

ROMANIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE PLANNING. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A MORE REALISTIC APPROACH

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The whole Europe is undergoing a very difficult economic period. That has led in most cases to a decrease in defense spending. Romania is confronted with a similar situation and that makes it impossible for it to reduce the gap with the strong states, despite the facts provided by the speeches of politicians. Therefore, it is imperative to have a serious strategic analysis, balancing the political objectives with the real possibilities of a still precarious economy. A partial solution to resolving this situation can be the 'smart defense' concept, implemented wherever and as much as possible.

Key words: *strategic defense review, smart defense, military expenditure, effectiveness, efficiency*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we will try to raise a warning about the apparent contradiction between the militaries' and politicians' wish to have an army equipped to the level of the most powerful allies and the socio-economic status of Romania, which does not allow strong support for the defense sector.

Once we present the statistical indicators through which we compare our country with other allied states, we will see to what extent the defense system is "under-funded", according to the prominent figures in political life that are close to the defense system.

We then try to demonstrate the need and usefulness of a strategic analysis, and finally we try to find solutions for increasing the

effectiveness and efficiency of the national defense system, using the obvious opportunities provided by the EU and NATO membership.

2. NATIONAL DEFENSE SYSTEM'S "UNDER – FUNDING"

We talk below about the numbers related to the national defense system. "Figures - noted a friend the other day - have at this time the gift of deep sorrow." On the other hand, they show us where we are. We dare not to define "under-funding", but the obvious trend of decrease in the percentage of the budget for defense, coupled with the stagnant amount of money allocated to the same budget, and with the inflation and the technological modernization make

us feel that resources are far from abundant for the desired operational usage. In other words, we are interested in comparing the initial situation in Romania with the situation of the allied states which serve as a model for us. Only then will we compare our estimated efforts with our own, more or less formalized, aspirations. A first comparison with other countries is the one presented in **Figure 1**, which displays the percentage of GDP [1] allocated to defense.

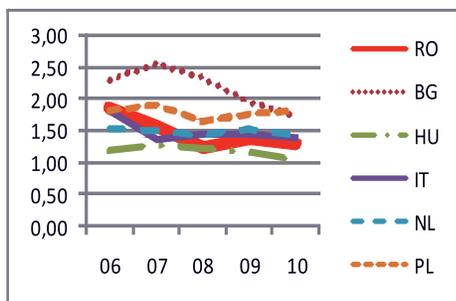


Figure 1. Defense Expenditure (Percent of GDP)

As the figure shows, there is a general decreasing tendency of the indicator at this time of economic crisis. That can also be interpreted in terms of reduced dangers of armed aggression of any kind, or of states' perception regarding this kind of threat. However, the decline is steeper for Romania and Bulgaria, the poorest EU countries, and this feature leads to the idea that existing gaps will increase rather than decrease.

When talking about defense spending and relating it to the number of inhabitants [2], we need to consider the effort the states are willing to make in order to achieve objectives for the defense field. **Figure 2** shows the evolution of this index over the same period.

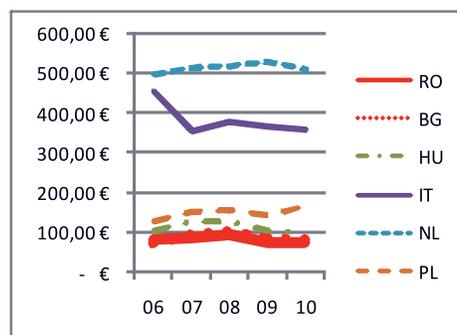


Figure 2. Defense Expenditure per Capita

As it results from the figure above, Romania has the lowest defense expenditures per capita and that raises concern. However, one can also notice the considerable difference between the old and new group members of the European Union. Romania and Bulgaria have taken the same path, except that we have not exceeded during the period studied, the level of 100 Euros per capita. This indicator shows that there is a reduced likelihood to reduce disparities with the Allies.

