

FOREWORD

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The international environment of today is more and more defined by volatility, uncertainty, and the rapid acceleration of geopolitical, economic, and technological change. Within this context, the capacity of states to absorb shocks and to restore essential functions in a timely manner – commonly referred to as strategic resilience – has become a fundamental pillar of national defence. Strategic resilience encompasses the ability of national systems to anticipate, resist to and recover from a wide range of shocks and disruptions, including political crises, armed conflicts, cyber incidents, and natural disasters. Beyond immediate crisis response, it implies adaptability and the preservation of critical functionality under conditions of persistent uncertainty and changes. As such, strengthening strategic resilience has become a central objective of defence and security policies, directly contributing to state stability, sovereignty, and continuity in the face of the new global challenges.

Hybrid threats, ranging from information manipulation to disinformation campaigns, cyber operations, infiltrations, economic coercion, and the exploitation of critical technologies require advanced mechanisms of anticipation, prevention, and coordinated response. In this regard, structured dialogue among experts, military professionals, analysts, and political decision-makers plays a strategic role, fostering a shared understanding of evolving risks and supporting the development of coherent and effective solutions for the protection of national interests.

This volume brings together the contributions presented at **the seventh edition of the Romanian Military Thinking Conference, held under the theme “Strategic Resilience and National Defence: From Planning to Action in the Face of Hybrid Threats”**. Conceived as a platform for integrated debate, the conference facilitated both academic, scientific research and applied perspectives relevant to experts and practitioners in the fields of security, defence, and public policy. Through its thematic panels – **Theory and Military Art, Intelligence and Security, Defence Resource Management and Military History** – the event promoted a multidisciplinary approach to contemporary security issues, linking doctrinal analysis with operational insights and strategic assessment.

The conference was held at a time of increasing pressure on deterrence and defence systems, when the effectiveness of institutional responses to crises has become a key indicator of national resilience. Participants examined the evolution of NATO's deterrence and defence posture, emphasising the way it adapted to the changing international security environment. During the discussions, particular attention was given to the implications of disruptive technologies for the future of conflict, including artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and the expanding role of cyber capabilities. The discussions also highlighted the importance of a realistic and forward-looking assessment of strategic risks in the Black Sea region, acknowledging both the complexity of this geostrategic space and the need for continuous adaptation in response to rapid technological and geopolitical developments.

Additional debates addressed the role of intelligence, influence activities, and cyber defence in contemporary military competition, as well as the contribution of civic resilience, innovation, and industrial cooperation to armed forces transformation. Emphasis was placed on doctrinal adaptation, organisational culture, and the development of multi-domain operations, which are increasingly central to the architecture of future defence.

Hybrid threats underscore the necessity of response strategies that are both precise and tailored to the heightened complexity of the current international environment. These challenges extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the military domain or the national defence, involving diverse actors and instruments, from disinformation, cyber attacks to economic pressure and indirect political influence. The conference provided a comprehensive framework for addressing these issues from a multidisciplinary perspective, encouraging the identification of pragmatic solutions that bear in mind both resource constraints and the complex realities of the current geopolitical and strategic-economic context.

The contributions included in this volume reflect the diversity of perspectives and the depth of expertise of the participants – researchers, military officers, security professionals, representatives of public institutions and international organisations. Through their analytical rigor and policy-relevant recommendations, these works aim to serve not only as a platform for intellectual convergence, but also as a reference point for future initiatives, policy development, and research agendas.

We extend our appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of the conference and to the realisation of this volume! It is our hope that the ideas, analyses, and conclusions presented here will represent a valuable resource for the defence community and for all stakeholders engaged in strengthening state resilience in the face of hybrid threats. We are confident that this collective effort will continue to stimulate dialogue, cooperation, and innovative solutions!