

**THE NATIONAL SECURITY
PRIORITIES
AND THE MASS MEDIA
IN BULGARIA**

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I. THE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The research on the media discourse related to the issues of national security, and in particular to the issue on the alliance to NATO has been centred in the period from the end of 1994 i.e. after the parliamentary elections and up to the end of 1996. The idea to apply for the project has been inspired by the viewpoint of the author, that the political behaviour of the BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) the defeateds who formed the parliamentary majority in 1994, will bear a marked reaction by the media circles, and will bring about among others, the launch of some positions that never before figured in the public debate on NATO.

On the other hand, the idea of the research also presumes the quest for continuity, development or changes in various positions on the issue of national security, which have been subjected to public awareness, since the onset of democratic changes in Bulgaria.

The research has been conducted with the aim to confirm or reject either of the following hypotheses:

- There exist in Bulgaria open media discourse exchange, by means of which public debate takes place, and the search for national consensus on the priorities of national security is being sought after.
- In Bulgaria open media discourses exchange do not exist, the media environment is not one that is debated, and one in which no public debate takes place, nor the search for national consensus on the priorities of national security is being sought after.

The research covers a period of two years, for whose purposes the two large party daily newspapers "DUMA" (the daily of the BSP) and "DEMOKRATSIA" (the daily of the UDF, the Union of the Democratic Forces) have been scrutinized, also, the private dailies "24 HOURS", "TROOD" (labour), "KONTINENT", "STANDART", and the weekly "168 HOURS" have been included in the study. For this period, 671 communication units have been collected and studied. By a communicative unit we assume the separate text together with its title, also including head-titles, under-titles, as well as any accompanying iconic information.

The analysis has been made on the basis of a registration card that included ten indices (see appendix 1).

Background information from the press have been gathered and used in the research by the author since the outset of the democratic changes in the country in 1989.

The pronounced interest in the subject, the participation of the author in various debates, symposia, etc. related to the priorities of national security as a whole, and the position on NATO in part, have been of exclusive significance for the realization of the research.

Along all that and during the process of research, the author have been following the theoretical publications in Bulgarian magazines and books,

publications in "NATO Review", "World Policy Journal", "Foreign Affairs", and others.

The author got acquainted with an exclusively important document for the period, the "Study on NATO Enlargement" and other documents as well as announcements and speeches by prominent political figures from country members in NATO and in particular from the USA.

The author feels much obliged to the US embassy in Bulgaria for the materials that have been regularly provided by its Cultural Information Centre.

It is impossible not to note the relevance of the author's two visits to NATO headquarters in the context of the project objectives - the first visit that took place in early 1995 on the "Opinion Leaders Program", and the second in November 1996, in time of the realization of the Dutch-Bulgarian project "Independent Journalism".

Bearing in mind that the project is not focused on conceptualizing the priorities of national security and its relevance to NATO, but rather on the media discourse on these issues, it is absolutely normal and necessary to study a host of new publications in the media sphere and the journalistic theory on the mutual relationship of the media and politics, on the role of journalism in the development of the democratic society and the formation of its political culture.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW UNCERTAINTIES AND THE PUBLIC DEBATE

1. The process of democratization and the media.

On the issue of national security in Bulgaria, changes in the attitude of the Bulgarian society after 1989 also surfaced in the media discourse in a most remarkable appearance and reaction. From the time of instituting the

opposition idea against the Communist regime by the establishment of the UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) in 1989 to date, the media environment has acquired a fully new countenance.

The research of the post-totalitarian period in itself is an impossible task without the analysis of the radical transformations in the mass media.

The fact is, that the changes in Bulgaria have started within and by the press, which have further carved the assertion that, in addition to the discourse mood that shaped the last seven years, other substantial changes do not exist. Monopoly of "the one and only viewpoint" has been in the first place smashed by the press, in which the first break into "total silence" have been effected (Sartori).

However, midway between the burst into "total silence" and the true relocation of the mass media in the social system, an extremely protracted process dragged in. This is where the media gradually emancipated themselves, and converted their role of state subordinates into an instrument of mutual intercourse of various social groups.

In this way, the media had to transform itself into a component of the civil society and the democratic system in whole.

The process of change in role and relocation of the media in society, has diverse characteristics and dimensions that are material for the response to facts related to the specific stage in the development of the freedom of the press.

In the first place, this is a political dimension for the specific stage i.e. the degree to which the media become independent from the political pressure during the process of power delegation.

In the second place, it is the economical dimension conditioned by the degree to which the media have become unconstrained by economic dependence on the political power.

In the third place, is the social dimension, which has been especially significant during the previous years, and has been moulded by the degree to which the media become subjects of their own audience, who in turn will have to become an active participant in the communication process.

In the fourth place, the professionalism dimension is outlined with distinct emphasis presented through the changes in the models of communicative behaviour and the media message.

These four dimensions give reason to outline an abundantly contradictory illustration, that corresponds to the controvert and complex nature of the post-Communist transition in Bulgaria. "...In any case, in that process of change, the loss of Communist monopoly over mass communications is the key to the break down of Communist totalitarianism", wrote Zb. Bzezinsky, /The Grand Failure: The birth and death of Communism in the Twentieth Century, New York: Charles Scribners & sons, 1989, p. 254/.

The changes in the media environment have produced the sense that all forms of control over the mass media have once and for all been eliminated. The recently emerging on the press market new privately owned newspapers, have been taken as evidence to the thesis that market mechanisms have entirely defeated the one-party monopoly, and censorship is now a thing of the past. The elapsing years however, have shown that this is one of the greatest illusions that were created by high expectations and hopes, following the collapse of the Communist rule.

Among others however, the establishment of national and local privately owned newspapers have had a significant role in a positive direction in transforming and emancipating the media. On the other hand, the fact is that despite the emerge of privately owned electronic media though limited in the broadcasting area nation-wide, nonetheless the monopoly of the Bulgarian National Radio and T.V has been preserved.

