

Dan Plăvițu
Romania

TERRITORIAL DEFENCE AS A PART OF THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE SYSTEM

Summary:

The fear of new "hybrid warfare" in the south-eastern flank of NATO, provoked by the Russian Federation following the Ukrainian model, alongside with the circumstances offered by the existent frozen conflict in the neighbourhood of Romania, with the evident process of Russian remilitarization in the Black Sea area, opened a serious debate in Romania about the need of recreating, training and endowing a National Reserve Force asked to manage the so-called concept of Territorial Defence. The role of TD is to support and to enhance the actions of the active defence forces through specific activities and to ensure a timely and efficient operation in order to prevent and reduce the consequences of an unexpected aggression over the country. The National Reserve Force will be composed of the existent reserve and of a volunteer reserve, according to new and drafted laws. Their missions will cover a broad scale of traditional and new risks and threats, particularly those linked to the hybrid and non-kinetic war. Fixing the National Reserve Forces issue will not only enhance the security of the country, but also will contribute to strengthening the south-eastern flank of NATO.

Keywords:

territorial defence forces, the Romanian Army, the Romanian National Defence System, the Romanian National Guard

Introduction

The annexation of Crimea and the Russian aggression in the Eastern Ukraine triggered a debate among the analysts and the military experts from Romania regarding the main directions of defence and security policy we must follow. Very often, the concept of "hybrid warfare", used by Russia lately, appears as a threat and a possible model for future conflicts in Russia's neighbourhood. If to this we add the existence of the frozen conflicts near Romania

(including the Transnistria which is one of particular interest), the fast and sustained process of remilitarization in the Black Sea¹, the resurgence of terrorism and the worsening effects generated by the increasing flow of migration and refugees from conflict areas such as Middle East and Africa to Europe, we have, to some extent, a complete image of the need to adapt and expand the possibilities to counteract the new threats.

Considering the fact that no country in the world, no matter how strong and developed it is, can afford to maintain during peaceful time armed forces at the same level of effectiveness and equipment as in case of armed conflict, especially with a more powerful enemy, there is a process of reassessment of the role for each component of the national defence system and the design of the most favourable system of forces and capabilities in Romania as well.

While joining NATO and in the view of the security context in the 1990s – 2000s, when the threat from the East had declined significantly, Romania, like many other new members of the Alliance, gave up conscription and adopted a smaller, more flexible and professional army, focused mainly on expeditionary missions rather than classical defence ones.

At the same time, removing the conscript system was done without considering any replacement, which forces us today to face important problems regarding the establishment of a national and operational army reserve. Moreover, the economic trends and the changes in the political system after the collapse of communism and the economic crisis, have led to neglect the maintenance of war supplies. Also, the negative demographic trend and the substantial number of Romanian citizens aged between 20 and 40 who have chosen to migrate, even for a short term, to Western European countries in search of jobs, have created further difficulties in terms of ensuring a national trained reserve steady and ready to meet the defence needs of the country.

Certainly, NATO and the EU are the main guarantees of Romania's security, but we know just as well that each Member State must be prepared to cope with the initial shock, to be able to defend themselves until Allied Forces are able to intervene according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Among the options considered in Romania to ensure real security in the new geopolitical and strategic circumstances, the most important ones relate to manpower, defensive structure and endowment.

Next I will cover only one aspect of the manpower, which is the need to restore the army reserve, qualified and trained by the same standards as the active forces, and the need to organize a functional and strong territorial defence, which would be adaptable to local specifics and new risks and perils.

¹ By 2020, Moscow plans to spend 2.4 billions USD to modernize its navy and The Black Sea Fleet (BSF) stationed in Crimea. More than 30 new ships are supposed to join the fleet by 2025. Although the BSF is obsolete in terms of hulls, its missile capabilities and those of the combined network of planes deployed in the region is formidable.

Territorial defence (TD), underdeveloped from a conceptual point of view and poorly regulated by law, in my opinion, must be regarded as part of National Defence, organised on the territorial principle, composed of structures subordinated to the authorities responsible for national defence and security, capable of undertaking a wide range of missions during peacetime, but also during curfew, state of emergency, martial law, mobilization or war.

I'm going to address briefly the issue of TD in terms of:

- the role of TD;
- force structures that may carry out missions for TD;
- territorial defence missions;
- manpower of TD forces;
- necessary legislative and organisational changes aimed at making TD efficient.

The role of TD is to support and to enhance the actions of the defence forces through specific activities, and to ensure a timely and efficient operation in order to prevent and reduce the consequences of natural disasters.

A territorial defence system, based mostly on latent rather than active forces, is mainly a defensive system, which is to concentrate on the defence of one's own territory and on the deterrence of foreign attacks. TD aims at defending local objectives of strategic importance, protecting civilians, supporting operational forces and counteracting uneven threats specific to hybrid warfare.

Territorial defence structures

Considering the above definition of the Territorial Defence, structures belonging to the following can participate to TD:

- Ministry of Defence – zonal military centres, elements of logistics;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs – Gendarmerie Brigades, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, County Police Inspectorate, Border Police;
- National Agency of State Reserve and Special Issues;
- Local Government (Public Administration) – Local Police;
- Romanian Intelligence Service – territorial structures;
- National Reserve Forces (Volunteer Reserve and National Guard which are currently only at the stage of requisition and project).

