



CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR DEFENCE PLANNING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT RISKS AND THREATS

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DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2022.1.01

Through this paper, we have tried to highlight the role of strategic analysis in the scientific approach of the issues related to the necessary correspondence between the objectives set and the resources needed to achieve these objectives, to help improve the defence planning system, in the spirit of increasing the process efficiency.

Given the particular complexity of the field, we focused on the importance of the relationship between military and non-military vision in the strategic analysis of defence.

Keywords: defence planning; strategic analysis; defence resources; capabilities for defence;



INTRODUCTION

The daily activity takes place in the immediate vicinity of the integrated defence planning activities, and its planning system remains compatible with similar processes in the organisations to which Romania is a party. The legal framework of defence planning involves the legislative power, the chiefs of the executive branch, the responsible defence structure, other state institutions. Moreover, Romania has found it appropriate to have a law of defence planning, so that there is security of application of the model, which is very similar to the American model, but also to many other models in the world, whether of the allies or not.

Referring strictly to strategic planning, Romania has managed to implement a defence planning system, which is appreciated by the allies and which works in good conditions. The architecture of this system is inspired by that of the system used by NATO and has been implemented since 1998, with the support of the American experts from the Institute for Defense Analysis. The implementation process lasted until 2002, when the system became fully operational.

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In the defence planning process, an important place is occupied by strategic analysis which is conditioned by the cooperation between actors, which requires the correct knowledge of the theories used to achieve it. Strategic analysis is a management activity associated with setting and implementing long-term goals between the organisation

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and its environment, while meeting the objectives set by its internal capabilities. Following such a professional analysis, decision makers will be able to set concrete, achievable objectives that can be supported with the available resources. The obligations arising from international commitments will certainly have to remain the main priorities of the transformation.

Research in the field of defence planning aims both to improve each of the stages of planning and to develop new tools that allow rapid adaptation to the dynamics of general policy and new risks and threats to humanity.

The defence planning process is an auxiliary process that initiates the process called defence and, as a result, we can talk about a defence planning system, with inputs, outputs, own structure, elements, operations, etc. The defence planning system is, in fact, a set of specialised institutions, capable of developing planning documents that can be put into operation.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING SYSTEM

By defence system we mean that multitude of operations, institutions and means that ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of a state in case of any armed aggression of forces outside the national territory.

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Although there are many common elements contained in the structure of the two systems, there are certain differences that separate them. If the defence system “produces” military security, i.e. a series of elements (troops, equipment, alliances, etc.) that ensure fundamental values such as sovereignty or territorial integrity, the planning system transmits plans and planning documents at the entrance of the main

system. The beneficiary of the defence planning system is the defence system, more precisely, the army (or its equivalent, the Ministry of National Defence). The first level of defence planning is strategic planning, which is an attribute of politics. The outputs of the strategic defence planning system must be used by the military and not by its components, regardless of their importance in the system. The strategic documents are made for the army and not for the categories of forces, or for any other subdivision of the Ministry of National Defence.

By planning we mean the activity of choosing some objectives to be undertaken and establishing the modalities, procedures and plans necessary to achieve them, its other qualities being primarily necessary for knowledge and analysis. A particular problem is represented by the limits of planning, in the sense that the plan is a product that can help the real goal and not the factor that determines its achievement. In other words, defence cannot be achieved exclusively through the elaboration of defence plans, but only through specific actions.

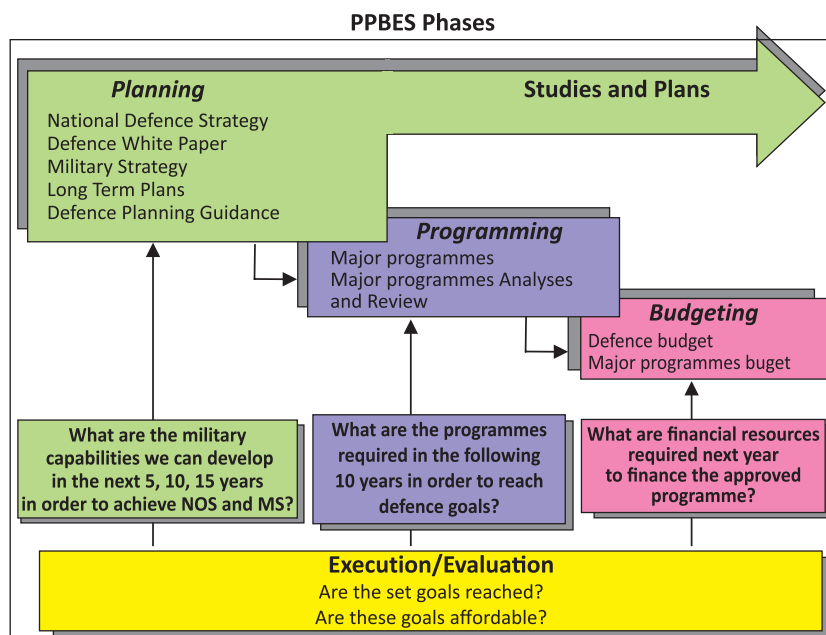


Figure no. 1: Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System
in the Ministry of National Defence (taken from <https://dpap.mapn.ro/pages/view/112>)



