THE HYBRID WAR CONCEPT EVOLUTION IN ROMANIA'S NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGIES

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The disappearance of the bipolar hegemonic character, the globalization process, the preservation of some hegemonic statutes and the hybrid aggressions emergence against the tense competitive markets and resources background were the key factors that led to international security environment major changes, fact that required a national defence rethinking, based on new risks and state threats. The way national defence strategies are designed and their content have varied from one period to another, depending on international events, economic crises, geopolitical games as well as past and present affiliations with regional or international institutions and organizations. The hybrid war concept was graduallly introduced in the defence strategies, initially being associated with some more well-known patterns such as asymmetric, informational aggression, terrorism or cyber attacks. However, considering that the conceptual boundaries between peace and war were diluted, they would all need a better nuanced, developed and argued approach.

Keywords: strategy; security; defence; aggression; hybrid warfare.

The disappearance of the bipolar hegemonic character and the globalization process were the key factors that led to the first major changes in the international security environment, which required the rethinking of national defence based on new risks and threats against the state. Given the security field dynamism and that the power balance on the global actors map is constantly reconfiguring at high speed, the transnational threats increasing incidence is observed, which, due to globalization opportunities have become much more dangerous, insidious and volatile, operating on a system-wide scale and with implications beyond the borders of a country, region or continent.

Although global security seemed, until recently, to be no longer threatened by major military conflicts, the general characteristic of the contemporary security environment was a constant conflict, generated by hegemonic statutes preservation, regional or global power transfers, but also by differentiated and restricted access to resources, their limitation and unequal distribution mechanisms, the interconnected and interdependent markets, energy dependencies and economic disparities. Ethnic, religious, cultural or ideological identity differences, as well as some historical reminiscences have also contributed to fueling

tensions in certain regions where power games are becoming more obvious and acute. The new threats emerging from the conventional paradigm, as well as their transnational character, make contemporary security acquire a strong holistic character, thus transcending the boundaries of traditional military security by including a mix of interconnected and interdependent of social, economic, political or environmental activity components, striving for its completeness.

Until the Russian Federation subversively seizured Crimee in 2014, the security policies comparative analysis, strategies or doctrines, as well as the normative basis for the operation of these policies, but especially of the Central and Eastern European States's national security structural changes forces and systems of the howed relatively naive democratic systems in understanding the new type of hybrid warfare, which fueled security vulnerabilities. This lethargy fueled by some States' strategic myopia was only a consequence of the fact that they either did not understand, did not have the capacity or were not allowed to take effective measures to counter hybrid aggression (Chirleșean 2013). Certainly, at least the Eastern European States including Romania were still familiar with such aggression, which is otherwise hard to distinguish, and still offset the cost of being considered defeated States in the Cold War, in an opaque confrontation type from which only the economic or social effects are

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distinguished and which cannot thus fit into the commonly accepted conventional war definitions. Reality shows that contemporary wars have spread and demilitarized and that current conflicts have diluted in a series of events that tend to replace natural phenomena and normal activities specific to globalization, as well as the effects generated by the economic reset, inevitably generated by the 4.0 industry.

The national security policy (strategy) is the regulatory framework that describes the ways in which a state ensures and guarantees its security and that of its citizens. It shall be presented in the form of a position document, systematized, structured, summarized, reasoned and accessible as a plan, a strategy, a concept or doctrine. Regardless of how this strategic document is named, its design starts from identifying the a nations' identity key elements: its main interests and objectives in the long term; priority actions that lead to those objectives, as well as the principles that underpin those actions; threats and risks likely to disrupt the chances of achieving these objectives as well as the main ways, means, techniques, directions of action, ways and tools necessary to mitigate their effects, correlated with the resources available or possible to mobilize ("Ovidiu Şincai" Institute 2006, 3).

