LILY-PAD GEOPOLITICS:

ROMANIA IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

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1. Introduction

Although the depth and duration of its effects are still subject to much moral anxiety, political controversy, and academic inquiry, there is little doubt that the US-led "global war on terror" (GWOT), declared in the aftermath on the September 11th attacks in New York and Washington, has affected significantly European security. This, on the one hand, is partly because of the mutations produced by the GWOT in the macro-logic of international security, and also due to the micro-practices that defined and sustained its pursuit. On the other hand, this is because European national and institutional actors have had to respond and adapt directly to these changes. This process of adaptation, often stuttered and fractious, has required European actors to rethink the parameters of European security as well as the security roles of and relationship between European institutions, which has often meant dealing with renewed strains of the transatlantic link and intra-European divisions, of which that between "old" and "new" Europe

was the most artificial, but not the least damaging. Most significantly, this inevitable entanglement in the GWOT has led many observers wonder whether the security philosophy that had underpinned the institutional enlargement of Europe could be maintained. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the rationale of future or potential institutional enlargements was immediately contaminated by the global and operational requirements of the GWOT. As a result, the trope of European identity, so fundamental to the configuration of European security in the first decade after the end of the Cold War, was circulated with ever decreasing intensity, in marked contrast to the evident revival enjoyed by the theme of strategic necessity.

This is not, however, to argue that the specific characteristics of the European security context have been entirely obliterated by the scorching rationality of the GWOT. As this chapter will demonstrate, the result of the confluence between the different scales and security logics of Europe and the GWOT is not simply the victory of strategy over identity, but a significantly different reciprocal modulation of strategy and identity – no less contradictory a modulation, but one that changes the geopolitical signification of the spatial and historical attributes of Europe and its member states. Continuing the thematic and empirical engagement of the previous sections, the interposition of the GWOT in the dilemma of European security will be illustrated here through an analysis of the GWOT's impact on Romania's national security strategy, as well as the politics and symbolism of 'US bases', the customary shorthand used – incorrectly, as Romanian officials never cease to point out – to describe the military facilities established by the US on Romanian territory as an integral part of the strategic and logistical template formulated after 9/11 for the conduct of the GWOT.

2. Identity/geopolitics in the war on terror

Even before the Obama administration's much welcomed renunciation of this formulation, the GWOT had begun to lose media and academic prime time (AP, 2009; Wilson and Kamen, 2009). Many, including some of its architects, have realised not only that the rhetoric of the GWOT was highly counterproductive, but also, as made patently obvious by conditions on the ground, that the war simply could not be won. It may even be that its perpetrators eventually grasped, even if only intuitively, the essential impossibility of the demiurgic omnipotence upon which the political and philosophical edifice of the GWOT had been predicated, which meant that *no* GWOT could ever be won, and also that a "GWOT" could, in fact, never *be* (Hirsh, 2008; Schmitt and Shanker, 2005). In this context, there was increasing mileage in the argument that the GWOT

had marked only an epiphenomenal, rather than fundamental shift in world politics (Pipe and Rengger, 2006). In contrast, some claimed that the GWOT continued to be the defining paradigm of US security policy without the name but with all its calamitous political and ethical baggage (Savage, 2009; Zalman and Clarke, 2009). This could be seen not necessarily in the battles launched in its name, some of which may have indeed subsided, but in the signs and scars indelibly engraved by the GWOT in contemporary political praxis. What distinguished the war on terror was, from such a perspective, the attempt to constitute a political order that magnified and re-legitimized the authority of the state, or more precisely, of one very particular, "exceptional" state (REFS - Habermas; Agamben; Gregory and Pred, 2007; Ciută, 2006).

It is the realization of this political order that required the significant retooling of US military power initiated during the Bush administration, which included the reformulation of national security strategy, shifts in key force-planning concepts, and ongoing force posture realignment. Together, these constituted the ideological and logistical platform for the strategic vision that has dominated the United States' foreign and security policy during the war on terror. As we have seen in the previous sections, this vision was invoked in various contexts as a means of conferring legitimacy and topical relevance to adjacent policy initiatives such as the post-9/11 NATO enlargements and the Black Sea region project. In those cases at least, the emplotment of the GWOT as a "strategy-first" narrative was deliberately designed to replace what was perceived to be the moribund narrative of European identity and the return to Europe, narrative which had served as the normative *and* strategic vector of the first eastern enlargement of institutional Europe. Actors who performed such an emplotment of the GWOT sought, in other words, to isolate and use a very specific dimension and interpretation of the war on terror, emphasising "strategy" and "geopolitics" at the (apparent) expense of identity.

Of course, this narrative did not operate in a moral and identity vacuum. From President Bush's (in)famous "you're either with us or against us" to frequent invocations or abjurations of Huntington's civilizational thesis, and from the mediatic representations of terrorists to the body-politics of biometric surveillance, identity politics has infused, as Jackson (2005: 62) put it, both the jargon and the institutionalised practices of the GWOT. As we shall see below, this is fully evident even in the strategic appropriations of the GWOT, which continued the by now familiar shuttling between invocations of "geostrategic" worth and statements of being right, and on the right side of geopolitics.

Just as it did not work in a normative vacuum, the strategic vision of the GWOT was not superimposed on a neutral political and spatial landscape. Most of its initiatives and policies not only worked *through*, but also *required* the formulation of determinedly geopolitical assemblages which constantly made the world in shapes and patterns that fit the logic, mechanics and logistics of the GWOT. In either institutional documents or best-selling pulp geopolitics, the GWOT was mapped onto the world through a panoptic gaze which critical political geographers have recognized from more traditional geopolitical forms, even though the visual and political product of this gaze was in many ways different from that left behind by 20th century geopolitics (XXX refs Barnett, Kaplan and critiques). Thus, the "geopolitical place-making" (Coleman, 2003) inaugurated by the GWOT was not just a spatial hermeneutic designed to simply make sense of the contemporary distribution of power or threats, but also "an important catalyst of geographical transformation" (Ingram and Dodds, 2009: 3), a "respatialization of the globe" (Ingram, 2009: 257) which not only rendered patterns of amity and enmity, but also created and imposed a regional register to fit its logic of global conflict and global access (Dalby, 2007; 2009). From this perspective, the GWOT is not unique in its geo-graphing effects (Barnes and Matthew, 2006), but located politically, normatively and analytically in the same imaginative geography described earlier by Edward Said, in which "landscapes and cultures [are] drawn into abstract grids of colonial and imperial power, literally displaced and replaced" (Gregory, 1995: 448). Here, the emphasis is on the transformative power of the GWOT's strategic vision, whose operation as "an imagined geography of uneven and occupied space associated with ideas of an assertive and unilateralist American empire" (Sparke 2005: 245) redesigns and even disfigures the local, which becomes a generic site of "appropriation, domination and contestation" (Gregory, 1995: 448).