The list can go on, including structures to be set up in crisis situations, such as Red Cross and others, but identifying and involving them is actually subject of the territorial defence organisation.

Today, National Defence Act no. 45/1994 stipulates the establishment, in wartime, of a military commander position in each administrative-territorial unit (counties as well as Bucharest). Obviously, this could be a solution for managing territorial defence, but under current legislation it cannot be imple-

mented unless there is a state of war, which seriously restricts both accomplishment of all range of missions and the efficiency of their entry into action.

Based on analysis of the above structures, the specific missions can be easily identified, because most of them are already in place and are covered by existing legislation. We are not going to insist on these. The only exception is The National Reserve Forces which currently does not exist, but it is going to be implemented starting with the 1st January 2017 under Law 270 from November 2015 regarding the status of volunteer reserve.

In our view, the Volunteer Reserve, as part of National Reserve Forces, should be made of people who consent, on a voluntary basis, to occupy positions in the defence organizational chart of the national authorities responsible for national defence, security and public order, by signing an employment contract.

National Reserve Forces can be considered a type of armed forces, organised on the territorial principle, composed of units, sub-units, combat and support elements, with a degree of the active manpower between 5 and 15% during peacetime, which will be completed with reservists up to the war-time requirements.

An academic study on territorial defence organisation suggests the establishment of a brigade in each of the cities where there are zonal military centres (8 in total), brigade which would be formed of 3-5 battalions, one in each county. The battalions and their endowment would be different depending on the geographical and climatic character and also on the strategic importance of the area.

During military exercises or other complex forms of training, the reservists would have to receive military training two days per month and 5 days in a row per year and their pay would represent between 10-20% of the position grid and grade in which they are employed, this being an obligation of the employers by the law to allow them to take part during the training time, in exchange for financial compensation.

Recently, (31 October 2016), a new legislative initiative was sent to the Parliament. It refers to establishing The Romanian National Guard (RNG), as the main reserve forces for MoD. According to this project, the RNG will act under the control of the Parliament, being subordinated operationally to the MoD, through dedicated structures in the Army and Air Force Headquarters.

According to the project, the Romanian National Guard will be composed of 8 Army Brigades, an Engineer Brigade and an Artillery Brigade (as well as different subunits specialized on specific tasks – communication and IT, NBC, logistics, etc). National Reserve Air forces should be formed in 8 military airfields, predominantly single wing and air transport aircrafts, organized up to the NATO standards.

The administrative and operational control and command, at the local level, will be ensured by the Territorial National Guard entities, formed according to the geographical conditions and the number of population and, at the national level, a National Inspectorate for National Guard will be put in place, close or

inside to the MoD HQ. The new law covers the main attributions, tasks, possibilities of training and restrictions for each level of operational and control-command elements.

During peacetime period, each RNG unit and subunit will be manned with personnel coming from the present reserve (former active personnel, between 55 and 65 years old), up to 35% of the wartime organizational chart.

Of course, in our opinion, this new legislative project must be refined and completed, but we consider that it is a big step forward on the way of establishing the military national reserve.

The national Volunteer Reserve Forces should be regarded not only as part of the army, but as one that belongs to the defence, public order and national security system, as a whole. In this context, structures made up of reserve forces, except those that belong to MoD, should be found in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (more precisely in the Romanian Gendarmerie, the Romanian Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and the Border Police) as well as in some elements from sanitary sector, rescue and evacuation, travel insurance and transport, etc. It is clear that the National Reserve Force structure and the legislative solutions should be subject to a deep analysis, involving all responsible stakeholders of the national defence system, public order and national security.

Territorial defence missions

It must be noted here that the forces designated as “territorial” or “home defence” in a particular country vary considerably in definition and scope. What they have in common are the internal (domestic) missions, even if in a country a type of mission can be more important than in other country.

We can identify some specific missions to territorial defence, undergone by the structures that participate in it, as follows:

During peacetime:

- search and rescue missions in cases of civil emergencies and natural disasters and liquidation of their consequences;
- missions concerning monitoring and securing the borders in cooperation with specialized permanent structures of the Border Police;
- securing the routes dedicated to strategic transport, particularly the energetic ones;
- securing or strengthening the security of the military and civilian facilities which are very important from a strategic viewpoint against espionage, sabotage or attack;
- reconnaissance Missions in inaccessible areas prone to preparatory actions from some adverse elements;
- engineering works type of missions;
- maintaining of public order and prevention of terrorist actions in areas of responsibility.