The appearance of privately owned media is thought to be one of the most effective means towards autonomy and the firm foundation of pluralism in society.

During 1996, 80 % of the newspapers market based on one time issue is in private hands. The private media do not generate and increase in themselves negative freedom, i.e. freedom from restrictions and interference of economical and political interests of the owners. At the same time however, the emergence of private media has unquestionably increased positive freedom in the mass media environment and society as a whole.

In the publishing environment, different viewpoints are launched and different opinions mirrored.

In the meantime however, the political power continues to display itself as a conservative element that views society according to necessity for specific propaganda influence and impact, while the media are the means for these inspirations, influence and reaction.

Surely the attempt by the political institutions to exercise pressure over the mass media is not a typical "Bulgarian phenomenon of the transition", but under the conditions dictated by the transition, the political institutions are strongly tempted to convert the mass media into an instrument for "public relations", while against this background the media themselves and the journalistic profession do not dispose of a built-in resistance to oppose such temptations. Notwithstanding that the media in the post-totalitarian period have ceased to be the direct instrument of the ruling institutions, they nonetheless - and this in turn also applies to the media identifying themselves as "independent" - turned out to be dependent on the defender of the ruling power regardless of his or her identity.

The big issues surrounding the set-up of the status of the national electronic media, the lack of a national privately owned T.V. channel, and

the absence of quality press product, and a host of other facts would yield to the conclusion that control over the mass media has been subjected to diverse modifications and has been transformed into new but before else, economic mechanisms.

Of no less importance is the fact that journalists continue to subject themselves voluntarily to dependence - they are hard up assimilate their new role of being unbiased observers and rectifiers of government behaviour and actions.

The prolonged process of liberation from government control has depended on existing bearings that directly bear down on the social and professional dimension of the changes in the mass media and the journalist profession.

In the post-totalitarian period, journalism has acquired a specific role by shifting from the consciousness of the "one and only viewpoint", the closed, the postulated and dictated media reality to a free flow of ideas and opinions in society, and into readiness to consider and respect other viewpoints, ways of thinking and attitudes. Only through the realization of this role, will the mass media be able to become mediators in the dialogue between various social groups.

It would be inadequate to conclude that the mass media in Bulgaria, and in particular the press which is the centre of our interest, have not undertaken changes in realizing their new role. But the media level and their role in forming a new style of communication and collaboration in society is a problem of the development itself of society. The mass media are unable to "overtake" or "outwit" the development of society where they exist.

In the post-totalitarian society like the Bulgarian, no stable nucleus of a democratic history existed. In this society, the application of a dichotomic model of thinking "friend or enemy", "adequate-inadequate" have been

imposed for decades. The confrontational adversity of the "opponent", of the "foreign" has been inspired as being a virtue.

It is for this reason that the conception of new values, new models for human relationships, and new forms of communication are associated with agonizing dilemmas and problems. The post-totalitarian society is no longer a totalitarian Communist society, but nonetheless is still nothing otherwise bearing in mind its systems of values. It seems indeed, that namely the process of rearranging values in sound order will turn out to be the most difficult, and most protracted process in the development of the new Bulgarian democracy.

Bulgarians have for long years accepted the fact of having a central informer who was normally considered as the representative and gifted with utmost competence. In the transformed situation, citizens have gradually enlarged the scope of their contradictive thinking, without limiting the freedom of speech, nor checking the media competence from last instance.

In addition, they teach themselves to regard the freedom of speech as the instrument to resolve contradiction, to view the media as an option to launch the coloured moods and adjusted behaviour of society towards the power of the mass.

Citizens, journalists and politicians alike, agonizingly assimilate the skill to co-exist and co-operate in a society directing itself towards openness and receptivity. In their best manifestations some private newspapers in Bulgaria such as "STANDART", and "KONTINENT", have shown their strive in openness of the discourse towards bringing into dialogue diverse viewpoints, and providing the possibilities for the choice of opinion and alternative knowledge of social facts. But the mass media in themselves come upon categorical uniform perceptions of their audience in part, and not ready to concede to other viewpoints except their own.

2. NATO in the agenda of political institutions and media.

The media discourse on any subject of great interest to society bears the characteristics of the controversial changes in it. The search for priorities on national security as an issue of outstanding importance for society has brought into focus social alertness and the quest for military and political security guarantees, and on these grounds the issue on alliance to NATO.

With the end of the "Cold War" which was marked by the dissolution of the "Warsaw Pact", a period of insecurity has accessed confronting not only Bulgaria, but all other European ex-socialist countries. In all of them, reconsideration of foreign policy and national security became compulsory issues in light of this latest insecurity. This is projected against the many new insecurities in a world where the threat of a wide-magnitude war is ever shrinking.

Amongst the latest safety issues in Europe and in particular the challenge to provide a rationale for the priorities of national security of Bulgaria are the following menaces:

- organized crime linked to international networks;
- the sale and use of weapons' components of mass destruction character;
- religious conflicts of fundamentalist nature;
- ethnical conflicts;
- illegal arms trade;
- drugs trade and others.

In the process of reconsideration of the priorities of national security, the mass media became the participants who are in pursuit to identify their new image in it, their new roles and functions. The sheer levying by society of the NATO issue in its overall controversial spectrum in the forefront, marks one the most important bursts into the "total silence". **It is**

hardly possible to ignore the fact that these problems was heavily burdened by the “black and white” confronting model of thinking in which NATO was embodied as “the enemy”.

Notwithstanding that the focus of our attention is the media discourse, covered by the most influential Bulgarian central newspapers for the period 1995-96, the mass media part in bearing down upon the issue of NATO for all of the previous period is undoubtedly significant in uncovering the basic tendencies and their role in discerning the priorities of national security and in particular the issue on NATO.

In the previous period, the basic communicative blocks surrounding the issue, were distributed around the events that have marked the beginning and the advance of the relations between Bulgaria and NATO at the institutional level. The mass media have presented to the attention of society in diverse consistencies and genres, not only the basic events and facts during that period, but also diverse positions in society itself.