As cuttingly perceptive such insights are, both their description of the political and symbolic mechanics of the GWOT, and the conclusions they draw are somewhat limited, especially when attention is focused not just on the initial architecture/architects of the war on terror, but also on its contextual reception or implementation. Ó Tuathail argues pointedly that some of the sweeping denunciations of the GWOT "have a tendency to flatten geopolitical practices and homogenize geopolitical discourses rather than appreciate their cultural thickness, contested articulations and unstable heteroglossia" (2008: 342). More generally, the scholarly study of the key documents of the GWOT – such as the US security, defence and military doctrines or the various mass mediatic iterations of their message – seems in fact to reinforce the

demiurgic impulse that gave them political and geographic shape. Put differently, even some of the critics of the ideology of the GWOT tend to assume that its objectives, ambitions, and desires are *achievable* (that is precisely what makes them morally and politically noxious) and as a paradoxical result, such critiques consolidate the vision of an omnipotent hegemon (e.g. Spence, 2005). Or, even if the puncturing of the GWOT delusion may not have led to its permanent and total abolition, a delusion it remains: resilient maybe, and undoubtedly dangerous, but a delusion nevertheless.

Finally, perhaps the most significant limitation of such analyses comes from the fact that their investigation of the geopolitical codes and practices that have structured the GWOT has focused only on the ideological manifests, doctrinal formulations, and policy initiatives of the US as the imperial force fighting and – in intention at least – leading the GWOT. In contrast, there is considerably less attention to manner in which the GWOT is or was in different corners of the world, including those where its military battles were not fought. As a consequence, there is a tendency to think of the master-narrative of the GWOT as telling in itself, and thus overlook both its reception outside the US – bar a broad anticipation of generalised outrage – and the modulations effected on its practices by contextual conditions, hermeneutic horizons and all sorts of resistances, affiliations, or frictions. Such a "contrapuntal reading" of the GWOT – to use very loosely the Saidian term (Said, 1993: 51) – will not necessarily demonstrate either the implausibility of the GWOT or the power/lessness of the US, yet it will add to our understanding by capturing the way these actors understood, reacted to, and appropriated the GWOT.

3. The GWOT in context: interpretation and realignment in Romania

9/11 was met in Romania with reactions similar to those that could be seen across Europe. A sense of shock and trauma was accompanied by an almost immediate realisation that the parameters of Romania's foreign and security policies were dramatically affected by the sweeping changes in the strategic vision that underpinned the US pursuit of the GWOT. Even if official statements never reproduced the momentarily infamous comment of a Romanian newspaper editorialist that 9/11 constituted an "excellent opportunity" that Romania could not afford to miss, Romania's political elite was quick to understand that its existing policy goals – not to mention any new ones – could hardly be unaffected. The impact of the tectonic shifts in US grand strategy should be seen therefore as a mixture of direct and indirect changes in Romanian foreign policy and/or vision.

In 2001, Romania was yet to achieve its two key objectives of joining NATO and the EU, so it is entirely unsurprising that its reading of the consequences of 9/11 was, at least initially, entirely subsumed to these goals. Of course, these were not GWOT-specific initiatives, but they both reached their apex in the period when European and global security was dominated by the GWOT. In both these cases, as in that of the Black Sea region project discussed previously, these policies were deliberately re-packaged in the normative and policy vernacular of the GWOT, as has happened in many other different contexts.

To a certain extent, the first reaction to 9/11 was entirely focused on NATO. Although NATO enlargement had been put back on the agenda by the US administration prior to 9/11 (Ref Bush Warsaw), and some Romanian officials were quick to emphasise that 9/11 had not changed the rules of the game (*Cotidianul*, 29.09.2001), there was a definite sense that the process, which had been severely lagging after NATO's Washington Summit and the Kosovo campaign, was back on track. In this respect, the effect of 9/11 was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the institutional process was revitalised by the new purpose and impetus that the GWOT seemed to confer NATO. On the other hand however, it also induced the feeling among a part of Romania's political elite that the delays and deficiencies of the accession process – which had been signalled in several NATO reports and reported with increasing alarm by the Romanian media before, as well as after 9/11 (*Romania Liberă* 10.04.2001; 20.08. 2001; 24.08.2001; 31.08.2001; 15.10.2001) – might be overlooked at NATO's 2002 Prague Summit due to Romania's potential military and logistical contributions to the assemblage of policies of the GWOT (REFS).

As NATO officials stressed repeatedly that the performance of the candidate states would remain central to the decision to enlarge, Romania gradually shifted the centre of gravity of its argument for membership to emphasise its ability to contribute to the fight against terrorism, argument which incorporated the narrative tropes from the earlier stage of the accession campaign. This was especially visible in the Romanian Parliament's decision, adopted on 19 September 2001 with only one abstention, to act "as a *de facto* NATO ally". This meant that Romania would participate together with NATO member states in actions to "combat international terrorism […] including through military means", and would allow, at NATO's request, the use of "all facilities on Romanian air, land, and maritime territory in support of counter-terrorist operations" (Romanian Parliament, 2001). Domestic political consensus on this issue was all the more striking given the party of government's earlier condemnation – while in opposition – of NATO's campaign in Kosovo (*Romania Liberă* 17.09.2001). As can be immediately

noticed, this decision marked an immediate – although not complete – shift in the security rationale for Romania's NATO membership, from the regional and European to the global, and from defence transparency and stability-projection to counter-terrorism and power-projection. This shift would later become manifest, as we shall see below, in Romania's security doctrine, but had also led, more immediately, to the strong support Romania offered bilaterally, and also as a member of the Vilnius 10, to the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003 (Vilnius 10, 2003).

