TURKEY'S POSITIONING IN A POSSIBLE POLITICAL-MILITARY CRISIS TRIGGERED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

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Against the background of the growing concern of the Euro-Atlantic community about Turkey's approach to Russia, this paper presents the probable posture of Turkey in a potential politico-military crisis caused by Russia in the Black Sea region. Thus, considering a projective scenario in which Russia is again engaged in a military conflict by invading Ukraine, it is estimated the most possible positioning of Turkey. This results from an operational analysis, based on a MACTOR model (Matrix of alliances and conflicts: tactics, objectives and recommendations) of Professor Michel Godet, focused on the influence between actors and their interests, adapted by the author of the material to this scenario.

Thus, the application of MACTOR model, configured based on the premise that Turkey has certain strategic objectives in the context created by the scenario of Ukraine's aggression by the Russian Federation, estimates that the Ankara administration will line up to NATO posture in this crisis because this way it maximises its chances to fulfil the objectives.

Keywords: scenario; aggression; Black Sea region; Turkish-Russian relationship; matrix;

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey are important players in the region. Moreover, they have the largest fleets in the Black Sea, so the relationship between them is very important for the Euro-Atlantic community, aware that a repositioning of Turkey closer to the Russian Federation can change the balance of forces in the region. Therefore, against the background of the recent events involving the two states – on the one hand, the recent actions of the Russian Federation to occupy some territories in neighbouring countries, Transnistria in 1991 (Republic of Moldova), South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008 (Georgia), as well as Crimea and Donbas in 2014 (Ukraine), and, on the other hand, Turkey's transition through a radical strategic transformation of its domestic and international policies in an attempt to resume its role as a regional power in the Middle East, which also included a slightly more eastern reorientation with an approach to Russia, which provoked various reactions from the international security community, especially the Western one – there arises the question of Turkey's positioning in a possible scenario in which Russia will provoke a new politico-military crisis in the region, other than the one already existing in Ukraine.

In order to achieve the purpose of the paper, it is necessary to identify the politico-military crises most likely to be caused by Russia in the Black Sea. Thus, following the study of the specialised literature in the field, among the potential politico-military crises generated by Russia in the Black Sea region in relation to which Turkey will have to position itself, there have been identified: the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, under the pretext of an intervention in support of the population of Russian citizenship in the regions of eastern Ukraine (possibly following a disruptive event artificially created by Russian forces through the specific means of hybrid warfare); an accident/incident caused by a Russian warship in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Romania, where offshore gas wells are operated by Western companies (possibly by causing casualties among their employees,

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Western citizens); an open Russian-Turkish military conflict generated on a foreign territory where the two state actors intervene on opposite positions and are engaged in a proxy war (Syria, Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh etc.); a military conflict generated incidentally by the Russian Black Sea Fleet through interaction with ships of a NATO member state.

Among these projective scenarios, against the background of previous facts, namely the precedent of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia created in 2014 with the capture of Crimea, to which are added the Russian-Ukrainian fighting on Ukrainian territory and the repeated accumulations of Russian forces on the Ukrainian border (the last took place in April 2021), we consider the scenario with the highest probability of getting materialised, in the current geopolitical conditions, to be the invasion of the Ukrainian territory by Russia, probably under the artificially constructed pretext of hiring Russian troops to protect the Russian community there.

The projective scenario of the Black Sea conflict (potentially generated by Russia) includes as stages of analysis: description of the operational environment, description of the crisis situation, threat analysis, analysis of strategic relations between actors, estimation of behaviour of the actors involved in crisis.

STAGES OF THE PROJECTIVE SCENARIO OF RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

The purpose of identifying the positioning of Turkey's reaction in a situation where the security of the Black Sea region could be affected by the exacerbation of the politico-military crisis generated by Russia, and not a prediction of the conflict results, allows us to pre-establish hypothetical elements in the scenario (the motivation for the problem emergence, the type of problem etc.) as the real course of action, as well as to relate them to a limited number of actors and a single set of objectives, those of Turkey.

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Stage 1 –Description of the operational environment

The events of 2014 in which Russia took over Crimea and started the internationalised civil war in eastern Ukraine resulted in blurring peace conditions and creating some crisis and conflict premises in the region. Moreover, the open confrontation between Russia and Ukraine in Donbass and Crimea not only destroyed the relations between

Moscow and Kiev, but also changed the politics throughout the region, giving a boost to the four protracted territorial conflicts in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria.

Russia, at the moment, seems to have achieved its main immediate political goal, pursued by the military action in Ukraine, that of strengthening control over Crimea, from where it can project its power deeper into the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa. Whatever Russia's strategic objectives remain, it is certain that its activities are usually, directly or indirectly, contrary to Western interests (especially NATO, the EU and the USA). Moreover, Ukraine remains at the forefront of the ideological struggle between Russia and the West, but it also represents a space for mercantile interaction with Turkey (Ciurtin, 2017). Turkey, with a declining economy, is aware that normalising relations with Western allies and increasing Turkey's pro-Western credentials are the only ways to create a positive economic outlook and dilute Turkey's international isolation. Proof of this awareness is the reaction of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan to promise support to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in a possible escalation with Russia (Polityuk, Gumrukcu, 2021). In fact, Turkey does not recognise the annexation of Crimea by Russia. As for Ukraine, in 2020, it presented the USA, the UK, Canada, Germany and France as key strategic partners, but Turkey and other states were also mentioned as partners.

