THE ROLE OF HELICOPTERS TO MAINTAIN MARITIME SECURITY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

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Abstract: The current geopolitical and international security context, characterized by the tendency to change positions of major actors through a diversification of the sources of tension as well as by a significant increase in uncertainty at times, triggered by political, regional, and/or military elements, highlights the dangerous possibility of an almost inevitable future conflict able to restore areas of influence and to establish a balance of forces at a global level. The article analyzes the role of helicopters in maritime security in the Black Sea Region, based on the Euro-Atlantic concepts and the capabilities of the maritime states.

Keywords: maritime security, Black Sea Region, helicopters in maritime security operations

1. MARITIME SECURITY: STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS

Before dealing with the specific determinations that maritime security brings to the security concept, we must look at the proximal genus.

If we look at „security" in The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, we will find the following definition „being sheltered from any danger, the sense of confidence and tranquility that one gives to the absence of any danger; protection, defense". In the case of animated curiosity we can also consult the Dictionary of Romanian Literary Modern Languages (DLRLC), published half a century before. Frist, we would find a very similar definition: "being sheltered from any danger; the sense of security that someone gives to the absence of any danger; (in particular) the safety of the borders and institutions of a state". But even more interesting than semantic explanations are the contextual explanations that the authors of the two dictionaries feel compelled to give. So the more recently mentioned dictionary provides us with the definition of collective security ("the relations between states, created by treaty measures of common defense against aggression") and of social security ("all legal regulations for social security status at all layers like persons, social group or total population, as well as for the protection of disadvantaged or marginalized people "). Finally, the dictionary topic caught our attention by pointing at to the existence of an outdated meaning, namely "a repressive state organ that has the task of defending by any means the communist system of Romania". Of course, lexicographic writing in communist Romania, as interested in either collective or social security, and in any case could not associate the adjective "repressive" with any state organ whatsoever. Instead, the DLRLC uses quotes from *Scânteia* to illustrate the meanings of occupational safety and security, as well as the syntax of the Security Council. And the attention of writers at the middle of the century, turned to the state organ "who oversees the internal security of the state and of the citizens' lives and defends the public goods against the scams of class enemies", giving a completely utopian definition.

From the comparison of the two explanations offered by dictionaries, coming from different regimes, we believe that it was clear that lexicography even bears the consequences of ideology. If this is how words function, and within such a short period, the differences are even greater over longer periods of time and in the sphere of notional content. That is why we will return to the origins of the term and we will strive to outline a brief etymological evolution. The most distant language in which the word of security is to be sought is Latin. The word *securitas* is the noun which expresses the state of carelessness, of inner peace. From Latin, the term went into French by borrowing, meaning a sense of security. Only in French at the second hand and with a meaningful change the term has spread to several European languages, including Romanian. The diachronic evolution of the word was not solely responsible for its semantic diversity. Within each language a difference can be made between at least two levels of use: the common one, used by the two dictionaries mentioned above and a specialized niche according to the fact that security does not mean as much protection and defensive strategy as it stands for equilibrium, prevention, deterrence, intimidation. With this we have reached the semantic area that interests us. The use of the term security with this latter meaning to name the concerns of contemporary states denotes not a random linguistic preference but a specific conception. To clarify this idea, we will consider it in contrast with an old concept used socialist Romania: that of collective defense. By the very use of the noun 'defense', one can easily tell that there is a radically different philosophy according to which all efforts are channeled in a defensive direction. So we can talk about a passive attitude. While, on the contrary, the use of the term security with its meaning of balance implies the assumption of an ambivalent participation on the geopolitical scene. The state that seeks security not only reacts to the movements of the other players, but also takes advantage of the opportunities that have emerged and acts to correct the imbalances that would jeopardize it. To defend yourself is to look only at your own borders. To pursue security means to look beyond borders, to the neighbors' neighbors, to the balance between the great actors, to watch all the opportunities to propagate stability.