In contrast, Romania's drive for EU membership was affected by 9/11 mostly indirectly. Romania's increasingly strong ties with the United States caused many domestic as well as international observers to note, at times critically, that Romanian foreign policy had become not only too NATO-oriented but also had an overwhelmingly pro-Atlanticist vision of the alliance – and hence, of European security and the EU's role in it – and also regarding the prosecution of the GWOT (US Senate, 2004: 72). This perception was not entirely correct, and in any case, the uneasy moments it created in the accession process were considerably less significant than those caused by Romania's slow progress in implementing – and often failure to – reform in the key negotiating chapters of the *acquis*. Similarly embarrassing was Romanian's alleged participation in the US programme of "extraordinary rendition", which has become a byword for the legal and moral failures of the GWOT. Although vehemently denied by Romanian officials (BBC Ro, 2007), Romania's involvement was cited both in the Council of Europe's Marty Reports (PACE, 2006a: 19-20; PACE, 2006b; PACE, 2007), and in that commissioned by the EU Parliament (EP, 2007).

Although NATO and the EU clearly dominated Romania's post-9/11 foreign policy agenda, other initiatives were much more specifically linked to the GWOT, although of course these too were formulated with a view to the two key objectives, and in turn, the pursuit of EU and NATO membership was influenced by GWOT-specific developments. Among these, the most significant were the signing of a Bilateral Immunity Agreement with the US in 2002, the 2005 agreement to host American military facilities on Romanian territory, and the significant doctrinal realignment marked by the publication of Romania's *National Security Strategy* in 2007.

Beyond the generic declaration of support common to most European states, and the Parliament's decision to act as a *de facto* NATO ally, Romania's first prominent and direct policy response to the GWOT was the signing on 1 August 2002 of a Bilateral Immunity Agreement (BIA, or "Article 98" Agreement) with the US, a generic treaty whose purpose is to prevent the prosecution of American citizens by the International Criminal Court. The article in question concerns a provision in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* which stipulated that

the Court cannot prosecute a person located within an ICC member state if doing so would "require the requested State to act inconsistently with its obligations under international law with respect to the State or diplomatic immunity of a person or property of a third State, unless the Court can first obtain the cooperation of that third State for the waiver of the immunity" (ICC, 1998: 69). Adopted on 17 July 1998, the *Rome Statute* entered into force on 1 July 2002, despite the Bush Administration's official withdrawal from the ICC on 6 May 2002 (US DoD, 2002), which revoked President Clinton's signature of the treaty in December 2000. Evidently, the signing of the US-Romania BIA is intrinsically linked to the context of the GWOT. Between 2002 and 2005 the US government conducted an intensive campaign which led to the signing of over 100 BIAs. Although not all of these came into force, this campaign prompted widespread concern around the world that the US was undermining not only the ICC, but also the ensemble of international institutions of which, paradoxically, the US had been a key architect. Following the election of President Obama, the US has pledged to "end hostility towards the ICC" (AMICC, 2010) and despite still not being a party to the Rome Treaty, has promised increased cooperation with and support for the ICC (White House, 2010: 48).

As far as Romania is concerned, the signature of the BIA was seen as a clear reflection of its foreign policy priorities at the time. Romania was the first European state to sign such an agreement (and one of the very few to do so) even though the EU had asked the candidate states to not sign BIAs until it formulated a common position (CEU, 2002). Although the treaty was not ratified by the Romanian parliament (Mediafax, 2008), its signature was controversial and remained an especially vexing issue during the EU accession process, where it was taken as a sign of Romania's Atlanticist rather than European foreign policy orientation. Widely considered "a striking act of Realpolitik" (Brucan, 2005: 3), the signing of the BIA signalled that a close bilateral relationship with the US was clearly at the top of Romania's foreign policy agenda (Moldovan et al., 2009: 12; see PACE, 2007: 27), both in terms of its desire to join NATO – as shown above, Romania had learned after the Madrid Summit that US support was absolutely vital for its membership bid – and with respect to the other policy initiatives that were seen to hinge on the development of the strategic partnership launched in 1997. In short, the signing of the BIA seemed to finally denote a clear foreign policy choice between Europe and America, so often debated in Romanian media after 2001 (e.g. *Ziua*, 2006). Repeatedly rejected by Romanian officials (Fuller 2003; REF Geoană), this "choice" was at times seen as the true essence of Romania's foreign policy philosophy rather than an epiphenomenon of 9/11.

Underpinning this argument was, unsurprisingly, a reading of the post-9/11 world which focused in particular on its so-called “geostrategic”, rather than normative and ideological drivers. In this sense, it is important to observe that the GWOT did not exercise its effects through a linear translation of its imperatives into the local context of Romanian foreign policy. At first sight, the effect of the GWOT seems to be – and local actors saw it to be – the re-validation of the old geopolitical tropes in Romanian security policy, which had temporarily been eclipsed by the exuberant embrace of European identity as a master foreign policy narrative. Inevitably, this narrative about-turn reads 9/11 not as a fundamental rupture in the logic of international relations, but as a sort of return to normality. Whatever the differences between the post-89 and post-9/11 world, what they had in common was a particular geopolitical and strategic logic in which Romania had the potential to play a significant role. To attest, then foreign minister Mircea Geoană illustrated precisely the mix of direct and spillover effects produced by the GWOT when, right in the aftermath of 9/11, he argued that Romania had “a relevant geostrategic capacity” in the GWOT and that “the current context [made] Romania’s position more interesting for NATO” (*Cotidianul*, 29.09.2001; REF Iliescu, Geoană, Paşcu). In another emblematic example of the contextual reduction of the GWOT, Prime Minister Adrian Năstase offered at the time a reading of the new strategic landscape that focused not on counter-terrorist engagements, but on the rapprochement between Russia and the US and the signing of the Russia-China treaty, events that, absent NATO membership, had in his view the potential to cast Romania in the role of a “buffer zone” between global powers (*Romania Liberă* 21.07.2001). Although Romania’s “geostrategic” relevance was at times disputed in media commentary (*Romania Liberă* 11.10.2001), there is little doubt that this had become again a *leit-motif* of foreign policy discourse.

However, such a reading of the GWOT-effect necessitates a reading of the GWOT that *assumes* its so-called geopolitical nature. Or, it is abundantly evident from the formulations of its initiator and leading actor – and much to the chagrin of its realist critics – that the GWOT has constantly been represented as an ideological and moral project, rather than a merely strategic one. Once the contextual particularity of Romanian representations is taken into account, the GWOT-effect appears much more ambiguous. Taking the prominent example of NATO enlargement, the apparent effect of the GWOT was to revitalise the drive for NATO membership. However, a NATO-focused emplotment of the GWOT was only possible through a selective reading of the GWOT as a geopolitical phenomenon, which the GWOT *becomes* precisely because

of the local focus on NATO and the experience of the early debates concerning membership. Filtered through local geopolitical lenses and policy priorities, the GWOT had thus ceased to be an alien logic forcefully etched on distant shores, becoming instead "the effect of its effects" (Cynthia Chase, quoted in Brooks 1984: 28).

