula is traditionally a symbol of instability resulting in ethnic tension and territorial claims, which are the cause of frequent military clashes. The Balkan Peninsula is at the contact zone of interaction between East and West. It has an important geostrategic position to make direct contact with Asia and the Middle East. The configuration and its position to the Mediterranean, Dardanelle and Bosphorus Straits and lower Danube determine the functions of a crossroad land. These geographical features attract the attention of the Great Powers such as the United States, Russia, and the countries from West Europe whose competing interests are designed and deposited among the Balkan peoples. They are led by great-state ambitions. Their influence on the peninsula became an integral feature supporting diversity in the relations of political actors in it.

The condition of the Balkan region, as part of the global politics is determined by three main factors: its role in the geopolitical plans of the Great Powers; complexity and unresolved nature of national contradictions; activation of the activities of radical

Islamists, strengthening its position in the Balkans, to facilitate its further penetration into Europe. These factors are increasingly intertwined. Further, the Balkans, now and then, act as a bridgehead for penetration of major Western countries in the region of Middle East, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The region of the Western Balkans is specific to the development of South East Europe for several reasons. Today the countries in it continue to be addressed in different levels as factors of uncertainties, generators of strong organized crime and disincentive to invest in countries of Europe and the world. Until ten years ago, the Balkans were associated with words wars, conflicts and tensions, while today regional cooperation becomes the basis of relations in the region. Assuredly, without stability in the Balkans, there will not be stable peace in Europe as whole. Europe will not be able to face the future with confidence as long as the Balkans is a kind of black hole in the middle of the continent. Nor can America be complacent about the stability of Europe, as two world wars have shown.<sup>27</sup> At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century here is the intersection of the geopolitical interests of the EU, Russia and the United States.<sup>28</sup>

#### Bulgaria In The Contemporary Geopolitical Situation

In the analysis of the geopolitical position of Bulgaria traditionally and somehow on inertia is assumed that the country is set to be an "important crossroad". This location has not only derived great benefits but also revealed some shortcomings. What in particular can be those "advantages" and "disadvantages"?

#### Advantages of Bulgaria's place in the current geopolitical situation

Bulgaria is the second (along with Romania) Balkan state with Danube and Black Sea access, thereby ensuring a broad and available connection of the Balkans with Europe. The Black Sea, being the only sea that gives Bulgaria a littoral access, is of

primary importance for the country. The Black Sea region is a strategic in the geopolitical balance of powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. It is due to the fact that it is an intermediary contact region between the European Union, Turkey, Russia and the oil rich Caspian and Persian Gulf regions.<sup>29</sup>

Bulgaria's occupies that part of the Balkans, which is the most direct and most important in the transport and geostrategic position between Europe and Asia.<sup>30</sup> However, the role of Bulgaria to balance between the major players in the region as EU, USA, Russia and Turkey, is getting more difficult and sometimes it has more disadvantages than advantages as the country achieves this fragile balance.<sup>31</sup>

Bulgarian key role for the stability and security on the Balkans and the region democratic development is officially recognized by the United States. Washington highly assesses the importance of Bulgaria's geographical position as a access to NATO for the Black Sea region.<sup>32</sup> The location of the country is the focal point of many foreign interests, some of them far do not match with its. In these circumstances, the preservation of the sovereignty, integrity and unity of Bulgaria should be achieved through a flexible policy of dialogue and understanding, which should not prejudice its national interest.

The efforts of the Bulgarian elite must focus on analyzing the potential benefits of its crossroad position - extracting financial and political benefits of international transport and raw material traffic that could pass through the country.<sup>33</sup>

Geopolitical advantages of Bulgaria do not derive only from its crossroads location and its role as a bridge between East and West. The state has the possibility for inclusion in a community with high production culture, established administrative

standards and Christian values. This community is the European Union. Through Bulgarian territory pass strategic intercontinental transport, communication and energy corridors as significant life lines not only for national but also European security.<sup>34</sup> Bulgaria's importance for global and European security will depend on the construction of these roads, the successful transformation of the country into the Balkan communication and energy center. Ultimately, through entry into EU, Bulgaria joined a highly competitive environment where home production, culture and national character can not be protected with prohibitions, duties, artificial barriers and impermeable boundaries. National interests can be defended through the use of veto powers within the EU.

