

DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

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***Abstract:** Defense resources management should be a matter of interest for everybody and not only for experts and decision-makers as long as the effects of any decision in this domain can be perceived by the entire society. NATO’s umbrella has not to be the only way of thinking security because any member nation of the organization has the obligation to be both a security provider and consumer. Global security environment is now safer than during the Cold War but there are still many risks and threats at regional and local level. Every crisis encompasses a hope and we all have the responsibility to search for and discover as soon as possible, the turning point between the decline and progress and then to proceed for recovery. The best way for managing defense resources during economic and financial crisis is to think and act considering the future. That is to say by investing especially in research and development, in order to find new ways of protecting and developing society through active participation of all the citizens.*

***Keywords:** defense resources, global security environment, risks, threats, defense planning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The direct connection between resources and combat capabilities of armed forces is, or at least should be, well-known not only by the military and politico-military experts but also by the decision-makers in politics and military field; and this because the responsibilities of each of us will increase gradually in direct proportion to our level of understanding. As everybody knows, all the citizens have the obligation to pay taxes for ensuring good functioning of the state, including the structures whose key responsibility is national defense and security. In conclusion, all the citizens should be well-informed on the effects upon them as a result of the decisions made with reference to the state resources and the way the government chooses to distribute them in different fields of activity. Nation’s defense and security is a common responsibility for all of us – and I refer to all the adult citizens – and not only for those working within the state’s structures involved in defending and securing the nation. As a result, all of the adult citizens of this country should know and acknowledge the short, medium and long term effects of any

decision which may exist upon her defense and security capability and even her credibility among all the allied and partner countries.

Usually, all the decisions related to the defense resource allocation have both an immediate and long term impact on state’s structures, especially on those with direct responsibilities for defending and securing the country. The majority of the effects will play upon the entire country on medium and long term and that is why less informed people may think that any postponement of a certain program of acquisition and modernization for defense and security field could be easily recovered next time (year, decade, and so on) and country’s defense capabilities might not suffer. The same decision must have a different interpretation from an expert and a respected decision-maker who will be able to see the medium and long term negative consequences from losing credibility as a partner for defense trade to diminishing military personnel and other state employee’s moral. On the other hand, any program or activity postponement will certainly increase the burden for the next fiscal years in order to introduce the delayed programs and activities.

Most probably, this situation might generate a review or even the restarting of the entire defense planning process. In other words, to review and reassess all the objectives, guidelines, priorities and deadlines in order to correlate them with the actual allotted resources.

The effects of any change in defense resource allocation will affect the entire state institutions because any downsizing or increasing of the one's budget has to be balanced with all the others' budget. At the same time, the effects of a defense budget reduction will affect (impact upon, bear on) relations with the allies and partners because they need, in their turn, to review postponed common activities with Romania, and then the credibility of our country might be negatively affected.

Romania's NATO and E.U. membership is a strong argument for discouraging any potential aggressor, if it exists. On the other side, this is not enough and normal to cover country's security deficit using only NATO's umbrella. Some American politico-military experts consider that burden sharing among allies is not equitable [1]. If we add differences in attitude between USA and her European allies related to security environment requirements, then it is possible to discover that all those facts may contribute to deep the existing gap between America and Europe. In the essence, some politico-military experts and even a part of American public opinion are tempted to withdraw their support for keeping an extended military contingent in Europe [1]. This attitude is caused by the dimension of E.U.'s GDP, which is greater than the US's and the E.U.'s defense expenditures which are less than America's with about 60% [1] and risk and threats against Europe which are considered less dangerous than the ones against US and less even than the ones during the Cold War.

According to NATO's basic documents, any member state has to be both a provider and benefactor of the Alliance defense capabilities. It means that all member nations have to build their own defense for ensuring their national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the Alliance's. It is

important to mention that if any NATO member is attacked, then all the other allies will sustain it in a period of time that lasts from days to months, pending on the situation the Alliance is at that moment. In conclusion, in the uncovered period of time, the aggressed state has to have enough combat capabilities to defend its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

All these elements that describe international security environment and its mechanisms to ensure security at NATO and E.U. level, should be enough both for public opinion and decision makers to start searching for solutions to avoid those decisions which must cause downsizing of country's defense capabilities and even its credibility among its allies and partners. In order to fulfill this objective it will be necessary that political decision-makers and the adult citizens also to acknowledge that a credible defense and security cannot be achieved with less than necessary budget.