This is not to say that the GWOT was entirely reduced to these local geopolitical tropes and security interests. Also, this is not to say that the predominantly geopolitical reading of the GWOT in the Romanian context elided completely either its grand ideological lines, or the baggage of local history and identity that seems obscured by the dominance of "strategy". As argued above, "strategy" must be interpreted as an intrinsic part of Romania's foreign policy identity, a feature that is equally visible in its deliberate reaction to the GWOT, which had as its key doctrinal expression the 2007 *National Security Strategy of Romania* (NSSR), and produced a major policy output in the establishment of US military bases on Romanian territory.

4. Security in the time of GWOT

The 2007 NSSR is not the only or first security doctrine to appear in Romania in the post-9/11 years. Earlier documents include the *Security Strategy* adopted in 2001 (NSSR, 2001) and the *White Book on National Security and Defence* (RGov, 2004), followed by the *National Defence Strategy* of 2008 (NDSR, 2008) and that of 2010 (NDSR, 2010) – the latter, an equivalent to the national security strategy which permanently replaces this type of document, in line with the provisions of the Romanian Constitution. There is however little doubt that the 2007 document is the most unequivocal reflection of the relationship between Romania's national security vision and the logic of the GWOT. This was also the most controversial national security document, due both to its content and to the fact that it was the first of its kind to be released by the Romanian Presidency for public debate prior to its adoption by the Parliament. To a certain extent, the release of the 2007 NSS – and the glaring influence exercised on it by the GWOT narrative – was to be expected. Many of the documents of this type previously released bore in them a structurally similar relationship between the principal vectors of Romania's security policy on the one hand, and the refiguration of the security environment along new lines, on the other. Just as the policies designed to achieve EU and NATO membership were complemented by doctrinal formulations that provided readings of the regional and international security context that were favourable to such policies, the NSS also offers a view of security, of Romania and of the world that makes its policies not only necessary, but also inevitable.

From its preamble to the last chapter, the *Strategy* is pervaded by the war on terrorism, whose tropes and symbolism constitute the document's "metanarrative apparatus of legitimation" (Lyotard, 1979: xxiv-xxv), a role explicitly assumed by its authors, who see the *Strategy* as "apt to legitimate the participation of national forces to the global war against terrorism" (NSSR 2007: 24). It is not just the presence of terrorism as *the* major security concern that marks the presence of the GWOT. What stands out from this document is the manner in which the driving plot of the GWOT has insinuated into the document's narrative, from the areas inevitably connected to the GWOT – such as the description of the security environment and the identification of threats and risks – to the formulation of major policy directions that obviously predate 9/11. In many ways, the contextual appropriations of the GWOT in policy-specific circumstances (e.g. NATO enlargement) are narratively compensated by the comprehensive contamination-with-GWOT of not only policy areas, but, crucially, the "old" narratives of Romanian security. As illustrated earlier, the doctrinal platform for Romania's security policy had since 1996 consistently been based on three principles, which were underpinned in equal measure by considerations of identity and strategy: a broad understanding of security that also linked internal with external security; "Europeanization", understood as a process of (re)alignment with the security values, principles and policies that were seen as characteristic of "Europe" and more broadly the Euro-Atlantic community; and an emphasis on institutions and institutionalisation, both at the European and global level. While these principles are not negated in the 2007 *Strategy*, their new iteration sees both formulation and unitary coherence drastically affected by the superimposition of the global dynamic and security logic of the GWOT. And just like in its previous manifestations, the hybrid of strategy and identity remorphs continuously, teetering between safe rehearsals of national mythology and tentative outlines of the national mission in times of global uncertainty.

Unsurprisingly given that by 2007 Romania had joined NATO and the EU, Europeanization features less as a driver of specific policies and more as a generic theme that is (still) part normative desideratum and part symbolic descriptor. Nonetheless, Romania's "European and Euro-Atlantic identity" is *the* defining element of the security vision formulated in this document, as indicated by its title, *The National Security Strategy of Romania. European Romania, Euro-Atlantic Romania: for a Better Life in a Democratic, More Secure and More Prosperous Country*. National identity and national security are linked not only in the symbolic terms familiar from the narrative of the return to Europe, but more directly and explicitly: "the *construction* of our

country's European and Euro-Atlantic identity", stipulates the document, "constitutes *an essential prerequisite* for Romania's national security" (NSSR 2007: 26, emphasis added). At the same time however, Romania is seen as already coterminous with Europe, since the values that "define its national identity" (8) are identical to those that characterise Europe as "a security space based on common values, interests and objectives" (7). Furthermore, Romania's European and Euro-Atlantic identity is not only an expression of values and interests, but also of its "geostrategic potential" (27). Romania's membership of and activity in the EU and NATO must *reflect* Romania's geostrategic potential, yet it at the same time "*changes* [its] strategic status and identity" (Ibid, emphasis added). In this manner, the normative/strategic hybridity of Romania's identity is maintained, together with the tension between its being and becoming European which characterised the early narrative of the return to Europe.

Yet the assignment of "geostrategic" value is only partially a repetitive incantation of Romania's foreign policy mythology. While Romania's worth is revalorised by NATO and EU membership, it is the global security setting that provides the most important "strategic opportunities" for Romania (12), given its location in "a geopolitical area of strategic importance" (NSSR 2007: 29). For all its reference to institutionalisation and democratisation as the most efficient security policies, the *Strategy* operates within an extremely bleak security horizon, which is characterised by a strong and proliferating conflictuality at the global level, and a pervasive confrontation between "radically different values, beliefs and perceptions, between democracy and totalitarianism" (10). Romania's geographic position becomes valuable precisely in this civilizational battle, which has as its epicentre the "major aggression of international terrorism" (11). That terrorism is considered the most pressing threat to Romania's national security is therefore not only a *product* of the unqualified adoption of the logic of the GWOT, but also a *condition* of its adoption, and consequently a *source* of geopolitical value. In this sense, the GWOT does not destroy the relationship between geopolitical identity, strategic opportunity and security, but re-signifies it in a manner that seeks to prevent the depreciation of Romania's "geostrategic" worth threatened by the end of institutional enlargement.