#### Disadvantages of Bulgaria's place in the current geopolitical situation

Bulgaria is a relatively small country, situated on the outside border of the EU. The Bulgarian economy is heavily dependent on Russian oil and gas.<sup>35</sup> It is an open type economy where the main trade takes place with EU countries. The three most important countries who have a strong influence and among which "stretches" the geopolitics of Bulgaria are EU, Russia and the United States.

A change in the situation in the Middle East, where major local players are Iraq, Iran and Turkey, would also affect Bulgaria. Emergence of new opportunities for the export of Caspian oil and gas through Turkey would reduce the importance of energy routes passing through the Black Sea and through Bulgarian territory. Thus, Bulgaria would be sidestepped and will not be a transit country for oil and gas.<sup>36</sup>

For a number of historical, economic and mostly purely geographical reasons, Bulgaria will be hardest hit by sharp reversals in the geopolitical destiny of Turkey.

Nowadays, the influence of Turkey in Bulgaria is significant. It is based firstly on the presence of a significant Turkish minority and the second important instrument is the economic influence that Turkey exercises with its booming economy. As far as Turkey's influence in Bulgaria is concerned, it is a subject that is not largely discussed, less is it admitted by either of the affected parties.<sup>37</sup>

Left hanging is the problem of acceptance or non-acceptance of Turkey into the EU and its growing role in the Black Sea-Caspian region.<sup>38</sup> Alienation of Turkey from the EU would bring extremely adverse consequences for the geopolitical position of Bulgaria. The country will remain an external border of the Union for a long time and will have to take the first wave of immigrants and dangerous elements, arriving in the EU from the Southeast. Furthermore, Bulgaria could have an increasingly unstable Muslim country for a neighbor.

Contemporary geopolitical position of Bulgaria in Europe is directly affected by its membership in the organizational structures of the European Union and NATO. Bulgaria is located in its southeast end and plays a twofold role. As part of the EU, it is a land that borders in the direction of Asia Minor, along the lines of NATO - a sea frontier with Russia and the Caucasus. The impact of membership is aimed at enhancing the socio-economic integration of the country with the EU. The country is under strong dependence on the European market. The absence of customs barriers and presence of a series of economic accepted agreements, have major implications for national trade.<sup>39</sup> Main trade partners of Bulgaria were Germany and Italy where that bilateral economic cooperation is the most dynamic.<sup>40</sup> The place of our country in the European geo-economic space, relative to competitiveness indicators of the economy, the

structure of trade and volume of attracted investments is in the periphery of the EU market.

American influence on the geopolitics of Bulgaria is expressed with protection of U.S. interests in our country. Bulgaria can provide them with an opportunity for a serious presence in the Black Sea, where important oil and gas pipe lines are meant to pass. The second factor is the fact that Bulgaria is situated near the countries of the Caucasus region. A signed "Agreement on cooperation in defense" between the two countries allows the United States to establish increasing control in the region and in the region of the so-called Greater Middle East.<sup>41</sup>

It should be pointed out that there is an absence of a vision for national geopolitical and geo-economic development of the country. This fact significantly impedes the process for taking useful moves and maneuvers, for the effective protection of the national interest or the conduct of active European policy.

From a national perspective, the parameters of both processes will be determined entirely by the common policies of the Union. In this context, the Bulgarian presence in the governing bodies of the EU can play a very positive role, somewhat offsetting the aforementioned drawbacks. However, Bulgaria's membership in the EU does not remove the political responsibility to work to build a modern state with a modern economy and geo-economic development model. Otherwise, the alternative for Bulgaria is clear: to be a peripheral model of economic status quo of the country. This position corresponds to the currently dominant geopolitical global model core, semi-periphery, and periphery.<sup>42</sup> The countries from semi-peripheral, like countries of Eastern and Central Europe, have the option to develop modern economies and societies, and a

chance to move towards the core of the developed countries. Therefore, development of a national strategic vision for geo-economic development of the country in a regionalized and globalized world is more than necessary.

