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ROMANIAN MILITARY NEWSLETTER

**Defence Minister's Participation in
Munich Security Conference**

Special points of interests:

- Defence Minister's Participation in Munich Security Conference
- NATO Defence Ministerial
- The Bilateral Meeting of Minister Mihai Fifor with His US Counterpart, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, as part of the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting
- Platinum Eagle 18.1" – Multinational Exercise Conducted in Babadag



Meeting of Defence Minister Mihai Fifor with the German Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, at the working lunch she hosted

The National Defence Minister Mihai Fifor attended the Security Conference in Munich on February 16th and 17th, an event in which the guidelines of the current security agenda are discussed and analyzed.

While at the Munich Security Conference, the Minister of National Defence, Mihai Fifor, had a series of bilateral meetings on February 16th, in which he presented Romania's defence priorities.

During the bilateral meeting with US Senator Ron Johnson, Chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the officials focused on the relations between Romania and the USA, with an emphasis on the cooperation within the North Atlantic Alliance. On this occasion, minister Mihai Fifor mentioned



the fruitful discussions with Secretary of Defense James Mattis at the recent NATO ministerial in Brussels, and assured the US partner that Romania continues its assumed commitments as a member of the Alliance as well as within the Strategic Partnership of the two countries.

During the bilateral meeting with representatives of the Atlantic Council, General (Ret.) James Jones and Alexander Vershbow, minister Mihai Fifor highlighted the importance of the security in the Black Sea region for the agenda of the next NATO Summit in July 2018, in Brussels. It was also discussed the significance of the reunion in the form of the Three Seas Initiative, which will be hosted this year by Romania, in Bucharest. On this occasion, minister Fifor reiterated the Romanian assessment of the security developments in the extended Black Sea region, as well as the efforts to strengthen the deterrence and defence posture as a state on the Eastern flank of the Alliance, in accordance with the political decisions at NATO level.

On February 17th, the second day of the Security Conference in Munich, Defence Minister Mihai Fifor participated in several round tables with the officials attending the event, a working breakfast hosted by Cohen Group and a working lunch hosted by the German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen. He also had a series of bilateral meetings with the representative of the US Congress Mike Turner, with the Dutch Defence Minister Ank Bijleveld, as well as meetings with the President of Lockheed Martin, Marillyn Hewson, and the former NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

During the working breakfast that is traditionally hosted by Cohen Group, minister Mihai Fifor had in-depth discussions on European security and the agenda of the next NATO Summit in Brussels, in July.

During the working lunch hosted by the German Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, the Romanian official stressed the importance of bilateral, multilateral and regional meetings in defining the positions of NATO member countries regarding the management of security risks. In this respect, minister Fifor highlighted the usefulness of organizing the Defence Ministerial in B9 format in Bucharest, in March, for harmonizing the positions of the allies on the Eastern flank, in cooperation with the USA, in order to ensure a unitary approach in the perspective of NATO Summit of July. The talks with the German counterpart focused on bilateral military cooperation, namely the development of a strong cooperation in the field of military intelligence, in the context the current security context. The Romanian official pointed out Germany's firm involvement in playing a decisive role within NATO and in developing the defence capabilities within the EU.

During the meeting with the President of American Company Lockheed Martin, Marillyn Hewson, the talks focused on military cooperation, as the defence ministry plans to develop the major procurement program, HIMARS. On this occasion, the Romanian official reiterated the importance of developing the cooperation with Romanian companies of the defence industry.

During the meeting with Mike Turner, a member of the US Congress, minister Mihai Fifor reiterated that Romania will continue to stand by its commitments to the allies and to the Strategic Partnership with the USA. Also, he reiterated the importance of the transatlantic relation and the need to cooperate fully with the American partner to strengthen European security, especially in the Black Sea region.

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The meeting with Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the former NATO Secretary General and founder of Rasmussen Global, revolved around topics related to the main risks and threats to global security, with focus on Brexit and the situation in the Ukrainian and the Black Sea region.