Yet as critics of the document have noted at the time, such emphatic references to terrorism do not just skew quite drastically the hierarchy of Romania's security concerns – and as a consequence, its short and medium term military planning, budgetary priorities and procurement policy – but change the very essence of Romania's security vision, from "a unifying and integrative logic, to a logic of exclusion and confrontation" (Stan, 2007: 3; IOŞ, 2006: 8). Such

global constraints affect, critics further argued, the way Romania must engage internationally as well as its policies in the region, which are recast "in security terms derived from balance of power politics" (IOŞ 2006: 8) despite the fact that terrorism affects only marginally the region, and that balance of power politics are fundamentally irrelevant in any confrontation with terrorist organisations. Thus, terrorism appears not just as a security threat and a fundamental policy modifier, but also an issue so overwhelming that it forces states around the world to change the way they *act* and also the way they *are*. The fight against terrorism is, the *Strategy* claims, "an objective necessity for responsible democracies [...]. Neutrality in the global war against terrorism is not possible. [No] state can neglect its responsibilities as a member of the international community. [...] Terrorism can and must be defeated through collective action and international solidarity" (NSSR 2007: 22). To fight terrorism is therefore to be a responsible state (Ciută, 2006), and this responsibility adds a new layer to the democratic identity already assumed by Romania's "European and Euro-Atlantic" credentials.

Although apparently compatible given their references to democracy, the rule of law, and the inextricable link between "internal" and "external" security, these layers of identification diverge considerably in the praxis of national security so imperiously demanded by the GWOT. The document continues to refer to the view formulated by former President Emil Constantinescu as far back as 1997 (Constantinescu 1997b: 3), seeing "security and prosperity [as] the inseparable terms of the same equation" (NSSR 2007: 9). In line with the narrative that dominated European security in the 90s, the "fundamental principles" that guide Romania's national security strategy maintain a focus on the "security of the citizen" and "the convergence between security policy and policies for economic and social development" (NSSR 2007:19). Notably however, in the 2007 *Strategy* the relationship between internal and external security is no longer constituted only by democracy, transparency and accountability, which ensured the consolidation of domestic politics and the success of institutional integration, and *through this*, national and regional security. Instead, this relationship is overwhelmingly determined by the struggle against terrorism, which is not only *the* major source of international insecurity, but also the "main priority of internal security" (NSSR 2007: 38).

This substantial shift is also manifest in what is the most visible and explicit espousal of the philosophy of the GWOT, which is the *Strategy*'s recurring and detailed reference to the doctrine of pre-emptive war. Uniquely amongst European countries, Romania seemed to adopt unreservedly the argument formulated in the 2002 US NSS – itself met with much criticism, both

domestically and internationally – that pre-emptive strikes were necessary as well as legitimate in the fight against terrorism. Early drafts of the Romanian document refer directly to the development of a "capacity for pre-emptive action" (DNSSR1, 2006: 34), which was later reformulated into the morphologically correct, but practically equivalent "capacity of anticipation and pro-active action" (NSSR 2007: 3; 21-22; 51). In this sense, the authors of the *Strategy* saw the adoption of its principles as an imperative step in the "prevention, deterrence, and pro-active counteraction of terrorist threats through actions undertaken with the European Union, NATO and partner countries, *including in areas which foster terrorism*" (NSSR 2007:24, emphasis added). Although eliminated from the final version, the first draft also included references to another voguish, but no less controversial trope of US security policy, stipulating that "Romania will participate to actions of *coalitions of the will*, according to [...] the principle of the right to individual and collective self-defence and other stipulations of international law" (DNSSR1, 2006:12-13, emphasis added).

Reactions to the first version of the document were unsurprisingly dominated by this issue, which was seen as a radical break with Romania's foreign policy principles and international practice more generally, as well as an unmistakeable sign of mimetism that all but cloned the US position on this subject (Institutul PRO, 2006: 3). This whole section of the strategy bore a striking resemblance to the 2002 version of the US NSS, from its reference to policies designed to counter risks "irrespective of their distance from our frontiers" (NSSR 2007:21) – which caused many to note that Romania actually was, and would remain for a long time unable to carry out such operations – to the justification of this policy preference in legal and moral terms:

> When consensus [on actions to combat terrorism] cannot be achieved, in virtue of its profound democratic beliefs, its vital national interests and responsible assessments concerning the nature and imminence of dangers, Romania will participate to multinational operations on the basis of rational political decision which result from cooperation agreements with allied, partner or friendly nations, according to situational necessity and in compliance to international law. (NSSR 2007:22-23)

Two immediate observations made most of the headlines in Romanian media when the first draft was released, which focused on the fact that Romania lacked the capabilities to pursue a true doctrine of pre-emptive war, and that its view of the war on terrorism was as blinkered as it was likely to make Romania a "target state" for terrorist activities (Stan, 2007: 3). Yet the critiques – and the dissonance that the *Strategy* caused in Romania's geopolitical imaginary –

went further than that, and addressed the impact of the conspicuous alignment of its security philosophy with that of the US on Romania's geostrategic identity (IOŞ 2006: 11). In his intervention during the parliamentary debate prior to the passing of the *Strategy* into law, a representative of the opposition (SDP) noted that the "national security strategy is suffused with a neoconservative view of the world and Romanian society, [which] makes possible the establishment of an authoritarian political regime" (Stan, 2007: 3; also IOŞ, 2006: 16). This striking reference to the ideological underpinnings of the GWOT is all the more surprising given that it the SDP was in power and led the government that had signed the Romanian-US BIA in 2002, while then-President Iliescu (also SDP) declared that Romania and the US had "identical positions on the way to address the great challenges that the international community is facing, including the threat of terrorism" (cited in PACE, 2007: 28). More than an ideological preference, this alignment was seen to reflect a shift in Romania's international identity, given that the *Strategy* "borrowed from the American version its missionary vocation. If the US assumes this role globally, Romania positions itself as a regional power with a civilizing role in the Black Sea region" (IOŞ, 2006: 16). This new identity impinged directly on Romania's European credentials, in both ideological and security terms, given that the *Strategy* seemed to indicate that "American priorities are more important than the European ones" (IOŞ 2006: 8), and that the Romanian administration "tried to solve security problems through a special relationship with the US, and economic problems through EU membership, following the British model" (GDRII, 2005: 1).

