

## RESILIENCE: A MILITARY CONCEPT

Cristian PANAIT

“Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy, Braşov, Romania (cripanait@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** *In recent years, resilience, as a concept, has become an important topic in the military. What exactly is resilience and why is it important? The purpose of this article is to present the value and implications of resilience when applied to the military as a system. A systemic approach to resilience at the strategic level has gnoseological and epistemological potential as a topic for research. The capacity of a system to recover after strong stress involves approaching the system as a living organism featuring a capacity for autopoiesis.*

**Keywords:** *resilience, military concept*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Defining resilience represents a challenge because of the numerous domains where this concept has meaning and relevance. The definitions from the literature might suggest that this concept was adapted to an increased number of research fields in order to answer the scientific development which describes a new reality with new attributes. From a military point of view, the nature of threats development and the complexity of military actions justifies the interest for this concept and a better understanding of its particularities.

As the majority of scientific and philosophical terms which have their roots in the two antique cultures, Greek and Latin, etymologically „*resilience*” also comes from the latin „*salio*” which means „*to spring, ricoche*” while „*re-*” meaning „*back*”, *resalio* meaning „*to spring back after an impact with an obstacle*”.

The Romanian dictionaries explain that the word *resilience* is a technical term regarding materials technology [1], however, this concept was given a psychological meaning as in Newton’s Third Law: action and reaction.

The beginnings of resilience research are marked by three major founding contributions: Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith's longitudinal study [2], research on various populations at risk, undertaken by Michael Rutter [3] and the "Competence" project, coordinated by Norman Garmezy [4].

In 1939-1945, American psychologists Werner and Smith [5] achieved significant results in the recovery of a group of children with disabilities emphasizing the importance of the resilience. But as a concept, "*resilience*" appears for the first time in John Bowlby's research on the affective attachment [6], [7], [8].

From a psychological point of view, resilience is defined as an ability to recover psychic functions after a strong stress of different causes: catastrophe, war, trauma, difficult living conditions, loss of work, and other similar situations. The way some people manage to overcome difficult times more easily than others represents one of the research topics in psychology. Personality skills and characteristics developed after overcoming the difficult living conditions that made some individuals become better

professional, stronger, who find better solutions to the problems of life; do not victimize themselves, trust them, have confidence in them, active social life. They are optimistic, they have friends, and a vision of perspective on their lives. These individuals allow themselves to have negative feelings of anger, sadness, anger, disappointment, loss, etc. but do not get overwhelmed by them. They manage to control their emotions and transform those experiences into life lessons and move on, stronger.

Resilience has been translated from English Resilience to Romanian in some contexts by resistance, including by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (translation of the statement made to the NATO summit in Warsaw July 2016) [9] which subordinates to an initial stage, the Euro-Atlantic Center for resilience. Resilience, unlike resistance, represents the ability to overcome and dominate unfavorable stimuli. If we took as an example (starting from the definition in the explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language), a ball that strikes a wall and ricochet without changing its shape, on the ball did not act a large enough to break, therefore, it is resistant to shocks of a certain intensity. But if we talk about a person, following a difficult experience (example: emotional shock), that person has learned a lesson, has developed, evolved stronger, resilient in the face of similar stimuli. Or it can be "broken" like a ball, resulting in trauma, anger, depression, etc. Resilience does not involve the return to form before the action of the shock, and in the case of a system, if it retains its function, the role. Starting from the premise that there is no perfect system, perfect person, resilience is defined by the direct proportionality with the intensity of the shock it is subjected to. Resilience involves resistance but does not define the same process or the same quality or ability.

In the specialized literature, resilience is regarded both as a process, a phenomenon, and as a quality. Resilience most often implies a process in which, not only the individual or system concerned, participates. For example, when a person goes through an extreme situation, he can exert his influence over the environment, family, friends and economic situation. Resilience, most of the time, represents a consequence of a process attended by several factors. Resilience as a result can be positive or negative from an ethical point of view.

## **2. RESILIENCE IN THE MILITARY**

The environment in which military actions take place can most often be characterized by volatility, insecurity, complexity and ambiguity. These characteristics can lead to: physical and mental exhaustion, reduction of rest time and caloric deprivation. The very short time needed to respond to many of the possible threats involves a high level of availability to respond, in time. Also the ability to cope with a hostile, stressful environment for maintaining optimal cognitive capacity. This ability is named, resilience. The ability to overcome, as effectively as possible, the negative aspects of stress caused by the obstacles encountered represents a complex process that is based not only on the individual physiological and mental qualities but is influenced by factors such as the environment, level, and quality of training.