In fact, reducing these gaps, as desired for all sectors of activity, is possible only by favoring a particular major socio-economic domain or through an accelerated economic growth, at a faster pace than those states with which we compare ourselves. The two indicators previously discussed show that the first solution cannot be predicted, while the European trend shows that the concern of the European political leadership regarding a future major military confrontation is decreasing. As for the second solution, it cannot be put into practice given the large debts to international financial institutions and the investments made in recent

years that have been far too little for sustainable development.

The third indicator that we study is that of defense investments vs. the number of military personnel [3]. **Figure 3** shows the situation of this indicator compared to the same period of time.

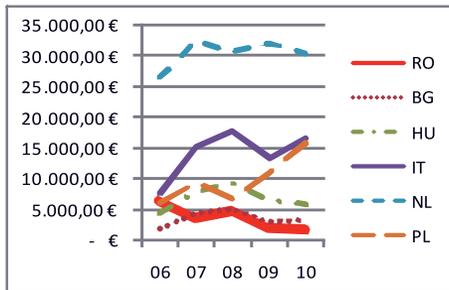


Figure.3. Defense Investment per Soldier

From our perspective, this is the clearest indicator showing inability to achieve our own targets in existing conditions. The distance that separates us from the Netherlands would not be so worrisome, since this is a country with strong traditions. The problem is that Romania's evolution shows that we objectionably neglect exactly what we say that we want to do, namely to have an army compatible in all respects with the Allied Armies. A first consequence could be shading Romanian military reputation that they have earned in theaters worldwide. Among the countries studied, only Romania has such a strong downward curve and the continued use of such cost structures will, very soon, lead towards the inability to fight alongside the Allies.

The presented situation thus contradicts most speeches of the Romanian personalities in charge of the national defense system; regardless of the positions they

take, whether they are military or civilian. Under the strict constraints of the economic crisis, the authorities have sacrificed the most cost structure without abandoning the less achievable goals, unnecessary or redundant. Moreover, it forces the new evidence, proposing major investments that presumably solve real problems but actually create other problems, perhaps even more serious.

Simple arithmetic supports these statements. Romania spent in 2010, \$ 119 million for the procurement of military equipment. By comparison, in the last month of 2012, "the US Defense Department said it has finalized a contract for the purchase of a fifth batch of radar-evading F-35 Fighter Aircraft from Lockheed Martin Corp., a deal worth \$3.8 billion for 32 of the advanced planes" (Reuters, 14 Dec 2012) [4].

Therefore, such an aircraft would cost about \$ 119 million, which is about 90m Euros, slightly below Romania's total annual expenditure for the purchase of equipment in 2010.

However, it is an obvious fact that too many choose to build chimeras, wasting resources to make their exaggerated vision credible. In addition, in 2010, Romania's total defense spending totaled 1.575 billion Euros, and it is also worth mentioning that the purchase of 16 aircraft of the type mentioned before costs an amount substantially equal.

Let us now go back to the "underfunding" of the defense. Yes, we can talk about this phenomenon if we relate it to our own development programs. Moreover, we can talk about some underfunding if we

compare the financial efforts with those of Allied countries. On the other hand, we believe that the latter problem can be solved by rethinking the vision of the future army of Romania, based on the British model dated a few years ago. A brief description of a similar model will be presented in this paper, as well.

Finally, we feel bound to say that all data used are public, and countries chosen for comparison were established on different criteria: Bulgaria and Hungary as neighboring countries, with a population of less than half the population of Romania and countries of the former Soviet block, Poland a country from the same block which decided to become a regional military power, Italy a Western European country discreetly interested in defense and the Netherlands as a significant military power, despite its size.

3. STRATEGIC DEFENSE REVIEW

We have mentioned above two ways, which are unlikely to solve problems unless major changes occur: increasing the percentage of GDP allocated for defense, and an accelerated growth of the GDP, respectively. There is also the solution of making structural changes, which is a more complex and painful one, but can lead to long-term beneficial effects. Unfortunately, a path like this can lead to other difficulties and problems. Such an approach requires a flawless foundation, through a Strategic Defense Review.