Moreover, all the political decision-makers have to understand that there are certain limits under which the defense expenditure cannot fall unless they deliberately assume the negative effects which might become catastrophic in case of an armed aggression against our country.

2. A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY

Although it is considered that „*territorial integrity of the most European states is not questionable and Europe defense is in Hindu Kush mountains, the security of most of the European states is yet threatened*” [2].

Having these considerations in mind and assessing the current effects of the existing world economic and financial crisis that affects bear on the entire fields of activities, we need to see that some of the risks and threats against world's security, such as terrorism, organized crime and tendency not to recognize the existing state's borders, have been amplified by crisis.

Normally, this prognosis has to lead to initiation of the appropriate measures in order to prevent risk to become threats and threats to

become conflicts because it is well known that preventing is more profitable than countering. Unfortunately, some of the measures, such as defense budget downsizing, cannot contribute to preventing risks and threats and, of course, cannot discourage any potential aggressor to make its plans come true.

According to one international security expert, the greater threat against European citizens is *“not terrorism, not organized crime, not drug trafficking, not even political blackmail, based on energy, utilized by Russia. The most important threat is the question: European Security Defense Initiative or NATO or a pro or anti-American Europe”* [3]. This way of thinking is close to the one belonging to lord Palmerton who stated that *“Great Britain never had permanent friends, but only permanent interests”* [4]. Also, there are some American experts who believe that *“the existence of a trans-Atlantic schism could be lethal to the Alliance in case of a conflict with WMD...[but – a.n.] the long term danger represented by the differences [between USA and her allies considering WMD utilization during the war - a.n.] have not to be underestimated”* [1].

It seems to me that as long as we are going far from the events on September, 11th 2001, the public opinion tends to forget all the dangers and threats to national and collective defense and security, until some other undesirable events happen, having similar effects or even worse ones. If such an event will happen, then all the assumed responsibilities and unaccomplished promises will become “hot potatoes” and we could assist to a new “witches hunting,” in order to discover “the scape goats” and to diminish fury, disappointment, protests and dissatisfaction of the public opinion. The people have the right to ask but, at the same time has the obligation to understand that a country defense and security cannot be build only with good intentions and promises. Also, the people have to acknowledge that any country needs security in order to build a more developed and prosperous society and a better life for her citizens. The investments in security could be compared with the investment in a house. If we decide to build a

house then we may need to make some sacrifices until the house is completed. The house is the most important objective because it protects us both against Mother Nature’s extreme events and against some bad people who desire to attempt to our goods or even to our life.

The similar way of thinking has to be applied to defense and security building because security has the role of protecting all of us against any risk and threat caused by the Nature or by some human beings, no matter who they are, and offers us the right shelter in case of a conflict. Like any house, security needs investments to keep it in very good conditions in order to accomplish its missions. If we do not invest in security, then it will be eroded and will not offer the shelter and support we need.

Most probably there are many citizens from all NATO and E.U. member states who must ask themselves: Who could dare to attack us, once we belong to the most powerful politico-military organization in the world? Why do we need to insist for developing defense and security capabilities because the Cold War has been finished? How could be sustained the requests for increasing the defense and security budget whilst long term prognosis estimates that the risk for a major armed conflict is reduced to a minimum?

The answers are easy to be given but for now, the most important is the way the public opinion think, and this is shaped by some patterns such as: *“The Evil (USSR) has been destroyed”*; *“There is no major threat against NATO and E.U. security”*; *“A major armed conflict is less likely for the next decades”* and so on. As a result of this way of thinking about security, majority of the people would like to live in normal conditions without risks, threats and conflicts and some events related to those threats and conflicts such as gunfire, bombs and car traps, and blows have to belong to a history that have not be resurrected. Unfortunately, desires cannot solve problems; they can only initiate the process of solutions identification.

So, in order to find a solution for a better and safer world it is necessary to better study the one we live.

After that we may understand its evolution mechanisms and the horizons it is heading to. As a result of the analysis we have to estimate our own capabilities to influence the security environment's evolution for accomplishing our objectives.

If our capabilities are insignificant or even null, then we need to adjust our nation and international organizations' evolution we belong to, to the international security environment trends, in order to avoid or to minimize the negative effects.

