ROMANIA STRONGLY ANCHORED
IN NATO EDUCATIONAL SPACE

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Abstract: *This paper wants to highlight how higher military education in Romania, as an active NATO member, is perceived. I will also make reference to the way integration was conducted and achieved in the Balkans, and in the European and Euro-Atlantic space. I have categorized the final conclusions, assumptions and opinions according to university's principle of non-attribution.*

Keywords: education; military; NATO.

Introduction

One cannot only notice that ten years have passed very quickly from the accession of our country to the largest global organization of collective defense. These times have been good times from some analytical countdown perspectives, but also intricate times, according to another global statistical reports on the financial and economic crisis[1,2]. Both Romania and NATO have made significant steps to developing the regional and cross-continental stability, but in the same time both have made critically budget cuts, long debated transformations, departmental mergers and so on.

On the other hand, one principle or, let's say, a perspective came into my consideration. During tough times, when the technological and critical infrastructure investments are low, every leader should focus on people and their education and training.

Within NATO, during the past ten years, concepts like *NATO transformation*, the *new strategic concept* or *smart defense*, have been column heads.

The phrase "NATO Transformation" encompasses a broad range of concepts. There is the relatively familiar notion of deeply integrating technology into military doctrine in order to improve the operations theater awareness, to provide for precision strike capabilities and to enhance the survivability and effectiveness of individuals.

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But there are other important dimensions of transformation, such as the less technical aspects of preparing NATO establishments for the diverse, and largely unknown, challenges of the future. Such changes are difficult to implement within a national military establishment. For the Alliance, especially as it moves toward substantial enlargement, transformation presents special challenges[3].

This transformation, nonetheless, is complex because of the lack of common purpose among member nations and deep fractures within NATO. Even so, the continuing values of NATO is unquestionable and I trust that sufficient common interests are found for the members and partners to go forward with the transformation required to reform the Alliance so that it may act in concert against updated risks and dangers. Determining priorities is an important part of the transformation process. It is not possible for the Alliance to defend all of the security interests of all of its members and partners, so priorities need to be established.

Each NATO member and partner may see priorities differently. It is therefore critical to have an ongoing dialogue to develop consensus on threats, priorities and appropriate responses. In turn, this suggests that the transformation process will have an important role in bridging the gap between continuing challenges and collective responses.

NATO's education and training

Although NATO member countries remain responsible for the education and training of their military forces, curricula and courses offered at the national level are complemented at the international level by the work undertaken by a specific number of colleges, schools and centers of excellence established by the North Atlantic Council, the Military Committee and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT).[4] Education and training also play a key role in the context of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.

NATO's primary educational services, used to educate leaders and specialists from member and partner countries, are the NATO Defense College in Rome, the NATO School in Oberammergau, the NATO Communications and Information Systems (CIS) School in Latina, and the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Souda Bay.

NATO also has a number of other educational establishments, namely[5]:

A. Centres of Excellence:
   – Command & Control (COE) (C2-COE / NLD);

– Centre for Analysis & Simulation for the Preparation of Air Operations COE (CASPOA / FRA);
– Cooperative Cyber Defence COE (CCD COE / EST);
– Civil Military Cooperation COE (CCOE / NLD);
– Combined Joint Operations from the Sea COE (CJOS COE / USA);
– Confined and Shallow Waters COE (COE CSW / DEU);
– Cold Weather Operations COE (COE-CWO / NOR);
– Counter Improvised Explosive Devices COE (COE C-IED / SPA);
– Defence Against Terrorism COE (COE-DAT / TUR);
– Energy Security COE (ENSEC COE / LTU);
– Explosive Ordinance Disposal COE (EOD COE / SVK);
– Human Intelligence COE (HUMINT COE / ROU);
– Joint Air Power Competence Centre COE (JAPCC / DEU);
– Joint Chemical Biological Radiation & Nuclear Defence COE (JCBRN Defence COE / CZE);
– Military Engineering COE (MILENG COE / DEU);
– Military Medicine COE (MILMED COE / HUN);
– Modelling and Simulation COE (M&S COE / ITA);
– Naval Mine Warfare COE (NMW COE / BEL).

