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**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ADOPTING U.S.
LESSONS LEARNED IN MILITARY RECRUITMENT AND
SELECTION INTO THE ROMANIAN MILITARY**

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Abstract:

Forces for NATO, EU and the US are required to be composed of military professionals, thoroughly trained, equipped with armament and equipment of modern combat, motivated properly in all respects. It is for this reason that the staff recruitment and selection, is a highly topical subject in the theory and practice of resources management of the defense.

Key words: NATO - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization; EU – European Union; US – United States; Resources management of the defense - concepts, principles, methods, and techniques drawn from management theory, economic reasoning and quantitative reasoning related to allocating defense resources in order to enhance effectiveness in modern defense organizations .

1.Introduction

The European continent, as well as the entire world, is at the center of a process of modernization that tries to cope with the dynamics of the process of globalization in the field of security. In accordance with the geostrategic position of Romania in the South-Eastern part of the European space, a country at the borders of NATO and the European Union, the national defense policy will have as its objective the protection and promotion of the vital interests of Romania, as well as an active participation of our country to ensure the security in all areas of interest for NATO, the EU and the US.

NATO and EU forces are required to be composed of military professionals, thoroughly trained, and equipped with modern armament and equipment, properly motivated in all respects, so that the transition to the system on a voluntary basis was a must do for the Romanian army.

Speaking from the military point of view about NATO missions, we can also talk about the missions of the strongest member of the organization, the US Army that faced, before the Romanian Armed Forces, one of the youngest members of NATO, the same problems and many others in organizing defense and modern warfare, with many challenges in the management of resources and implicitly in the system of recruitment and selection of professionalized military personnel.

The military personnel recruitment for US Army manpower needs is an actual issue in the theory and practice of defense's human resource, as outlined by the new security environment after the Cold War and the revision of national defense issues. Extending the process of democratization and market economy principles, the achievement of an appropriate assertion of human rights, the development of the cooperation and integration

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within the meaning of the transition from individual to the collective defense, have created favorable conditions for replacing the conscription with the volunteer system. Economic logic, it modifies the perspective on the military and the reasons for choosing a military career. In spite of tradition, customs and even nationalism, on the market appears the idea of military professionals with the status of citizens engaged and motivated by an appropriate salary.

Faced over time with many events or crisis of internal and international nature and engaged in promoting and implementing democracy in the world, or for other reasons, US have gained a vast amount of experience or, as the nowadays trend is stating - problems are becoming lessons learned. Obtaining data and information from the mission area and from the participants' experience, US have learned that war-fighting actions in conflict areas are in a permanent evolution and vary from case to case. Conducting combat actions standards are stipulated and standardized in the regulations and instructions used for training military personnel including defense resource management, so they try to maintain a tight relation between the theory and what's really going on.

Having a strong political and economic support and with a solid base of lessons learned, US Army has successfully passed over problems and became efficient in the defense resource management and also in recruitment and selection of personnel for the army (officers, NCO's, soldiers, civilian personnel).

2.Challenges and opportunities for the Romanian Armed Forces

2.1. The need to promote the profession of professional soldier/graduated

The year 2007 was the nodal point which marks the conclusion of the process of transformation of the military institution and the beginning of building process a new Romanian Armed Forces for the 21st century.

The Romanian government took the decision to provide a framework for a new military profession that of the SGP (professional soldier). If the institutional level is, first and foremost, of a political nature, it was generated by the need to adapt to the realities the Romanian Armed Forces are facing, as follows:

- changes in mentalities and the appearance of traditional values erosion, insufficient now in ensuring a strong motivation for the military profession;
- lowering the value of the military profession on the job market because of the appearance of professional alternatives more attractive;
- higher needs of voluntary personnel affect recruitment during the time of the armed forces professionalization.