Because of the importance of the accumulated "inheritance", some events and facts that have become media facts are presented herewith, together with institutional views on NATO for the purposes of understanding the tendencies and positions in the public debate on the issue during the past two years.

Following the London declaration which was passed on the 6th of June 1990 by member countries of NATO, and which became the corner stone of the relations between the organization and countries from central and east Europe, on the 13th of July the same year, Bulgaria accepts the invitation addressed by NATO. In a declaration by the ministry of Foreign Affairs, published by the media, the following statement was underlined "...readiness for acceptance of practical steps in response to the proposal for contacts with NATO."

At the same time, in a letter to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian diplomacy described the London declaration as "positive though not unanimous" which needs to be analyzed carefully "without prejudice but equally without romantic illusions".

From the information pieced together in the press, it has become clear that in its reply to the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Bulgaria approves of the Russian approach for the advance of relations between NATO and the "Warsaw Pact" on a collective basis.

During the month of September 1990, a group of delegates put forward a declaration bill before the Great National Assembly in which the wish of Bulgaria to become a NATO member was demonstrated .

Two months later in November, the minister of Foreign Affairs in the cabinet of BSP (former Communists) pays a visit to Brussels following the first free elections. The minister declared that Bulgaria no longer considers the "Warsaw Pact" the guarantor of its security, but that it now depends on its own forces, the improvement of mutual relations with its neighbouring countries, and the creation of common European structures for safety. The minister further observed that NATO must not ignore Bulgaria should the situation in the Balkan peninsula becomes more aggravated.

In this manner, it was ever since the first year following the advent of the political changes that some statements on current issues will consequently have a noted presence in the public debate, and will participate in actualizing adverse positions - In the first place, the indecision on taking sides with the Russian stand, or the choice of self-determination to open the dialogue with NATO, while in the second place the concerns of Bulgaria on the safety issue in the Balkans were quite distinct, and the ensuing NATO position in the event of conflicts emerging in future.

During the following year 1991, the issue on foreign policy in respect of guarantees for the security of Bulgaria, but coloured by the issue on

NATO, has echoed in the mass media but more strongly with the influence of some few visits. The other event that had also its share in contributing to strong reactions was, the official dissolution of the "Warsaw Pact".

The first official visit of high rank Bulgarian politician in Brussels was made by the prime minister of the coalition government, which was formed following the fall of the cabinet of Lukanov. In the process of talks, prime minister Popov declared that Bulgaria is not looking for full membership, nor full guarantees for its safety by NATO, but was looking to start a common, favourable and constructive co-operation with the Organization.

The visit of the general secretary of NATO Manfred Wörner to Bulgaria, and his speech before the Bulgarian parliament had become significant media events. At the same evening of the visit however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have declared before journalists the official stand that "at this stage the issue of membership or guarantees for security in countries of Eastern Europe by the power of the North Atlantic Pact, do not figure on the day's agenda.

A particularly important event in relation to which the NATO issue came within the focus of political institutions and society alike, was the visit of president Zhelev to the NATO headquarters in November.

The President declared that the wish for immediate association to NATO is not an unknown issue to Bulgaria. By the end of the same year, Bulgaria became participant in the formation of the North Atlantic Council for co-operation.

The nature of events of the year in progress, and in particular the visit of president Zhelev to Brussels had born upon the political institutions the necessity to formulate their definite position in respect of NATO. This situation found its reflection in the press, where the issues of international military and political guarantees for the national security started to appear more regularly.

Following the events that have caught the attention of the press in 1992, the first sessions of the military committee of NATO in which the Defense ministers and General Chiefs of Staff of countries of Central and Eastern Europe took part, were reported. The other event that was also reported was the alliance of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria to the Association of the NATO in the quality of observer.

In spite of the lack of noteworthy institutional events during 1992, the issue on NATO figured though not in exceeding regularity, but nonetheless with marked opposing positions. At the end of 1993, a position that justified resound in the press was that of a consent among delegates from diverse political powers is now in existence, and one which supports the notion of Bulgaria's alliance to NATO.

In connection with the planned high rank meeting of member countries of NATO for the 10th of January 1994, president Zhelev met with the heads of parliament groups and asked them parliament makes a resolution for starting the procedures for Bulgaria joining the Organization.

On the 21st of December 1993, Parliament passed the declaration in which it has indicated its position to accelerate efforts in order to take advantage of the possibilities for co-operation which NATO and the West European Union had proposed. With the objective that during future enlargement of these organizations, Bulgaria would join as member while taking into full account national interests. Of the 215 delegates attending the parliamentary session of the 36th National Assembly, 198 voted in favour of the declaration.

The year 1994 however, made a start with a media dispute that had progressed from the previous year. A delegate from the BSP published in "DUMA" a letter addressed by the president to Manfred Wörner at the end of September. In the letter by the president it was declared, that the stand on the NATO issue is a priority in the foreign policy of Bulgaria. In the

BSP newspaper, the letter was described as a secretive document hidden away from delegates. According to the article, the president made a constitutional breach having not priorly referred to Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In response to those allegations, the presidential institution explained that the powers of the Head of State also included the formation of proper directions for foreign policy.

During the whole of 1994, the dispute on NATO figured frequently in as much as in the extremely uptight relationships between the political institutions, as in the mass media. The most significant communication blocks in the press focused around the "Partnership for Peace" Program, which was launched at the beginning of the year by member countries of NATO, and also on the invitation it had addressed to member countries of the Organization of Co-operation and Safety in Europe to join the Program.

On the day following the close of the summit conference of NATO, president Zhelev, prime minister Berov, Defense secretary, the Home and Foreign secretaries, the heads of parliamentary commissions on national security and foreign policy held a meeting to discuss the latest NATO initiative and make a decision for joining it.