The Country Defence National Strategy (NSCD) refers both to the present and to the future, because it defines a nation's vital interests, it establishes the direction to be followed and the lines of action necessary to potentially cope with all present and future threats, aiming to include the management of the ordered measures favorable developments. As a general rule, it is hierarchically superior to other security policies, such as military doctrine, military strategy or any other economic, social, environmental strategy. In fact, the latter approaches national security only through certain bodies viewpoint, covering only part of the overall security dimensions. As regards the NSCD reporting to the National Security Strategy (NSS), it goes without saying that as long as all security dimensions (economic, political, social, military and environmental), are covered by the NSS, the difference between those two terms is only semantics. Thus, in line with Barry Buzan's interpretation in Copenhagen School (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde 1998, 22), by introducing the national security 5 dimensions, he formalizes a

much more comprehensive understanding of this concept (Dima 2019). In this regard, we can recall that, a strategy prior to the one in 2008 was rejected by the Parliament due to the lack of clarifications, precisely on the grounds of its title – the Security Strategy. They then invoked art. 65 par. 2 letter f of the Romanian Constitution (Romanian Parliament 2003), which stated that the Parliament approved the National Defence Strategy.

Until the outbreak of the bloody Russian-Georgian military conflict in 2008, respectively the Russian *green men* invasion/diversion for those deployed to Crimea in 2014, the hybrid war concept implementation in the South-Eastern European States' military doctrines had an abstract approach, the concept not being fully assimilated and integrated into their defence strategies, but tangent to most by including elements that visibly went beyond the scope of the conventional. In fact, the security strategy concept evolved over time from the classical (Clausewitzian) approach, in which the security system relied on military force due to predominantly military threats, to the modern, American concept in which security is characterized by multi-dimensionality, interconnectivity, inter-dependence and globalization.

The NSCD manner of development and content varied from one period to the next, depending on international events, geopolitical games and to regional or international institutions and organizations with past and present affiliations. Moreover, in its conception, Romania followed the Western States example to gradually develop its own national security document, initially more superficially but more firmly, yet with an administrative apparatus maturity. Thus, an analysis of its development evolution closely follows the security policy maturity stages, with a gradual development, enough to generate a complex of fundamental documents as a base for the national strategy configuration. In this regard, as the security environment became complicated and threats diversified, state institutions gradually matured, becoming more proactive, thus generating a series of specific documents in response and protection to these changes[1].

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[1] Thus, the forerunners of Romania's National Defence Strategy (2010) were: Romania's National Security Law, no. 51/1991; National Defence Law of Romania, no. 45/1994; National Security Strategy of Romania, 2001; Military Strategy of Romania, 2002,

The main elements that directly influenced the 2006 NSS design and left in the project stage to then be entirely assimilated within the 2008 NSCD were getting the NATO Member status and the European Union integration process, the main directions aiming to secure the eastern border according to EU standards and to strengthen Romania's active role in the wider Black Sea area. Thus, in the effort to support the EU neighborhood policy, on the Eastern, Southern or Western Balkans dimensions, the Romanian state commits itself to deepening the EU Member States perception through NSCD regarding the emerging risks in these regions, as well as strengthening the complementarity and strategic coordination relationship between NATO and the EU at regional and global level (Romanian Information Service n.d.). This strategy was considered to be *"a realistic, bold and pragmatic national project"* that responds to the need and obligation to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, vital national values and interests as the Romanian state existence breakpoint (Afas 2006). The preamble highlights Romania's favorable position as a NATO and EU Member in relation to the of economic and social development acceleration and as a contribution to the regional and global security maintenance. Although it does not refer strictly to the new conflicts hybrid tendencies, this concept has not yet been developed even in the major players strategic documents on the global political scene, yet the strategy refers to *new, of a military or non-military nature asymmetric threats, including those that manifest themselves in the form of cyber or informational aggression* and endanger national security. These threats to national security revolved around international terrorism, frozen conflicts and transnational crime, elements that tangentially touch the spectrum of hybrid aggression. Moreover, the lack of originality determined by the fact that all 4 threats detailed in the strategy are also found in the European Security Strategy adopted by the EU in 2003, betrays Romanian decision-makers' mimicry and lack of personality (Council of the European Union 2009), who instead of innovating or adapting the strategy, to Romania's

needs identifying threats, risks and vulnerabilities specific to the country's area, simply preferred to copy, compiling Western theories and documents. Thus, through the lack of originality, the 2006 NSS, respectively the 2008 NSCD have become a simple act of mimesis, without local reality substance and content, with a simple *must have* necessary to *"do good"* in front of the Alliance partners   .

