

MILITARY CAPABILITIES THAT ROMANIA NEEDS FOR PREVENTING AND WAGING A HYBRID WAR

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Abstract: *Conflicts of the future will no longer be classified as conventional or irregular because the most capable opponents will pursue to combine a multitude of capacities and abilities in a complex typological mixture that relies to a great extent on the inaccuracy of approaches. In the current geopolitical and geostrategic, volatile and unpredictable context, hybrid warfare is a major concern and a strategic priority for international security and defense organizations. This article presents the most operative capabilities of the Romanian Armed Forces capable of responding timely to the present and future challenges and threats of the security environment in general, especially hybrid threats. In this context, we believe that the defense of the national territory must be approached as thoroughly and pragmatically as possible, thus generating an effective strategy for combating the modalities of expressing a hybrid conflict.*

Keywords: *defense; terrorist actions; territory; military capabilities; ability to respond*

1. INTRODUCTION

Soldiers describe war as an extremely violent and costly manifestation of the existing conflict at some point between large groups of people (states, peoples, nations), structured and provided with military equipment, using armed combat to achieve their targeted objectives (established by the political element)[1].

Wars and conflicts of the last decades were carried out following other principles than those associated with classical war, the demarcation line between combatants missing completely, whereas combatants are more invisible right now (see the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the wars of Afghanistan).

2. HYBRID WAR - BRIEF HISTORY

Current confrontations involve a reconsideration of the armed forces structures and their continuous adaptation based on the evolution of security environment. Although the national military structures will be preserved in the form stipulated by organizational charts - platoon, company, battalion, brigade, division and their corresponding equivalents, for crisis and war (hybrid) missions, the new structures must be modular / deployable, so that they can accomplish any mission assigned[2].

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, the concept of "hybrid war" has become somewhat of a buzzword, with an extensive use by media and news agencies, academic communities and the NATO to describe actions and operation methods used by Russia in Crimea, Donbass and Lugansk regions.

Currently, there are views that the war of the future will be nameless and the enemy faceless [3], or, war will be "hybrid" (a combination of classic and unconventional war, in which the lack of direct confrontation creates difficulties to the armies of powerful states, whereas classical laws of war are not being followed).

Hybrid war is "a combination of symmetrical and asymmetrical armed conflicts, where the intervention forces conduct traditional military operations against enemy forces and targets (military or/and civilian), while acting simultaneously and decisively to get control of indigenous population in the theater of military action, by stability operations"[4] .

In 2002, Major William Nemeth used the term *hybrid war*[5], to describe a "contemporary form of guerrillas" that "uses both modern technology and modern mobilization methods (in reference to the first Russian-Chechen war of 1994-1996, "flexible war, half regular, half irregular", based on conventional weapons, terrorist and organized crime methods)"[6].

Nathan Freier, senior associate, in the International Security Program at the Centre of Strategic and International Studies has defined hybrid war as a confrontation which involves four threats: traditionalism, asymmetry, catastrophic terrorism and disruptive terrorism employing technology to counterbalance the military superiority [7].

In 2007, Frank Hoffman, in his work, "Conflict in the 21st century. The rise of hybrid wars" emphasizes the impressive adaptability of new opponents that prepare and use different capabilities and asymmetric methods, in an innovative manner. The challenge will not come from one state, but from states or groups of states which choose from all the available arsenal, technologies and tactics that suit their own strategic geographies and cultures [8].

David Kilcullen, in his book, "The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One", says that hybrid war is the best explanation for modern conflicts, but he stresses that it includes a combination of irregular war, civil war, insurgency and terrorism [9].

The ways of waging the battle, in case of hybrid wars, are varied, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist actions and criminal disorder. These actions will be carried out in order to obtain the synergistic effect on one or all levels of war. Thus, the ones waging hybrid wars "seek to obtain victory by merging irregular tactics and the most lethal means at hand, in order to attack the opponent and achieve their own political objectives[10] .

I will define hybrid war as the type of war that aggressively combines traditional irregular tactics, different techniques and procedures, including all elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) in a unified effort focused on the achievement of victory in all aspects of war: tactical, operational and strategic. Future conflicts will take place between people, in the middle of people, limiting the utility of conventional applications of military power.

In hybrid war both military and especially non-military (societal) weaknesses are "exploited", which the abuser tries to capitalize: ethnic and religious tensions, weak and corrupt institutions, economic and energetic dependence. Based on these weaknesses, a hybrid war involves various actions, from terrorism to media propaganda, through irregular and not assumed military actions [11].

2. MILITARY CAPABILITIES THAT ROMANIA NEEDS FOR PREVENTING AND WAGING A HYBRID WAR

Preparing the territory for defense includes a set of measures and actions established and executed ever since peacetime, for the use of all human and economic potential of the country, to meet the needs of defense and to assure the continuity of economic and social activities in the event of mobilization or war [12].

The territorial defense is attributed to structures belonging to:

- Ministry of National Defense - all categories of forces;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs – Gendarmerie, Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, County Police Inspectorate, Border Police;
- Romanian Intelligence Service - territorial structures;
- National Administration of State Reserves and Special Problems;
- local public administration - local Police;
- National Reserve Forces [13].