Prime minister Berov addressed a letter to the General secretary of NATO, in which he indicated the delight of Bulgaria at the "Partnership for Peace" initiative. The document itself on the program had been signed by president Zhelev on his second visit to Brussels in April. After signing, the President declared that this act is "one step of our sovereign strategy towards integration within the European and Trans-European structures".

The same month, first the prime minister then the president delivered lectures on our relations with NATO. The title of the lecture by the prime minister was "Bulgaria and future systems for security - regional,

continental, and global", while the lecture of the president was titled "The new foreign policy of Bulgaria and NATO". Both lectures were exclusive indicators of the state of the public debate in Bulgaria on NATO, to the extent to which they express two different tendencies.

The prime minister heads a cabinet formed by the parliamentary backing of the BSP and the Movement of Rights and Freedoms (MRF) following the fall of government of UDF due to loss of majority support when the (MRF), then the balancing power in parliament, ceased its support to government. The stand of the prime minister bears all the characteristics of prudence. While president Zhelev for a second round has manifested his view as a consistent and active supporter of Bulgaria joining NATO, a position that has periodically infuriated and caught sharp criticism by the cabinet, and the parliamentary group of the BSP.

It is of great significance to remark in the period of the UDF cabinet being in power, one that had a categorically positive position towards NATO, some tension in the relationship with the president had surfaced - mainly because of the aim of the UDF to replace the president in his role as the prominent advocate of the links of Bulgaria with NATO. It must be however equally noted, that following the fall out in the relationship between the UDF and president Zhelev (indeed elected as a candidate of the UDF), the declarations and actions of the president with regard to NATO fell within the scope of tolerance and support on the part of the UDF in his favour.

The unceasing struggle of the political powers, the controversy between them and the government institutions the complex relationships within these, are factors that have to a great extent determined the role of the media discourse on national security to at the end of 1994.

III. MEDIA DISCOURSE BETWEEN TWO CONFRONTING POLES.

The issue on national security and its guarantees, which was consistently lead by the changes sweeping the country, and the new actualities related to world politics, has drawn onto the public scene the issue of NATO. With the accession of the BSP to power, the country remained without a clear-cut articulate and general stand of the political powers in respect of NATO.

In their pre-election campaign, former Communists have mainly hedged on the encumbrance of the economical and social problems at home, presenting themselves before a mass disappointed in their high expectations for changes, as the builder and saver political power.

Because of this approach in their pre-election campaign, foreign policy had relatively a slim space in the campaign of the defeating political power in November 1994. It should be however noted, that in all its official declarations the BSP and consequently its cabinet have supported the premise of drawing nearer, and gradually moving towards integration in the "European and Euro-Atlantic structures". This fact in itself is an indication of the changing mood in society in whole, and one of which the leaders of the BSP had no alternative but to be mindful.

It is possible to observe that the strive for integration in the "European and Euro-Atlantic structures" had been outlined as a tendency in society, and in a definite sense, as a conversion point of its unanimous consent.

But the period 1995-96 which was the specific subject of our analysis of few major central newspapers and one weekly, became a marked challenge that have uncovered the scope of the dispute on the NATO issue. The challenge had been expected in light of future NATO decision in respect of its enlargement.

The newspapers chosen for the purposes of the analysis include some that are self-claimed "independent", the selection also included the newspapers of the two largest political powers (see appendix 2).

In contrast to the mass media situation in democratic societies, the party engaged, press exercises strong influence on public opinion in a society still in transition as Bulgarian, by creating their own information worlds. The behaviour of a press of this type could not be significant in a "normal media environment" i.e. under the conditions of a balanced existence of the mass, party's or quality press.

The analysis of the block of 671 communicative story units opens the prospects to make a distinction between three groups of publications and issues in accordance with their stand on NATO.

1. the ones that are in favour of NATO;
2. the ones against;
3. the others that take a centrist position.

This distinction is formed before else, over few key issues that have become dominant for the period:

- the prospects of the NATO enlargement;
- the routes and guarantees of the national security of Bulgaria;
- the stand of Russia towards the enlargement of NATO.

Other issues settle around sideways or become included, amongst which are

- the "price" for Bulgaria joining the NATO;
- the possibility of deploying nuclear weapons on the territories;
- the conflicts of some member countries of NATO (Turkey - Greece).

As it is possible to guess, **the most categoric in their expression in connection with the first two groups are the newspapers of the two**

major political powers, where the daily "DEMOKRATSIA" disposes of the positive sign in contrast with the daily "DUMA" which disposes of the opposite.

In the quality of the newspaper of the Union of Democratic Forces, "DEMOKRATSIA" is fully identified with the stand of the UDF on the NATO issue. Since the very beginning of its existence, the positive stand in its evaluation and strive to join NATO were at the root of the foreign policy platform and attitude of the UDF.

Consequently, publications in "DEMOKRATSIA" endorsed of the alliance to NATO without reserve, and peremptorily criticised not only the stand of "non-joining" but also any indecisive and sceptical position. "Delegates of the UDF have again insisted on membership in NATO" (04.10.1995), "For membership in NATO Bulgaria does not dispose of other alternatives" (15.11.1993), "The UDF delivers today a bill for decision on NATO" (22.11.1995), "UDF again opens the question on NATO" (30.11.1995), "The BSP has exhausted its arguments against NATO" (15.11.1995), "The BSP once more blocks our membership in NATO" (23.11.1995), "NATO is like an insence* for the stubborn centenarian" .

These headlines selected as could be noted from a short period, indicate the reality created by of "DEMOKRATSIA". At the conceptual level, this reality is equally dichotomic - "the UDF believe that our membership in the Pact, is a safeguard for our national security" (06.06.1995), "The cabinet of the BSP conducts an anti-nationalistic policy, by rejecting commitment to concrete and decisive steps with regard to the participation of Bulgaria in the NATO structures" (11.02.1995).