If the NSS adopted by the National Defence Supreme Council on April 17, 2006, still in a draft stage until the 2008 NSCD was published, contained only a few disparate elements in terms of non-conventional aggressions, the *2010 Romania's National Defence Strategy* had a more applied approach to the non-conventional aggression phenomenon. This was due to the effects the late 90[2] and early 2000 regional and global events produced[3], leading to the Clausewitzian paradigm change over wars, gradually introducing hybrid warfare concept into their doctrine. At declarative level, NSCD 2010 *"...reflects a balance between classic and unconventional risks, threats and vulnerabilities"* (The Supreme Council of defence of the country 2010)*,* having a pronounced multidimensional character, which simultaneously targeted the military, political, economic, social and ecological dimensions and which proposed integrated security management by promoting the idea of a security community. As a vulnerability, it, *"the phenomenon of ordered mass-media campaigns, with the aim of denigrating state institutions, by spreading false information about their activity; the pressure exerted by media trusts on political decision"* (The Supreme Council of defence of the country 2010)*,* was identified in a simplistic and relatively clumsy way and used, instead of the informational aggression generic concept which had not yet been assimilated.

According to it (The Supreme Council of defence of the country 2010), the main vulnerabilities identified were a decrease of some state institutions' law enforcement capacity, a

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2004; National Defence Planning Law of Romania, no. 473/2004; White Paper on National Security and Defence, 2004; National Security Strategy of Romania, 1999; National Security Strategy of Romania (2007).

[2] This was marked by the conflicts in the Balkans that ended with the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the creation of new independent states (Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, Kosovo in 2008) (the area of the former Yugoslavia).

[3] It was represented by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the territory of the USA, and, later, by the attacks in Europe, from Madrid (March 11, 2004) and London (July 7, 2005). These attacks were the main factors that determined the emergence of appropriate responses from European decision-makers.

reduction in the central and local administrative capacity, some institutions' excessive politicization at all levels, the budgetary imbalances' wrong political decisions, the lack of a coherent forecasting, planning and control mechanism to support the budget management, corruption, tax evasion, smuggling and phenomena specific to the underground economy. The main state concerned terrorism risks and threats generated by religious radicalization, cyber terrorism, virtual environment propaganda, weapons of mass destruction proliferation or ballistic missile programs development. The organized crime, drug trafficking, espionage and other hostile intelligence risks related actions were also not forgotten. Although only two years before the Russian-Georgian conflict took place, we find only one line which identifies related to maintaining a high level of instability and insecurity in the Black Sea area as a risk. This hardly triggers hints at the state or non-state actors, hybrid instruments, the most clearly defined being the energy risks, the terrorist phenomenon and the *of non-state actors concerns oriented to influence the decision-making, including the political decision*, to the detriment of the state.

The simple way in which the risks and vulnerabilities of the state are listed, the empty theoretical formulations and the lack of a depth to detailed analysis of the systemic problems and geopolitical risks show a relative immaturity or an inability of the state structures to understand the pattern of hybrid economic, social, environmental or political aggression new types, which is no longer carried at borders but within the "home" of the aggressed party, by disguising the hostile aggressor as a partner, associate, ally or environmental activist. This incapacity for new types of aggression institutional understanding was a state's inexcusable relaxation consequence, by establishing a state-specific comfort under a new protection umbrella provided by a strong military alliance (NATO). What policy makers did not understand at the time of the strategy's development, and neither later, is that hybrid aggressions hide the hostile actor's real identity , the hybrid instruments being used by third parties and concealed in such a way that their actions copy the natural framework of events whose effects destabilize or harm the state. The anonymity

of the aggressor and the his actions' subversive character determine that the state should manage itself through its institutions when facing a hybrid war, since the lack of military instruments and a declaration of war deprive it of NATO reactive measures .

