



RESISTANCE MOVEMENT – RELEVANCE FOR HOMELAND DEFENCE

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There is a direct connection between societal resilience and resistance movements, as a higher level of resilience ensures preconditions for an efficient resistance movement when territorial sovereignty or independence is threatened or temporarily lost. This paper highlights the necessity to approach the resistance concept in both Romanian armed forces and civil society, and the required preconditions for a successful resistance movement in case of occupation. The purpose of this paper is to debate the opportunity of planning and preparing during peacetime for a valid resistance in a total defense scenario.

Keywords: resistance movement; resilience; national sovereignty.

The aggressive external diplomacy conducted recently by several regional actors in the Black Sea region, as shown by the Russian Federation in Georgia and Ukraine, determines permanent risks and threats evaluation regarding national security level of Romania. It requires, at the same time, adjusting the proper measures and actions of the state power instruments in order to eliminate, diminish or counteract their concrete effects on national defence capability. Moreover, as a member of the main alliances at international and regional level, NATO and, respectively, the EU, determines the need to properly identify those conditions to be met in order to ensure our country's status as a factor of regional stability at the eastern border of these alliances.

Efficient engagement of military capabilities for consolidating national security requires, besides implementing conventional measures, properly countering those methods and techniques specific to unconventional or hybrid warfare, while, at the same time, diminishing the advantages, in quantity and quality, a conventional aggressor force could have. One important aspect regarding national defence capacity is the level of resilience that institutions, the economy and society will have reached when facing an armed aggression.

Romanian National Defence Law no. 45, from July 1st 1994, article no. 4, states that "In the event of aggression against the territorial integrity, existence and unity of the Romanian state and

people, the extent of which exceeds the combat capacity of the armed forces, organized on the principle of defensive sufficiency, the response will be comprised of appropriate forms engaging all human and material resources necessary to repel it"¹. Can we speak today about a whole people's war in Romania? How can our nation employ the entire existing human and material resources in order to effectively repel a major aggressive operation? Are the methods, techniques or instruments we currently plan to employ for national defence sufficient? What resources will we actually have when we are confronted with major impediments like eliminating mandatory military service for country citizens or heavy migration of workforce within the EU? These problems are more pronounced when we consider Romanian Law no. 446 from November 30th 2006 regarding the preparation of the population for defence, article no. 3 that states: "When mobilization and war state is declared or when siege is instituted, performing military service as conscript is mandatory for men aged 20 through 35 years old that meet the required criteria for military service"².

According to the same National Defence Law no. 45/1994, at article no. 33, the Ministry of Defence is compelled to organize proper training and preparations for armed forces and civilians alike in order to ensure optimal national mobilization efforts. The Defence Staff is the structure responsible for reaching the necessary readiness level of population, economy and homeland for supporting the national defence effort, through various trainings and exercises regarding general mobilization of resources.

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When considering diversity and interdependence of current confrontational domains and the various methods and techniques specific to unconventional or hybrid warfare, we can certainly say that the general population of the state has, one way or another, a significant role in discouraging or repelling a possible aggression towards homeland sovereignty or independence.

Resilience versus resistance

Resilience and resistance are two different mechanisms of the same system by which it can cope with perturbing actions. Resistance is the mechanism which the system employs to mobilize the necessary resources and act accordingly to mitigate immediate negative effects of perturbing element's actions for the purpose of reinstating the normal functioning state. In a strongly affected environment, the resilience of the system emerges with the purpose of durable adaptation of the system to the new normal conditions.

The level of resilience achieved by a society contributes to deterrence efforts and actively supports a comprehensive national defence by providing the condition for a planned and organized resistance movement likely needed to reinstate territorial sovereignty or independence. Resilience is a fundamental element in planning, generating and organizing an efficient resistance movement.

Civil society resilience is determined by:

- the will of the population to maintain the society they have built until the moment of aggression;
- the will and ability of the population to withstand negative influence and pressure from both external and internal sources;
- the will and capacity of the population to overcome the negative effects of pressure or toxic influence and to recover.

Resistance comes as a normal response of a society when its sovereignty or independence is threatened. A valid total war scenario of the state implies a proper planning and preparation long before crisis or war emerges. For this reason, responsible institutions must focus during peacetime on building a durable resilience of society that ultimately create the conditions for resistance against occupation. Resistance is a synergic effort of every element of society that seeks to reinstate the normal function of the state

that existed before the aggression. It includes a wide range of activities and actions, both armed and unarmed, violent and nonviolent, within the boundaries of a legal government, even if exiled or shadow, that seek to regain independence and homeland sovereignty previously lost through aggression. Resistance movement consists of an organized effort by a part of nation's civilian population in an attempt to challenge the enforced authority of an aggressor. Its goals include creating a state of incertitude, instability and general public disorder or disobedience in the occupied territory.