The strategy is a plan designed at the highest level of the subject-system, in which the share of political objectives is higher than that of the operational objectives. Both the systemic and the procedural approach are approaches that allow the external judgment of the system, its design or redesign depending on the results obtained. At the strategic level, identifying the inputs and outputs from the system is essential, especially since a system is a set of interconnected and purposeful components.

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The Defence Planning Directive is the document that regulates integrated defence planning at the level of the Ministry of National Defence, regarding the relationship policy-resources-capabilities and ensures a common vision regarding the objectives, priorities and opportunity of resource allocation, establishing links with the defence planning system that takes place within NATO. According to the rules in force, the Defence Planning Directive is developed by the Integrated Defence Planning Directorate (DPIA) and approved by the Minister of National Defence, with a time horizon of ten years and being reviewed annually.

MILITARY SECURITY RISKS AND THREATS WITH AN IMPACT ON DEFENCE PLANNING

The security environment in which Romania defends its interests and promotes its national security objectives is characterised by the geopolitical competition between actors with global or regional interests, high dynamism, volatility/instability, unpredictability, as well as the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with cascading effects on all levels of social, economic and political life. Romania's Military Strategy formulates rather confusingly the risks and threats facing Romania: *"the main risks and threats of a military nature to national security are determined by the continuation of consolidating the military potential in the vicinity of Romania (the militarization of Crimea and the Black Sea basin by the Russian Federation), the conduct of military exercises (especially those at short notice) and the development of offensive and defensive capabilities on NATO's eastern flank"* (Strategia Militară a României, 2021, p. 7).



Although they are at a minimum level, the risks associated with a conventional aggression on the national territory should not be neglected or excluded, considering Romania's geographical position, in the vicinity of areas with high security risks, as well as the Romanian state taking an active role in securing NATO's eastern flank and maintaining a regional strategic balance.

Thus, there are two types of defence planning: collective defence planning and national defence planning, processes that differ significantly but have large areas of intersection. The combination of the two types of planning can produce synergistic effects that increase the efficiency of the main process (defence - military security), but make the auxiliary process (defence planning) more difficult, forcing planners to a much more laborious substantiation of defence plans. Eliminating unnecessary redundancies, ensuring complementarity, provoking a division of specialisation into distinct fields, all these must simultaneously take into account the common and national interests.

We note that the most significant threats to the security environment are: the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the consolidation of the military potential in the vicinity of Romania, including on the eastern flank and on the NATO border, the offensive/aggressive behaviour, in economic terms of state entities included, timing of the Alliance's adaptation processes to threats in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods, security volatility in the Western Balkans, instability in the Middle East and North Africa, terrorist threat, hostile intelligence actions, hostile actions of influence carried out in public, cyberattacks, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and carriers, the phenomenon of organised crime, cybercrime, distortions in the energy markets, unwanted interference and hostile foreign takeovers of economic operators (Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării, 2020-2024, pp. 24-25).

Logically, defence is to be planned for such threats, being obvious that the chances of a position of our country as a consumer of defence are extremely small in the foreseeable future, remaining with the roles of beneficiary and security provider and with that of defence provider to ensure international security. Thus, the planning assumptions

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will have to diminish the nation's efforts to increase its defence capacity on its own territory and for any type of conflict in our geographical region and to amplify the efforts to meet the commitments to allies, including effective and efficient participation in theatres of operations.

