

EDUCATION AS A SMART POWER TOOL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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***Abstract:** In the theory of international relations, the notion of power is the starting point of most conceptions of political thought, being the basic component that determines the behavior of the state in its external relations. Regardless of the perspective we choose in defining power, it is the result of combining three elements: resources, will and ability. Nowadays, the power of a state is determined by its entire structure, not just the military dimension, as it used to be in the past. National security and the people's level of education are in a strong and direct relationship. Capitalizing on human potential is the core of creating a secure society in a competitive market economy, therefore increasing the well-being of citizens and a high standard of living. Thus, in a dynamic process of globalization, state with an elevated level of education is considered a strong actor on the international arena.*

Education can be considered an element of smart power, combining elements of economic nature (hard power) and human capital (soft power) and the results of the education system built the society features. Education is a safe and profitable long-term investment on which the future of any nation depends, and an important smart power tool for achieving the national security goals.

***Keywords:** Smart power, national security, strategic, military education, defense strategy.*

Introduction

The category of national security represents the basic notion that designates the essence, the core of the various types of security. It can be interpreted as the capacity of the territorial state community to satisfy, despite the existence of objective dangers, those requirements that are necessary for its self-preservation. At the same time, the national security or the security of the country is directly related to the economic, political, technical-scientific, demographic aspects of the development of the society, to the state of development of the medical culture, of the training and education, etc. Romania's national defense strategy reflects the need to

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promote an extended concept of national security - based on constitutional democracy and mutual respect between citizens and the state - which aims at interests that converge to ensure national security, manifested in the following areas: defense (understood in double normative quality, by national defense and collective defense), public order, intelligence, counterintelligence and security, education, health, economic, energy, financial, environment, critical infrastructure. The strategy has an integrative and multidimensional approach, in which the defense dimension merges and balances each other with a series of other dimensions - public order; intelligence, counter-intelligence and security activities; diplomacy; crisis management; education, health and demography.

There are three major ways to exercise power: by coercion, by retribution, or by engaging in cooperation, determining subjects to identify the purposes of the one exercising power. An immediate result is that if you manage to attract people and want what you want, the costs of exercising power will decrease significantly, because coercive means and retribution are no longer necessary. But persuasive power is not a simple exercise in the application of charisma. As in any act of exercising power, it is necessary to establish a coherent relationship between the behavior and the means involved. The success of persuasive power sometimes depends on the reputation of an international actor and, equally, on the flow of information between actors. Persuasive power is often associated with increasing the impact of globalization and the theory of neoliberal international relations. National cultures and the media are constantly associated with persuasive powers, as well as the spread of the national language or sets of normative structures. Persuasive power, however, is a more descriptive than normative concept.

1. Smart power and national security

Specialist have chosen to distinguish, from the perspective of a state's actions, two types of power: hard and soft. Hard power is achieved through military threat or use, and by means of economic menace or reward. Soft power is the ability to have influence by co-opting others to share values and some key elements on one's agenda for international order and security.

Hard power, through its military and economic dimensions, is shaped in a coercive form. For example, from the perspective of Joseph Nye - one of the most famous contemporary theorists of International Relations, Professor at Harvard University -, hard power involves the conduct of coercive actions, using, in particular, military and economic means to influence the interests or will of other political entities¹. The components of this concept of power or the ways in which it manifests itself are economic sanctions, embargoes, military interventions or any other type of threat with military and economic force.

There are still descriptions and analyzes of the concept of hard power from the oldest types, even if it did not bear this name until the modern era. Much has also been written about war - usually defined as an armed conflict between two or more groups, social classes, or states, to achieve economic and political goals, beginning with the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Zi and continuing with other leaders. Famous soldiers, including Caesar (*Comments of Bellum Gallicum – Gallic War, Comments of Bello Civili – Civil War*), Napoleon Bonaparte (*Oeuvres de Napoleon à Sainte Hélène*, translated as *Memoirs of Napoleon*) or Karl von Clausewitz (*Von Kriege – About the war*). It could be said that almost the entire history of humans has been dominated by force, materialized in conflicts, wars, as during the last three millennia were identified only about 190 years of peace. Therefore, hard power was used. This aspect is very well emphasized by the French analyst Frédéric Encel: “Power gives power over others (...). From the moment we identify the field of international relations as an arena, we assume that states operating in this arena behave similarly to beasts or gladiators, in other words they act as predators (...). When circumstances become favorable in terms of balance of power, there are few states that would resist the temptation to increase their power.”²

Today, the power of a state is given by its entire structure, not just the military dimension. In a deep process of globalization, societies with a high level of education create strong states. The distinction between hard power and soft power has been used with increasing frequency in the early

¹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power the means to success in world politics*, PublicAffairs Books, 2005, p.36;

² Frédéric Encel, *Orizonturi geopolitice*, Cartier, Chişinău, 2011, p. 19;

21st century. According to Joseph Nye, hard power includes military and economic capabilities, while the concept of soft power covers other, less tangible dimensions of power.