Inevitably, the NSSR reopened in this manner the familiar debate regarding the "choice" between Europe and the US, whose significance reaches beyond the formulation of policy – although such consequences were not negligible – to shape the very core of Romania's geopolitical identity. Through constant emphasis on Romania's ambition to promote EU-NATO cooperation (NSSR 2007: 27), the authors of the *Strategy* seemed openly concerned to rebuff the supposed need for this choice. Yet by its very referencing of "European Romania, Euro-Atlantic Romania" in its subtitle, the document explicitly (albeit perhaps involuntarily) instantiates two *different* security identities, which are subsequently formulated and hierarchically organised using the narrative scaffolding offered by the GWOT. By assuming – and at the same time assigning – the political rationality of the GWOT in the NSSR's formulations, Romania sought to recreate and consolidate a particular version of itself as an actor of "geostrategic" significance. For this, Romania had to upload its geopolitical profile into the security matrix of the GWOT, and

also to become a physical part of the GWOT's geography, which seemed an ideal fit for Romania's own imagined geography.

5. Lost in space: Romania, bases, and the *Global Posture Review*

As it surely is rarely the case, the fit between Romania's self-assumed geopolitical identity and the spatial mechanics of the GWOT emerged almost in its entirety from a single quanta of strategic planning. In 2004, the US Department of Defence delivered its *Global Posture Review*, a blueprint for the reconfiguration of the military presence of the US in a manner that addressed the confluence of logistical and political challenges brought by the need to fight the distant battles of the GWOT. Although posture reviews are not uncommon, the 2004 version was hailed by then Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Douglas J. Feith as the "most profound re-ordering of U.S. military forces overseas" since World War II (US DoD, 2004a: 2), a view that was nevertheless met by observers with some scepticism (O'Hanlon, 2008: 9). Complex in design and laborious in implementation, the GDR encompassed "a cross-section of relationships, activities, facilities, legal arrangements, and global sourcing and surge", elements designed to support "security cooperation efforts and [...] enable prompt global military action" (US DoD, 2004a: 7). Fully attuned to the philosophy of the GWOT (Rumsfeld, 2004a, b; US Senate, 2004: 93), the base structure envisioned by the GDR was not "merely a derivative of strategy [but] a driver in its own right" (OBC 2005a: iii), and was see from the outset as "inescapably, indeed overwhelmingly, political in terms of its effect on the rest of the world" (Bloomfield, 2006: 49).

The GPR hinged on a triad of new basing concepts which reflected the GWOT's need for a military presence that was global, networked and detached from regional boundaries and local political constraints. Its "tiered power-projection deployment scheme" (Noonan, 2004: 2) consisted of Main Operating Bases (MOB) with permanently stationed combat forces and robust infrastructure; Forward Operating Sites (FOS), expandable facilities with a limited U.S. military support presence and prepositioned equipment, designed primarily for bilateral and regional training; and Cooperative Security Locations (CSL), facilities with little or no permanent U.S. presence, whose purpose is primarily to "provide contingency access and be a focal point for security cooperation activities" (US DoD, 2004a: 10).

At the heart of this logistical arrangement was a geopolitical vision that embraced the globe, and aimed to change it in its totality. As one of its key architects argued, there was "not going to be a place in the world where it's going to be the same as it used to be" (Douglas J.

Feith, quoted in Campbell and Johnson Ward, 2003: 95). Basing strategy was to be no longer driven by the identification of threats to US security on a regional basis (Critchlow, 2005: 4), nor was it to be determined "by transient considerations of current events" (Douglas J. Feith, quoted in Schrader, 2003: 2). Situational assessments and response were going to be "from the standpoint of the world and not just of a region" (US DoD, 2004b: 6), which required a posture that enabled the surge of "capabilities on a global basis – across theatres" (US DoD, 2004a: 8). US military would thus be able to "focus and act both within and across various regions of the world" […] along with an ability to manage forces on a global basis and project power across so-called 'seams'" (Ibid.: 9). Rather than inventing new regions (Dalby, 2007: 598), the GDR envisioned a network geometry (Garamone, 2004a, 2004b; Isenberg, 2004: 2) that altogether bypassed regional segregation in order to facilitate global access with maximum speed and impact.

A pivotal role in this network was played by the new types of bases, the smaller and more austere FOS and CSL, which became instantly known in policy and media circles as "lily-pads", the designation first used by former SACEUR General James L. Jones (Anderson, 2003a; Combat Films, 2005). In line with the principal "concepts" of the GPR, lily-pads had to fulfil three conditions: be located in places where troops were "wanted, welcomed, and needed"; be located in environments where "flexible legal and support arrangements" were in place; and be in the proximity of potential crisis points, allowing rapid – preferably instant – deployment (Rumsfeld, 2004b: 3). Geography intersected politics precisely in the governing principle of *access*, which combined the ambition to cover territory globally "[jumping] from country to country on a moment's notice" (Schrader 2003: 3) with the freedom of doing so unhindered by local constraints (Bloomfield, 2006: 57; Henry, 2006: 42). Through its spatial and legal omnipresence, the global base network can thus be seen as a pivotal element in the US effort to "institutionalize the GWOT domestically and internationally", which was, in the assessment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, critical for achieving victory in the GWOT (US JCS, 2006: 19).

Although integral to the "strategic partnership" with the US signed in 1997, Romania's participation in the global base structure delineated by the GDR was a clear step-up in bilateral relations which transcended Romania's membership to NATO. Pentagon officials had been sounding off allies and partners around the world to identify potential sites for the new lily-pads as early as 2003 (Anderson, 2003a; BBC, 2003; IHT, 2003; US DoD, 2003), and Romania enthusiastically offered to host bases as soon as the US initiated consultations in the run-up to

the official launch of the GDR (Moldovan et al., 2009: 11).[1] Following several rounds of high-level meetings (*Ziua*, 2005) and three years of expert-level negotiations (Moldovan et al., 2009: 15-16), the deal was signed on December 6th 2005 and ratified by the Romanian Parliament on July 6th 2006 (RGov, 2006), establishing the use by US forces of five facilities of various sizes and purposes.