We believe that, too often, lack of resources makes us plan uselessly

with no tangible results as we set targets that do not have a utility basis. Calculation of the multi-role aircraft number based on the number of existing pilots is quite accurate and can be taken into account by the decision makers, but it would be much more useful and responsible if the starting point is the need for defense, based on the useful tasks that should be fulfilled.

The close limits of planning are quite well-known, in the sense that it can not replace the main process to which it is dedicated. On the other hand, a good quality planning process can contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts. Quality planning must be well grounded, rigorously enforced and sufficiently flexible to allow the necessary corrections during the periodic evaluation of the results. The Strategic Defense Review is the most used method for this initial condition serving the utility planning: grounding. It is the assessment of possible inputs and outputs of the system itself, so the plan is achievable and realistic. Today's economic and social context, marked by the severe economic crisis influencing international and national levels, mandates the strict inclusion of reasonableness into our plans, on short and medium term.

The strategic analysis model that we present was adapted years ago, when there was an attempt to achieve an analysis, using a model provided by the U.S. experts from the Centre for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) [5] Monterey - United States of America. The list below shows the stages of such an analysis.

- 1. The framework for the Defense Policy.**
- 2. Accepted Planning Hypothesis.**
- 3. Plausible Scenarios/Contingency.**
- 4. Military Assumed Missions and Responsibilities.**
- 5. Identifying the Needed Military Capabilities.**
- 6. Creating a Credible and Accurate Costs Catalogue.**
- 7. Identifying Options.**
- 8. Options to be taken.**
- 9. Allocating Resources and Finalizing the Implementation Plan.**

The first step is the analysis of the defense policy, emphasizing what should be considered: assessing risks and threats, economic and financial projections and the demographic analysis. The idea is that these areas of analysis are considered mandatory, but the subject of the analysis may be extended. Given the reality that we face today, we considered that the first stage should focus on the following components: 1) The Legislative Framework; 2) The Institutional Framework; 3) The Strategic Planning System; 4) Main Risks and Threats; 5) Economic and Financial Perspectives; 6) The Demographic Analysis.

The second step is to establish planning assumptions, namely the establishment of a constant of the defense system, such as: membership in international organizations; goals and objectives as stated in the strategic documents; principles and the decision making system. These assumptions come generally from the existing norms and framework.

The third stage is crucial. Thus, the successful analysis and development

of plausible scenarios are derived from the system of risks and threats to which Romania is exposed, from a military perspective. This stage can allow the continuation of the analysis only if the panel covers all risks and threats, so difficult when those threats are not real. For example, one of the greatest global current threats is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. How can Romania counter such a threat? Obviously, the threat of a general nature should be materialized in the possible action types, from nuclear attack by an aggressor aiming domestic objectives and activities, to effective participation in arms control or military action against countries that circumvent the international control. Based on these scenarios, the military component decides on the missions and the tasks they undertake, always considering the opportunities offered by the membership in international organizations and also including efforts to minimize potential overlaps between national military capabilities and those of the Alliance. A logical approach to this step allows initially for missions and tasks to be undertaken by the armed forces to achieve the targets, following that those components incumbent to the national armed forces to be specified later. However, the basic idea is that it is absolutely unlikely for the national armed forces to carry out tasks outside collective defense.

The next stage identifies those military capabilities that are necessary to carry out the tasks and duties described in the previous step. Related to these capabilities,

which are one of the main outputs of the process of analysis, we should point out some issues. Even if the Dictionary of the Romanian Language does not list the word “capability”, it is worth reminding that this is a concept much resorted to in defense. Therefore, we try to describe it as accurately as possible. “Capability is the ability to achieve a specific objective ... or doing something in a given situation”. (Touchin, “System of Systems Engineering for Capability”). This first definition, which describes the essence of the concept, is very general, so we will try to narrow it down so as to refine our approach. The definition agreed by the Romanian Ministry of National Defense runs as follows: “capability is the ability to generate solid operating results or desired effect in relation to threats, environment and contributing coalition partners” (Ministry of Defense: Acquisition Operating Framework).