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Stage 2 – Description of the crisis situation

After 2014, Ukraine gave higher priority to securing its territorial integrity and prosperity by seeking integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union. Thus, the official status of Ukraine, as a country aspiring to membership of these two organisations, was enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine in 2018 (Constitution of Ukraine, 2019, Art. 85, 5) and in its National Security Strategy for 2020. Subsequently, in March 2021, its Military Strategy stated that Ukraine's defence policy is designed to lead to NATO membership (Zaniewicz, 2021). In this context, Russia is becoming increasingly incisive, as Ukraine's accession to NATO would weaken its regional power. Against this background, in April 2021, considering the unprecedented accumulation of Russian forces on the Ukrainian border, the Western community suspected a major escalation in the Russo-Ukrainian war (Zagorodnyuk, Khara, 2021). Although it proved

to be only a show of force by which President Putin wanted to achieve several goals such: intimidating any NATO candidate state from the former USSR, especially Ukraine, to move forward in the process of becoming a member; reminding NATO that it is not *"appropriate"* to accept ex-Soviet states as its members (in the context of the NATO Summit in June 2021, to which Ukraine could have been invited in this direction); reiterating Russian military force at regional and international level; strengthening the anti-Western vision promoted inside and outside Russia, this probability should not be neglected.

Given that only states that are not involved in territorial disputes with other states are allowed to join NATO, Russia can de facto prevent Ukraine's accession only by fuelling the Ukrainian existing conflict. However, the precedent of the invasion existed, and once the territory of a sovereign nation-state has already been violated by Russia without it being stopped, but only "scolded" by the international community with political statements and economic and political sanctions, another similar attempt remains possible.

Stage 3 –Threat analysis

Given that only states that are not involved in territorial disputes with other states are allowed to join NATO, Russia can *de facto* prevent Ukraine's accession only by fuelling the Ukrainian existing conflict. However, the precedent of the invasion existed, and once the territory of a sovereign nation-state has already been violated by Russia without it being stopped, but only *"scolded"* by the international community with political statements and economic and political sanctions, another similar attempt remains possible. It is very likely to happen so considering that a hypothetical Russian invasion of Ukraine could easily find a pretext, such as the intervention in support of citizens with Russian identity documents in the self-proclaimed *"people's republics"* of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine or in Odessa (Joja, 2020). Therefore, the threat consists in the damage of international security and the rule of law by a Russian invasion in Ukraine.

Stage 4 – Analysis of strategic relations between actors

The logical working premise of this stage is that Turkey will lean in favour of a decision of involvement/non-involvement in response to the Russian invasion in Ukraine based on at least two coordinates, *the maintenance of its strategic objectives unaltered in the region* related to individual relations with Russia and Ukraine and *the reaction of other actors with whom it maintains relations of dependence (or influence)* (for example, the influence of NATO, through its quality of member state in this organisation, or the USA, through the Turkish-American strategic partnership, but also of Russia, through the Turkey dependence on its energy resources). Therefore, in order to analyse the relationship between actors we will use a reconfigured model of MACTOR (Matrix of alliances and conflicts: tactics, objectives and recommendations) (Godet, 1994, p. 105), which is based on the influence between actors,

trying to give an overview of the importance and possible outcome of the various issues, as well as of the expected strategies of the actors, power relations and potential alliances in conflict. This initial model uses three main inputs, collected in three matrices, respectively[1]: *the positioning of the actors towards the problem, stored in the position matrix; the importance of the problem for the actors, stored in the evidence matrix (this matrix merges with the position matrix, creating a matrix that represents the product of the cells corresponding to the evidence and position matrices); the influence of the actors on each other, stored in the matrix of influence.*

In the scenario developed in this paper, the improved and explained version of MACTOR, exposed by Dan-Lucian Petrescu in his book *"Realizarea scenariilor militare între știință și artă/Realisation of Military Scenarios between Science and Art"* (Petrescu, 2019, pp. 73-86), is processed in another to better identify some of Turkey's estimated response to a possible invasion of Ukraine by the Russian armed forces so that its objectives set in relation to the directly positioned actors are not affected (or least affected) in conflict. Therefore, we will include as variables the following elements: the *actors* we consider relevant for the issue of Turkey's position in relation to the crisis generated by Russia in the Black Sea: Russia (A_1), Ukraine (A_2), Turkey (A_3), NATO (A_4), USA (A_5) and Romania (A_6); the *Turkish objectives* (OA_3) identified following a descriptive analysis (conducted in the study *Turkey – the Evolution of the Political and Security Situation and the Implications at Regional Level* to be published under the auspices of the Publishing House of *"Carol I"* National Defence University from Bucharest), as a priority in relation to the issue we are referring to, respectively: de-escalation of the conflict (O_1); maintaining a good Turkish-Ukrainian relationship (O_2); maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine (O_3); maintaining a balanced Russian-Turkish relationship (O_4); Ukraine's integration into NATO (O_5); maintaining the current content of the 1936 Montreux Convention (O_6); *the level of importance given to the promotion of Turkey's objectives* by the states interested in the evolution of the region; *the influence* (power relations) between actors.

In order to analyse the relationship between actors we will use a reconfigured model of MACTOR, which is based on the influence between actors, trying to give an overview of the importance and possible outcome of the various issues, as well as of the expected strategies of the actors, power relations and potential alliances in conflict.

[1] *Positioning* is treated as the opinion of each actor on the problem, determining whether it agrees (value +1), is against (-1) or is neutral (0) for a certain problem. *Evidence* represents how important each objective is for each actor, this being evaluated on a scale ranging from 0 (unimportant) to +4 (extremely important). *Influence* represents the power that the influential actor has over the influenced actor, measured on a scale between 0 (without influence) and 4 (very high influence) respectively.