It is imperative to develop a geopolitical and geo-economic prospect for Bulgaria. This act has to determine the strategic vectors for the development of the country in the horizon of 25 years, with guaranteed political continuity for protecting of national interest and realizing of doctrines. Naturally, in the geopolitical and geo economic perspective of Bulgaria, the European Union is the main strategic vector.

#### Reflection of the Contemporary Geopolitical Situation in Security Policy of Bulgaria

The ongoing transformation in the Bulgarian defense sector is focused on bringing defense capabilities in accordance with the parameters of the security environment. The defense system should be adequate to today's challenges, so that the entire security sector, part of which is defense, is effective in the formation of such a security environment in which the state to realize the fullest extent interests. To be successful in this process, it should first be set in the right direction. This can be done by answering the question of what are the challenges, i.e. risks and threats to security?

#### Risks and security threats

The analysis of risks and threats require first to understand the vulnerability of the country. This suggests an answer to the question, what at present is a risk or threat to Bulgaria, given its geopolitical position and previously conducted foreign policy and security policy? The country is a member of the EU and NATO and actively participates in crisis management operations. Therefore, it should be taken into account that Bulgaria shares the same risks and threats for its national security as its allies.<sup>43</sup>

The attempt to arrange the most important challenges in terms of Bulgarian national security, for the purposes of this research will be done on the basis of criteria that currently affect the security of the country and its citizens.

The strategic security environment is complex, dynamic and with difficult to predict dimensions. Influence on its formation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century include: globalization, a crisis in the financial and economic sphere, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, climate and health issues, demographic, environmental and energy problems, asymmetric risks and threats, threats to information security, countries with weak state, internal and regional conflicts, and the globalization of organized crime.<sup>44</sup>

The trend towards further stabilization and full integration into the Euro-Atlantic and European area is leading to the development of peace stability in southeastern Europe. Reduction capabilities of countries, an expansion of bilateral and regional cooperation, and joint projects in various fields contribute substantially to this. The processes of gradual integration of the Western Balkans into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures are the basis of the strengthening trends of cooperation and good neighborliness. A strong stabilizing effect throughout the region has resulted from the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU and NATO.<sup>45</sup>

Security in Europe and in the Balkans is determined by a series of general and specific risks. A contemporary interpretation of the overall risks to the security of Europe, the Balkans and Bulgaria suggests the following classification:

Objective process of globalization and redistribution of spheres of influence and interests

It is a leading risk. Along with the creation of conditions for development of relations between the countries, processes of globalization and deepening economic inequality and imbalance in economic development. Financial crisis in the world has had a negative impact not only on the internal stability of countries and international relations, but also the security sector and defense.<sup>46</sup> Today the Balkan region and especially the Black Sea are of particular interest to the "great" powers according to the place they occupy in geostrategic concepts of the U.S., Russia and Europe. Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey are emerging as points for connecting Europe with the oil in the Caspian Sea and the Middle East and bridgehead for immediate impact and crisis management processes taking place in the South Caucasus and the Middle East. Balkans are part of the objective emerging transport network connectivity in the shortest possible routes to a richest mineral regions of Eurasia and developed economic regions of Western Europe.<sup>47</sup>

Risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The risk increases as a result of the increased interest in some countries growing access to technology for their production and transportation, and because of problems with the storage of nuclear and radioactive materials.<sup>48</sup>

Climate change, natural disasters and anomalies

These risks as well as the prevalence of dangerous diseases, further complicate existing problems - poverty, social tensions, environmental conditions, and management threaten the stability of countries. They create the conditions for internal

conflicts and humanitarian crises that require significant allocation of civil, financial and military resources to resolve them.<sup>49</sup>