B. *Partnership Training and Education Centres (PTECs) and National Training Institutions (NTI), see also figure 1:*
– Austrian Armed Forces International Training Centre (AUTINT / AUT);
– Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC / BIH);
– Bulgarian National Military University/Department of Foreign Languages (BGR);
– Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA / EGY);
– Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT / FIN);
– German Armed Forces United Nations Training Centre (DEU);
– Sachkhere Mountain-Training School (GEO);
– Multinational Peace Support Operations Training Centre (MPSOTC / GRC);
– International Institute of Humanitarian Law (ITA);
– Armed Forces Language Institute Jordan (JOR);
– Peace Operations Training Centre (POTC / JOR);
– The Kazakh Training Centre of the Defence Institute of the Ministry of Defence (KAZCENT / KAZ);
– Regional Department of Defence Resources Management Studies

(DRESMARA / ROU);
- Crisis Management and Multinational Operations Department (CMMOD/ ROU);
- Armed Forces Academy (SVK);
- PfP Language Training Centre (SVN);
- Swedish Armed Forces International Centre (SWEDINT / SWE);
- Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP / CHE);
- Armed Forces International Command Training Centre (SWISSINT / CHE);
- PfP Training Centre Turkey (TUR);
- International Peace and Security Centre (UKR);
- United Kingdom Defence Academy (GBR);
- Naval Postgraduate School (NPS / USA);
- Moldovan Continuous Training Centre (MDA);
- Regional Predeployment Training Centre (GEO);
- Latvian National Defence Academy (LNDA) via Latvian NLR to ACT.
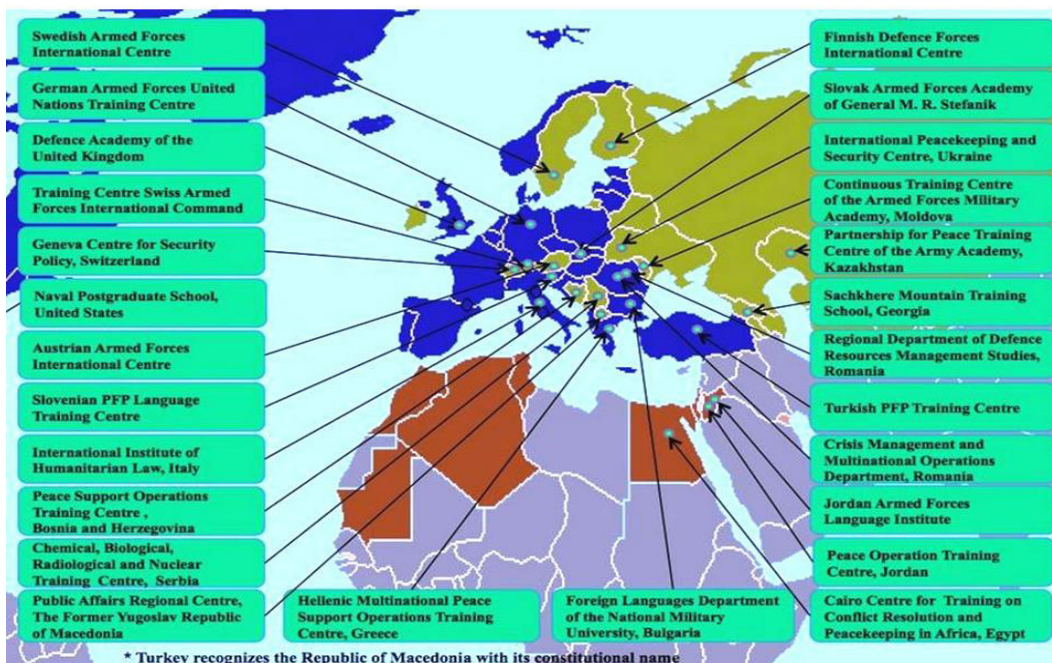
Figure 1. *Partnership Training and Education Centres[6]*

NATO ACT is responsible for the planning and delivery of NATO education and training programs using NATO national facilities. These programs are provided under the e-NATO approach as efficient, effective, affordable, and open. NATO education and training programs are under the direction of the Joint Force Trainer (JFT).