As working steps, developed from the MACTOR model and adapted for the specific type of analysis focused on the most likely course of action in crisis of a single actor, based on the probabilities of meeting its objectives, we will: a) identify the convergences and divergences between actors for each strategic objective; b) establish the positioning of each actor towards the strategic objectives of Turkey at the beginning of the politico-military crisis in the Black Sea; c) analyse the convergences/divergences between actors based on the established objectives; d) highlight the importance of the objectives for each of the actors, thus achieving a matrix of their prioritisation (MP); e) establish the intensity with which each actor aims to achieve the set objectives; f) identify the convergences and divergences between actors for the prioritised objectives; g) achieve the variable of direct influence between the actors involved; h) ponder the prioritised objectives with the ranking of direct influence; i) identify the convergences and divergences considering all three aspects: support/ rejection of objectives; intensity of the objectives importance for each actor; influence between actors.

To identify convergences and divergences between actors by objectives there are used the convergence/ divergence diagrams between actors. The result is expressed in graphical representations of the positions of the 6 actors in relation to each of the 6 objectives resulting in 6 corresponding work diagrams.

a) *To identify convergences and divergences between actors by objectives* there are used the convergence/divergence diagrams between actors. The result is expressed in graphical representations of the positions of the 6 actors in relation to each of the 6 objectives[2] resulting in 6 corresponding work diagrams. A model of such a diagram is presented in *figure no. 1.*

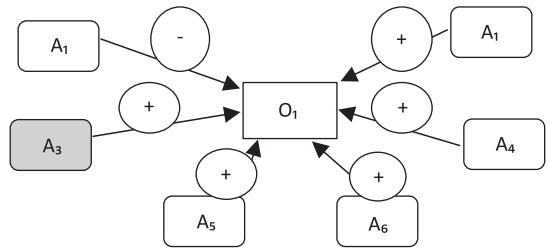

Figure no. 1: Diagram 1 – Convergence/divergence between actors and Objective 1 (O_1)[3]

[2] The establishment of each actor's position on the strategic objectives is based on the exploratory analysis of Turkey's political, diplomatic and military relations with Eastern and Western actors with interests in the Black Sea, in the context of Russia's already existing politico-military crisis in Ukraine since 2014.

[3] The actor we are most interested in, A3 – Turkey, is highlighted throughout the analysis.

From Diagram 1, it results that regarding O_1, 5 actors are positioned in favour of de-escalation of the conflict[4], only one being the exception – the aggressor state – Russia. Therefore, there is a high convergence towards conflict resolution. The motivation for this high convergence of the mentioned actors is the desire to secure the Black Sea region, to maintain the territorial integrity of Ukraine in its position of aggressed state, to eliminate potential threats to Turkey and Romania, as neighbouring states with a state in conflict, to continue pursuing NATO interests (securing its eastern border) and US policy (recognised political and economic interests in the Black Sea region). As a general orientation, the convergence diagrams between the actors show that in case of materialisation of such a scenario, a possible alliance will be concluded between actors A_2, A_3, A_4, A_5, and A_6, against A_1.

b) The positioning of each actor towards the objectives of Turkey entails the correlation of the actors with the objectives, respectively by indices -1, 0, +1 we will show for each of the actors if they do not agree, are indifferent or agree with that objective, as it results from the specialised literature. The quantification of the data is performed in tabular form, as a result of the diagrams created in the previous step, to which we associate the actors-objectives matrix (MAO) *(figure no. 2)*.

The table can determine the general configuration of the relationships between the actors and the established objectives, expressed in the values Σ_{A+} (convergence of actors for each objective) and Σ_{A-} (divergence of actors for each objective), which shows the probability for each of the objectives to be supported by the actors involved. Therefore, for O_1, O_2, O_3 and O_5 there is a majority support, so high chances of being materialised, and for O_4 and O_6 the chances are equal both for their realisation and for their non-realisation.

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[4] The analysis was performed according to the personal vision and professional expertise of the author on the actors and events at the time of July 2021 so that the clues may transgress over time or, when performing another type of exploration, they may be interpreted differently. For example, if we were to discuss the fact that Turkey has benefited from the closure of energy corridors through Ukraine, becoming itself the main transport hub, we could deduce that Turkey could position itself to maintain a conflict between Ukraine and Russia; however, it is politically obliged to assert its position in favour of de-escalating the conflict, perhaps also for fear of provoking a large-scale conflict, through NATO intervention, against Russia, in the region in which it is also present, which would have negative effects on all states in the region, especially those bordering the Black Sea.

	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	Σ_{O+}	Σ_{O-}
A_1	-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	+1	+2	-4
A_2	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	0	+4	0
A_3	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+5	0
A_4	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1	+4	-2
A_5	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1	+4	-2
A_6	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+5	-1
Σ_{A+}	+5	+5	+5	+3	+5	+2		
Σ_{A-}	-1	-1	-1	-2	-1	-3		

Table actors x objectives

-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	+1
+1	+1	+1	0	+1	0
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1
+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1

Matrix actors ˣ objectives (MAO)

Figure no. 2: Relation between actors and objectives

c) Analysing convergences/divergences between actors based on objectives. Godet considers that *"the relationship between two actors is quantified by the difference between the values* (in mathematical mode, author's note) *of the number of convergences and the number of divergences that occur between them, compared to the objectives under analysis"* (Petrescu, 2019, p. 74), for their identification, proposing as a calculation method a product between the actors-objectives matrix (MAO) and its transpose, the objectives-actors matrix (MOA), resulting in a matrix of the form actors x actors (MAA) *(figure no. 3)*.