But how does maritime security differ as a species from the general security concept as a proximal genre. There is an abundant literature that has highlighted the specificity of the seas and oceans as a strategic space due to the technical, economic, geographical features that are inherent in this environment. In political discourse, the notion has gained an increased frequency over the last three decades, but it is rather intuitive that the concepts considered are more or less different.

Just like other international approaches, maritime security is a term that draws attention to new challenges and, together with other security-related tasks, has the role of protecting against the current risks and threats that are in the process of development to the future. Of course, when we talk about maritime security, we also need to indicate the type of threat that prevails at sea at some point.

Although at present, the EU does not have a permanent naval component such as NATO's naval force, the European Maritime Security Strategy (SEES) for the global maritime domain was adopted by the European Council in June 2014, implying improving the way the EU anticipates and responds to the challenges can affect people, activities or infrastructures in the EU.

The strategy addresses maritime security as an international civil-military activity aimed at reducing risks and countering illegal or threatening maritime activities, law enforcement, protecting the EU's maritime interests in the world.

This strategy has been complemented by an action plan to boost its implementation. All stakeholders in the field of maritime security in the EU - from all sectors and Member States - are invited to participate directly in a cooperation framework.

In this endeavor to redefine marine security concepts and strategy, in June 2018 the SUESM Action Plan was revised, the new Action Plan having a horizontal (A) spanning 5 key areas, devoted to cross-cutting issues and a new regional part (B) in which the EU aims to address global challenges through regional solutions for European non-violent sites (in European sea basins such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea) and internationally (Guinea Bay , Horn of Africa, the Red Sea or Southeast Asia).

We can therefore speak of a new approach to maritime security, which focuses on 5 key/domains that aim at defining maritime security in positive terms and in terms of economic development through the use of the sea's advantage. And it is not just a conceptual approach to the phenomenon, but going further it has to become a response to the way in which these threats are countered and how the relations between the states involved are affected. These areas are: international cooperation, maritime surveillance, capability development, research and innovation, awareness and management of risks, education and training.

Recognizing the importance of enhancing stability at sea, both NATO and the US increasingly use the term maritime security operations to describe maritime operations in which international and national laws are respected, in which the right to free navigation is assured and citizens, infrastructure and maritime resources are protected.

The concept of joint maritime security describes an ideal form of cooperation between all relevant actors in the maritime sector. In this ideal form, all stakeholders identify threats that are existential and what should be done to counteract them by developing a common understanding of repertoire and creating instruments to promote maritime security.

Security co-operation has been understood as a form of political alliance largely characterized by the absence of war, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and a growing sense of mutual trust and the development of a collective identity.

The notion of alliances integrates into the current security thinking and develops this concept further claiming that an adequate understanding of regional stability must go beyond the traditional understanding of war and how distinct threats are identified while the organization is reacting collectively.

Beyond the theoretical milestones outlined above, which can be subsumed into a unitary doctrinal vision, we must take into account a variety of acamedic visions, of course, that it is justified to review them and discuss each one, for in fact, the discussion should focus not on the objective specificity of the maritime environment, but on the plurality of theoretical approaches of the concept. The idea is not new and has been circulated in the Romanian academic environment, but the stake is not to explore and highlight the diversity of approaches within the Western academic communities, but to put forward Western doctrines with the doctrines of other actors on the world stage. To miss the significance of the concept of maritime security for Russia, for example, means failing to achieve our own Black Sea security goals, if we are referring to NATO member countries.

2. THE USE OF HELICOPTERS IN MAINTAINING MARITIME SECURITY

When talking about the place and role of helicopters in operations, in general, we must keep in mind that each helicopter type or variant has distinct characteristics that determine the primary role in which it can be used.

It consists in the fact that most helicopters can carry out a wide variety of missions and have general characteristics that recommend them to be used both on the frigates to carry out their missions as well as on the shore as required by the situation. In an appropriate configuration, so far, he can carry out air and medical evacuation missions, day and night, search and rescue missions at sea, day and limited at night, as well as naval surveillance and research missions.