The JFT directs and coordinates education and individual training with ACT and for SACEUR and NATO HQ. The JFT coordinates with SACEUR and nations to provide forces necessary to conduct training, exercises and experiments in support of transformational objectives. The JFT ensures that SACT's transformational outputs, with regard to concept and doctrine development, are integrated into individual education and training as well as collective training events, and, that it coordinates integration of experimentation with into to these specific areas. The JFT acts as principle advisor to SACT on all topics related to NATO, PfP and non-NATO individual training and education, exercises, training needs analyses and, as appropriate, evaluation. This includes acting as conceptual lead regarding these specific areas.

NATO aims at providing nations' and partners' personnel with high quality Education and Training (E&T) opportunities. This is achieved by aligning NATO's E&T with International Educational Standards.

International Educational Standards articulate concrete binding requirements for teaching and learning. They thereby constitute a key mechanism in the effort to secure and enhance the quality of the work done in NATO's, partners' and National E&T Institutions. These standards specify the competencies that E&T Institutions must impart on their students. The students are expected to demonstrate these key competencies upon course completion. The key feature of the standards is operationally articulating the required competencies to allow an assessment of a student's performance. International Educational Standards constitute a three-staged process: Educational Goals lead to derived Educational Standards while the QA process ensures the alignment with these Goals and Standards.

One of the fastest growing areas of NATO's education and training capabilities is the use of technology to deliver or enhance traditional training methods. This *electronic learning* (e-Learning) is an important tool to provide education, training and performance support to personnel from NATO and partner nations in a cost-efficient way. Its capabilities can provide an unlimited number of forces effective, relevant high quality education and training to increase mission readiness.

E-Learning can be applied in a variety of ways and will be integrated into the mainstream of education and training programs. E-Learning technologies encompass Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL), Computer-Based Training (CBT), immersive learning, mobile learning (m-Learning) and transmedia collaborative learning, as seen in the *figure 2*. It should be considered under these circumstances:

- As the sole method of instruction when it can appropriately satisfy education and training requirements;
- When there is a large number of students distributed over geographic locations;
- As a method to augment classroom instruction with an e-Learning component, as an example of a blended learning approach;
- As a method to provide refresher training that will help to maintain student skills.
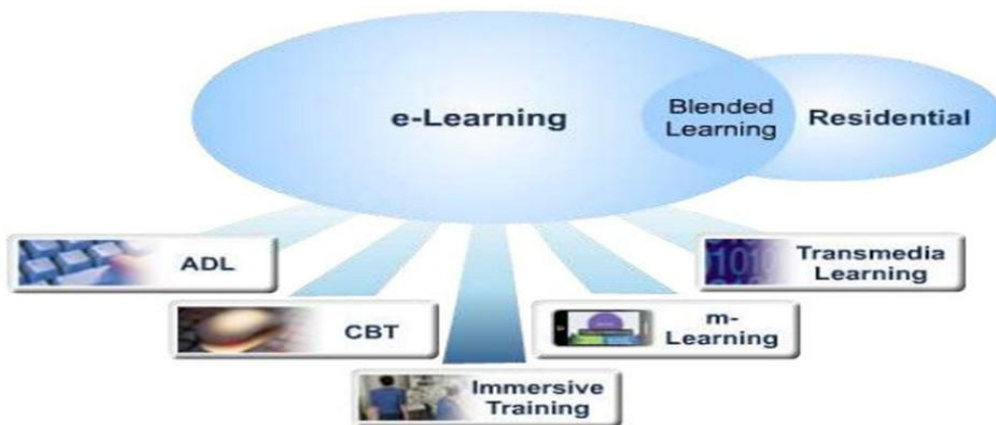
Figure 2. *Types of e-Learning technologies[7]*