However, with the publication of the *National Defence Strategy for 2015-2019* (Presidential Administration 2015-2019), one can still see a leap forward in the way it is conceived, even though similarly to its predecessors, it is full of gaps, generalities, hesitations, difficulties in its grasp or complicated forms, including a lack of views in places with acute lack of depth. As an element of novelty, in NCSD 2015-2019 we find the need to promote an extended national security concept for the first time, based on constitutional democracy and respect between the state and citizens. In this strategic document, the Romanian government, long cautious about military influence and malignant Russian politics, although it does not expressly identify the Russian Federation as a hostile actor, either in terms of risks or threats, nevertheless stresses the need to guarantee citizens' *"national character, sovereignty and independence"* and protect democracy and the rule of law. NCSD art. 55 indirectly refers to the Russian issue, among the listed threats on *"destabilizing actions in the eastern neighborhood which generate major challenges for the security of the Euro-Atlantic area".* Regarding the risks, the expression is even more opaque, mentioning *"the regional instability that limits Romania's capacity to promote strategic interests, especially those regarding the Republic of Moldova European path support".* It is not clear, however, whether the reluctance to individualize the Russian Federation as an aggressor state that manifests its hostile character in the vicinity of NATO's Eastern border was due to a certain diplomatic precaution due in particular to historical reminiscences transcendent in time, which geographically condemned Romania to remain permanently servant in a marginal society projected at the extremities of the west and the east. Regardless of the reticence, the subversive seizure of Crimea, using an ingenious and insidious hybrid arsenal just one year before the publication of the NCSD, forced the state institutions to update the risks and threats to it, by correlating them with the new dystopic tendencies shown by the Russian Federation.

The document mentions *"the need to support NATO collective defence guarantees"* as main interests, as well as *"EU consolidation and integration"*. In the absence of Russian economic or cultural influence, especially due to the obvious lack of a significant Russian minority in the country, Romanian state's strategic interests can help to guarantee robust Romanian support for the US and NATO military presence expansion in the Black Sea region, and the ability of the state to combat hybrid threats.

The 2015-2019 strategy analyzes the interests of the state aimed at ensuring national security and stability, viewed from the perspective of the following areas: *defence* - understood in the double normative quality, national defence and collective defence; *public order*; intelligence, counterintelligence and security activity; *education; health; economics; energy; financial; environmental; critical infrastructure.* It is, however, designed on an integrative and multidimensional approach, in which the defence dimension combines and balances each other with a number of other dimensions, such as: public order; intelligence, counterintelligence and security; diplomacy; crisis management; education, health and demography. The need to extend the concept of national security is motivated by the need to ensure convergence with the European security principles, developed in the European Security Strategy and the European Union Internal Security Strategy, and the national security objective is aimed at developing capabilities to combat asymmetric threats, admitting *"...the difficulty to delimitate classic risks and threats from asymmetric and hybrid ones."* (Presidential Administration 2015-2019, point 29, 11). It is worth noting the sincerity in which it is frankly and honestly recognized that the inter-institutional reaction in crisis situations is affected by the scarcity of resources and incoherence in the management of various types of risks. This vulnerability becomes even more important if we refer to the reduced interoperability capacity of the various state institutions that should act uniformly and synergistically in the event of asymmetric and hybrid threats.