-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	+1		-1	1	1	1	1	1		6	-4	-2	-6	-6	-4
+1	+1	+1	0	+1	0		-1	1	1	1	1	1		-4	4	4	4	4	4
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	x	-1	1	1	1	1	1	=	-2	4	6	2	2	4
+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1		1	0	1	-1	-1	1		-6	4	2	6	6	4
+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1		-1	1	1	1	1	1		-6	4	2	6	6	4
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1		1	0	1	-1	-1	-1		-4	4	4	4	4	6

Figure no. 3: Matrix multiplication actors x actors (MAA)[5]

If we consider the support/opposition/neutrality of the actors towards the objectives of Turkey, the matrices of convergence and divergence deduced from the MAA, show as follows *(figures no. 4 and 5)*:

Thus, on the one hand, M_1CA is obtained by maintaining the elements in the product matrix that have a positive value, the others being cancelled, its elements representing the number of objectives against which a pair of actors (line and column at whose intersection is the element) have a resulting convergence relationship (both being

[5] The calculations are performed with the matrix calculation program accessed at https://matrixcalc.org.

$M_1CA =$

	0	0	0	0	0
0		4	4	4	4
0	4		2	2	4
0	4	2		6	4
0	4	2	6		4
0	4	4	4	4	

Figure no. 4: The matrix of convergences between actors based on prioritised objectives

$M_1DA =$

	-4	**-2**	-6	-6	-4
-4		**0**	0	0	0
-2	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**
-6	0	**0**		0	0
-6	0	**0**	0		0
-4	0	**0**	0	0	

Figure no. 5: The matrix of divergences between actors based on prioritised objectives

in favour or opposing in most objectives) (Ib., p. 77). On the other hand, M_1DA is obtained by maintaining only the matrix elements of the MAA that have a negative value, the elements of the divergence matrix representing the number of objectives against which a pair of actors have a resulting divergence relationship (one is in favour of, and another opposes most objectives).

From the view of the two matrices, it is obvious that Russia (followed in line 1 and column 1, being the first actor in the grid) has 0 convergence for all objectives with the other actors and high divergence with them (on 4 objectives with Ukraine and Romania, on 2 with Turkey, and maximum divergence with the USA and NATO on all objectives).

d) Highlighting the importance of Turkey's objectives for each of the actors, through their empirical prioritisation. This will be achieved through a ranking of objectives based on indices ranging from 0 to +4 (unimportant, slightly important, important, and very important). We clarify that the indices of this indicator quantify the importance given by each of the actors to each objective of Turkey, respectively how much it is desired to achieve or not achieve it. The data presentation will be made in tabular form, establishing the objectives' ranking on importance for each of the actors involved, which will be associated with a prioritisation matrix (MP) *(figure no. 6)*.

	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6		Σ_O
A_1	2	2	4	3	4	4		19
A_2	2	2	4	2	4	2		16
A_3	3	2	4	4	1	4		18
A_4	4	3	4	3	2	4		20
A_5	3	3	3	4	2	4		19
A_6	4	2	2	2	2	4		16
Σ_A	18	14	21	18	15	22		
Table of objectives' prioritisation for the actors								

2	2	4	3	4	4
2	2	4	2	4	2
3	2	4	4	1	4
4	3	4	3	2	4
3	3	3	4	2	4
4	2	2	2	2	4

Matrix of objectives' prioritisation for the actors (MP)

Figure no. 6: Objectives' ranking for each actor

From the presented table we find out that Turkey has set: 3 primary rank objectives (O_3, O_4 and O_6); O_1 of secondary rank; O_2 of tertiary rank; and O_5 of quaternary rank. Therefore, the Turkish state is most concerned with maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, its good relations with Russia and the content of the Montreux Convention.

d) Establishing the intensity with which each actor aims to achieve the set objectives by pondering MAO with the result of MP resulting in MPO (objective pondering matrix). The presentation of the data will be done in tabular form, establishing the objectives ranking by their importance for each of the actors involved *(figure no. 7)*.

	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6		Σ_{O+}	Σ_{O-}
A_1	-2	-2	-4	+3	-4	+4		+7	-12
A_2	+2	+2	+4	0	+4	+2		+14	0
A_3	+3	+2	+4	+4	+1	+4		+18	0
A_4	+4	+3	+4	-3	+2	-4		+13	-7
A_5	+3	+3	+3	-4	+2	-4		+11	-8
A_6	+4	+2	+2	+2	+2	-4		+12	-4
Σ_{A+}	+16	+12	+17	+9	+11	+10			
Σ_{A-}	-2	-2	-4	-7	-4	-16			

Table actors x objectives pondered with objectives ranking

$$\begin{pmatrix} -2 & -2 & -4 & +3 & -4 & +4 \\ +2 & +2 & +4 & 0 & +4 & +2 \\ +3 & +2 & +4 & +4 & +1 & +4 \\ +4 & +3 & +4 & -3 & +2 & -4 \\ +3 & +3 & +3 & -4 & +2 & -4 \\ +4 & +2 & +2 & +2 & +2 & -4 \end{pmatrix}$$

Matrix actors x objectives pondered with objectives ranking (MPO)

Figure no. 7: Relation between actors and hierarchised objectives

e) Identification of convergences and divergences between actors for the prioritised objectives resulting in the convergence/divergence matrices (M_2CA/M_2DA) in terms of the intensity with which each of the actors aims to achieve/not achieve Turkey's objectives. To perform this step, the sum of arithmetic averages between the absolute values of the intensity of the actors' positions (considered in pairs) relative to objectives is applied to the MPO data (Ib., p. 79). Given that for O_4, Ukraine has a neutral position, it will be excluded from the calculation. For example, M_2CA_{13} and M_2CA_{13}, which represent the convergence and divergence relations between Russia and Turkey, will be calculated as follows:

$$M_2CA_{13} = \frac{|+3|+|+4|}{2} + \frac{|+4|+|+4|}{2} = 7,5 \quad \text{and}$$

$$M_2DA_{13} = \frac{|-2|+|+3|}{2} + \frac{|-2|+|+2|}{2} + \frac{|-4|+|+4|}{2} + \frac{|-4|+|+1|}{2} = 7,5$$

Therefore, the level of divergence between the two states is higher than the level of convergence for the proposed objectives.