Contrary to what one might expect in the case of such a significant policy move, Romanian officials did relatively little to explain the rationale behind the intention to host US facilities (for a summary, see Moldovan et al., 2009: 12-14). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' press communiqué ran briefly through a list of positive effects of the basing agreement, including "strengthening Romania's strategic profile, […] the consolidation of national security, increased interoperability with US and other allied armies, and increasing Romania's attractiveness for foreign business and capital" (RMFA, 2005), yet most official commentaries included only vague references to "diplomatic and economic gains" (BBC, 2005) and "facilitating cooperation" with the United States (ISN, 2005). Despite being hailed as a "national issue" for Romania, neither the wider consultations announced in 2003 (US DoD, 2003), nor the joint session of the two houses of the Romanian Parliament which approved the stationing of US troops on Romanian territory (RParl, 2007) managed to shed too much light on the precise reasons why Romania took this decision.

Given their size and limited activity, the economic benefits of the bases were likely to be minor (GMF, 2005), and their contribution to Romania's security remained particularly nebulous if inscribed in the counter-terrorism-centred parameters of the NSSR. On the other hand, a different security role – but one seldom voiced by Romanian officials – could be assigned to the bases in a reading of the GWOT that was focused less on the fight against terrorism and more on regional rivalries. In this reading, the bases constituted bilateral security guarantees designed to mitigate perceived strategic neglect and geopolitical miscalculation on the part of NATO, and hedge against very traditional threats, as mentioned by former Romanian Prime Minister Năstase above (*Romania Liberă* 21.07.2001), or by East-European states in their letter to the Obama Administration (Adamkus et al., 2009). Overall however, the message coming from the Romanian political and military establishment was that US military presence was simply a good in itself.[2] That this was implicitly assumed to be obvious and not conditioned by the parameters of the national security strategy was, as we shall see below, less the product of a democratic consensus

[1] Personal interviews with high ranking Romanian officials in the Ministry of Defence; personal interviews with US DOD officials in office in 2003-5.

– although the treaty was not met with significant public opinion resistance – or manifest calculation of national interest, and more that of an autopoietic geopolitical identity.

Perhaps inevitably, success in bringing the bases to Romania was immediately sloganised in both media and official discourse, which proclaimed "The Americans are coming!" (Munteanu, 2005; Orescu, 2005). In direct reference to one of the defining elements of Romania's post-communist folklore (Lefter, 2005), according to which Romanians had constantly been "waiting for the Americans to arrive" at the end of World War II *and ever since*, the bases were seen as a fulfilment of nothing less than a national "dream" and "ancient expectation" (RParl, 2007), and thus, as a renewed confirmation of Romania's Western credentials and the transience of its location in the Soviet/Russian sphere of influence. Parliamentary grandiloquence aside, there can be little doubt that the significance of the bases was not limited only to an augmentation of military capability, since the number of US troops was capped at 3000, with limited equipment and rotated for training purposes only. In frequent recitations of Romania's geopolitical mythology occasioned by what was seen as a veritable security policy coup, the bases became the ultimate geopolitical vindication, a final, peremptory, undisputable proof of Romania's strategic worth (Moldovan et al., 2009: 12).

Superficially at least, this worth was entirely derived from the parameters of the GWOT. Simply put, Romania was presented as the perfect lily-pad, satisfying all the three conditions stipulated above: willing, flexible, and conveniently located. This was more than just a case of *Romania* fitting the lily-pad profile like the proverbial glove. From Romania's point of view, the *GDR* appeared as a strategic vision that finally grasped the congruence between the different versions of Romania's political and geographic identity that had been deployed at various moments in the post-Cold War era. As we have seen previously, Romania had successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the Black Sea region in the security register of the GWOT on the basis of a dual security logic that oscillated between "the future of European integration" and "the threshold of great power conflict". Consequently, the presence of US bases was not only a necessary step, but also a logical continuation of the Black Sea region agenda, which was itself a continuation of Romania's EU/NATO agenda. Not only was there no contradiction between these initiatives, but the geopolitical imaginaries they relied on were mutually reinforcing, if not indistinguishable. Consequently, , the GDR appeared at the same time visionary and pragmatic in its recognition that Romania was simultaneously a "bridge between civilisations and different

[2] Personal interview with senior US diplomat.

economic and cultural interests" (NSSR 2007: 18); a security actor in the new "geopolitical pivot" of the Black Sea region that was itself a "platform for power projection" in the GWOT (Maior and Matei, 2005: 50); and a lily-pad in the war on terrorism. All three were premised on Romania's "geostrategic" importance and on a reading of the international environment in which "the role of the military and geographic location [was] increasing" (Paşcu, 2002).[3]

"Location" was therefore the dominant trope in Romania's official narrative regarding the US bases, which, in complete alignment with Romania's reading of the GWOT, meant that the GDR at the same time recognised of Romania's "strategic identity", and provided an opportunity for the "geostrategic potential" identified by the NSSR (2007: 27). Indeed, Romanian and American officials were not hesitant in emphasising Romania's "favourable geographic position" (Condoleezza Rice, quoted in Perescu, 2005), or its "geostrategic location at a crucial point of global affairs", as President Băsescu dramatically described the Black Sea region (Băsescu, 2005). While most of the media and political commentary seemed to agree that "the basic attraction of Romania as a new base of operations for US forces is geographic" (Shimkus, 2006: 5), there is nevertheless a profound contradiction between the contextual appropriations of the GWOT which put such a premium on Romania's location in the US global base structure, and the archetypes of Romania's geopolitical identity, which were effectively effaced, rather than validated by participation in the GDR.

There is, on the one hand, significant evidence that the primary criterion used in the selection of base sites was not location, but access. Early in the GDR consultation process, the US had made clear that "host countries that would impose nettlesome constraints on the out-of-country deployability of U.S. forces should not expect to be significant hubs in the new American defense posture" (Bloomfield, 2006: 57). Consensus had emerged in the US policy establishment that troops would be deployed "in a place where people agree with what you're doing, so they don't shut down ports and they don't shut down airfields" (Scharder, 2003: 2), and on the occasion of Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's visit to Romania, US officials confirmed that Romania was "willing to open things up to us without significant restrictions" (Dunham, 2004). During the US Senate hearing of the GDR, senators also emphasised that "in talking to the military leaders [in Bulgaria and Romania], they want us there. [...] They offered things that the Europeans never did, the Western Europeans" (US Senate, 2004: 71). Such accent on access

[3] Note however, the contradiction between this security logic and that formulated by the Secretary General of NATO, who argued that "it matters less and less where a country sits on the map" (de Hoop Scheffer, 2006: 3).