Planning, organizing and conducting a homeland resistance movement ultimately contributes to the national defence effort alongside regular armed forces that concentrate on executing conventional actions and consider asymmetric and unconventional as well. When talking about unconventional warfare we include those operations and actions conducted through guerrilla forces in order to facilitate the resistance movement to overthrow or coerce the aggressor authority in occupied territory.

An efficient resistance movement relies on a mature resilience capability of society. Proper preparations for crisis situations or war include consolidation of people national identity in order to strengthen their capacity and will to resist any aggressor. Governmental institutions are responsible for informational and psychological measures regarding the country's civil population awareness of potential external or domestic threats. So, the importance of resilience building and resistance planning during peacetime become absolutely obvious. If resilience is considered and taken care of at several institutional levels, when it comes to resistance it appears that it is not considered plausible. We can acknowledge that credible resistance planning in conjunction with specific informational and psychological operations can contribute to national security by convincing a potential aggressor that occupation in itself will come at a very high price and will be undermined in every way possible until national sovereignty and independence are regained.

Resistance oriented approaches

Planning and preparing for deterrence, mitigation or countering potential threats by resistance means must be conducted in a



comprehensive manner since peacetime. A strong national identity is consolidated through proper measures like education promoting historical, patriotic and cultural values, and different actions taken to promote national unity such as sport leagues and civic activities. The main idea behind this is to emphasize the importance of homeland sovereignty over the political factor. People disliking the government in charge at any given time will be reluctant to support or act as part of a resistance movement when needed. The psychological state of mind of a country's citizens must be molded accordingly before any aggressive effects are visible. Building propaganda immunity starts at young ages and continues in every stage of the educational process for every citizen. This will set the basic psychological readiness when the aggression and hostilities commence. An efficient resistance movement needs a consistent and constant popular support in order to actively contribute to regaining sovereignty over lost territories or national independence.

Unlike regular armed forces, special operation forces have specific tasks that belong to unconventional warfare like supporting resistance movements in adversary occupied or controlled terrain. Recent unconventional, asymmetric and hybrid warfare methods and techniques, used in confrontations determine thoughtful consideration when planning and preparing to counter possible aggressive actions. One such consideration is capitalization of possible resistance movement efforts in repelling an aggression and regaining previously lost territory's sovereignty or independence. Peacetime planning and preparation for defensive measures in case of aggression, conventional or unconventional, must include possible resistance movement effects to determine high costs in resources for any aggressor or occupying regime. Proper preparation of population, terrain and critical infrastructure for a possible invasion can also be used in informational operations to deter a possible aggression altogether.

A resistance organization has four main elements: underground, auxiliary, guerrillas and the public component.

The underground refers to organized cells that operate in urbanized locations under occupier forces control. The underground entities conduct both military and political actions through

intelligence networks, media networks - including radio, television, social media and internet, with the purpose of promoting their just cause to locals and international community. The underground cells also manage materials that can be used by fighters in various sabotage acts against occupier's forces.

The auxiliary includes a part of the local population that actually supports the underground cells or the guerrilla forces. Their implication is clandestine as they have an overt role in the community. The main functions of the auxiliary are providing intelligence, logistic support, a consistent labor force and security or early warning for the other elements of the resistance.

Guerrilla forces are the military element of a resistance. They consist of irregular soldiers that originate from regular army units or from trained civilians. Guerrillas conduct unconventional warfare actions through sabotages, ambushes or harassing occupier's forces in order to disrupt their ongoing operations, affect morale and produce material losses. The size of the guerrilla force is in direct relation with the size of the population supporting it. Guerrilla warfare, as an integral part of insurgent tactics, is, in general, based on small cells that use specific actions like combat, gathering information, detailed planning, manoeuvre tactics, surprise, infiltration and undermining enemy morale³. Guerrilla forces have a military type structure with a conventional command chain. They operate under the control of a legitimate government even if it is a shadow government or it is exiled from the occupied territory.

The public component refers to an accepted political expression regarding the resistance movement in the occupied territory. This component can exist as a political party or other overt entities if accepted or tolerated by the occupier. The public component can directly negotiate with the newly installed power's institutions and promote the resistance cause.