If we consider the level of support/opposition of the actors towards the objectives of Turkey, the convergence and divergence matrices deduced from M_2AA, show as follows *(figures no. 8 and 9)*:

$M_2CA =$

	3	7,5	0	0	2,5
3		14	13,5	11,5	10
7,5	**14**		**11,5**	**10,5**	**13**
0	13,5	11,5		12	11,5
0	11,5	10,5	12		10,5
2,5	10	13	11,5	10,5	

Figure no. 8: The matrix of convergences between actors based on ranked objectives

$M_2DA =$

	12	11	19,5	19	18,5
12		0	3	3	3
11	**0**		**7,5**	**8**	**4**
19,5	3	7,5		0	6,5
19	3	8	0		3
18,5	3	4	6,5	3	

Figure no. 9: The matrix of divergences between actors based on ranked objectives

Visualising the resulting matrices one can find that Turkey (followed in line 3 and column 3, being the third actor included in the calculation grid) has the highest level of convergence with Ukraine (14), the following values of convergence being: with Romania (13), NATO (11.5), USA (10.5), the lowest value being registered with Russia (7.5). It has the highest level of divergence with Russia (11), but also lower levels of divergence with the USA (8), NATO (7.5), Romania (4), with Ukraine not registering divergences.

f) The realisation of the variable of direct influence between the actors involved is expressed in the form of a table and in the matrix of direct influence (MID)[6], to identify the power relations between actors based on the total level of dependence (Σd) or influence (Σi) for each actor.

The table of direct influences[7] presents, by lines and columns, the actors within the analysis and has as elements values located in the range [0,4] that correspond to the intensity of influence between one actor and another, the quantification levels being: *non-existent, low, medium, high and very large (figure no. 10).*

The TID table in the figure above shows that Turkey has an equal level of dependence and influence (10) compared to the actors introduced in the analysis. The most dependent actor is Ukraine (12), and the most influential, NATO (18). Also, from the same table result the synthetic factors that quantify the value of the influence and the general dependence that each of the actors has on all the other actors. These are *the factors of general influence (M_i)* and *factors of general dependence (D_i),* which are obtained by summing the values arranged on the lines and, respectively, on the MID columns, except for those at the intersection of the lines with the columns belonging to the same actor.

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[6] We believe that Turkey and Russia are influencing NATO as a result of the current hegemonic manifestations, in the same category being the USA, a major global power, member of the Alliance. The USA influences, from the position of superpower, all the other smaller states in the analysis.

[7] We will limit the analysis to this aspect, focusing on the direct relations (not considering the indirect ones) between actors that, although important in the integral analysis of a projective scenario, are not necessarily relevant in the present situation.

ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING

	A_1	A_2	A_3	A_4	A_5	A_6		Σ_i
A_1		4	3	1	2	2		12
A_2	0		0	0	0	0		0
A_3	2	1		3	2	2		**10**
A_4	3	3	4		4	4		18
A_5	2	3	2	3		3		13
A_6	0	1	1	1	1			4
Σ_d	7	12	**10**	8	9	11		**57**

Table of direct influence between actors (TID)

$$\begin{pmatrix} & 4 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 & & 3 & 2 & 2 \\ 3 & 3 & 4 & & 4 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 2 & 3 & & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & \end{pmatrix}$$

Matrix of direct influence between actors (MID)

Figure no. 10: Direct influence between actors (power relations)

g) The final configuration of the convergence/divergence relations between the actors, taking into account both criteria: the priorities of each actor regarding the objectives and the existing balance of power in the context of the crisis.

In order to determine the result of applying the criterion regarding *the ranking of objectives according to the priorities of each actor* and the one regarding *the power relations between actors*, by weighting the general relative influence $(M_i/\Sigma M_i)$ of an actor with the inverse of the dependency function $(M_i/(M_i + D_i))$ the coefficient of general influence (r_i) is obtained:

$$r_i = \frac{M_i}{\Sigma M_i} \times \frac{M_i}{M_i+D_i}$$ (Petrescu, 2017, p. 158)

The results of the calculations related to obtaining coefficient r_i for each actor are included in the table below *(figure no. 11)*.

Variable / Relation	A_1	A_2	A_3	A_4	A_5	A_6	Sum	
General influence factors (M_i)	12	0	**10**	18	13	4	57	ΣM_i
General dependence factors (D_i)	7	12	**10**	8	9	11	57	ΣD_i
Coefficient r_i	0,13	0	**0,09**	0,25	0,13	0,02	0,62	Σr_i

Figure no. 11: General influence coefficients (r_i) for each actor

From the general influence coefficients of each actor one can notice that in the current status quo, Russia and the USA have the same level of power in influencing Turkey's objectives in the context of the ongoing crisis. But the difference is made by NATO with the highest coefficient of influence (0.25), which tilts the balance towards supporting the Western point of view in order to achieve Turkey's goal of promoting its objectives.

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The next step is to calculate the specific influence coefficients r^*_i obtained from the following formula *(figure no. 12)*:

$$r^*_i = n \times \frac{r_i}{\Sigma r_i}$$, where *n* is the number of actors in the evaluated system.