In some way or another, this image characterizes the informative and analytical texts alike for different occasions - for instance, on the event of

* *In the Bulgarian traditional beliefs and the Christian orthodox religion, insence is used to expel bad spirits.*

the visit of the Deputy-Secretary of State of the USA Richard Holbrooke in October 1995, where "DEMOKRATSIA" has categorically indicated the position that Bulgaria must accept all terms and conditions that NATO may require for alliance; on the question of the document by the cabinet for individual dialogue of Bulgaria with NATO; on the occasion of the visit of the general secretary Xavier Solana.

The reality seen by "DEMOKRATSIA" is that different stands in a society do not exist. There exists either a "proper" or an "improper" stand, and depending on this fact, politicians can be divided into two categories "the good ones" i.e. "our politicians", and "the bad ones" i.e. "all the rest". In fact, an opposing position could not exist in the full sense of the expression notwithstanding it referred to the position of the representatives of the BSP, or other political powers, or the view of experts, "different" stand for instance, of the representatives of the BSP, exists only in the situation where it belongs to the delegates of the BSP who are against the official party stand to which they belong.

On the 06.06.1996, the daily "DEMOKRATSIA" published an interview with Philip Bokov, a delegate of the BSP in which he declared "I am in favour of alliance to NATO. Before that however, we need to clarify the nature of guarantees offered by NATO".

The whole image of controversy "friend or enemy" is deeply characteristic of the development of the newspaper of the Union of Democratic Forces and its depiction of world politics. In the context of the issue of interest to us, there exists only one dilemma in this world "NATO or Communism". Within a specific context, this dilemma may be modified into "NATO or BSP and Russia".

At the other end of the horizontal axis, the newspaper of the BSP "DUMA" is situated. The analysis that shows the architecture of the "Party church" around which it builds its own reality, is conceived by the stand of

BSP and its cabinet, which through official declarations approves the alliance to the "European and Euro-Atlantic structures", while in practice its political behaviour and most of all, for its party's internal consumption, by far more guarantees for the national security are being sought after in Russia.

It is impossible not to observe that through a so often declared conception on the integration in "the European and Euro-Atlantic structures" the need to determine a definite stand on the NATO issue is being skilfully blemished. This is easily understood bearing in mind that for the larger part of the readership of the daily "DUMA", and party membership mass, the supporters' view of the BSP the stereotype "NATO = enemy" is sufficiently powerful in as much as the stereotype "Russia the guarantor for peace" is.

At the same time however, the leaders of the BSP, have to be cognizant of some members in its own circles represented by the younger generation of strongly pro-Europe and pro-NATO oriented former "Young Communist league" members or young Communist diplomats. In addition, there is one more factor the personal ambition shown by the editor-in-chief of "DUMA", a former dissident against the Communist regime, in assuming independence from the leadership of the BSP. It is possible to note that the newspaper was one of the harshest critics of the cabinet of the BSP chaired by Videnov, and have through many of its publications been insisting the cabinet resigns.

These particularities as a whole uncover the formation of a reality in which the strongly exploited fear associated with the "cold war" is felt in the numerous publications, co-exists with this, where an attempt into a strategy of openness towards the changes in the global sphere is observed.

With the increased regularity of story units that were part of the analysis, the concerns are in particular sensed by the fact that the guarantees are

sought after in Russia, by laying down the issue of “deployment of nuclear weapons as an eventual and unacceptable price which Bulgaria has to pay for our eventual admission to NATO” (the intensity of this charge was in particular noticed following the visits of Holbrooke and Solana), by catalysing “the threat from Turkey” which was present during the whole period of the analysis, and the specific outline of some diplomatic initiatives by the BSP on the creation of systems for regional security.

Whilst describing the visit of Solana, "DUMA" underlined: "Solana has shown great interest in the progress of the preparatory measures for the conference of Foreign Affairs ministers of the Balkan countries due in one month in Sofia, and the possibility that it would be followed by an identical meeting of ministers of Defence during the second half of the year. These regional forms of co-operation are perfectly in line with the establishment of security networks" (04.05.1996).

A typical for the newspaper was the interview given by a BSP delegate and member of the parliamentary commission on national security Ivan Guytandjiev, in which among other matters it was said "Bulgarian supporters of the premise, need immediately to announce a declaration for our wish of alliance to NATO, a clear insinuation is heard that despite the presence of political declarations, NATO will nonetheless give priority to objective indices. And that by far it isn't of utmost importance to provide political signs, but rather much more important is the fact of having realistic arguments and motives that are backed by national pride for the eventual alliance to the Organization, and evidence of being apt to meet the serious criteria it requires" (27.09.1996).

The overall complexity of the internal nature of the BSP as well as its role as the governing party actively involved in the foreign policy dialogue, have been mirrored in the publishing trend of the newspaper. The emotional outbursts of the "traditional patronage" to Russia, co-exist with

the rational viewpoint of failure and the irrelevance of the adversity of Russia to NATO in the contemporary global situation.

The most discerning characteristic of the newspaper in the period in question however, was to levy not only on the current agenda of the electorate and supporters of the BSP but also on society in general the premise of national neutrality. By virtue of this notion being laid down, a place in the conceptual examination of the analysed newspapers will be reserved.

It is necessary however to stress that the premise of national neutrality had been initially let off as "intermediate" way between the categorical rejection of the eventual alliance of Bulgaria to NATO, and in contrast the even more determined stand, the urge see even the "immediate joining" the Organization. It had quickly become clear however, that the notion for national neutrality was accepted also by the leadership circles of the BSP as euphemistic substitution of the adverse stand of Bulgaria joining NATO.

On the horizontal axis of analysis of the media discourse, newspapers described as independent have occupied a space between the "for" and "against" of the two extremes.

A specific mark has tinted the newspaper "STANDART" whose stand in favour of the alliance had been clearly manifested since its emerge during 1992. The newspaper aimed at the intelligent and educated readership, has advocated the liberal political values of modern western democracies, the needs for fast market reforms and the development of private ownership, and in this sense ever since the beginning, the stand of the newspaper in favour of NATO was a promotion of a civilization choice.