From a military point of view, the US has given the most interest to this concept, which is also due to the complexity in which they define their resilience:

*„The ability of an architecture to support the functions necessary for mission success with higher probability, shorter periods of reduced capability, and across a wider range of scenarios, conditions, and threats, in spite of hostile action or adverse conditions. Resilience may leverage cross-domain or alternative government, commercial, or international capabilities.” [10]*

The definition given by the US Department of Defense although explicit, uses general terms as a result in the following definition given by FM 3-01 U.S. Army Air and Missile Defense Operations: „*Resilience is the quality of the defense to maintain continuity of operations regardless of changes in or unanticipated tactics by enemy air or losses of critical air and missile defense components.*”[11], it can be seen that the definition only particularizes what was already defined by a higher level publication, preserving the basic idea of the unitary concept, although, in the first definition, the concept is regarded as a skill and in the second as a quality.

In the same manual, resilience as a key factor in maintaining anti-aircraft defense, involves the optimal choice, principle, or principles of creating an integrated fire system. This decision must be made by the commanders under the conditions of a very good understanding of all the capabilities of the systems that are part of the forces package as well as the types of threats. The decision-making process based on analyzing the risks and vulnerabilities of their own fire system, will have to be taken into account during the planning process and the reply mode, if a subsystem is no longer in the initial operating parameters (such as mutual support, e.g.).

The way of using the armed principles struggle, from the perspective of resilience, implying an unitary effort, going to the strategic level until the conjugated use of the power tools of a state. Thus, the condition of the military power of its own.

In this regard, starting with 2010 (the strategic concept for the defense and security of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance "Active Commitment, Modern Defense", adopted on the occasion of the NATO summit in Lisbon) can be noticeable to the concept of resilience.

In 2014, due to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, during the Summit in Wales, the participating countries mention in Wales Summit Declaration:

*„The Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. But we cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which our Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest. NATO is both transparent and predictable, and we are resolved to display endurance and **resilience**, as we have done since the founding of our Alliance”*, also:

*„As the Alliance looks to the future, cyber threats and attacks will continue to become more common, sophisticated, and potentially damaging. (...) The policy reaffirms the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and of prevention, detection, **resilience**, recovery, and defence.”*[12]

In 2016, during the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw, the heads of participating states and governments adopt „Commitment to enhance resilience”, commitment that states very clearly that „Resilience is an essential basis for credible deterrence and defense and effective fulfillment of the Alliance’s core tasks.”[13]

In 2020, at the "Coordinated Coordinates of Military Strategy under the conditions of a synergistic approach in the field of security", the deputy general of NATO, Mircea Geoană, made the following statement:

*„There is no performance without rehearsal and without practice. That is why I am convinced that Romania can and must be a champion in what means the transformation of lessons learned in the field of resilience and impact of these crises on society for the good of the whole alliance and of the citizens we are called to protect. The construction of the resilience of our societies and the defense infrastructure in this part of the world must be a priority for us as an individual nation, as a region and for our trans-Atlantic partnership”*. [14]

Another important moment for the development and implementation of the concept of resilience for Romania, took place on May 31, 2021, when the "Euro-Atlantic Center for Resiliency E-ARC" was inaugurated.

According to the statements made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this Center will provide a platform for strategic discussions and development of concepts, training and exercises, as well as the collection and provision of lessons learned and will allow the development of different programs and initiatives in the field of resilience over the next three pillars:

1. Combating/reducing risks by anticipation and adaptation;
2. Developing analytical tools and good practices;
3. Practical cooperation in the field of education, training and joint exercises. [15]

The main themes on which the working groups will concentrate are:

- societal resilience
- resilience in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies
- resilience of communications systems and new technological ecosystems
- resilience to complex crises and emergencies
- resilience of ensuring continuity of governance and essential services;
- transport infrastructure resilience;
- the resilience of the states in the vicinity of NATO and the EU to the anti-occidental influences of the state and non-state actors.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The concept of resilience, applicable in the military environment, refers to both the individual ability of a military and the level of military actions where it refers to the capabilities of some systems.

At the individual level, resilience has a complex psychological aspect and is defined both as a skill and as a resilient process that several factors compete as: environment, family, service colleagues, friends, etc. Resilience can be a part of the emotional intelligence of an individual through his or her human relations. Through self-management, individual emotions and experiences become a dimension of interpersonal relationships. Resilience is an ability to be developed in the military educational system within leadership programs. Resilience can develop, over time, exponentially at the level of the whole human resources of the military system if higher education institutions form leaders capable of further transmitting knowledge and skills. Resilience at the individual level can be developed by maintaining the cohesion of the group, optimism, confidence in their own forces; support from specialists in resilience, colleagues, family, friends, cultivating optimism, and motivation, regular sports activity. All these means of developing resilience can be used in programs that should be part of the military school curriculum.

The resilience of a system of the size of an alliance of states (NATO, EU) can be interpreted as the ability of societies to adapt to internal or external crises and recover. The context of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was a difficult test for societies, resilience being a desire that can be best achieved by common effort. As a result of this "experience", as at the individual level, both NATO and the EU are stronger.

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