#### Hazards for ecological security

The risk arising from climate change and its consequences, and the occurrence of natural disasters and accidents, industrial accidents with leakage emissions, transboundary air pollution, water and shoreline, radioactive contamination of separate territories and increased activity of international terrorism all pose risks to military forces engaged in missions and operations outside the country.<sup>50</sup>

#### Problems with lack of energy and natural resources

These specific problems are becoming more serious challenges for all countries. In this context, energy security has acquired new dimensions. Risks and threats in this area derive from the increased opposition of interests, activities of terrorist groups and Armed Forces, and the presence of unresolved conflicts in the areas of extraction on resources.<sup>51</sup>

#### Transnational organized crime and illegal trades in question in people, drugs and weapons

The point risks are not only threatening the stability of countries, but also the global economic order and complicate the strategic security environment. Fusion of organized crime with executive and private capital can lead to regional rivalries and the formation and opposing groups of countries and blocs.<sup>52</sup>

#### Key influences on the strategic security environment

The impacts are asymmetric and include other transnational risks and threats, especially terrorism. Terrorist organizations decentralize their structures, making it difficult to locate and neutralize their individual elements. Terrorists increase possibilities

to use radioactive materials, chemical and biological agents. Terrorism is a threat to both global and regional security. Now it is well understood that there are no borders in the fight against terrorism and that should talk mainly about politics of confrontation and comprehensive preventive measures against the phenomenon of terrorism.<sup>53</sup>

#### Risks of information security and threats of cyber attacks

These contemporary risks increase constantly. Their targets are strategic civil and military communications and information systems and forces involved in operations and missions outside the country. They are generated by the rapid development of technology, extending the range of criminal and extremist organizations and hackers who try to get unauthorized access to classified information in automated information systems or networks.<sup>54</sup>

#### The existence of weak states

These countries significantly affect the formation of the strategic security environment. At the same time there is an increased role of various non-state actors such as economic and financial groups, NGOs, radical religious communities, transnational criminal networks, and other extremist groups. They all try to influence the world order, the setting and appearance of hostilities in crisis regions.<sup>55</sup>

In the Western Balkans, positive trends dominate owing to the active involvement of the international community to resolve the traditional and emerging issues. Despite this, the threats for national security on the countries continued to exist in the region. At present, the risks are no longer the product of potential ethnic conflict and result from asymmetric economic and political development of the countries in the region.<sup>56</sup>

## Specific risks to the Balkans and Bulgaria

### Risks associated with developments in the Western Balkans

Here can be seen in the first place the situation in Kosovo after the election. The Democratic Party led by Hashim Thaci won. Some European countries say they support the Government of Kosovo, trying not to notice that in power in the country is the Mafia's elite, according to the deputy from the European Parliament Pino Arlacchi.<sup>57</sup> The situation in Kosovo had the status of "frozen conflicts/wicked problem" and north Kosovo where Serbs live is mainly the "biggest challenge".

The situation in Serbia remains uncertain. High unemployment and the "gray economy" adversely affect the normalization of the situation in the country. In the short and medium term, the most serious problem for Serbia is acknowledged of the new status of Kosovo.<sup>58</sup>

The situation in Macedonia is closely related to processes in Kosovo. The international community imposes the opinion that the Western Balkans is like interconnected vessels in which events in one country directly affect the situation in the other. Highly developed Albanian separatism in Kosovo and Macedonia remains a destabilizing factor in Macedonia.<sup>59</sup>

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains complex. Among the population of the country is considerable potential of ethnic intolerance, able under certain conditions to provoke separatist sentiment.<sup>60</sup>

Montenegro dissolved Union with Serbia and individuate into a separate state. The "Declaration of Independence" declares that it is a civic state, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional society, state based on the rule of law and market economy.<sup>61</sup> Its strategic national goal is membership in the EU and NATO.