Romania's other vulnerabilities against hybrid aggressions are also numerous: *the absorption of European funds, the use of public money, energy, critical infrastructure, agriculture, environmental protection, justice, health, education and scientific research, social polarization, the ability of central and local government to implement national and European public policies, corruption, degree of poverty, demographic decline, migration of specialized labor force, socio-economic disparities between regions and counties, fragility of the spirit and civic solidarity.* However, the following are accepted as main directions of action: *the development of the necessary capabilities to react to asymmetric and hybrid threats, the identification and countering of hybrid asymmetric actions, and the development of the security culture* (Presidential Administration 2015-2019, 18). Although the objective and direction of action related to hybrid warfare are correctly formulated, however, *Chapter III – Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities* does not contain this concept, which accentuates the lack of NCSD correlation with geopolitical realities, especially with the tense situation in the Black Sea region, if we were to take into account the frozen conflicts (Transnistria, Abkhazia, Ossetia or Nagorno-Karabakh) or the two armed conflicts that took place in this region (Russo-Georgian in 2008, Russo-Ukrainian in 2014), until its publication. Moreover, NCSD seems to put all the weight of countering unconventional or hybrid threats on intelligence, counterintelligence and security structures and, to a far too small extent, on defence, without having the vision of a system that integrates viable, flexible, efficient and coherent, all specialized structures of force institutions in the country. This point highlights the fact that the term hybrid war, or just the concept of hybrid, was not fully understood at this time, even though the Russian Federation's manifestations of force in Ukraine up to 2014 were based exclusively on hybrid instrumentation.

It is important to bear in mind that NCSD 2015-2019 must be correlated with two other reference documents, with a specific character, namely Romania's Military Strategy and the White Charter of Defence. Thus, the programmatic document for the development of the Romanian Army, in the sense of countering hybrid operations, is the Romania's Military Strategy. Within its provisions, it is unequivocally stated that *"the current military environment most prominent feature is hybrid warfare, adopted by certain state actors",* as the direction of action being specified

"...the structural adaptation of the Romanian Army to ensure a united force, having the necessary capabilities for efficient fighting, together with the other institutions with responsibilities in the field of defence, both traditional and unconventional, hybrid warfare." (Romanian Government 2016). The directions of achieving a military bodysustainable transformation explicitly support the development of a countering hybrid warfare concept, the specific training material base development and modernization or the military education system conceptual, normative and curricular revitalization. However, when it comes to the C2 structure, the organization of the force structure, the development of military capabilities and staff policies, interoperability, endowment and provision of the necessary infrastructure to counter hybrid warfare, these areas are not found as measures in any of the three stages of prioritization of the Romanian Army reform on the Western system and adapted to NATO requirements.

The last major document referring to the risks and threats of non-conventional or hybrid type, but not the latter, is the *White Charter of Defence*, which presents the vision of the Ministry of National Defence on strengthening the operational capacity of the Romanian Army and developing the capabilities necessary to fulfill the assigned missions, resulting from the short-term strategic defence review process. It covers the period 2015-2019, as well as the medium-term guidelines until 2027. The White Charter of Defence states that *"The Romanian Army must be able (...) to plan and conduct a defence operation on the national territory to counter conventional, unconventional and/or hybrid aggressive actions, with the integrated use of all national power instruments, until the intervention of the main Allied forces."* (Ministry of National Defence 2017, 34). However, the quoted assertion does not include the ways in which the Romanian Army would respond following hybrid economic, cyber, informational or environmental aggressions. The lack of substance of the recommendations in the strategic document is indicative of the lack of understanding of the hybrid phenomenon, as a whole, respectively, the acceptance that at least hybrid aggressions do not necessarily involve a military component that requires an adequate response from the army. Moreover, the

chapter on risks and threats (Ministry of National Defence 2017, 14), states that they fall within the conventional and unconventional spectrum, but do not list, except perhaps tangentially[4] hybrid aggressions that could take advantage of the risks and vulnerabilities of the state. However, the White Paper lists the existence of a mix of unconventional and conventional components, and it is proposed to implement the inter-institutional pattern of national security as an innovative solution to counter them,, but also to develop specific capabilities, even at peacetime, such as surveillance and early warning systems, large units and units of psychological operations or cyber defence structures.

In terms of quantitative analysis, it is worth noting, however, that the term *hybrid* appears in the text of Romania's Military Strategy 15 times, compared to only 3 times in the White Charter of Defence, which seems to be as simplistic as it is overqualified and conformist.