Exercising one type of power can amplify or, conversely, cancel the effects of the other type of power applied. Specific objectives require applying different forms of power from general objectives. Specific goals generally depend on hard power, while general goals are achieved more efficiently through soft power. For example, it is easier to draw people to democracy than to force them to behave democratically. Instead, the military can consolidate favorable alliances. Or, on the contrary, misused, unaccompanied by power, can cause fear, leading to the cementing of adverse alliances.

Not coincidentally, Joseph Nye changed the paradigm of thinking about international relations by introducing a new concept - *smart power* which consists of a mix of hard power and soft power. In this perspective, hard power and soft power intertwine in complex ways. Smart power requires the use of well thought policies which combine in a balanced way elements of hard power with actions of soft power, creating a path for more successful end results. Thus, this concept values the importance of combining actions in function of a state's needs: national and international context; cultural characteristics, current political system; economic influences. Therefore, Nye defined soft power as "the ability to shape the preferences of others"³, and this ability is based primarily on the attractiveness of the power user.

His numerous writings have exposed the key aspects of soft power and its relationship to hard power. Nye stated in a paper that "a country can achieve the results it wants in world politics, if other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness. In this regard, it is just as important to set the agenda in world politics and to be attractive to others, at least as important as forcing them to change by threatening or using military or economic

³ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power*, Public Affairs, New York, 2004, p. 23;

weapons”⁴. The key aspect of soft power is the attractiveness of a country, but this is not a unique idea.

Edward H. Carr, in his analysis of power in international politics, argued that power over opinion — in addition to the types of military and economic power — is one of the key forms of power. The difference between Nye and Carr’s concepts is that while in the latter’s view, propaganda can be an effective tool in securing power over opinion, Nye rejects the usefulness of propaganda, at least in the short term, by emphasizing a positive narrative, a positive overall picture. According to Joseph Nye’s approach, the elements of the soft power concept are: culture - cultural aspects of the strong state, attractive to others, political values - the strong state respects the political values of other political entities and foreign policy - others see in the strong state legitimacy and moral authority⁵.

The soft power theory offers concepts and explanations about the relationships between phenomena, at a high level of abstraction. Empirical results will always be based on a certain theoretical support (which it validates or invalidates), but it does not have to be very structured or very abstract. These theoretical structures, which may or may not be integrated into a broader theoretical framework, are limited to certain aspects of social/organizational/economic life, and are formulated to be empirically validated in one way or another. Theoretical support may in some cases not be explicit. Thus, the motive of this research is identifying and explaining an important and sometimes neglected aspect of the problem of education viewed as a smart power tool to ensure national security. Therefore, in this article we use descriptive analysis as a method of scientific research, creating a general presentation and then particularizing and highlighting the advantages and disadvantage of the identified problem of education use, and even though we have a few data’s to analyze, it is qualitative information.

The national security strategy adopts a comprehensive vision on security, understood as a public service subject to state actions aimed at protecting the rights, freedom and welfare of citizens, ensuring Romania’s

⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p.12;

⁵ Joseph Nye, *The Future of Power*, Public Affairs, New York, 2011, p. 31;

defense, its constitutional principles and values, contributing to international security with Romania's allies and partners, in accordance with the agreed commitments. Thus, national values, interest and objectives play a central role in defining the National Security Strategy. National values are elements of a spiritual, cultural and material nature that define national identity. Their protection, promotion and defense establish the essential conditions for the preservation of the nation, fully respecting the principles of international law, developing dialogue and cooperation with other states and international organizations responsible for ensuring a secure and stable regional and global security environment.

National security and the level of education are in a direct relationship. There are two strongholds to support this idea: capitalizing on human potential is the core of creating a secure society in a competitive market economy, therefore increasing the well-being of citizens and a high standard of living; human potential is primarily activated by education. Furthermore, education can be considered an element of smart power, because it combines elements of economic nature (hard power) and the human capital (soft power) and the effects of the education system have implications for society. Thoroughly, education is a smart power component because it contains a soft power toolbox used to implement values, competencies, integrity and strategic vision to the population, but also a hard power dimension, because a good educational system relies on the economic factor and the way financial resources are used in this direction.

The construction and viability of a national security strategy that must, among other things, be forward-looking, is also given by the way of approaching the directions of education, research and culture. The underlying issues in this area, which could be called cultural security in the broadest sense, are directly related to the need to assert new mentalities and attitudes that contribute to shaping the cultural and civilizing dimension of reforms, implicitly required by our new European and Euro-Atlantic status.⁶ Community spirit, national solidarity, communication culture, attitude towards performance, respect for elites and their promotion are still in insufficient stages of development. Therefore, the enhancement and

⁶ Adrian, Gorun, *Geopolitică, Geostrategie, Globalizare*, Academica Brâncuși Publishing House, Târgu-Jiu, 2010, p. 172;

development of Romania's cultural, scientific and human potential is an essential component and resource of national security and society modernization, a context in which the diversification of ways to strengthen social solidarity and civic spirit, complementarity with the action of institutions in the education system, it imposes itself as a first-rate imperative.