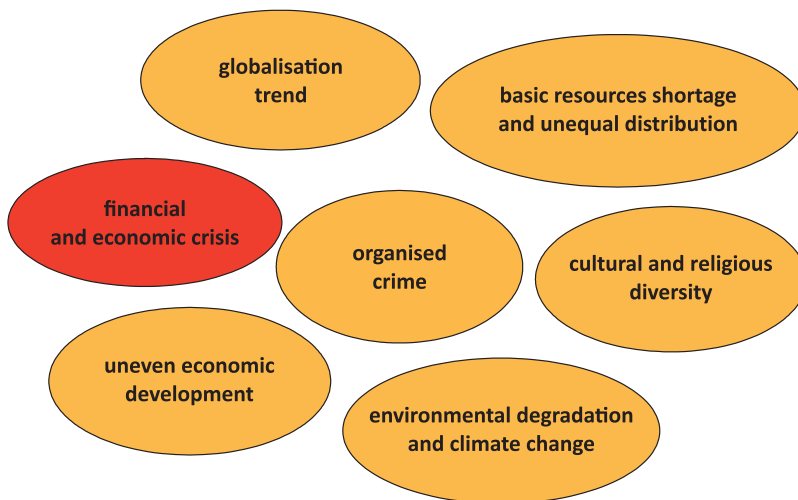


Figure no. 2: The picture of current challenges

Thus, the planning assumptions will have to diminish the nation's efforts to increase its defence capacity on its own territory and for any type of conflict in our geographical region and to amplify the efforts to meet the commitments to allies, including effective and efficient participation in theatres of operations.

Collective defence differs significantly from national defence planning, especially due to the differences in the allocation of resources, the main inputs to the system. On the other hand, the omission of the advantages offered by collective defence systems leads to a waste of resources, affecting the very security of the states that do so.

THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC DEFENCE ANALYSIS IN SUBSTANTIATING DEFENCE PLANNING

Without intentional processes, we find that, too often, a lack of resources makes us unnecessarily plan for intangible results, as we set goals that have no basis for utility. That is why the planning process begins with a very serious strategic analysis. As we will see, there are a multitude of recipes for performing this analysis, from which we will try to choose the best one.

Some of the shortcomings that cause a questionable quality of the results of the planning process and, downstream, of the defence process are due to an insufficient substantiation of the planning,

in the sense that the objectives are often set on the basis of opinions and not on knowledge. Before setting the objectives, the organisation must carefully analyse its current situation and compare it with the desired situation, so that the transformation can be supported by the available resources.

Strategic analysis is a means of transforming the data obtained in the process of environmental analysis into the strategy plan of an organization. Its tools are quantitative methods, formal models and the study of the specifics of a given organization. The main purpose of the strategic analysis is taken into account in order to assess the greatest impacts on the current and future position of the analysed organisation. It is equally important to determine the specific impact on the strategic choices. Based on the identified objectives of the organization, the main tasks faced by the organisation are determined, which will help to present the indicators for strategic planning (Strategic Analysis, 2021).

Whenever a goal is pursued, there must be certainty that it is tangible, so as not to waste the available resources. In order to do this, the costs of achieving the goal must be assessed as accurately as possible and measures must be taken to be able to pay those costs. The rather tight limits of planning indicate to us that it can support the process, but that it can by no means replace it. On the other hand, good quality planning can help the process itself in being more effective and efficient.

Good quality planning must be well-founded, rigorously executed and sufficiently flexible to allow for the necessary corrections following the regular evaluation of the results obtained. Strategic defence analysis is the most used method for this first condition that ensures the usefulness of planning: substantiation. It refers to the evaluation of possible inputs and outputs from the system itself, so that the plan is feasible and realistic. Today's economic and social context, marked by the severe economic crisis at international and national level, requires that our short- and medium-term plans be strictly framed and reasonable.



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In most cases, the argumentation of the decision is as clear as the argumentation of any of the variants in question, which deepens the presumption of arbitrariness in the decision-making process. A serious analysis must allow the elaboration of good decisions and, from our point of view, the solution is nuanced in:

- a) the substantiation of the planning is obligatory (the strategic analysis of the defence is desirable);
- b) the model of such a tool for substantiating the planning is at hand (strategic analysis of the defence can be applied);
- c) the effect of such an analysis is not guaranteed, if it is not accepted by all the actors involved (all interested parties must participate in the analysis);
- d) the costs of the analysis become pure waste if the decision-making bodies do not trust the process (decision-makers must be constantly informed of the results of the analysis and intervene directly when they do not agree with the effects).