The world seems to be safer and the recent signed agreement between USA and Russia for reducing the nuclear weapons is a new hope. Unfortunately still there are some other matters of concern such as:

- many ongoing conflicts and also many dormant conflicts that could be easily reactivated;
- current economic and financial crisis did not amplify international cooperation in order to find available solutions for everybody;
- some country political leaders try to throw their own responsibility for inefficient governance on the others shoulders by blaming them for interfering into their internal affairs with bad intentions;
- the fight for power in some countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka look more like a civil war than a democratic fight.

Focusing our attention on security of the region Romania belongs to; there is a conclusion that needs to be drawn: here there exist some risks which need to be solved timely and in an appropriate manner; otherwise they might create conflicts and their consequences are hard to be estimated. Some of the most important risks are the following:

- unjustified rising tensions between Ukraine and Romania after The International Court of Justice decision to approve Romania's request to consider Serpent Island a rock and to share accordingly the Black Sea continental plateau between the two countries;
- political instability and social riots from Ukraine, caused by political fight for power between pro-NATO and pro-Russia parts, on the economic, financial and energy crisis amplified by the disappointment of not having received the NATO's MAP (Membership

Action Plan) for its accession on the occasion of 2008 Bucharest Summit;

- the existence of tensions between Ukraine and Romania, on the one side, and Moldova and Romania, on the other side, generated by "*ethnic Moldavian...multiple citizenship...illegal immigration, and allegation of political discrimination...frustrations in borders regime because of the visas required for Ukrainian citizens*" [5];

- after spring elections in Moldova, and massive street protests violently reprimanded by the communist regime, and tensions raised unjustified between Moldova and Romania as a result of allegations formulated by President Voronin who blamed Romania for interfering in his country internal affairs, and followed by expelling of Romanian ambassador and her military attaché;

- allegations against Romania made by some Russian politico-military analysts for so-called interferences in Moldova's internal affairs, with the most probable objective to blame NATO and E.U. using one of their member because of their support for Georgia during Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008;

- Kosovo self-proclaimed independence from Serbia is not satisfactorily solved since Romania did not recognize her as an independent country;

- the existing freezing conflicts from Transnistria, Caucasus, Balkans and Middle East could be activated and extended at any time to include Romania;

- cross-border organized crime has intensified its activity in Romania [6] and some of her neighboring countries;

- the existing ethnic-religious tensions from some of Romania's neighbor countries have been amplified.

The existence of the risks and threats already presented here and of others, too - less dangerous for the national defense and security - should not be interpreted as a sign of a coming war, although history says that major crisis were followed by major conflicts (The World War II is one the most obvious examples to confirm this assertion). Our intention with this risk analysis to our national defense and security is to make every citizen aware of the security situation and to motivate

political decision-makers to take prudent but firm and discouraging measures to prevent any aggression against our country, even if it is not so likely.

2. THE EFFECTS OF A LESS THAN REQUIRED BUDGET ON THE COUNTRY'S DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

The most significant consequences of a less than required budget are the following:

a) In human resource domain:

- intensification of potential exodus from Armed Forces – especially the high qualified ones – towards other Governmental structures and private sector that offer better salaries and benefits than Department of Defense (DoD), whilst the DoD keeps the same restrictions for its employees and risks that they have to face remain higher than the ones from private sector and other government's entities;
- possible reduction in number and quality – from education level and personal competence point of view – of the candidates for military education institutions, and even of the volunteer because of uncertain carrier perspectives such as: job stability and market existing jobs; professional development; less attractive salary than in another organizations; high risks of the jobs etc.;
- partial reduction of the professional competence, both at individual as well as at the organization level, as a result of the high qualified people's exodus and because of scarce resources for performing training exercises in an appropriate number and complexity;
- unsafe level of security as well as incidents and accident likelihood rising during live exercises and activities with high pace, risk and complexity because of reducing in number and complexity of the training activities which, at their turn, generate partial reduction of the personnel's skills, especially the leading and combatant one;
- potential rising risk for not accomplishing live missions and the ones assumed within NATO - such as Air Policy, which is a part of NATINAD; Operation Active Endeavor; Operation Enduring Freedom etc.- as a result of diminished skills of military personnel;

- increasing risk for diminishing the Armed Forces credibility as a whole, because of: the high likelihood not to accomplish NATO and E.U. standards and even minimum military requirements for personnel, equipment and infrastructure; reduced level of readiness for many military units; possible failure to affirm military units committed to NATO and E.U. missions; possible failing for not being able to fulfill obligations assumed to NATO and E.U.;
- possible reduction in winning chance during live and simulated fights and firings because of partial reduction of the personnel's skills and because of physical and moral degradation of the most equipment which may not function at desired performances or may not function at all;
- potential rising risk for failing to participate in Alliance's live exercises as a result of personnel's training level and skills which might be under the safety standards required by the organizers.