Albania remains one of the most backward countries in the region in economic and energy terms. Its vague prospect of European integration creates additional prerequisites for instability in the region.<sup>62</sup>

#### Risks in the Black Sea region

The presence of threats in the region and the struggle for leadership in it has a direct influence on the stability of the political and economic situation in the Balkans. Today, the prospects of this region depend mostly on the presence in it of two powerful countries - Russia and Turkey. Their historic rivalry to some extent affects international relations among Black Sea states. Both sides see themselves as a regional leader of the Black Sea. Over the last decade the importance of the Black Sea region increased sharply due to existence of contact points with the Caspian Sea and its vast reserves of oil and natural gas. There is a conflict of interest.<sup>63</sup> Turkey's tough stance in terms of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles became a problem for the transportation of oil from the Caucasus and Central Asia to Western Europe.

Neglected for years the Black Sea region started to become important to the security of Western societies. After the EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria, 500 km from the Black Sea coast became part of the new eastern border. The United States used the Black Sea region air corridors in connection with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup>

#### Risks posed by Islamic fundamentalism

These hostile movements are aimed at integration between religion, state, politics, modern technology, and military power. A new generation of terrorists emerges that is not transferred and is not closely related to the Middle East. There is a desire for the instrumentalization of the Islamic faith with the aim of opposition to the fundamental

European values, increasing the distance of Muslims from the rest of society, and thus imposing the term "Islamic fundamentalism."<sup>65</sup> Supporters of Islamic fundamentalism dismiss the achievements of democracy, human rights, pluralism and formulate public policy change. Therefore it is very important to realize not only the danger of "Islamic terrorist", but also "political Islam."<sup>66</sup>

#### Organized crime in the region

The risks of organized crime in the region are expressed in the operation of cross-border smuggling of arms, drugs and human trafficking. The approved regional merging of gangs and their penetration into the political and economic environments, the executive and the judiciary hide a big danger. Albanian paramilitaries are new threats in the region that have emerged in recent years and transfusing each other. They not only are not under direct political control, but also create their own political parties to participate in the legislative and executive - a phenomenon unknown in world political practice.<sup>67</sup>

The processes of globalized drug trafficking and drug consumption affect all European countries and especially the region of the Balkans including Bulgaria. There is a growing danger of the involvement of Bulgarian citizens and criminal structures in the drug trafficking channels based on the country's location. It is well known that the main routes for international drug traffic from the Middle East to Western Europe go through Bulgaria.<sup>68</sup>

#### Different levels of democratization and strengthening of statehood

The presents of these differences divides the region and creates disturbance of the unity in a security environment. One part of the region including Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey is a stable security environment in the EU and NATO; the rest is

still unstable in terms of security. Painful questions about human rights, minorities and refugees between Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are still not solved.<sup>69</sup>

These threats directly and indirectly affect on national security of the Bulgaria and should be considered in the development of basic documents governing structures, functions, rights and obligations of the institutions involved in its provision.

From the analysis of the strategic and regional security environment in the Balkans, one can make the following predictions:

In the medium term will remain differences in the degree of integration of the region into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, making them areas with different levels of security. At present, the main destabilizing factor in the region is the situation in the Western Balkans.

In the long-term integration processes and objective necessity of tackling global and regional issues will require increasing the security of the region.

No country or organization alone can ensure peace and stability in Southeast Europe. Currently, prosperity and a common future of the region can be achieved only through open and effective cooperation among the Balkan countries, with the active assistance and support of the EU and NATO.<sup>70</sup>

The analysis of the risks and security threats outlines the main causes of future conflicts, namely the struggle for power, influence and access to resources.

#### Strategic objectives and guidelines for development the security policy of the Republic of Bulgaria

Specifically for Bulgaria, the assessment of the geopolitical position should include evaluation of such processes as external political relations of the country in the global and regional viewpoint, the attitude of the superpowers in the Balkan geopolitical

unit and Bulgaria's place in it, the integration processes in Europe and Balkan, solving the Bulgarian national question and others. Of particular importance in the evaluation of the complex geopolitical situation in Bulgaria in the Balkan Peninsula is its close proximity to the Caucasus geopolitical unit, Bosphorus Strait and politically unstable territory of the former Yugoslavia. The process of forming a political map of the west of our borders is not yet completed.