Even after the loss of its image as an elite "quality newspaper" to which it had initially strived, the newspaper continued to expose and set both opposing positions, taking this approach as search for arguments to avoid emotional conjurations. The newspaper has kept this image for the whole

of the period 1995-96, by the term of which the processes in society have described the newspaper according to the expression of some researchers as "another DEMOKRATSIA".

Through the concurrent publications of interviews by which different positions were being vindicated, the newspaper had given the readership the option to compare different viewpoints, without in the least withdrawing from its own. The consistent position in supporting president Zhelev (as a whole), and all his declarations and measures in defending the priority of the NATO issue in the foreign policy of Bulgaria (in parts) had a significant effect over the publishing strategy of "STANDART".

Following the acquisition of the document "Study on NATO enlargement", "STANDART" published two interviews concurrently in which different positions overlap (07.10.1995). To the question "for which type of membership should Bulgaria aim?" the president of the Atlantic Club Solomon Passy replied: "Towards real membership. According to the study made by NATO, it is clear that from now on new members will be admitted on equal grounds". Whilst to the same question General Stoyan Andreev who was a long time consultant to the president on issues of national security, defended "a model of alliance without the presence of foreign forces and bases on the territories, without commitment to the military objectives of the Pact, and without the deployment of nuclear weapons, or other means for mass destruction".

The frequent reference to the interview in "STANDART" has put the newspaper in a position to erect its own authentic background information which was particularly essential to uncover the contradictory and inconsistent political behaviour of the BSP, and individuals connected with this party. The newspaper did not omit to recall that the stand of the delegate of the BSP and president of the Commission on national security since after elections in 1994 Lyuben Petrov is for instance, notably different than his stand as General Chief of Staff of the Bulgarian army.

The newspaper recalled the interview with him published at the beginning of 1994 in which to the question "Do you seriously believe that Bulgaria will be first to become NATO member should the Pact start enrolling new members?" the General replied: "This is our wish, we do want it to be this way. If we judge by the reception of our delegation by NATO, and if the Organization is enlarged, we may be optimistic that in the foreseen future, confidence will be vested in favour of Bulgaria to be amongst the first members".

During the whole period of the analysis, the position of the newspaper was formed by propelling implicitly or explicitly the following premises:

- full rights membership in EC without military and political integration in NATO is impossible;
- NATO only may be the guarantor of the national security of Bulgaria;
- the tie down of Bulgaria with Russia on the political spectrum is undesirable, and will have serious adverse consequences on the country;
- the foreign policy of the BSP had inflicted a once more historical event of passing Bulgaria and Europe each other by.

The third group newspapers where the total determination and commitment characteristic of the two party newspapers and the daily "STANDARD", is absent are referred to as "centrists".

At the heart of this group however, there are different stands on the NATO issue and our eventual alliance to it.

Although they publish unlike viewpoints including the ones of the most prominent advocates of the alliance, the newspapers of the press group "168 HOURS" - the weekly "168 HOURS" and the daily "24 HOURS" (the newspaper with the largest circulation in Bulgaria and bought by the German group "VAZ", Westdeutsche Allgemeine

Zeitung at the end of 1996) takes the disapproving view on the NATO issue. This conclusion has been deduced by a content analysis of the two newspapers, where the weekly newspaper has shown its opposition more distinctly.

With wider frequency, articles and texts compulsively appeared with express stand against the alliance of Bulgaria to NATO. This situation preconceived with ample calculations is applied not only through interpretive texts, but also through news texts with suggested assessment headlines ("NATO doesn't want us", "NATO wants to deploy nuclear weapons in Bulgaria", "Russia is against the enlargement of NATO", and so on. Among all the newspapers in the analysis, "24 HOURS" has been particularly persistent in its inducement through its headlines and news articles alike.

The theses most often elaborated in "24 HOURS" are"

"The real threat to the West, for which in counterbalance the Organization was created has vanished. NATO however, has not been dissolved, although according to the logic of its organizational development, in such event it becomes superfluous".

"Noble justifications have been found not only for extending the life of the Organization, but also for its enlargement - to shelter former Soviet satellites with NATO umbrella (nuclear)".

Against whom will NATO protect us? Against Russia? Has it not voluntarily released its satellites from under its shed?

"Russia quickly understood that it has again been transformed into a rival to NATO, but is now reacting"

"In its war against the Serbs, NATO has made a dangerous precedent and no one knows what its consequences might be. We not only have not denounced it, but went as far to approving it".

"EC and NATO do not want us".

These theses appeared in an article published in the newspaper on (09.10.95). In one or another version they are repetitive during the whole analysed approach. To these, some items could be adjoined - the impression of Russia as the guarantor of the security of Bulgaria, and the high costs associated with the alliance to NATO. For instance, the interview with the general secretary of NATO Xavier Solana published in the newspaper ahead of his visit has been titled "Membership in NATO is not free of charge" (30.04.1996). In the graphic layout of the interview, information have been inserted on a pending "protest against our alliance to NATO, organized by 20 organizations and parties in connection with the visit of Solana". (It seems nonetheless worthy to mention that the "demonstration" have gathered a negligible number of protesters).

The newspaper "24 HOURS" in a relatively larger frequency in comparison to other newspapers, places the emphasis on the premise that under the new conditions the existence of NATO is not necessary. "Even the most daft pupil can ask himself the super logical question - Why is it that following the self-dissolution of the "Warsaw Pact", The Soviet Union has fallen apart, Communism has been defeated, the West the uncontested victor, NATO continues to exist? ...It is necessary...to review the Treaty of the North Atlantic Organization and eventually should be liquidated, now that the world is different" (24.01.1996).

The other newspaper subject to our analysis is "TROOD" (Labour), (in second place in size of circulation in Bulgaria), similarly considered as "centrist" because it exposes different viewpoints, but figures however, on the affirmative side on the issue of NATO and the alliance of Bulgaria to its structures.