From the analysis of NCSD 2015-2019 and the White Charter of Defence 2017, it can be concluded that there is a real mismatchbetween of the hybrid aggression theory theoretical support and the provision of the necessary capabilities to counter them, due mainly to the hybrid war phenomenon complete misunderstanding and the incomplete way of approaching it, by overcoming the military paradigm circumscribed to conflicts. The fact that the energy security related risks, critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, of public administrationweaknesses, or any other nature are not even listed, which may represent security breaches by which a hostile actor can penetrate the system using hybrid techniques and tools, it reflects the superficiality and lack of depth that are fueled by the optimism that Romania is defended from any aggression launched by any hostile actor. because it is a NATO Member. This way of addressing the issue reflects the major vulnerability of the moment, only a more efficient functioning of existing capabilitiescould be made if we relate them to modern wars, however insufficient and ineffective,n the absence of budget allocations for acquisitions or investments. The vulnerabilities generated by the lack of the national security legislative framework revision, outdated and full of

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[4] Cyber attacks are mentioned, the potential for use of biological, chemical or radiological means, as well as terrorism, but without including them in the category of hybrid instruments.

terminological confusions, even if it was a minor provision in the NCSD[5], were found even during the pandemic when it was necessary to establish the alert state. Thus, due to the fact that most of the goals of the strategy remained only to the status of simple aspirations, it can be concluded that the increased resilience of the state institutions summed up or materialized only in their increased resistance to change, to efficiency and modernization.

2020-2024 (Presidential Administration 2020) Country's National Defence Strategy represents an *upgrade* in terms of strategies, much better than the previous ones by successfully eliminating the uncertainties, which can only demonstrate the level of maturity that state institutions have reached, as well as a slight influence and Western inspiration (and NATO). However, it would be too early to decide on its effects on state's strategic institutions due to the fact that we are still halfway through its implementation. This strategic document unequivocally reflects the Romanian thinking level today, in strategic matters, being designed in an appropriate, balanced, coherent manner on a comprehensive and balanced background, without syncope and fully consensual. NCSD 2020-2024 highlights the professionalism and integrated activity exercised by several specialists, from all the institutions that were able to contribute to its design, the theoretical construction epistemological mechanism with an extremely clear and coherent. documented background.

First of all, it opens mentioning *"Russian Federation, aggressive behavior the Black Sea region militarization actions and hybrid type carried out by this state, which aim to maintain a tense climate and insecurity in the area close to our country",* which brings as a novelty the identification of a potential hostile state whose military and hybrid actions revolve around the extended Black Sea region. The NCSD also reiterates the state's confidence in its own forces and allies, as well as the security guarantees

provided by the partnership with NATO and the strategic one with the US. The strategy uses terms of great depth such as *continuity* and *stability* that express security and predictability in the ability to ensure the security of the Eastern flank of NATO and the EU border. Other terms such as *flexibility*, *resilience* and *adaptation* demonstrate, at least theoretically, the state's ability to cope with extreme or unforeseen phenomena that have the power to destabilize the state, such as the impact of the corona-virus pandemic on all of humanity.

NCSD 2020-2024 is based on the concept of extended security based on the five components of security: political, economic, military, social and environmental; three fundamental elements of security: the state, society and citizens; the new components of threats specific to modern wars: critical, cyber, energy and terrorism infrastructure that includes all of these; and not least, but of great significance, asymmetric and hybrid threats. It is clear that the strategic partnership with the US, NATO membership and the EU are being reconfirmed as pillars of foreign and security policy. The NCSD for 2020-2024 involves a new approach, proposing a management of national security issues with focus on integrated risk, threat and vulnerability management. This type of approach of the NCSD is dependent on the paradigm shift at the global level, taking into account the developments in the wider Black Sea region, the deterioration of relations between NATO and the Russian Federation, the proliferation of terrorism, hybrid and cyber threats, and other types of challenges. By the manner it was conceived, Romania has the opportunity to strengthen its strategic position at Euro-Atlantic level and its role as a stability vector and provider of national security in the Black Sea region. NCSD puts the citizen at the center of the actions of the institutions that guarantee national security, a form of guaranteeing the position of first beneficiary of the institutional construction, focusing on the protection of human rights, the rule of law and the safety of the population.