Higher military education in Romania and geopolitical context

As the current Minister of National Defense has reiterated in the first Tuesday of February, this year, the fact that the "Carol I" National Defence University (*NDU*) is an elite military institution that should keep up its standards, on the occasion of the ceremony for the taking over of the command of the university. The defence minister reassured the new commandant, brigadier general air force Gabriel-Florin Moisescu, of the defence leadership support of the university activities[8]. Services' The Academies, The Technical Academy and The Medical Institute are acting along with the highest military educational institution in the field of the higher education.

As we know, Romanian education in general and the military education in particular, have gone through many transformations over the past 24 years. It is not unimportant the cause of repeated legislative changes, when it comes to debate the real state of today's higher education. Although, as the organic law, have three acts been used in this period, we highlight the many changes and additions made to one of them (Act no. 84 of 1995). We can see this on the best free legislative database such as the *legal repertoire* of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania[9] (see *figures 3 and 4*). We have noticed the same trend of instability in terms of regulations in the military in general, and particularly in the evolution of military career, closely related to the educational field.

Figure 3. *File of Education Act no. 84 of 1995*

Today, the *Education Act no. 1 of 2011* is in place, which already has an amount of changes and additions[10]. These, in fact, send Romania in an area of *Balkan* integration more than in a *Euro-Atlantic* one. However, Romanian education continues its course in accordance with the Bologna process.

"Carol I" National Defence University has continued the tradition of the "Superior War School", founded in 1889, representing the sixth staff college in Europe[11], in line with those in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Turin and Brussels. Its task has been the graduate and post-graduate training of commanders, staff officers and experts within the military, civilian and political fields, who are to be appointed in leading and expertise positions in the defense and national security domains, to organize and carry out scientific studies and research, necessary for the concerned structures in those domains, and to facilitate the use of principles and norms of military action and leadership at the joint, operational and strategic levels in the time of peace, crisis and war. The university (NDU) will celebrate 125 years of its existence.

Figure 4. *File of Educational Act no. 84 of 1995 (continued)*

In terms of training officers who are able to make good decisions at higher levels, NDU provides a complete and complex educational process[12] that is meant to consolidate the scientific instruments and the methodology needed for applying the operational art and military science.

Furthermore, the greatest strength of the military profession is its recognition that there will always be gaps in knowledge; military culture must continue to emphasize the need to make decisions without complete information. This is, in fact, military culture and this should also be the directive idea of military pedagogy. It is a problem that the *Information Age* does not want to concede the reality of the knowledge gaps. With its *"digital decision-making"* it believes to reach a total certainty. The search for certainty is based on the expectation that digitization will remove the effect of chaos. Because of the everlasting uncertainty of war, from the beginning of their military education and throughout their careers, officers should study the elements of ethical decision making. The professional and moral duty of military officers is to arm their junior officers and younger soldiers with basic moral principles they can rely on to make the right moral choice in complicated situations. This is the meaning of ethical leadership.

Leadership is usually not an enduring role; and leadership transitions can therefore have a potential destabilizing effect on the organization if overly invested in the cult of an individual. In western societies, leadership transition is often about elections and succession planning. In some cultures, however, leadership transitions often run in families. But in others, legal and social structures may ensure some degree of permanence in leadership decision-making. According to the law, and the internal referendum, in NDU, the elite military institution, leadership transition is definitely completed by elections.