Variabile / Relation	A_1	A_2	A_3	A_4	A_5	A_6
Coefficient r_i*	1,26	0	**0,87**	2,42	1,26	0,19

Figure no. 12: Specific influence coefficient (r^*_i) for each actor

It is observed that the ranking of actors in terms of power coefficients is the same as that one established in the balance of power on the criteria of *general influence factors (M_i),* meaning A_4, A_5, A_1, A_3, A_6, A_2, from the most influential (A_4) to the least influential (A_2).

Then, to obtain M_3AO, each line of the MPO matrix (containing information on the relationships between actors and objectives, by priorities) is pondered with the specific influence coefficient r_i^* of each actor *(figure no. 13)*:

$$\begin{pmatrix} -2 & -2 & -4 & +3 & -4 & +4 \\ +2 & +2 & +4 & 0 & +4 & +2 \\ +3 & +2 & +4 & +4 & +1 & +4 \\ +4 & +3 & +4 & -3 & +2 & -4 \\ +3 & +3 & +3 & -4 & +2 & -4 \\ +4 & +2 & +2 & +2 & +2 & -4 \end{pmatrix} \times \begin{pmatrix} 1,26 \\ 0 \\ 0,87 \\ 2,42 \\ 1,26 \\ 0,19 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2,52 & -2,52 & -5,04 & 3,78 & -5,04 & 5,04 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 2,61 & 1,74 & 3,48 & 3,48 & 0,87 & 3,48 \\ 9,68 & 7,26 & 9,68 & -7,26 & 4,84 & -9,68 \\ 0,39 & 0,39 & 0,39 & -0,52 & 0,26 & -0,52 \\ 3,78 & 0,38 & 0,38 & 0,38 & 0,38 & -3,78 \end{pmatrix}$$

Figure no. 13: Matrix of prioritised objectives with the ranking of direct influence

h) Identify convergences and divergences considering all three indicators (support/rejection of objectives, intensity of importance of objectives for each actor, influence between actors), to determine which of Turkey's strategic objectives are most likely to be supported by most actors.

Following the procedure applied to the MPO matrix, from the M_3AO matrix will result in the square matrices M_3CA (matrix of convergences between actors weighted with priority of objectives and hierarchy of influences) and M_3DA (matrix of divergences between actors pondered with priority of objectives and hierarchy of influences).

The convergence and divergence matrices (of the ranked actors) related to Turkey's six prioritised objectives, deduced from the M_3AO, are as follows *(figures no. 14 and 15)*:

The indices obtained against the background of the performed operational analysis show that, for the objectives formulated by Turkey, the highest convergence between actors – based on the ranking of objectives and actors' relations of influence (20.08) – is that between Turkey (A_3) and NATO (A_4), and the greatest divergence – based on the prioritised objectives and the power relations between them – exists

-	8,82	8,04	0	0	2,08
8,82	-	7,83	15,73	0,72	2,65
8,04	**7,83**	**-**	**20,08**	**5,07**	**8,74**
0	15,73	20,08	-	16,45	18,19
0	0,72	5,07	16,45	-	3,18
2,08	2,65	8,74	18,19	3,18	-

Figure no. 14: Matrix of convergences between actors based on prioritised objectives and power relations (M_3CA)

	7,56	11,91	36,17	13,21	14,4
7,56		0	8,47	0,52	1,89
11,91	**0**		**11,95**	**4**	**3,63**
36,17	8,47	11,95		0	3,82
13,21	0,52	4	0		0,45
14,43	1,89	3,63	3,82	0,45	0

Figure no. 15: Matrix of divergences between actors based on prioritised objectives and power relations (M_3DA)

between Russia and NATO (36.17). Therefore, Turkey's objectives in the region in the context of the crisis caused by Russia will be the most supported by NATO, and the least by Russia. Adding to this the data showing that NATO has the greatest influence on the achievement of Turkey's objectives, the most probable estimation is that Turkey will follow the Alliance's policy when positioning itself against the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, and possibly in any crisis generated by the Russian Federation when, by that positioning, it maximises its chances of achieving own objectives, regardless of the levers of influence used by other regional actors.

From the operational analysis, we have already found that the best positioning for Turkey is to follow NATO's policy and reactions if it wants to maintain the development of the objectives that are described in the projected scenario.

ADDENDUM TO THE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS TO JUSTIFY TURKEY'S MOST LIKELY ESTIMATED POSITIONING

From the operational analysis, we have already found that the best positioning for Turkey is to follow NATO's policy and reactions if it wants to maintain the development of the objectives that are described in the projected scenario. However, for a more accurate estimate of Turkey's positioning vis-à-vis Russia in a Russian-Ukrainian conflict, we provide a more detailed empirical analysis for each objective (primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary), as an accumulation of convergences and divergences may trigger the failure in achieving a primary priority objective, which might determine a change in Turkey's positioning in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Turkey has set[8]: – *primary priority objectives*: O_3 – maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, since secessionist actions in

[8] Priority levels for actors are identified on the basis of the Table of Prioritisation of Objectives for Actors (MP), by transposing them from 0-4 (the least important, less important, important, the most important) into a hierarchy IV-I (quaternary objective, tertiary objective, secondary objective, primary objective).

its immediate vicinity may affect its own territorial integrity given the imminence of the Kurdish problem in Turkey; O_4 – maintaining balanced Russian-Turkish relations, since Turkey is heavily dependent on Russian resources; O_6 – maintaining the current content of the 1936 Montreux Convention, which gives it control over the straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, for Turkey the international document representing a diplomatic lever managing relations with Russia and non-riparian states with regional interests in the Wider Black Sea Region; – *secondary priority objective*: O_1 – de-escalation of the conflict. Ukraine is a direct neighbour to its maritime border, which causes its activities in the region to be affected, not only economically, but also politically. Turkey is already surrounded by troubled states – Armenia and Azerbaijan vying for Nagorno-Karabakh in the northeast; Iran with its hegemonic policy to the east; Syria and Iraq in civil wars in the south, another in its immediate vicinity will complicate its existence; – *tertiary priority objective:* O_2 – maintaining the good Turkish-Ukrainian relationship; – *quaternary priority objective:* O_5 – Ukraine's integration into NATO to counterbalance Russia in the region.