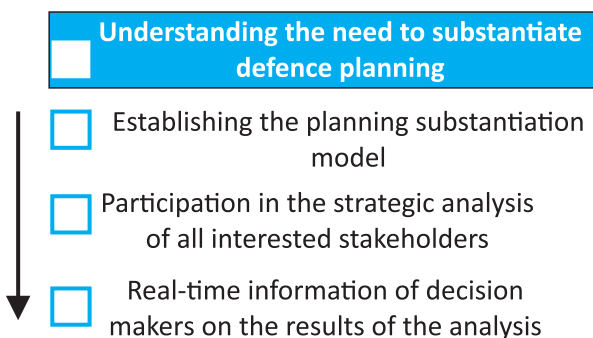


Figure no. 3: The conditions of the effectiveness of the strategic analysis

We are convinced that the call for strategic analysis was determined by the urgent need to understand how to substantiate planning or, perhaps, even by the need to scientifically substantiate it. However, the intention to give even greater importance to the analysis has led to the use of reference documents that are being developed in the United States of America, respectively the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A careful, acceptable and, subsequently, accepted by the stakeholders of the system, provides results

that make up, at a certain moment, a document adopted by the entitled institutions. Discussions on conducting a strategic defence analysis focused on several content options. We will further present a variant that we will briefly characterise:

1. Premises (Security environment; Financial resources; Commitments; Missions);
2. Military requirements (Operational requirements; Capability requirements; Other requirements derived from the other missions included in the politico-military Directive);
3. Functionality of the national security system (Institutional consultation, Decision making, Implementation and Periodic evaluation);
4. Human resources (Categories and personnel flow – commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, warrant officers, volunteers and civilian personnel, Correspondence between personnel flows and the future force structure; Attractiveness of the military career; Optimising the use of human resources);
5. Endowment programs (Prioritisation criteria);
6. Logistics (Consumer logistics; Production logistics; Medical insurance for expeditionary forces; Proposals for the elimination of surplus goods);
7. Infrastructure (Critical infrastructure; Measures for surplus infrastructure);
8. Structure of forces (Forces; Command and management structures; Administrative and support structures);
9. Efficiency of the management/command act (Improving defence planning; Public policy planning system);
10. New directions and priorities in the process of transforming defence.

The essential stages of the strategic analysis represent the chronological order of some activities that make up the analysis.

The first stage is the analysis of the defence policy framework, emphasising the fact that there must be taken into account: the threat and risk assessment, the economic and financial projections,



as well as the demographic analysis. The idea is that these areas of analysis are considered mandatory, but the object of the analysis can be extended. We consider that the first stage should focus on the following components:

- the legislative framework in the field of defence;
- the institutional framework for the field;
- the strategic planning system and the main documents;
- the main risks and threats related to national defence;
- economic-financial projections;
- the demographic analysis.

The complexity of such an analysis lies precisely in the obvious interdependence between components, an interdependence that leads to the need to coordinate the stage at a very high level.

The second stage consists in establishing the planning hypotheses, i.e. the establishment of some constants of the defence system, such as (in our opinion): membership in international organisations, targets and objectives specified by the strategic documents, the applied principles, the decision system. These assumptions generally come from the existing regulatory framework.

The third stage is particularly important for the success of the analysis and consists in the elaboration of plausible scenarios, derived from the system of risks and threats to which Romania is exposed from a military point of view. This stage can allow the analysis to continue only in the case of full coverage of the picture of risks and threats, which is difficult to achieve when those threats do not become concrete. For example, one of the most important current threats is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of carrier vectors. How can Romania counter such a threat? Obviously, the general threat must be materialized in types of possible actions, from the nuclear attack by the aggressor on some objectives located on the national territory and to the effective participation in arms control actions or military actions against states that evade international control.

Based on these scenarios, the military body decides on the missions and tasks it assumes, taking permanently into account the

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opportunities offered by membership in the organizations to which it belongs and minimising possible redundancies between the national and the Alliance military capabilities. The logical approach of this stage allows in the first phase the missions and tasks that must be fulfilled by the armed forces in order to reach the proposed targets, following that those components that belong to the national armed forces to be specified later. However, the basic idea is that it is absolutely unlikely that the national armed forces will carry out missions outside of collective defence.

The next stage identifies those military capabilities that are necessary to accomplish the missions and tasks described in the previous stage. These capabilities are one of the main outputs of the analysis process.

The development of a credible and accurate cost catalogue is a seemingly ancillary step, but it is a problem very present in the national space. The catalogue must take NATO standards into account, in order to ensure interoperability and to take into account the fact that most missions take place within the Alliance or along with Alliance member states. Options should include the development of alternative force structures, the identification of capability deficiencies and the development of options to cover these deficiencies (material and non-material). Priorities should be set because, even when all options are needed, it is obvious that they cannot be covered instantly, especially because of the scarcity of resources.

The final stage consists in allocating resources and finalising the implementation plan. Beyond this stage, the process of achieving the proposed objectives begins, in a certain order, with established characteristics and responsibilities.