b) In the field of material resource:

- rapid physical and moral degradation of the weapon systems, fighting and logistics equipment because of the postponed or downsizing of the acquisition and modernization programs, situation that could lead to a more intense utilization of operational equipment, in order to fulfill training standards and missions requirements;
- more advanced moral degradation of the major equipment belonging to all the Services, as a result of the postponement or even cancellation of the acquisition, modernization and repairing programs, and from bad to worse, because there are not enough possibilities to replace the old and obsolete equipment;
- continuous increasing expenses for maintaining and keeping operational all the equipment because of their physical degradation and intense utilization that cause an increased likelihood for incidents, accidents and any kind of troubles;
- continuous reduction of fighting and other types of performances of all types of equipment as a result of their physical degradation;
- continuous reduction of equipment' effectiveness and precision because of their

weariness.

c) In the field of financial resources:

- a potential increased risk for getting into impossibility to pay all the debts to the Services and products providers, situation that may cause extra payments as penalties and even potential reducing of the DoD's credibility as a trade partner;
- continuous infrastructure's degradation because of the postponement, downsizing or even cancellation of the investment, modernization and repairing programs with direct consequences consisting of reduced or even null possibilities to use it during training process and in live operations;
- possible reduction of the interoperability level with the allies and partners which may cause an amplified risk for failing to achieve the assumed commitments against UN, NATO, E.U., OSCE and other international organizations because of less than necessary funds for taxes, annual contribution, training, acquisitions, modernizations and investments;
- possible reduction of living and working standards for the personnel.

3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR MINIMIZING NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Any reduction of the defense resources' quality and quantity requires reviewing the entire defense resources management process from the risk and threat evaluation against nation's defense and security till the defense planning and programs implementation. That is to say the experts and decision makers have to consider conclusions related to risks and threats - types, domains of activity, level of the danger, magnitude, prognosis for evolution etc. - and then to create scenarios and to play them in order to identify the best courses of action for making decisions which have to:

- keep the objectives of the defense and security and level of ambition at the initial level, or to adjust (formulate other ones) them in accordance with the resources allotted;
- keep the availability of the strategies, concepts, plans and programs for acquisition, modernization, investment, training through transforming nation's entities responsible for her defense and security or to recommend

other defense planning documents to address the challenges and to efficiently manage the security situation;

- establish new guidelines for maintaining nation's defense and security capabilities as high as possible;
- reassess and reschedule deadlines for plans and programs in such a manner that can allow nation to get an acceptable level of risk for her defense and security in case of a conflict or even in an aggression;
- identify new priorities for nation's defense and security;
- fructify the existent experience and lessons learned with greater efficiency and to create the appropriate conditions for involving all the political and military leaders who lead governmental entities with responsibilities for nation's defense and security, into the process of defense resources management;
- identify new and more efficient ways to perform daily and long term activities, considering: resources consumption; quality of the products – material and intellectual ones; reassessment of the proportion between live and simulated activities; reviewing the methods, standards, tactics, techniques and procedures in order to optimize them to be more cost-effective; scientific research intensification in order to fructify nation's creative potential etc.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Defense budget reduction has important negative effects that will be more intense in the future.

During any crisis, the best solution to overcome is to concentrate all the nation's efforts for identifying new ways to transform the society as a whole because the solutions we have followed led us to the economic and financial crisis. On the other side, any crisis encompasses the nucleus of opportunity and chance to:

- search and find out new and more efficient solutions to the problems we face;
- rethink the existing objectives, plans and programs in order to optimize them;
- push the known limits of human beings creativity toward new horizons;

- promote people who prove competence, professional skills and performance;
- discourage promotion of the people who display bad behaviors;
- increase speed of adapting people's mentality to the new reality, which is characterized by often and sometimes sudden modifications of the situation; risks and threats amplification both at individual as well as at nation and euro-Atlantic organizations level etc.

Our ancestors' heritage consists of many wise proverbs such as "*after bad weather will come the nice one.*" This proverb has to be connected to another one "*the need teaches us.*" Both proverbs have to make up our mind to find out solutions for helping ourselves because the divine help exist but we need to be involved not only physically but also mentally and emotionally otherwise the result may not be as we planned to be.

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