Back in 2003, after taking the control of the NDU, General Mureşan not only addressed the technological and the innovations in training of the future military leaders but also emphasized the role of multinational education and training stating that: "There are specialized functions in multinational headquarters. Some people have been accustomed to. Here, what do we have to do? Each should have all necessary specializations for respective functions. A staff officer should be prepared as joint based by his knowledge. We should invite 40 experts – on intelligence, defense diplomacy, resources on peace time, war, and their restoration. When going to the post, it leans more towards that specialization. Therefore, I argue that education in our country must be prospective. To do things that have not happened,

to find four or five possible resolutions. It might not happen the way we think. But it is better to be prepared. In civilian life it is said, that before crossing the street look if a car comes. We crossed the street without looking to the left were and hit by a car. What did I win?[13] ".

It is recognized that an officer with experience in NATO structures can teach the innovations just one or two hours. Also, there are advocates bringing civil professors that can teach disciplines to the future military leaders. General Mureşan continued: "We want to separate the organization of academic from administrative. It is not compulsory that the military rank be decisive in university. Military rank has to be something more. On the other hand, what if I need to ask a one-star general to teach here, being one who changed the concept of logistics in multinational operations? He will have to hold a course. Why cannot he come one year, included in the university, keeping his general rank rights? He teaches and is remunerated with the money that he had before. When finished, whether he wants to stay or not – he will go back to a brigade or elsewhere. Here we are restricted by law. On the other hand, how long can a battalion commander teach in a theater of operations? Actions that he led are about the same, and at a certain echelon. So he can teach two to four hours. It is worth moving to university? What we pursue to get outside the university must be the leader, the leader, who, excuse the expression, gives "light". Do not be the one who lights. Like those, we can find enough…[14]".

In other words, the military commander (rector) of the NDU said then that military students need to receive knowledge from leaders who recently returned from theater of operations, but to cover most of the classes he would based only on teachers from departments.

Therefore, even if when he arrived at the university he had the impression that education was not placed on the correct and legal bases, eventually he understood that the educational process was done with teachers. He also understood that there was a legal opportunity to invite experts in different fields to supplement students' knowledge with current issues of leadership.

In sum, we have to recognize that it is necessary to reorganize teaching. That should be a priority. Teaching in higher education, despite the appearance, remains very complicated: on one hand, it promotes the idea that the student no longer needs a teacher (due to the progress of modern communication techniques), and on the other hand, it is known that the passing on of knowledge and better skills training is achieved through the direct relationship that can develop between the student and

the teacher. Restructuring the process involves a few basic actions:

- Establish a modular system of university courses packages. This means bringing together temporal and concentration courses with direct links to their well-defined time intervals. Evaluation will be done on the courses packages;
- Build a new center of gravity – the tenured teacher (module). The basic unit in the organization of the teaching process is the chair (department). This, however, is sufficiently heterogeneous and often hangs performance, so it is necessary a translational mode of organization for the tenured teacher or module, which provides greater flow of information and skills to students, and which would better involve in work the assistants and lecturers who would be on its team;
- Ensure the development of "E-Learning" educational policy in communication technology and the modernization of corresponding infrastructure;
- Establish exchange of national experiences (visiting professor) and interuniversity cooperation in education. It was found that teachers invited to lecture in other universities than their own, induced a new atmosphere, stimulating the academic life;
- Improve the organization of competitions for assistant professor and professor;
- Provide clear structure for the educational cycles, with exit gates for the students. Such a structure provides the system output ports for a student who is not able to follow the entire path established by three cycles;
- Increase the importance of transferable credits in academic work.

The leadership of NDU brought the university on the way to ensuring good quality of education and on the way to obtain the *high level of trust* from the highest national level agency belonging to the Ministry of National Education (*2010*). At that time, the university was led by General Teodor Frunzeti and that success was stated in his project when he took the mandate of rector, back in 2008. He considered that not only previous experience of education, which was only part of his work, but also practical experience in command of important structures from brigade up is gave him a vast experience. General Frunzeti said, when interviewed

by a military journalist: "First, we have already started to review curricula for all forms and levels of education provided by National Defence University at both bachelor and master, as well as doctoral level, and all types of courses that we organize, in sense of pragmatic approaches and the approaching of different levels of education that are ongoing in the university, to the requirements established by final beneficiaries – the services and the General Staff. To be more specific, I mean the increasing practical-applicative character of education and focus of all forms of education on the knowledge base and on the skills and abilities they need to have, firstly, commanding officers and the staff officers from battalion level up, because this is the main product that we provide for[15]".