NATO Defence Ministerial

On the first day of the Meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers held in Brussels on February 14th, the discussions focused on nuclear deterrence, fair sharing of responsibilities among the allies, on the adaptation of NATO command structure and modernization of the Alliance in general, as well as on the cooperation between NATO and the EU.

One of the main topics on the agenda of the working sessions was the sharing of responsibilities within NATO (burden sharing), in terms of defence spending, capabilities and contributions to operations and missions under the aegis of the Alliance.

The discussions were based on the NATO Secretary General's assessment, the Alliance's strategic annual reports related to the implementation of commitments made in the Alliance, in particular those related to the increase of defence expenditure and the Defence Investment Pledge (DIP) of 2014. The results of the discussions helped shape the framework for approaching this subject at the Brussels Summit in July 2018.

A separate session was dedicated to the North Atlantic Council, namely the efforts to modernize the Alliance against the background of the current security environment characterized by unpredictable and changing challenges. Thus, the central topic was the reform of the NATO Command Structure, according to the pattern agreed upon by the allied defence ministers in November 2017, in order to adapt the Alliance to the new security environment. The defence ministers also focused on the institutional adaptation topic, a line of action provided in the Warsaw Summit final communiqué, along with the political and military adaptation. In this context, the allied defence ministers discussed about a better prioritization of the current Allied programs and resources.

During the working dinner, the participants discussed topics related to European security, the design of stability in the neighboring areas, as well as the European initiatives on NATO and EU defence and cooperation. On this occasion, the Romanian official expressed his appreciations for the progress made in developing the



North Atlantic Council Meeting Luik

- photo from NATO.int



cooperation between the two organizations, highlighting the need for a realistic and pragmatic approach for the full implementation of the previously agreed measures and to develop the strategic partnership between NATO and EU.

The second day of NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting focused on the deterrence and defence posture, as the defence ministers discussed the stage of its implementation and the perspectives of NATO Summit scheduled for July, in Brussels.

The Romanian defence minister stressed the importance of maintaining the allied commitment to continue implementing the decisions made at Warsaw Summit related to consolidating the deterrence and defence posture of the allied troops along the Eastern flank. They also highlighted the efforts made at national level to ensure the presence of land forces, such as the stage of rendering operational the multinational brigade and the progress made in implementing the Combined Joint Enhanced Training Initiative – as shown by the documents presented to the defence ministers participating in the meeting.

Another topic on the agenda was the analysis of the allied efforts to project stability and counter-terrorism, when the ministers discussed the allied efforts in the South, in the context of the security risks at the southern border of the Alliance. As to the fight against terrorism, the support was reiterated that the Alliance gives to the Global Coalition against ISIS. They also discussed aspects concerning enhancing the support given to Iraq, in terms of developing the defence capacities and the training process of the Iraqi Security Forces.

In the margin of the defence ministerial, minister Fifor met with his counterparts from B9 member states, with a view to preparing the B9 meeting in the defence ministers format to take place in Bucharest in March.

During the talks, the Romanian minister emphasized the importance of the consultations among allies, as basis of defining common positions and approaches to the European and Euro-Atlantic security and defence. In this context, it was highlighted that the meeting in Bucharest will open a series of consultations among the allies on the eastern flank, that would continue with Parliamentary consultations, only to be taken further by the B9 Summit of Warsaw in June.

„All these events will contribute significantly to defining a common approach to setting the Agenda of the B9 Summit in Brussels, as well as enhancing cooperation and interoperability among the allied armed forces along the entire Eastern flank”, minister Mihai Fifor declared

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The Bilateral Meeting of Minister Mihai Fifor with His US Counterpart, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, as part of the NATO Defence Ministers' Meeting

The Minister of National Defence Mihai Fifor had a meeting with the US Secretary of Defense James Mattis, on February 15th, during the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels.