The structure of the strategy is intuitive, coherent, comprehensive and systematic, following the mandatory steps of designing such a document. It starts from the fundamental elements that define Romania as a state, going through the three pillars commitments and

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[5] Final Considerations, point 83 of NCSD 2015-2020, *"A necessary condition for the operationalization of the Strategy is the revision of the legislative framework in the field of national security, which takes into account, in addition to the deficiencies revealed over time, the new threats and the need to respect the rights and civil liberties. In order to achieve the objectives and achieve the directions of action assumed by this Strategy, the institutions with responsibilities in the respective fields will develop the strategies, programs and subsequent sectoral activity plans".*

guarantees description (NATO membership, EU and US strategic partnership), pronouncing the major objectives of the state (prosperity, security, identity, dignity, rule of law and human rights, values, principles, interests), assessment of the security environment, threats, risks, vulnerabilities and directions of action. The threats include the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, the strengthening of the military potential in Romania's neighborhood, the volatility of the regional security state, as well as the   hybrid aggressions patterns: hostile influence actions in the public space, cyber attacks, and   in energy marketsdistortions,   interference   and   hostile foreign takeover of the national interest.economic operators

A current point of interest is the relation to the Russian Federation and its actions, the text of the current document being balanced but to the point; perhaps the most clearly formulated in the history of the National Defence Strategies. Without being directly and clearly defined as an enemy, adversary, hostile state actor or threat in everything, the Russian Federation possible aggressor nature is highlighted by its divergences with NATO, which Romania is part of Russia's strengthening of the offensive posture and its aggressive nature are highlighted, with an impact on the Black Sea region tension escalation potential.

However, in relation to the hybrid war, the strategy does not identify state's risks and vulnerabilities in relation to the new types of aggressionpatterns, especially those that are part of the Russian Federation hybrid arsenal, including identifying gaps and ways through which it can penetrate state institutions in order to undermine the partners' confidence in the capacity to support the obligations assumed by Romania, or through which it can create economic imbalances, social unrest, energy market destabilization and economic distortions. Although the hybrid concept is found throughout the strategy, it frequently takes on a general character, without being strictly applied to our society's specific character. Moreover, the integrated risks, threats and vulnerabilities management, mentioned in the last three editions of the strategy, remains a difficult desideratum to assume and reach by the state institutions, even if an integrated crisis management system is an effective and powerful

tool for countering hybrid aggressions, that can interfere with such an economic, energy, financial or pandemic crisis at some point. By revising them one notices that no strategy has followed the natural cycle required in their correct and applied development, by transposing national objectives into sectoral strategies, multi-annual strategic planning, identifying ways of implementing these objectives, implementing and evaluating results. Although theoretically comprehensive, no strategy has pursued the implementation of the objectives assumed by the previous ones, but it is limited to listing, the risks and threats to the state, in an increasingly complex and detailed way, without quantifying the measures ordered by the state institutions, through reduction strategies   .

Conclusions

Through the status conferred by NATO membership, Romania is permanently concerned with ensuring security on NATO's Eastern flank, in the Black Sea region. In order to anticipate, mitigate or counter a potential hybrid conflict in all its aspects (doctrinally, institutionally, capabilities and human resources point of view), Romania must concentrate the all government ministries and agencies' effort, in the sense of fully covering the domains in which any aggression can be manifested, including hybrid type ones. Strengthening the administrative apparatus, professionalization and elimination of corruption, including the moral retraining of the political class are essential elements in disclosing the instruments and combating hybrid aggressions launched by various hostile actors. The transnationality and ubiquity of emerging threats requires immediate and urgent international cooperation to deal with them, automatically highlighting the need for interoperability. Moreover, it is not possible to achieve these objectives beyond an integrative approach to the security sector and especially without further reform within it. It should be understood that at least for Romania, hybrid aggressions are not aimed at conquering the state or some territories in it, but at altering the political decision and the administrative act, diminishing the capacities to respond to crises, increasing dependencies and alienating national resources, sabotage the development of infrastructure or the necessary capabilities to respond to such

aggressions, as well as weakening the partners' confidence in the state's capacity to cope with the assumed obligations.