Regarding the problem if the educational programs of NDU respond to the requirement of the correlation between military education and military base reality and the reality of modern battle space, General Frunzeti said: "In any form of education, in any type of education and any university, the graduates, the university final product, are not fully prepared for all possible positions that have to meet later. In any educational institution, a general framework is provided and an algorithm of activities are implemented that the graduate must be able to follow. We have a model of the graduate. This model works only in military institutions. Civil institutions have not such a model and it's good that we have it, and we are reviewing it now along with all our stakeholders. In other words, determine what he should know and what he can do and what our graduate should be like. From the graduate model we get the curricula; from the curricula we get educational programs and the contents of each subject to be taught. It is true that during the studies here – at bachelor education level, whether at the masters of two years or one year level – students are provided with models and they are doing exercises. No one should expect that a university graduate or a service academy graduate knows and is able to do all from the very beginning. Education and training should continue within the echelons and structures where graduates took commanding and staff positions.[16]"

Whole NDU's learning capability recognizes teaching strategies and learning theories appropriate to adult learners and places importance on student-centric learning (*figure 5*).
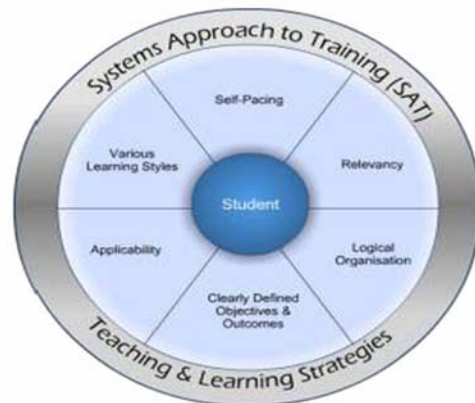
Figure 5. *Student-centric learning[17]*

Student-centric learning also recognizes that students have different learning styles and preferences. For example, some students learn best through visual stimulation, such as images and written information, and others by audio methods, such as listening to lectures. University's programs are designed to accommodate the most common types of learners: audio, visual and kinesthetic learners, to create a rich learning experience for all students. Bearing in mind that learning occurs only when knowledge and/or skills transfer from the professor, whether human or technological medium, to the student, all methods and techniques should be designed to enable students to perform their jobs satisfactorily.

With leaders strategically educated within the context shown in previous pages, and with right political-military leaders at the top of the Ministry of National Defence (*MoND*), Romania will have a strong word to say in the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical space and especially in the Europe's South Eastern part, Balkan area, by installing an efficient protection system against ballistic missiles, to protect European interests and allies.

Conclusion

Obviously, designing Romanian military higher education in a specific time horizon involves some risk, because the forms that it takes, because of existing

distortions and contradictory dynamics of military life and career, in the first place. Also, a low level of available resources can slow the process of structural change, reaching only certain segments of university life. However, there are clear paths: the desire to accelerate the change, the university's lean towards the society and not its total separation, and the capitalization of strengths of a qualitative higher education in tomorrow's society, a university research focused on identified priorities.

With several professional mutations, vital for the desired change, not only the "Carol I" National Defence University will not be the sole beneficiary. Romanian Armed Forces as a whole will receive the annual "fresh blood" officers able to parry future shocks, especially those that are unpredictable. Target of the new way of education will be the implementation of military elite mentality typical of the 21st. The graduate will be the man who will be able to be efficient in the active force, including troops deployed in theaters, which were unimaginable until near recently as action space for Romanian battalions. They will be the same people who will properly manage the future benefits created by the Balkan geostrategic position while member in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Changing attitudes will not be done overnight. But the first effects of the strategic vision of the expected alignment in military higher education we will see – and annotate on – next year.

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