Another relevant feature of the naval helicopters on board the frigates is the ability to react quickly in the marine environment. This is evidenced by the fact that frigates with helicopters on board are able to react in a short time to unforeseen situations and to respond adequately and timely to crisis situations. Preparing for action goes hand in hand with many non-combatant activities such as strength exertion, logistical and medical support, etc. Also, through the experience acquired and the necessary capacities to resolve conflicts, frigates can offer a wide range of services to support operations from peacetime in a favorable environment to covering the entire spectrum of conflicts in the environment hostile.

Missions to combat piracy by helicopters involve both discoveries by research and intervention at ships suspected of piracy. Next, for a better understanding of the subject, we will refer to the use of helicopters only in the Black Sea area.

The character of "sealed", the small area (436,000 km2) and the endowment of defense structures (civil and military) made piracy so far not a problem in the Black Sea region.

Helicopter missions can also be adapted to the protection of commercial ship convoys by detecting small threat ships and combating them if necessary especially in anti-piracy operations.

Technique involved in carrying out these operations consists of helicopters embarked on surveillance frigates and ground based helicopters. These missions have a wide range of tasks such as territorial waters monitoring, SAR, internal security (e.g. anti-drug operations). These missions can also be extended to international waters, especially those designed to prevent drug trafficking, where helicopters can be involved in tracking and catching fast-track boats. Moreover helicopters support Special Forces in amphibious operations through tactical transport, information provision, supports in combat and antiterrorism fight.

The volume of maritime trade has increased fourfold worldwide since 1965, only in the Black Sea, sailing around 100 commercial vessels a day. Globalization, which has made it easier for cross-border traffic and the information revolution, highlights the fact that the oceans and seas of the world have become an increasingly accessible environment for criminal activities and potentially hostile actions. These to enroll in a broad spectrum like illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings, weapons, drugs and piracy to terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of transport to their destination.

MSO Maritime Surveillance Operations are under the responsibility of the Coast Guard, being carried out by the Navy with the support of the border police and even the Gendarmerie in some situations but in time of peace, embarked helicopter frigates can be used to monitor the naval situation and control maritime traffic in the territorial sea, the contiguous area and the exclusive economic zone of Romania, to support forces specializing in the fight against maritime pollution, smuggling and illicit arms transport and drugs, as well as national and international search-rescue efforts or humanitarian aid.

They also have an important role to play by participating in bilateral and multinational exercises within NATO or the coalition to which our country is a party.

In addition to these actions, they can detect, warn and control ships and boats suspected of terrorist activities or cross-border organized crime (illegal trafficking in human beings, arms and ammunition, drugs, prohibited material) on the sea.

If required, the frigates take part in naval actions against drug trafficking in support of NATO or Partner country specialized agencies to detect, monitor, prevent, produce, transport and distribute illegal drugs. Allied naval forces can be effectively deployed in detecting and monitoring drug trafficking, as well as those involved, until specialized agencies intervene in their area of responsibility. Against maritime terrorism, they can participate in offensive (counter-terrorism) and defensive (anti-terrorism) missions, and by taking effective protection measures to reduce the success of any terrorist attack against ships.

In the case of a request to participate in national or international search-rescue or humanitarian aid actions, the frigates have the capabilities to carry out search, rescue, and medical assistance to shipwrecked persons, capacities greatly multiplied by the presence of the embarked helicopter. The management of search and rescue operations at sea in the maritime area of responsibility is under national responsibility, with the participation of border police, military and civilian ships or aircrafts. All forces involved in these SAR operations apply the IMO and NATO procedures.

With regard to the use of helicopters for the areas of the EU Strategic Action Plan, they can be used in MSO maritime surveillance missions to monitor the naval situation and control maritime traffic.

3. THE PRESENCE OF HELICOPTERS IN MARITIME SECURITY OPERATIONS AT THE BLACK SEA

We will continue to review the capabilities of the three NATO states at the Black Sea.

The naval forces of the Republic of Bulgaria it has three Corvettes of Soviet origin Tarantan class, a Soviet frigate of the Koni class and three Belgian frigates Wielingen. At present, the Bulgarian navy has two Eurocopter AS565 Panther helicopters that it can use in sea operations at the Chayka Air Base, without any boat.