In a hybrid war, the military capabilities effectiveness can be reduced to zero, as long as the aggressions included in this pattern manifest themselves in vectors and fields unrelated to military technique and art, especially by the lack of any military instrument to support aggression. This state means that no hostile action, even a proven one, can activate a NATO response, regardless of whether they have the potential to harm national security. National security can no longer be ensured at national level, effectively, precisely because of the threats transnational nature, while an international response is necessary. In order to protect the state from potential hybrid attacks or assaults, its force institutions must collaborate closely in the light of a harmonized vision, in a system that integrates viable, flexible, efficient and coherent all their specialized structures. Real-time information exchanges must be centralized, analyzed, synchronized and processed in a specialized command center organized as an integrated crisis management system, in order to anticipate, mitigate and counter the of hostile actors aggressions in all risk state areas: economic, environment, political, social or military.

The Romanian military, a basic pillar in ensuring and guaranteeing peace and national security, is the only one empowered and entitled to coordinate this command center, in close contact with military partners and allies, thus validating the hybrid aggressions hostile nature. In this respect, the effort will focus on the decision political level because national security policies are concerned with national defence capabilities management first of all, to define the forces and missions structure, deployment and combat engagement preparedness, to ensure their sustainability; only then would the security and defence strategies be outlined. Security policies must be implemented in such a way as to take into account the fact that, the following trends are manifested in the non-conventional areas development, from a diachronic point of view,: from simple to complex; from autonomous action to work in a common environment; from military to non-military; from conventional to non-conventional; from the primordial structure

of forces to the primordial effects obtained; from kinetic means to non-kinetic means, and from lethal effects to non-lethal effects.

Looked at from the National Defence Strategy (NCSD strategic level, asymmetric/hybrid vulnerabilities and military and non-military risks are identified, including those manifested in terrorist, psychological, economic, social, informational or cyber aggressions format, at least as seen from the NCSD 2020-2024. Romania had difficulties in developing institutional mechanisms, including military ones, to put into practice policies and strategies to counter these types of aggression. In practice, although it has introduced the hybrid aggression concept and its emerging risks in the strategies up to 2020 more or less indirectly,, the lack of measures to crystallize the proposed desiderata proves the decision-makers incapacity on particular policies, to understand that NATO does not defend the state from the state or non-state actors'hybrid and undeclared hostile actions. This delay may be justified by the lack of sufficient resources necessary to implement targeted measures to strengthen the administrative apparatus, including its digitalization and access to advanced technology, which has inherently led to an increase in the administration de-professionalization seen as a depreciation of the public actbut also as a politicians' competence, dedication and responsibility dilution. These shortcomings augmented security breaches that can allow for the hostile actors' covert and effective action of, directed against the strategic interests of the Romanian state. Certainly their subversive aggressions can also be stimulated by factors such as institutional vulnerability fueled by mediocrity, disinterest, bureaucracy or corruption. These systemic weaknesses may be considered a consequence of the same disinterest of decision-makers, but framed in the hybrid spectrum may fit into another scenario of the intentional and insistent undermining of the social and administrative fabric, by perverting the identity values of the state.

A suggestive example in this regard may be the fact that although in all strategies reference is made to the risks of energy dependence and state vulnerabilities in this field, the only measure ordered by the state institutions to eliminate this

dependence on Russian gas was only the closure of industrial capacities to reduce consumption (which generated dependencies on products derived from them, for example: chemical fertilizers) and not increasing production capacities while diversifying energy sources in friendly countries, which confirms the failure of defence strategies developed by 2020, with high chances of failure for the one from 2020-2024, at least for energy risks.

As a general conclusion, although emerging risks from hybrid aggression are mentioned in all defence strategies, the fact that much of the avenues of action aimed at reducing these risks and threats have remained at the stage of desideratum, while these risks materialize through the subversive actions of various hostile actors, with harmful effects on the state, aimed at altering the administrative act and political decisions, only confirms that we are in a full hybrid war that, although we describe it, we do not fully understand.

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