The concept has evolved and become more commonly used in various environments, especially in defense, being the basis of a true new science. Thus, the capability “is the heart of engineering systems, although unfortunately it is rarely stated as such in these science-based approaches” (Neaga, EI, Henshaw, M., Yue, Y.: “The Influence of the Concept of Capability-Based Management on the Development of the Systems Engineering Discipline). The capabilities based planning system was developed based on this concept and it means “to plan in conditions of uncertainty, the development of

capabilities to respond to a wide variety of challenges and specific circumstances of today, within an economic framework that often forces your choice” (Davis, A., “Analytic Architecture for Capabilities-Based Planning”). A capability has a number of components. While for the industrial activity these components are, in general, the Personnel (Human Resources), Products, Processes, Technology and Facilities, in the military field the components are specific and numerous. A military capability consists of the following components: Training, Equipment, Personnel, Intelligence, Doctrine and Concepts, Organization, Logistics Infrastructure. Planning for a military capability means to plan all its components.

Developing a credible and accurate Costs Catalogue is apparently an auxiliary milestone, but it is very common in the national arena. The Catalogue must take into account NATO standards to ensure interoperability and to consider the fact that most missions are conducted within the Alliance or with the Alliance member states.

Options should include the development of alternative force structures, to identify capabilities’ deficiencies and develop options to cover these weaknesses (material and non-material).

Priorities have to be established because, even when all options are required, it is obvious that they cannot be covered immediately, especially because of the scarcity of resources.

The final step is to allocate resources and complete implementation plans. Beyond this

stage, the process of achieving the proposed objectives, in a certain order, and with all features set begins.

We believe that this model is sufficiently comprehensive and clear for a rational approach to the field and should not be “enriched” with various “tricks” to introduce various stages consistent with partisan interests. We believe that, in order to increase defense effectiveness and efficiency, it is necessary to use the most of the opportunities offered by the “smart defense” concept.

Under the heading “Building security in an age of austerity” the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen presented a call for smart defense at the Munich Security Conference in February 4, 2011 [6]. Starting from the idea of sharp cutting budgets for European defense, the author says: *“The era of one-size-fits-all defense cooperation is over. What matters is to deliver capabilities that allow us to operate successfully at 28. Smart Defense can do just that. They make two challenges today: how to get more security for the limited resources they devote to defense, and how to invest enough to prepare for the future”*.

The declaration on capabilities was signed by representatives of allied states at the Chicago summit in May 2012 [7]. Heads of State and Government agreed on this occasion, for the future as follows: *“we have confidently set ourselves the goal of NATO Forces 2020: modern, tightly connected forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment”*. [8] Course objectives can be achieved

through Smart Defense: *“Smart Defense is at the heart of this new approach. The development and deployment of defense capabilities is first and foremost a national responsibility. But as technology grows more expensive, and defense budgets are under pressure, there are key capabilities which many Allies can only obtain if they work together to develop and acquire them. We therefore welcome the decisions of Allies to take forward specific multinational projects, including for better protection of our forces, better surveillance and better training. These projects will deliver improved operational effectiveness, economies of scale, and closer connections between our forces. They will also provide experience for more such Smart Defense projects in future”*.

“Smart Defense” is the way to achieve maximum defense effectiveness and efficiency. To be put into practice, “Smart Defense” needs correct identification of required capabilities, multinational availability and, especially, trust between partners.

3. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The conclusion of our study is that the decision makers of the national defense system, whether civilian or military, should understand the need to rethink the system, depending on the current economic policy. This requires a thorough strategic analysis and identification of possible options that take into account the advantages of collective defense and the possibilities of applying the concept of “smart defense”.

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ENDNOTES

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