Bulgaria seeks to realize its national-security strategy based on and in accordance with UN statutes, international, bilateral, and multilateral treaties and conventions. The main goal expressed in Bulgaria's national security policy is the maintenance and strengthening of peace in a situation of internal stability and international security. Bulgaria has no territorial claims and rejects any such claims upon itself. It unconditionally renounces the use of military force in international relations and seeks no military superiority over any other country.<sup>71</sup>

Ensuring national security is a priority and an ongoing task for the ruling elite of the state. Chief guarantor of national security is the state and its institutions. State and foreign policy can not be viewed outside the context of its geopolitical position. Specific expression of the geopolitical situation of a country is its borders and neighbors, foreign policy, bilateral relations, participation in interstate military-political and economic blocs and others.<sup>72</sup>

Analysis of the strategic security environment confirms the stability of the evolution of trends occurring in it at the end of the Cold War and gained even more sharpness after the terrorist attacks against the United States of September 11, 2001. The security environment is characterized by asymmetry of the new challenges that

have unlimited distances from the ability to influence, complexity and dynamics of the processes, increasing the role of non-state actors, the lack of clearly defined and predictable opponents.

The strategic goal of the defense policy of Bulgaria is validation of national interests through the development, improvement and use of adequate defense capabilities. Second is the development of a single set of interoperable armed forces capable of performing the entire range of tasks arising from developments in the geostrategic environment of security. Therefore it is necessary for Bulgaria to maintain a very clear and reasonable defense strategy, which will serve as a basis for decisions about development.<sup>73</sup>

The defense policy of the Republic of Bulgaria is a tool for the realization of political strategy. This defense policy as a means for foreign policy strategy is based on active membership in NATO and participation in the development of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) of the EU. This ensures both national defense and increased relative weight in international relations, in order to achieve foreign policy goals. It was adopted by the country in a pro-active approach to global security including participation as a key element in operations abroad. This participation in military coalitions contributes, directly or indirectly, to enhance the external security environment.<sup>74</sup>

The Republic of Bulgaria defines the priorities of defense policy, including the role and place of the Armed Forces as taking into account the nature of the strategic environment in which to conduct the security and defense, and considering national interests. Armed Forces should have sufficient capacity to cope with the challenges.

Scarcity of resources and the complex nature of the environment suggest the need for a reliable integration into the security structures. This, together with the European democratic values orientation of the country determines the foreign policy choices toward the EU and NATO. This membership in both organizations, however, entails commitment of responsibility, so that the obligation to security is mutual.<sup>75</sup>

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria reflects the interests of the country in the context of understanding the nature of national security under the specific environment and the existing factors.

With the goal of building Armed Forces which to meet current requirements in the defense system is performed through the transformation process. This process helps to achieve the main goal - the development of defense capabilities to be a reliable component of a comprehensive toolkit for influencing the external environment in the desired direction of the country. The transformation includes a shift from an approach based on the sources of threat to an approach based on ability. This requires the country to have sufficient capacity with which to address the risks and threats when and where needed. Moreover, the transformation is reflected in a shift from territorial defense, as during the Cold War, to participate in operations to maintain peace as part of a proactive approach to security.<sup>76</sup>

Active participation in NATO and in particular the contribution to Alliance operations should be maintained as a key strand of the Bulgarian Security and Defense. Expedient is the Republic of Bulgaria to continuing to contribute according to their means for collective defense and for operations in response to crises.

The defense policy of the Republic of Bulgaria as a member of the EU complies with the objectives of the European Security Strategy. The country has defined a framework for the development of the EU as a global security factor, including the effective use of a wide range of instruments military and non-military in response to new threats.