The two officials discussed topics related to the security situation in the Black Sea region and the allied priorities for the next NATO Summit. In this context, minister Mihai Fifor



Defence Minister Mihai Fifor and the US Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis
– photo from the US delegation to NATO

pointed out that the recent security developments in the area require strengthening the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture on the entire Eastern flank.

At the same time, he mentioned Romania's efforts to fulfill the assumed commitments, in particular by maintaining the allocation of two percent of the GDP for defence in 2018 and over the following years, a significant part of the defence budget being allotted to military equipment for the security of Romania. In this regard, Minister Mihai Fifor briefed the audience on the state of implementing the procurement plan of the Romanian military, stating that, in 2018, a special attention will be paid to the improvement of the maritime capabilities.

Romania's constant and significant participation in the allied operations is another dimension of our country's contribution to assuming the allied security responsibilities, Romania being the fourth contributor with troops in Afghanistan.

The US Defense Secretary James Mattis welcomed Romanian efforts to fulfill the commitments made to the Alliance to strengthen the collective defence, stating that our country is a model for the budget allocation and the defence investments as well as the constant support to the allied operations. He highlighted that the Romanian troops in Afghanistan won the respect of all military allies, including the US Army due to their courage and professionalism. James Mattis appreciated that this is an example of Romania's determination to be actively involved in the Alliance's overall efforts to manage the current security aspects.



The US Secretary of Defence assured the Romanian minister that the USA maintain their commitment to Romania's defence, including its presence at Deveselu and Mihail Kogalniceanu base, as well as the implemented procurement programs. James Mattis expressed his availability to make a visit to Romania, at a date to be communicated later.

Platinum Eagle 18.1” – Multinational Exercise Conducted in Babadag

Over February 12th to 16th, the Secondary Center for Combat Training of the Romanian Land Forces in Babadag, Tulcea County hosted the training module PLATINUM EAGLE 18.1 of the Black Sea Rotational Force 18 (BSRF 18). The exercise brought together 100 Romanian troops who trained jointly with some 200 troops from Bulgaria, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and the USA.

The Romanian Armed Forces were represented by soldiers of the 9th „Mărășești” Mechanized Brigade, the Navy by soldiers of the 307th Marines Battalion while the Air Forces were represented by flight personnel from the 86th „Locotenent aviator Gheorghe Mociorniță” Air Base. The main goal of PLATINUM EAGLE 18.1 was to increase interoperability among participating countries, by maintaining the common deployment and training capability by exercising logistic support, to develop a regional environment suitable for multinational cooperation, to increase the training level of the troops from the countries involved in the exercise.

The common training included tactical exercises, first aid in the area of operations and exercising command and control procedures at unit level.

The Black Sea Rotational Force is an annual drill led by US Marine Forces Command deployed in Europe and Africa, conducted in the Black Sea and in the Balkans and the Caucasus region. It is meant to increase the level of interoperability by training soldiers jointly for the participation in peacekeeping and counter-insurgency operations.

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SNMG-2 conducted drills in the Black Sea

The Romanian Navy has deployed one of its four Musca-class minesweepers through January 24th-February 13th in order to join NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 2, as it operated in the Black Sea. The Romanian minesweeper Lt. Lupu Dinescu was joined by the Turkish Navy mine hunter TCG Akçayand and the British Royal Navy's HMS Enterprise. The Romanian



Turkish Navy mine hunter TCG Akçayand

minesweeper (DM-25) docked in Constanța military harbour, after having surveilled the maritime traffic in the Black Sea Basin, as part of the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group. During their stay in the Black Sea, SNMCMG2 ships visited Bulgaria's Burgas port, Romanian port of Constanta and Turkey's Sinop.

Also, Frigate „King Ferdinand” ended its first NATO mission conducted in 2018 on February 17, as part of the NATO SNMG-2. Throughout its three week-mission, the ship sailed over 2,600 miles, and the Romanian crew, together with the British, Bulgarian and the Turkish ones, conducted several drills simulating fight against air, surface and subsurface threats.