The most important result of the analysis is the military capabilities. The concept of capability has evolved and become more and more used in various environments, especially in the field of defence, being the basis of true new sciences. Thus, capability *“is the heart of systems engineering, although, unfortunately, it is rarely specified as such in science-based approaches”* (Neaga, Henshaw, Yue, 2009, p. 3). Based



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on this concept, the capabilities-based planning system was created, which means *“to plan, in conditions of uncertainty, the realization of capabilities that respond to wide areas of challenges and circumstances specific to our days, within an economic framework that often requires you to make a choice”* (Davis, 2002, p. 18). A military capability consists of the following components: Instruction, Equipment, Personnel, Intelligence, Doctrine and Concepts, Organisation, Logistic Infrastructure. Modification of one component determines the corresponding modification of the others, which means that the effects of seemingly local decisions are found in all the components of capability.

Therefore, based on the study of the various requirements that the defence system has to face, a list of capabilities can be drawn up that will allow the achievement of the established objectives. Each of these capabilities is a sum of components that are organically linked when they actually work.

From now on, each component must be planned to correspond, each of them to the operability of the whole. For the whole and for each component, implementation plans can be drawn up, which are, in fact, outputs of the strategic analysis process. Reducing admissibly to the above example, the combat missions will be described, the necessary equipment and acquisitions will be specified, the personnel training will be completed, the field of the mission will be studied and the new infrastructure needs will be specified, etc.

The implementation plans at the strategic level certainly have a very high complexity and a degree of detail that allowing them flexibility, based on which the final documentation is developed. And this time, as we have done before, we draw attention to the provision of the stages of verification of the results, so as not to fall into the traditional trap of planning and not to exhaust the available resources before ensuring the functionality of the capability.

Romania’s current military strategy is part of a broader planning effort, taking place at a time when security and defence challenges are taking on new dimensions, while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to

have its influence not only on the medical front, but also on the social, economic, diplomatic and security front. It provides the necessary directions until 2024, and lays, at the same time, the foundations for the sustainable transformation of the Army until 2040 (Strategia militară a României, 2021, p. 3).

In our opinion, the new Military Strategy is vague, optimistic and full of unclear promises. The strategy emphasizes that the risks to Romania may be exacerbated by vulnerabilities with a military effect (poor railway and road infrastructure and the maladaptation of the defence industry to the needs of the army), as well as by some legislative gaps in the field of national security, which it does not name. The government appears not to have understood these shortcomings for 2021-2024 before the adoption of this document and that it would have any plan to remedy them, because in the previous Strategies they were listed, but they remained only on paper. There is no explanation for the issues related to planning the comprehensive response to hybrid threats, how to ensure the necessary resources for the modernization of the armed forces, what dual-use capabilities are being developed, in a national context and jointly with the allied and partner states.

Critical thinking is reflective thinking generated by the need to react to environmental factors, in order to establish their authenticity and optimal response modalities, while clarifying the objectives. In addition, creative thinking generates new ideas, and combines them with the old ones in order to obtain innovative solutions. However, an optimal affective climate, a certain level of acceptance of change and more flexible perspectives are needed, and that is a challenge for the military organisation.

In conclusion, the general objective of integrated defence planning is to optimise the process of allocating and using resources for the army in order to obtain and maintain the capabilities needed to meet Romania's commitments to NATO and the EU, thus becoming an important element in increasing the level of effectiveness.



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CONCLUSIONS

The fast pace of transformation of the regional and international security environment, the forecast of the security environment, the technological evolutions and their influence on the military field highlight the special role of the process of elaborating the Strategic Analysis of Romania's Defence. This analysis represents a political, military, interinstitutional and social process that establishes the interests and objectives of the state in the field of defence and security, starting from the security developments at regional and international level. The strategic analysis can provide a response to the questions related to the military strategic objectives that Romania can fulfil and about the contribution of our country to the missions of the international organisations of which it is part, in order to promote and maintain a climate of regional and international security.

The strategic analysis of the defence must attach a public document, which can convince the various segments of society of the need to ensure significant funds for military security, even if Romania has been protected from military aggression in the last seven decades.

In general, any analysis is formalised through a series of documents that prove the rationality of the decisions to be taken to achieve the objectives. Most of them are uninteresting to third parties, and in some cases, including our case, the information contained in the documents must be very confidential. On the other hand, most large-scale analyses also produce a public document, whether it is subject to the knowledge of the whole society or only of an interested party.

In this case, the strategic analysis of the defence must attach a public document, which can convince the various segments of society of the need to ensure significant funds for military security, even if Romania has been protected from military aggression in the last seven decades.

One of the atypical problems faced by the construction of the national defence system is the improbability of testing in real conditions. This can lead to incorrect assessments of its usefulness and effectiveness in both directions. It is possible, in such conditions, to underestimate or overestimate the capability to defend.

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