The analysis of changes in the strategic security environment, the new definition of the risks and threats, accumulated significant imbalance between planned capabilities and devoted resources to their creation and maintenance, the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis on the Bulgarian economy demand conducting a review of the structure armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.<sup>77</sup>

The conceptual part of the review of the structure of the armed Forces ended with the adoption of the White Paper on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is a program for their development. The main objective was to determine what defense capabilities need to develop in Bulgaria, taking into account existing and predictable real resources that society can spend on defense. In the determination of capabilities, a key moment was Bulgarian participation in the system of collective defense of NATO and the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union. The aim is to achieve a real transformation of defense capabilities. This is achieved through the application of planning based on capacity. This approach addresses existing and required skills, taking into account those which are no longer needed. This allows the formulation of the requirements for the transition to a single set of forces, performing a wide range of missions and tasks. This planning approach is

suitable for contemporary security environment, where there are clear and specific threats and applying only a military response is rarely applicable.<sup>78</sup>

In the national context, the purpose of defense must be focused on building a modern and efficient army and implementation of effective management of defense.

### Guidelines

Bulgaria has already done much to establish its orientation and place in the international community. The country achieved membership in two of the most prestigious organizations in the world, NATO and the EU. Bulgaria successfully built its national security taking into account its geopolitical location and constantly changing environment. The country contributes to regional and international peace processes and plays a leading role in several of them. To confirm itself as a long term strategic partner to the democratic forces in the Balkans and Europe, and to develop the its national security several more things need to be done:

- The Bulgarian senior leaders have to take the responsibility to reach an agreement in numerous controversial internal issues and to lead the country. Vicious practice of some Bulgarian politicians to put party interests before the interests of society and the state should remain in the past.
- It is necessary to constantly and correctly understand the nature of the new challenges in today's security environment. This in turn requires a balanced mix of military and non-military instruments in the political strategies of the country. Only then the process will ensure national security and the realization of its interests in the fullest possible extent.

- Bulgaria has to continue adopting and defending an active approach to security and in particular participation in operations in response to crises. This approach will provide practical contribution not only to the pursuit of national interests, but also to enhance stability regionally and globally.
- The Bulgarian elite needs to put more effort toward building and maintaining transcontinental energy, transport, and communication infrastructure on Bulgarian territory, connecting Europe with Asia. That will increase importance of the country among our partners and will allow the Bulgarian government to have a louder voice in regional and world affairs.
- And last but not least is the need to continue the hard political will of government, directed towards a new quality of defense, a new standard model of formation and implementation of an active defense policy.

### Conclusion

Depth of analysis shows that in recent years, Bulgaria is located in a complex geopolitical situation. It is caused by its incorporation into the European structures, the desire of Turkey to be hegemonic on the Balkans, the independence of Kosovo, and the geopolitical situation in Macedonia. In these external political conditions and complex internal political situation, Bulgaria has to balance its foreign policy in the Balkans and globally.

In this sense it can be said that Bulgaria's foreign policy must be a flexible policy of dialogue and understanding, but without prejudice to its national interest.

A serious geopolitical analysis and of course a long-term national security strategy that incorporates the results of such analysis can and has to lead to the

realization of real and potential benefits with which the country possess. The power of small countries lies in their ability to determine their exact location and importance in order to realize their interest to the maximum. It should not be forgotten that the shortage of resources and finance has not only a negative meaning. It forces senior leaders to look for original, creative solutions to identify and develop potential that can make a country much stronger and more secure. Therefore, when considering the geopolitical factors of security, they must be seen in relation to the economic, political, social, spiritual and other aspects of national security. This is the correct process to uncover opportunities for the development of real potential, which will lead to the strengthening of the security system.

At the same time, the most important goal is to preserve the Bulgarian national sovereignty and integrity, despite the complicated geopolitical situation. Existing State Community and national spiritual unity always have been and will be the basis of Bulgarian identity.

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<sup>70</sup> “National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria”, 12.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid 24.

<sup>74</sup> “National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria”,9.

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<sup>77</sup> ”Development Plan of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria”

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