Turkey has set: – primary priority objectives: O3 – maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, since secessionist actions in its immediate vicinity may affect its own territorial integrity given the imminence of the Kurdish problem in Turkey; O4 – maintaining balanced Russian-Turkish relations, since Turkey is heavily dependent on Russian resources.

In short, the operational analysis shows that Russia does not agree with 4 of the 6 Turkish strategic objectives (although it does agree with 2 of the 3 objectives considered primary by Turkey, which are actually used for its political purposes[9]), compared to the other actors: NATO and the USA (2 non-agreed objectives, each), Romania (1 non-agreed objective), Ukraine holding a neutral position towards these targets, being far too concerned about the conflict on its territory (although in peacetime, its options may differ).

Given that NATO and Russia emerge from the scenario data as the actors with the greatest potential to influence the achievement/non-achievement of these objectives, and also considering the greatest antagonism regarding them, as well as the fact that the other actors involved (Ukraine, USA and Romania) have similar positions towards the objectives of Turkey, in a first phase, we will focus our analysis only on the antithetical opinions NATO-Russia in relation to these objectives. Therefore, by synthesising the information obtained from the matrix analyses, the data from the following table are deduced *(figure no. 16)*.

[9] The close relationship with Turkey arouses the dissatisfaction of Westerners and contributes to the division of NATO, and maintaining the content of the Montreux Convention does not allow NATO member states such as the USA or France to bring major military forces into the Black Sea.

Objectives	Priority level for Turkey	Priority level for NATO	Priority level for Russia	Positioning to the objective[10]	
				NATO	Russia
O_1	II	I	III	pro	against
O_2	III	II	III	pro	against
O_3	I	I	I	pro	against
O_4	I	II	II	against	pro
O_5	IV	III	I	pro	against
O_6	I	I	I	against	pro

Figure no. 16: Summary of Turkish objectives' prioritisation and the positioning of Russia and NATO towards them

NATO agrees with four of the six objectives, of which: one primary priority objective (O3 – maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine) out of the three pursued by Turkey and all other secondary, tertiary and quaternary priority objectives.

It should be noted that, on the one hand, NATO agrees with four of the six objectives, of which: one primary priority objective (O_3 – maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine) out of the three pursued by Turkey and all other secondary, tertiary and quaternary priority objectives. On the other hand, Russia agrees with Turkey's two primary priority objectives, denying the other four different priorities.

Next, in order to calculate the ratio of the possibility of achieving Turkey's objectives, in the view of the three actors, we give a priority weight to the six objectives according to the level of priority given by them. We establish the weights of the objectives taking into account the ranking of the actors' interest for their achievement/non-achievement, as follows: level I objective – 100%, level II objective – 80%, level III objective – 60%, level IV objective – 40%. The result is shown in the figure below *(figure no. 17)*.

Objectives	Priority weight (+ support; - rejection)		
	Turkey	NATO	Russia
O_1	80% (+)	100% (+)	60% (-)
O_2	60% (+)	80% (+)	60% (-)
O_3	100% (+)	100% (+)	100% (-)
O_4	100% (+)	80% (-)	80% (+)
O_5	40% (+)	60% (+)	100% (-)
O_6	100% (+)	100% (-)	100% (+)
Average of support/rejection for all the objectives	**80% (+)**	**80% (+)**	**140% (-)**

Figure no. 17: The average interest of the actors towards the achievement/non-achievement of Turkey's objectives

[10] The positioning of the objectives is summarised from the MAO, explained in *figure no. 2*.

From the above, it appears that NATO is inclined to support Turkey's overall objectives to the same extent as Turkey, and Russia is more inclined to reject them. Therefore, it is normal to lean towards supporting NATO's position in a Russian conflict in the region, which is also the optimal variable in line with the current status quo in which Turkey is a full member of the Alliance.

An objective stated as viable for NATO, but disputed among its members, is O_5 *(Ukraine's integration into NATO).* The Alliance's reluctance in 2008 to approve action plans for accession (MAP)[11] to Ukraine and Georgia, although it promised the two to become members (NATO, 2018), offered Russia the opportunity to re-establish its sphere of influence in these post-Soviet spaces. Currently, regions of Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Ukraine (Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk and Lugansk) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2019) are under Russian occupation, while *"over 14,000 Ukrainians are dead as a result of the Kremlin's ongoing military intervention in eastern Ukraine"* (Reuters, 2021). However, no consensus has been reached between NATO member states in favour of Ukraine's integration, which in any case is not possible as long as Ukraine has an open conflict on its territory.