The Romanian naval forces are equipped with a frigate Mărăşeşti class, two frigates of British production class 22 Broadsword and 4 corvettes of Romanian production Tetal class. It also has three IAR 330 PUMA Naval helicopters that can be operated both by the frigate board and on land from the Tuzla aerodrome.

IAR 330 PUMA Naval   FRIGATE Mărăşeşti

Turkish naval forces have 16 frigates, 10 corvettes, 12 submarines and 37 helicopters (12xAugusta-Bell AB-212 ASW Italian, 25xSikorsky S-70B-28 American Seahawk) which can be operated from several platforms both sea on land.

Augusta-Bell AB-212

FRIGATE G-class

The Russian Black Sea Fleet consists of a wide range of ships, of which we remind you of the most important ones: Moskva cruiser Slava class, destroyer Smetlivyy class Kashin (the only ones of its kind in the Black Sea), 5 frigates (2x Krivak class and 3x class Amiral Grigorovici), 8 corvettes (3x class Grisha, 1x Buyan-M, 2xDergach, 2xNanuchka-III). In support of them are also used 20 helicopters Kamov Ka-27 and Mil-Mi 14.

Kamov Ka-27

Russian CRUISER Moskva

Two types of approaches are possible when assessing the performance of the four states. First, considering that since the end of the Second World War there have been no armed conflicts in the sea basin, as no piracy cases have occurred in the last seven decades it can be considered that endowment is beyond the necessity of such threats.

The prompt response would be that neither piracy nor armed conflicts are imminent attacks on maritime security at the Black Sea, precisely because of the discouraging role that these capabilities have. At the opposite end, political decision makers could be criticized for having too little effect, insufficient endowment if it is to compare the French, Italian and United Kingdom Naval Forces.

The replica has to come in two levels: firstly, the character of the sea closed and the reduced surface has the effect of amplifying the effective army efficiency mentioned above, whose effectiveness would be diffused in sea open conditions and large stretches of water (like the Mediterranean Sea) . Secondly, an increase in endowments and flocks may easily have the unwanted effect of an arms race. The riparian states felt directly threatened by each other.

If we are to discuss threats of high probability, such as illegal migration and poaching, helicopters prove to be rather fewer. The procedural roles are indisputable. But they can rather be a tactical response, not a strategic solution. The tightening of regulations on the ownership and use of craft along with the increase of police controls on land and in the coastal area can significantly limit the phenomenon of poaching while the threats associated with the migratory phenomenon can be diminished and then eliminated through a wide ranges of diplomatic, financial or military actions.

CONCLUSIONS

By considering the most important military and political events of the last century and a half we can come to the conclusion that the Black Sea plays a role for its maritime states, their ability to shelter the threats that concern them and that diplomatic and politico-military actions in area may have deep recesses outside the actual settlement. In other words, national and transnational interests that intertwine lead to a difficult geostrategic dynamics around the ancient Pontus Euxinus. That is why we need to have a flexible look at the concept of the Black Sea region. Of course, all six Black Sea exit countries are part of the region but the interests of their neighbors, allies and even their competitors play a decisive role in long-term regional development.

Helicopters, and especially naval helicopters operated from ships, prove their usefulness, particularly in complex situations, during operations at sea, when the other on-board means are limited technically or tactically. Their multiple use resources (autonomy, range of action) make them indispensable in ensuring the consistency of ship systems, whose performance increases considerably.

Also the protection of helicopter navigation can be accomplished by distant or near escorting, naval cooperation and airborne air traffic controller.

To the extent that it solves the stringent problems of the Navy in the 21st century, the use of helicopters to ensure the safety of security also creates new challenges and new needs. Synergic operation of the helicopter-ship binomial remains to be improved in such a way that the two components (maritime-to-air) operate in a complementary manner. In this direction the technicians and strategists in the doctrine are expected to compete. It is a good collaboration of military research that can generate the optimal formula of the airborne couple.

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