"TROOD" places the accent on the realistic conditions for accelerating the contacts with NATO, on NATO as the possible guarantor of our national security, and on the dangerous policy of the BSP towards NATO leaving our country in isolation. During the period covered by the analysis, the newspaper has, on three occasions published results of a survey on the

attitude of society towards the NATO issue, which clearly demonstrate the growing approval for an eventual alliance with NATO.

"When during September 1990 the delegate group of the UDF required in parliament a declaration by Bulgaria indicating its wish to join the Organization, the request sounded nothing but herretic. Today, matters have settled down, and it seems that a consensus on the issue exists in society, for the Organization, we do not dispose of any other alternative for our national security. This course for Bulgaria however, happens to be quite long in comparison with other east European countries." (27.09.1996)

"TROOD" also informed on the "Russian topic" and has equally exposed the stands of its defenders. Typical of the newspaper however, was the irony of one of its commentators who wrote: "There is nothing left to us except to again reassemble and drive Moskvitches, the toughest, safest, and most enduring cars on our bumpy carriageways towards the shining future. And to bend in respect for the refined Spanish diplomat Solana, that he had not overlooked Bulgaria, which is stranded on the crossroad in Europe and history." (02.05.1996) "The logical place of each European country, wrote another commentator, is in the European structures and its security systems, be it NATO, be it the west European Union, or others. The opposite case would be regarded as a strange mutant, which we could be hardly able to patent." (27.03.96).

As a whole, the stand of the newspaper "TROOD" on NATO and the prospects of the alliance of Bulgaria into its structures is dependent on the manifested changing positions of the newspaper in respect of the government institutions and the political powers.

Among the newspapers in the analysis, "KONTINENT" has retained a particular place. From its start, the newspser, has a small circulation, but with an apparent pretence for being a quality newspaper of the Anglo-saxon type. In the complex qualification of the Bulgarian press, the newspaper was subjected to change in financial sponsorship in pursuit of

enlarging its issue size. After the changes in the management team, the newspaper took the form of a tabloid in mid 1996, a measure which nonetheless did not affect the size of its circulation.

"KONTINENT" has adopted the image of a newspaper rather emphasizing on the analytical approach of viewpoints that are different from the ones that advocate a unanimous "for" or a unanimous "against". The newspaper aimed at bringing to the open an analytical approach on the real security prospects of Bulgaria, on the stand of Russia, and the reasons for its discord on the NATO issue. The newspaper reserved a special treatment for the changing role of NATO, and some important decisions made by countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, and the prospects of closeness between Russia and NATO and so on. This type of approach impels through the many publications, the deduction that it is necessary for Bulgaria to clearly declare its readiness for joining NATO.

In an article by a former diplomat (13.12.1995) it has been said: "In their co-operation with NATO, the other east European countries dispose ever more priority in comparison with Bulgaria. Naturally, the possibility that we undertake identical steps like the ones by the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary in former Yugoslavia are totally excluded - the national consensus on non interference in Balkanic crises must be strictly sustained, certainly, as regard military actions. But against this background our reluctance had been a great deal woven so that we declare our wish to join NATO...

...There are different options of joining NATO - for instance, the Spanish case which took partial joining in the military structures of the Organization, the Norwegian case in declaring rejection to dispose of any nuclear weapons on their territories. There are likewise alternatives for refusal to accept foreign troops on Bulgarian territories...

...It is ridiculous we show off that the opinion of Moscow is of no interest to us, when it is of particular interest to member countries of NATO, especially the USA. It is absurd to talk about a security system in Europe

without the participation of Russia. This is why all NATO members in particular the USA, do their best to deflect the suspicions of Moscow that NATO enlargement is posed against it.

...Moscow seems not to be totally clear on what it wants- co-operation, absence of co-operation, or confrontation with NATO.

...Years of negotiations are ahead and it is likely that the outcome be - the closeness of Russia and NATO. And when the time for decision on Bulgaria joining NATO comes, we would expect also this problem cleared and packed."

"The security of Bulgaria is a strategic element of security in the Balkan region and consequently security on the whole continent. Security in Europe is common and may be indivisible, if it does not allow the isolation of Russia, the Ukraine, the Balkans or which ever other parts integral to them. It is on this common and indivisible security that NATO - transformed and indivisible is the nucleus, the distinguished image of the successful guarantor." - wrote in his article (28.04.1995) former delegate of the UDF and former chief of the parliamentary commission on national security Slatinsky.

Typical of the newspaper is also the commentary article that appeared in the issue of 06.05.96 "The interests of NATO are aimed at central Europe and mostly at Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic...Xavier Solana has come to Bulgaria not with the aim to invite it for membership, but rather to make certain Bulgaria won't make scenes of jealousy like other countries, when the North Atlantic Organization admits the three favourites only from central Europe".

The newspaper "KONTINENT" gives the impression of finding an intermediate position - not the "for", nor the "against" - coupled with a balanced study of the "pros" and "cons" of the relations with NATO. Such a stand brings quite closely the newspaper to the reformers expert circles in the BSP, which are pro Euro-Atlantic oriented.

The premise of national neutrality has seen its place in the media discourse on NATO. It must be said that in the previous years this thesis was launched though "by the way of things". But as a stand it was advanced and argued in the newspaper "DUMA" during the period covered by the analysis by the delegate Kuranov of BSP "There is also a fashion retro" - 03.08.95.

"Three neutralities" - (28.11.95). This thesis has proposed a peculiar approach to reconciliation between the prominent opponents to NATO, and the advocates of alliance of Bulgaria to NATO within the BSP. But with the accent on the fact related to this century in which Bulgaria always lost when committing itself, the premise of neutrality touches on sensitive layers in the historical memory. The premise has gone out of internal party disputes and received wide openness in the press, expressly entangled with the premise of referendum on the subject, likewise woven by the BSP.