During curfew, mobilization or war:

- locating targets and providing information about them;
- ensuring military actions of the operational structures by taking over some of the missions related to ensuring actions, protection of the forces and the critical infrastructure by the units engaged in territorial defence (e.g. military bases, airfields, HQs, dams, energetic facilities, transport routes, war-industrial factories, logistic elements, etc.);
- undermining the groups or the isolated enemy forces;
- support of asymmetric actions (guerrilla warfare, sabotage);
- anti-tank missions with improvised explosive devices;
- contribution to the urban warfare alongside with regular or specialized troops;
- participation in military actions on the territory, in areas where they are constituted, by being integrated in the national defence forces, especially on the most threatened directions;
- border defence during military actions, by expanding the activities of the Border Police and by supporting it with reserve forces;
- reinforcing the operational combat disposition of the active forces and supporting their actions by preparing the defence and organising total defence;
- regeneration of the army operational forces by providing effectively trained personnel in order to replace the loss suffered during the military actions and also by replacing those structures that have lost temporarily or permanently combat capability during their participation in the missions of the territory defence;
- reduce the consequences generated by the attacks of the enemy in areas of responsibility, since they can act in a timely, effected and coordinated way and they have active personnel and volunteer reserves;
- training of conscripts in cases stipulated by law during curfew, mobilisation or war, when conscription becomes compulsory;
- actions of insurgence/guerrilla/hybrid warfare in the territories occupied by the enemy.

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of specific territorial defence missions since the range and their continuous development are much wider, being determined by the many types of structures involved and the complexity of the situations which must be faced.

Switching to a professional army in peacetime has caused a drastic reduction in the number and the level of training of the army reserve and the trend seems to be negative, with major repercussions both in the situation when the defence forces should pass rapidly from peacetime to wartime format and also on the territorial defence organisation.

Considering the shortage in human resources and the continuous deterioration of the security landscape at the East of Romania, the intensification of the non-kinetic warfare specific actions undertaken by the Russian Federation, including in Romania, setting up the volunteer reserve and establishing of the national reserve forces, all of the above, represent a mandatory condition in order to strengthen the defence of the country.

Legislative and organizational changes

In order to achieve Territorial Defence, there are many measures that should be taken, both in relation to current legislation, by amending the existing legal framework, and from an organisational standpoint.

a) From a legislation viewpoint:

1. amendment to the Law of National Defence of Romania to include territorial defence in the National Defence System and establishing the military commander positions during all exceptional conditions, starting with the state of emergency;
2. developing and implementing subsequent legislation related to the recent Law on the status of volunteer reservists;
3. elaborating and approving the necessary legislation to organising the territorial defence and to operationalising the National Reserve Forces.

b) From an organisational point of view:

1. establishing structures belonging to the authorities responsible for the national security and defence which participate in territorial defence;
2. there is a need to design, establish and made operational the structures of National Reserve Forces, also a progressive framing of reservists and volunteer reservists and military equipment according to the specific endowment and the assigned missions;
3. reintroducing the conscription system on a voluntary basis during peacetime and during the state of emergency by amending the existing legal framework;
4. incorporating the territorial defence into the National Defence System and the National Defence Reserve into the Defence Forces.

The establishment of National Reserve Forces should be considered in a 10 to 20 years horizon, starting with the next exercise of government, from 2017 to 2020. This means that the objective must be politically assumed and must benefit from the responsibility of all stakeholders, both in terms of financial support and, also, in achieving the necessary legal framework.

Fixing the National Reserve Forces issue will be not only an improvement for the security of the country, but also will contribute to strengthening the

south-eastern flank of NATO. At the same time, it will create a framework for better paramilitary preparation of the territory and of the young generation and a requisite level of training of all citizens for defence.

Furthermore, developing NRF will trigger the necessity to revitalize national defence industry, in order to endow these new forces with appropriate equipment, ammunition and armament, which is beneficial from an economic standpoint.

There is no question that, in order to fulfil these projects, this is a real need of financial support and equipment, which under certain circumstances could be considered too expensive. However, given the fact that structures that carry out similar activities during peacetime participate in the territorial defence and that a considerable part of them consists of National Reserve Forces, which is less costly in terms of resources necessary to its establishment and maintenance during peacetime, it can be concluded that the use of viable and efficient territorial defence is a reasonable solution to strengthen the defence capacity of the country.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Source materials:

Documents:

- ✓ Law no. 270/2015 on the Voluntary Reserve of Romania
- ✓ Law no. 355/2009 on the partial or total mobilization state of the armed forces and the state of war
- ✓ Law no. 446/2006 on preparing the population for defence, subsequently amended
- ✓ Law on The National Romanian Guard (project), presented to the Parliament on 31.10.2016

Studies:

Books:

- ✓ Szymański P., Gotkowska J., *The Baltic states territorial defence forces in the face of hybrid threats*, Centre for Eastern Studies, 2015, no. 165

Chapters in joint publications:

- ✓ Bălăceanu V., Ștefănescu D., Adomnicăi A., *Forțele Naționale de Rezervă. De la suficiența defensivă la descurajarea credibilă* [in:] *Impact Strategic*, National University for Defense, 2015, no. 2

Articles:

- ✓ *High Tide, Romanian Security on Europe's Frontline*, Centre for European Policy Analysis, January 2016

- ✓ Mendershausen H., *Territorial defence in NATO and non –NATO Europe*, Rand Corporation, 1980,
<<http://www.rand.org/pubs/notes/N1265.html>> (10.12.2016)