Throughout history we can find numerous examples of resistance type efforts that managed to actively support the conventional component to regain previously lost sovereignty or independence like the Soviet society's effort to repel Axis forces from the Motherland in World War II or the Vietnamese fighting French and later American invasion. There are plenty of sources that detail each resistance element's role and contribution



in supporting the resistance movement. Lessons learned in the past by struggling nations, including Romania, are still valid and should be capitalized and implemented in our current national defence strategy by revising army doctrine, field manuals and standing regulations to properly approach the specifics of unconventional, asymmetric and hybrid warfare.

In order to stimulate and facilitate civil society implication in national defence effort and in sustaining possible resistance movements on our national territory, proper training and preparation of both military and civil citizens are needed in order to conduct or counter conventional and unconventional actions. This is achieved during peacetime through sustained efforts in every domain that contributes to and promotes preconditions for an efficient resistance movement when needed.

Some European states have implemented recently several measures that intend to properly inform and prepare regular armed forces and the general population alike in case of aggression towards territorial sovereignty and national independence. One of the most notable is communication and distribution of essential information regarding existent risks and threats, while countering at the same time adversary propaganda and misinformation actions. Governmental institutions support and count on specific resistance actions at every level of society by creating the lawful environment in which these actions can be taken. The most interesting means of communication to nation's citizens came in the form of written materials, manuals and pamphlets that approach and elaborate on actual civil actions to be taken during occupation or invasion by an aggressor.

In Lithuania a manual called "Prepare to Survive Emergencies and War: A Cheerful Take on Serious Recommendations"²⁴ contains survival techniques that civilians can employ in case of an invasion. It also emphasizes civil contribution to resistance against an aggressor in order to prevent easy deployment of a military invasion. The manual reiterates citizen's right and duty to defend the homeland and acknowledges the role of every citizen in a country's warning system.

In Sweden a pamphlet called "If Crisis or War Comes"²⁵ presents – using images – to the general population the ways to prepare in case of aggression

and how to contribute to the country's Total Defence plan. This pamphlet also details specific civil protective measures that should be taken in case of aggression or attack like finding shelters from bombing, securing surviving essentials and understanding warning signs and signals.

One other example comes from the Latvian Armed Forces that include in their training and doctrine specific tasks and missions that are in direct relation with resistance movements that could emerge in crisis or war situations. These tasks and missions are not intended just for special operation forces like we have, but for every possible actor that must be properly aware of unconventional warfare methods. Furthermore, in accordance with the Latvian National Security Law from January 13th 2020, the Armed Forces must lead a resistance movement where the entire nation is involved in the fight against an aggressor.

These examples show several methods of proper planning and preparation for future confrontational scenarios that should be taken into consideration when ensuring homeland security, sovereignty and independence of the country. They come from implementing lessons learned from previous conflicts or national struggles for independence and ultimately contribute to deterrence and countering efforts regarding possible aggressions.

Conclusions

As the modern confrontational environment focuses more and more on human mind and the general perception of the public we foresee the importance of proper preparation for both armed forces and civil society in order to withstand possible negative influences an aggressor could exert on them. Building and consolidating a durable resilience of society and a strong national identity for Romanian citizens goes beyond the sole purpose of supporting a possible resistance movement in case of aggression, as it can significantly influence the development of any local and regional crisis situation or confrontational scenario.

Romanian National laws, field manuals and specific regulations have little to no content regarding military and civilian actions for supporting a resistance movement in an occupied territory. Modern conflict methods and instruments, including the unconventional spectrum specific to resistance movements, must be known and



accessed not only by special operation forces but by all armed forces, and furthermore, by civilians and all entities involved in a possible national defence effort. Resistance movements and its component elements can be equally supported by special operation forces, stay behind regular troops and plain civilians with or without military training, as resistance is conducted in both violent and nonviolent manner and it also has an important passive component.

At present, Romanian laws address national mobilization efforts of population, economy and homeland in a possible national defence effort against aggression. Mobilization efforts basically have the objective to support national armed forces operations but, in order to adopt a Total Defence plan like other European countries, efforts must be made to create proper conditions (legal, economic, psychological mindset, etc.) so as to include all available resources in a possible homeland defence scenario, also including the form of a resistance movement.

NOTES:

1 *** *National Defence Law of Romania no. 45*, from July 1st 1994, art. 4.

2 *** *Law no. 446, from November 30th 2006 regarding the preparation of the population for defence*, art. 3.

3 Col.Assoc.Prof. Stanciu Cristian-Octavian, PhD, „Insurgență/contrainsurgență – formă atipică de manifestare a acțiunilor militare”, *Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defence University* no. 1, from 02.04.2018, p. 46.

4 *** *Resistance Operating Concept*, The JSOU Press MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, 2020, p. 28.

5 *Ibidem*.

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