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If we move forward in the analysis considering the weight given by Turkey to support its objectives, it results: the actual levels of NATO support (O_1 – 100%, O_2 – 100%, O_3 – 100%, O_5 – 100%) and rejection (O_4 – 80% %, O_6 – 100%); Russia's effective levels of support (80% – O_4, 100% – O_6) and rejection (O_1 – 75%, O_2 – 100%, O_3 –100%, O_5 – 100%)[12]. The percentages in *figure no. 17* show that NATO has a greater availability even than Turkey to support the achievement of objectives O_1, O_2 and O_5, and maximum availability (100%), similar to Turkey, for O_3, which we frame as a level of support of 100% for those objectives. Also, in the case of Russia, an effective level of total support (100%) is granted only for O_6, with O_4 being allocated a level of support of 80%. Moreover, if we analyse more empirically the primary priority

[11] MAP - Membership Action Plan.

[12] Taking as a benchmark the priority weight given by Turkey, an equal or higher weight of another actor for that objective is considered as an effective level of support, or as the case may be rejection, of 100%. If the priority weight of an actor is lower than that of Turkey for that objective, the actual level of support/rejection is calculated as a percentage applied to the weight given by Turkey. Example: for O_1 in the relation of Turkey-Russia weights, to identify the effective level of rejection we will calculate 60% of 80%, resulting in 75%.

objectives for Turkey, not agreed by NATO, but supported by Russia: O_4 – maintaining balanced Russian-Turkish relations and O_6 – maintaining the current content of the 1936 Montreux Convention, we find that they are antithetical to NATO's general policy towards Russia, but they do not reflect the Alliance's position on Turkey. In fact, there are already close Russian-Turkish relations that are bothering NATO, but the Alliance has not taken major action on this issue, and with regard to the Convention, amendments to it are possible, under US pressure, which wants warships in the Black Sea, obviously not giving Turkey more rights than it does today. Moreover, opinions on the Convention are also divergent between NATO member states, making changing its text only an objective for Russia's polarisation and not one on the Alliance's current political agenda.

If we are to estimate, Turkey's position on the Black Sea crisis generated by Russia will be one of support for Ukraine, along with other Western actors, position that, although it will bring a decline in one of the strategic objectives (that of maintaining a good relationship with Russia), will certainly facilitate the others, having as side effects, not to be neglected, the reheating of the relationship with the USA and the potential for relaxation of US sanctions imposed in 2020 following the acquisition of the Russian S-400 weapon systems by the Turks.

Considering this research addition to the operational analysis, in such a scenario, if we are to estimate, Turkey's position on the Black Sea crisis generated by Russia will be one of support for Ukraine, along with other Western actors, position that, although it will bring a decline in one of the strategic objectives (that of maintaining a good relationship with Russia), will certainly facilitate the others, having as side effects, not to be neglected, the reheating of the relationship with the USA and the potential for relaxation of US sanctions imposed in 2020 following the acquisition of the Russian S-400 weapon systems by the Turks. Therefore, **the most possible estimate of Turkey's position is that it, together with NATO, will support Ukraine in crisis.**

Moreover, if we take into account the response of the international community to the Russian action in 2014, which we find presented in detail (Legucka, 2017, p. 47), we can consider that in a possible invasion of Ukraine, NATO will be limited again to provide intelligence and indirect military support, including the provision of weapons in strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities. The preposition of military ships in the Black Sea, without violating the Montreux Convention, may be another NATO action. NATO member states such as the USA, France (which are not dependent on Russian gas) will also impose new sanctions, possibly in the form of imposing restrictions on Gazprom's financing on the capital market or blocking the operation of some Russian banks in Western states (VTB, Gazprombank) (O'Toole, Fried, 2021).

Russia's participation in the G20 or the OSCE could also be suspended. In this context, Turkey will carry out the most supportive actions such as visits to Ukrainians and consultations with political and military decision-makers in Ukraine, but without getting directly involved militarily and, possibly, again avoiding sanctions on Russia. These types of actions will not seriously endanger its relationship with Russia, not placing it in a real danger of the Russian *"energy weapon"* being used on it. Thus, it is provided with all 6 strategic objectives set to be achieved or maintained during the conflict, although probably with a slight decline in its relations with Ukraine, probably disappointed by the lack of a strong common response of the international community, including NATO and Turkey.

The option of NATO's direct military involvement in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is unlikely for several reasons. The first major reason is that NATO is not obliged to intervene militarily because Art. 5 of the North-Atlantic Treaty can be invoked only by the Member States, not by the partners, which will mean that, including at a request from the UN Security Council to intervene under its auspices, the consensus will not be reached in the North Atlantic Council for such an action given the divergent interests within the Alliance vis-à-vis Russia. The second reason is that the great powers understand that a NATO military intervention in Ukraine will trigger a large-scale and high-intensity war, perhaps even a third world war with the use of nuclear weapons (Dibb, 2014, p. 8; Frederick et al., 2017, p. xi). The third reason is the current period of pandemic in which the resources of states are directed with priority in this direction. The fourth reason is the moment of the system of international relations – reorganisation towards multipolarity, or a multipolar unipolarity – in which each of the hegemonic actors of regional size (Russia, Iran, Japan etc.) expresses its influence on the weaker actors without risking large military actions, and other actors, that only want to maintain their current status, use their power resources to assert themselves internationally and not to protect the interests of other states. Neither NATO nor Russia is prepared for a long war, but this does not preclude an incorrect, hasty, proud decision or an incident in which the territory of a Member State neighbouring Ukraine is accidentally affected, not to cause the activation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

CONCLUSION

The operational analysis focused on the regional actors' matrix (MACTOR) and supported by the addendum demonstrates, although limited, that in a possible open East-West confrontation Turkey's strategic objectives can be mostly achieved by positioning itself with the Euro-Atlantic community. In fact, the convergences of Turkish policy with Western ones are evident at the regional level, and the divergences with the Russian Federation are numerous in relation to their own interests, so only from the current position of a NATO member state can it counterbalance individual Russian interests.

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