Although it is an organization with strict rules, specific culture, it shares the same labor market (external recruiting resources) with institutions and civil organizations, with a high demand of educated and high potential work force. The military profession is dependent on the labor market, being affected by its' permanent fluctuations. The demographic targeted resource, competitiveness of the remuneration, the unemployment rate among young people, the benefits of the military institution, the resources available to the military decision-makers and the attitude of young people towards State institutions or the need for Defense are factors that affect the labor market. Changing the normal parameters of these variables has the effect of decreasing availability for embedding/enrollment and the quality of resources.

The current military operations demonstrate that the time of armies on paper is a thing of the past, being necessary a new organization.

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The strategy of the Romanian Army transformation "has the overall aim of achieving a modern, fully professionalized structure, with a high degree of mobility, efficient, flexible, deployable, sustainable development, having the ability to act together and to be engaged in a wide spectrum of missions".

The experience of countries with professional armies demonstrates that the economic problem of society, market economy, changes in social values and demographic decline affects the success of military recruitment.

2.2. The strategy for the recruitment and selection of professional soldier

The professionalization of the armed forces means that, starting 2007, there was a shift from the mandatory system to the voluntary military system, becoming a matter of vocation and personal choice. This process has led, naturally, to an increase in the quality of personnel in the military system.

Important conditions for the professionalization of the armed forces are: the creation of a system of career evolution, coherent and viable, as well as promotion based on merit, and to ensure transparency and equal opportunities; design and implementation of a modern management of military careers, in accordance with the NATO countries experience and practices; monitoring the evolution of individual career; improving the recruitment, selection, training system used of the army.

Losing the compulsory military service and professionalization of the armed forces does not mean just going to hire servicemen, but also a new conception on the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of military personnel. The professionalization of the armed forces by eliminating the compulsory military service leads to higher operational levels, also reducing costs associated with training new personnel. The new system of recruitment and selection of the military personnel is part of the extensive process of reform of human resources management, which is in progress, inspired by the experience of NATO countries, tailored to the specific needs and the long-term objectives of the Romanian Army.

The attractiveness of the military profession is closely linked to the level and quality of the promotion of the armed forces. The changes occurring in the society and on the job market have determined to identify viable ways of attracting young people to the military career. The General staff has been involved more actively in the work of promoting recruitment, as proved by the existence of educational and vocational training offers, varied and dynamic.

Analysis of the promotion strategy of previous years and the vast experience of the United States Army reveals some conclusions which are required to be kept in the attention of decision-makers from the Romanian Armed Forces

- Correct information and public awareness sustained the offer of military profession, as well as sociological investigations undertaken, among the target population, shows that the attractiveness of the military profession is the greater, the more you get to know about it;
- Direct contact with potential candidates has had and will continue to be very important;
- Using public relations campaigns that aims at getting support from different groups must be a joint effort of all factors interested, like civil educational institutions and military commanders, military units in the region, representatives of the media, in activities to promote the profession and military recruitment;

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- The main sources of where young people can obtain information about the military environment are television and family;
- Active strategies for advancing the military profession must focus not only on providing quantitative selection, but also on the quality of human resources recruited;
- Presenting the military career with professionalism, seriousness, throughout the country and in the theatres of operations must always be made at a high level, related with the prestige of the armed forces;
- Ensuring financial resources is of great importance in the standardization of materials, in a sufficient amount and with an age-appropriate content to the characteristics of the target group.

3. Conclusion and some consideration

Analyzing the process of selection and recruitment in the light of experience gained and comparing with the Allied experiences, at the level of the General staff, it was estimated that there will be the following problems:

- in areas with a functional and efficient economy, expressed through a proper wage, in the absence of a strong motivation, the number of young people that will try to join the armed forces will be relatively small;
- in times of crisis, when the use of force in some areas of the world is imminent, and when Romania will assume political obligations to participate, the number of volunteers for the recruitment process may be lower than the expectations;
- in regions where the population density is low, selection is also at a low level, and there will not be sufficient personnel to fulfill the needs of the military units from that area.

We are still in full transformation and so we appeal to our allies knowledge, and use of their vast experience in the field of recruitment and selection of individuals for the army. But to have a modern army and thus a factor of security and stability for the country, for us to be able to achieve our goals, it takes willpower, political and economic support for the Army.

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