In order to be able to meet the challenges and the current and future difficulties with concern to the continuous changes of security environment, the Romanian Armed Forces' capabilities must be integrated in defense planning both regarding the size of collective defense and the national defense, in accordance with the types of missions be them high intensity operations (collective defense operations, counterterrorism and non-proliferation, peace enforcement, extraction operation), operations of low intensity (CBRN defense and consequence management, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, imposing sanctions and embargoes) or humanitarian operations and support in case of disasters.

In reply to the hybrid threats, all security and defense organizations must combine productively all power elements in campaign plans and strategic actions that they conduct. Political, social, diplomatic components of power, as well as the informational ones must give full support to military organizations. At national level, in order to increase the quick reaction capacity related to non-military aspects of conflicts, the government needs to establish standards and cooperation procedures between agencies and within agencies that hold responsibilities in the field of defense, inclusive of nongovernmental organizations.

Military capabilities that Romania needs for preventing and waging a hybrid war:

- protection of resources and strategic assets (under state control) and their judicious use;
- critical infrastructure protection in order to prevent sabotage and espionage;
- correction of legal deficiencies (so that the hybrid aggression can be prevented);
- continuous and efficient communication between state authorities and civil society to prevent or defuse any ethnic and / or interreligious tension that would facilitate or support the actions of lobbying groups or agents of destabilization
- strengthening the safety culture at the level of both state authorities and population;
- design of a strategy and plan regarding responsibilities and the manner of preparation and conduct of military operations in case of hybrid attacks;
- development and assurance of capabilities necessary for participation in such actions, in major focus areas (police, gendarmerie, civil protection, administration, justice) and assurance of differentiated, specific instruction, but next to military structures;

- acquisition and implementation of state-of-the-art digital systems able to provide an improvement of knowledge regarding the environment in which operations are conducted and to increase the reaction against hybrid attacks, tending to obtain maximum effect at a minimal cost;
- structures capable of rapid transformation based on the assignment (battalion, regiment, brigade or its equivalent - which do not have a predictable structure), with high degrees of modularity at peace time, with modular forces, rapidly deployable on large spaces, with specific logistics to permit execution of actions independently and individually for a relatively long period of time;
- a flexible command and control system (centralized / decentralized) able to provide the time needed for the reaction in the context of the new physiognomy of war;
- a military intelligence system to assure the timely and efficient political, political-military and military leadership, at all hierarchical levels, for the purpose of avoiding surprise attacks and of assuring the decision-making processes;
- a communication and information system equipped with latest generation integrated equipment, methods, procedures, software and personnel, capable of assuring information exchange at all levels of command and control and interconnection with other systems of communication and information;
- ISR (Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance) networks to collect, analyze, process and disseminate information in the system according to the situation and mission requirements;
- means air transport to assure strategic transport of deployable forces (planes, helicopters);
- flexible and modular groups of forces, self-sustainable, capable to operate both in conventional structures and in small, autonomous formations (especially in urban areas);
- modern combat equipment: combat armored and non-armored vehicles, attack helicopters, multirole aircraft, air defense systems, surveillance and electronic warfare systems;
- specialized structures (intelligence) prepared for counteracting actions that concern knowledge, influence, domination and control of attitudes, behaviors, will and decisions of the people;
- sharing, at inter-institutional level, of training facilities and designing a firing range for education / training for urban combat;
- structures ready to fight at all time, destined to surveillance and early warning, combat engagement, intervention in relation with military objectives, terrorist crisis and emergency situations;
- development of infrastructure necessary for deployment of intervention forces;
- improvement of quality of life by providing military living conditions, improvement of health care, enhancement of social dialogue and harmonization of legal framework concerning staff payment relative to national socio-economic realities;
- formation, training and use of volunteering reservists as well as a maintenance of a high level of readiness for mobilization of military structures;
- periodical training of the country population, in an organized background, by local administrative bodies, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of National Defense / Romanian Intelligence Service, related to the execution of hybrid attacks by a possible aggressor and activities people need to carry out to prevent them or facilitate actions of specialized structures.

- preservation of a permanent freedom of movement and maneuver by controlling communication nodes (ports, airports, bridges, satellite stations, and other infrastructure elements) - military, police, gendarmerie, intelligence agents;
- establishment of territorial troops (county guards) made up of civilians and their training on procedures and methods of intervention in cases other than hybrid attacks, together with armed and public order forces in the area, until the deployment of specialized intervention forces;
- close monitoring of the borders to prevent infiltration of hostile elements, which can aim at discrediting or manipulating public opinion in the area, or destroying strategic objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Romania committed itself to allocate at least 2% of GDP for defense, the decrease in the total budget revenues collected by the National Agency For Fiscal Administration in January and February 2017, decreasing by 0.9% compared to the same period last year, creates problems for the achievement of the strategic objectives proposed by the Ministry Of National Defense for 2017, implicitly also for the specific tasks of preparing the territory for defense (at this rate the total budget allocated to the MOD could be lower than last year's budget). This will affect the procurement of techniques, the improvement of existing techniques, as well as training.

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[12] *Law 477/2003 on the preparation of the national economy and the territory for defense*, art. 2, Monitorul Oficial nr. 824/20 noi. 2003, accesată în 25.06.2016 la adresa http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=51514

[13] At this time, it does not exist, but according to Law 270/2015 on the status of volunteer reservists, from November 2015, it should be established starting with 1 January 2017.