In fact, the premise on national neutrality has shown to be more beneficial for the BSP itself, by not contributing to any particular colouring in the media discourse. The newspaper "DEMOKRATSIA" as it would be expected has taken a firm position in the rejection of the thesis of: "Any delay with the pretext of some neutrality or waiting to solve the problem on national security later, is inadmissible" (02.09.1995).

In the above mentioned interview in the daily "DEMOKRATSIA", the delegate "dissident" of the BSP, advocate of the alliance to NATO said: The question of between who and whom shall we be neutral arises. Because it hedges on the presumption of the "cold war". And further more - if we share the values that NATO also does, and this is obviously the case, and later, when agreement between Russia and NATO is reached, where will we find ourselves? Possibly outside the perimeter, in the dark zone. This is desired by no one ...We must identify ourselves with the values of Europe and accept that these are likewise the values of NATO."

The premise of national neutrality has appeared in all the newspapers analysed who in their position follow the one demonstrated by the "for" or the "against" NATO. For this reason it is not surprising to deduce that this premise had been let off several times in the daily "24 HOURS". The presence of the thesis on national neutrality in the media discourse have not resulted any particular changes in it.

The analysis of the main Bulgarian dailies, disclose a number of peculiarities that are important for the overall assessment of the media discourse. Among these peculiarities the presence of different viewpoints, positions, ideas in the whole of the media environment is obvious. At the same time however, deductions with direct relationship to the key issue for that whether there exist conversing media discourses and whether the dialogue and relationship towards the "othership" have substituted the didactic monologue have been imposed for the attention of the analyst.

Content analysis provides grounds for scrutinizing these particularities in reviewing the position on NATO:

- the prominent presence of the image of "the enemy", through which are created "symbolic universe" and a "symbolic choice" between NATO and Russia, between east and west and so on
- two-way usage of the archetype of fear
- biased selection of the facts, i.e. their reconstruction in artefacts who strongly distort the information picture
- usage of key words, terms or phrases - markers, handled in different signs - for instance national betrayal, national irresponsibility, unaccountability to national interests and others.
- the inclusion of interpretive elements while delivering information
- significant dominance of information texts
- the use of suggested assessment oriented titles.

On the basis of the analysis, it is possible to confirm that in the media discourse on NATO old methods of thinking and communication

behaviour are being repeated. The presence of different viewpoints in the media with little exceptions, do not lead to the opening of the discourse, nor to openness towards the "othership", nor to the other position, and not to dialogue.

"I think I am right, but I may not be when you might be, and in any case let us discuss matters, because in this way we might get closer to the real understanding of the issue, instead of each one of us simply insists he is right - in this way Poper has characterized the rationalist mentality of the "open society" (Poper. "Some problems of the new democracies, Sofia, 1993, p.31) The building of rationalist mentalities presumes departure from unanimous and simplified models of the world.

The analysis of the main dailies has given enough empirical materials to confirm the hypothesis that **through the period covered by the analysis, open and conversing media discourses through which, discourse in society on the priorities of the national security and the issue on NATO are conducted, and social consensus is sought after, did not exist in Bulgaria.**

On these grounds, it is possible to confirm that in society, public debate on this issue did not take place. Public debate appears to be to a great extent simulated by parallel monologue discourses.

IV CONCLUSION

The end of 1996 and the beginning of 1997 mark the radical changes brought into in the political life in Bulgaria. Following the election by a sweeping majority of the new president Stoyanov, candidate of the UDF, the resignation of the cabinet of Videnov, the January mass protests against the politics of the BSP, have lead to departure from forming a second BSP government, and agreement on preliminary elections that took place in April this year. The UDF (United Democratic Forces) came to power with large majority after the April elections. In their political behaviours whether the president (since the outset of his pre-election

campaign), or the cabinet, have on many occasions clearly declared their strive for alliance with NATO.

The care-taker government appointed by constitutional decree by the president in power before the preliminary elections, has on the 19th of February passed a resolution on alliance to NATO, based on parliament declaration of 1993. During this period the dissidents in the BSP, active supporters for the alliance to NATO, have left the party and participated in the establishing of a new political formation Euroleft, which accessed to the new parliament. In turn, the stand for neutrality became the official stand of BSP, and with this situation the presumed became the obvious.

The radical political changes did not bring about any significant changes in the media discourse. The symbolic reality released before by the UDF, in which the situation that Bulgaria is not amongst the first countries to join NATO, simply because it was not sufficiently determined in its request, have been substituted with another symbolic reality. This one gives higher expectations because of the clearly and firmly manifested wish to join NATO on the part of the democratic forces. Super expectations have always given fears of super disappointments, which would be used in the event, by the opponents of alliance to NATO.

At heart, the media discourse remain unchanged.

In the event of disposing of large blocks of texts on NATO, a significant size of society is not be adequately informed on the real processes in NATO, nor on the new dangers in the world which determine the special role of NATO in guaranteeing security, even for the criteria of countries - candidates for membership in it. The media have not succeeded in releasing relevant and sufficient information.

The transformed situation presumes the building of an information strategy in connection with the whole issue on the prospects of the alliance of Bulgaria to NATO. Such an information strategy, would be

among the prerequisites to apply changes in the media discourse, and the gradual emerge of conversing media discourses.

Registration card

- 1. Title - typology**
- 2. Genre characteristics /information, interview, comment, column etc./**
- 3. Subject**
- 4. Key words**
- 5. Informational density**
- 6. Intonation**
- 7. Argumentation**
- 8. Place in the newspaper**
- 9. Author, source**
- 10. Layout particularities**

Main Bulgarian national daily newspapers /in average circulation terms/*

“24 tchasa”/“24 hours”/	280 000
“Troud”/Labour/	250 000
“Democratsia” /Democracy/	50 000
“Standart”	50 000
“Duma”/ Word/	45 000
“Novinar”/Newsman/	30 000
“Continent”	15 000

* *The figures are relevant to the end of 1996.*

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