highlights once more the necessary relationship between Romania's predisposition towards the GDR and its security strategy. The doctrinal changes effectuated by NSSR 2007 can be thus seen as a direct effect of the GDR, given that, as one of its key architects indicated, the United States had urged "doctrinal and legislative changes in allied capitals consistent with the practical realities of the war on terrorism", in particular pre-emptive action (Bloomfield, 2006: 61; 62).[4]

Even more seriously damaging to Romania's self-professed "geostrategic" identity was the spatiality of the GDR. In perfect alignment with the "seam" geometry of the GDR, Prime Minister Năstase was telling an US audience in 2003 that US bases on Romanian territory would constitute "an excellent platform for various regions" (Fuller, 2003). This argument, however, effectively cancelled *la pièce de résistance* of Romania's archetypical representation of itself in geopolitical terms: the significance and specificity of its location, historically validated by centuries of imperial struggle and European strife, was completely lost in the GDR's unambiguous "logic of global geography" (Bloomfield, 2006: 50). Neither Romania nor the Black Sea region mattered as themselves, but only as anonymous "[platforms] from which to send U.S. troops *elsewhere*" (Schrader, 2003: 3, emphasis added). Critics of the NSSR 2007 observed precisely this fracture between the access logic of the GWOT and the geopolitical identity usually assumed by Romania, noting that "Romania defines itself and adopts the identity of a Europe margin, a space of transition (bridge) between the Euro-Atlantic world and the other important spaces of the Euro-Asian Orient (sic) – the Caucasus, Middle East, etc." (IOŞ 2006: 8 ; Stan 2007: 3).

Geopolitical worth was therefore denied at the very moment it was asserted. What was at times described as a policy glitch – the contradiction between the need for maximum flexibility of deployment and the long-term commitment necessary for effective security cooperation with the host states (O'Hanlon, 2008: 6) – was in fact a reflection of the self-subversive identity of a lily-pad. Paradoxically, the perfect lily-pad was not one that was geostrategically important, but one that did not matter at all. Lily-pads that maximized access and flexibility were useful precisely because they were disposable; as former SACEUR General James L. Jones aptly described them, "we could use [a base] for six months, turn off the lights, and go to another base if we need to" (quoted in Isenberg, 2004: 2).

By morphing into a lily-pad, Romania did not become something *else*, that is, something prescribed by the new geopolitical architecture of the GWOT, but simply ceased being able to be

[4] In addition, some high ranking US defence officials argued that in logistical terms Romania did not offer that much of an improvement on the existing American facilities in Germany, with respect to both overall capacity, and the distance from

itself. Hollow as it may sound, Donald Rumsfeld's philosophy of "places, not bases", which underpinned the GDR (Killian, 2004; Isenberg, 2004), wiped out the place from under the base. Tropes that were absolutely fundamental to the geopolitical identity assumed by Romania in the early nineties as well as to its triumphant return to Europe – such as the quasi-Mackinderian "crossroads of empires" – were rendered obsolete and irrelevant. Although premised on a ahistorical geopolitical vision, the strategic apotheosis painstakingly and elaborately sourced in Romanian history was eradicated by the GWOT precisely because of the historical prejudice it was built upon. Historical geopolitical identities could not be fit onto the geography of the GWOT because the GWOT had no history, premised as it was on its own unprecedented nature, which is the very source of its exceptionality and legitimacy.

6. Conclusion

It has at times been tempting to assume that the rampaging logic of the GWOT has been inscribed either onto geopolitically idyllic or onto geopolitically blank contexts, and that whatever else there is, or was, in geopolitical terms, must be better than the GWOT. But, if the starting assumption is that the GWOT has transformed local geopolitical identities to the point of dissolution, the question is not only whether this transformation is desirable or reversible, but also: transformed *what* precisely? As we have seen, Romanian geopolitical culture is organised along very traditional tropes, so its fusion with the GWOT could hardly have been just a case of imperial destruction of geopolitical innocence. In this context, the effect of the GWOT has been less that of prompting direct resistance or strict adherence to a new regional nomenclature forcefully drawn in its name. Rather, what was in play was a process in which local actors sought to *affirm existing* national or regional geopolitical identities by attuning them to the modes of being and acting required and rewarded by the GWOT. Often, the intended outcome of these hermeneutical mechanisms was to source policy investment and political attention, which are anticipated in virtue of a practical and virtual plug-in to what is perceived as the strategic and geopolitical mainstream. Hence what Said referred to as "the transformation of territories in the metropolitan imagination" (1994: 21) is not a unilateral process of symbolic appropriation, but an authentic fusion of geopolitical horizons, local and hegemonic, regional and global, coagulated and whirlwinding at the same time.

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base to potential targets. Personal interview, April 2010.

Encounters with the geopolitics of the GWOT are however paradoxical. On the one hand, the regional profiles that were successfully uploaded by local actors into the geopolitical matrix of the GWOT were adopted by its planners in almost every respect, and then subsequently re-applied onto the places in question in the form of strategic plans or military footprints. Local geopolitical identities were, on the other hand, virtually effaced at the very moment they were referenced to the GWOT. Victims of their own success, region and state become geopolitically empty shells. The GWOT, in other words, did more than simply enforce an alien geopolitical pattern: it encouraged an excision of the context out of the context, hollowing out local geopolitical narratives of their historical content and cultural significance. Only time will tell if the product of this narrative collision is a permanent displacement of the security principles and practices associated with the geostrategic visions it uprooted, or whether local geopolitical myths will resurface intact once the void created by the GWOT will have waned.

Romania's case provides a sharp illustration that the effects of the GWOT will significantly outlast its military battles. Its deliberate institutionalization has changed not only security doctrines and current foreign policy practice, but also, much more profoundly, the GWOT has transformed profoundly the way states – in particular lily-pad hosts – see their place and their role in the world. While the US facilities in Romania have never been used to full capacity – a trend that will in all likelihood continue in the short term at least, much to the disappointment of the Romanian hosts (Coon, 2008; Moldovan et al., 2009) – there are already signs that the US has recently moved away from the rhetoric of short-term disposable bases, adopting instead a narrative heavily focused on long term, enabling local partnerships (US DoD, 2010a; b). It remains to be seen whether the combination of ultra-mobility and definite return to regional frames of the phase-adaptive approach to missile defence (PAA) adopted by the Obama administration – to which Romania is also an enthusiastic participant (BBC, 2010; Marinas, 2010) – will have a similar effect as the GDR, or whether it will serve as one last confirmation of geostrategic worth that repairs the narrative dissonance induced by the GDR, and restores intact Romania's hybrid geopolitical identity.