2. Education and the implication in national security as a smart power tool

The development of the educational system is important and achieved by implementing the principle of equal opportunities in education, improving the educational performance, skills and competences of all children and young people, through access to a relevant, inclusive and qualitative educational system. This is the key to growth and prosperity.

In order to emphasize more of the impact that education has on national security and how it is shaped in Romania's national security policies, we will use the comparative analysis on three national security strategies to see the evolution of the education perspective during the last decades. Romania has gone through a process of transformation and evolution in terms of security, starting from the first post-communist security strategy until now, and has gone from an individual vision of security to a collective vision. Thus, a comparative analysis of Romania's security and defense strategies from the perspective of the smart power approach of the education system will allow the creation of a balanced smart power implementation model to ensure a faster and more feasible adaptation of the country's future defense strategies to the international security.

The strategies that are the object of our scientific research are three national security strategies that have as a landmark Romania's integration in to NATO: pre-integration 2001⁷ immediate post-integration – 2006⁸ and the

⁷ *** *Romania's National Defense Strategy 2001*, available at http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.ftp_act_text?idt=31060, accessed on 23.01.2021.

⁸ *** *Romania's National Defense Strategy 2006*; available at <https://www.afas.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Strategia-de-securitate-nationala-a-Romaniei.pdf>, accessed on 02.02.2021.

current one - 2020-2024⁹. We considered it opportune to use this selection benchmark for analysis because Romania's accession to NATO was a moment that definitively changed the paradigm of national defense and security and the way of relating to the international security environment.

The 2001 security strategy had the following directions of action related to the education system: the development of education, research and culture institutions, the continuation of the education system reform, as a foundation of human resources policies, and the development of civil society and the middle class. Thus, we can observe a special attention paid to the development of large public systems, in order to be able to align them with Western standards. The 2006 Strategy focuses on making important changes in the field of education, research and development to ensure access for all citizens to a quality education, and achieving a social balance. The 2020 Strategy emphasizes, in addition to those mentioned above, the shaping of a large national education project, which will provide planning mechanisms for programs, projects and the development of technological capacities and capabilities in the field of research-development-innovation, with the involvement of academia.

According to Romania's Security Strategy, "security and prosperity are inseparable terms of the same equation - Romania's progress, prosperity and national security can only be the major result of a complex process of promoting and guaranteeing national values and interests"¹⁰. All this, can be achieved by fulfilling certain conditions such as: "real and full integration in the European Union; taking responsibility for membership of the North Atlantic Alliance; maintaining the integrity, unity, sovereignty, independence and indivisibility of the Romanian state, in the specific conditions of participation in the European construction; developing a competitive, dynamic and high-performance market economy; radical modernization of the education system and efficient capitalization of human, scientific and technological potential; increasing the well-being of

^{9***} *Romania's National Defense Strategy 2020-2024*, available at https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf, accessed on 11.03.2021.

¹⁰ Marian Zulean, *Strategiile de securitate națională*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017, p.63;

citizens, the standard of living and health of the population; affirming and protecting the culture, national identity and spiritual life of Romanians”¹¹.

Debates about education policies have intensified in recent years in most democratic societies. An increasingly important part of the public observes the close links between these policies and the quality of development, democracy and the level of security in their societies. At the same time, the critical perspectives on established educational solutions are multiplying. Romania is part of the same trend, to increase both the visibility of education issues and to emphasize a critical tone. Romania’s progress, prosperity and national security are in a direct relationship with the country’s human capital. The exploitation of human potential is the essence of the development of society so that the development of a competitive market economy, the increase of the well-being of citizens and a high standard of living can be achieved.¹²

One of the actual main directions of action in the field of educational security, in addition to continuing the reform of the education system, is the invigorating on a competitive basis (including by improving the legislative and institutional framework) of the national research and development system. The educational units, are meant to achieve the fundamental objectives that meet the requirements of groups of beneficiaries, as segments of society, in order to integrate the educated individual in a world of real values, the target of everyone’s ideals, characterized by balance and social stability, legality and equal opportunities, where to exercise unrestricted the fundamental rights and freedoms stipulated in the Romanian Constitution.

In order to achieve this goal, in an educational environment lately characterized by globalization, that involves structural and functional mutations and fundamental resizing of educational institutions, it is imperative, on the one hand, to achieve a dynamic balance between them and the social, cultural and economic environment and, on the other hand, to ensure a pragmatic vision and able to evaluate in the medium and long term

¹¹ *** *Romania's development strategy in the next 20 years- 2016 – 2035*, Volume I, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 34;

¹² Giulio Gallarotti, *Cosmopolitan Power in International Politics: A Synthesis of Realism, Neoliberalism and Constructivism*, New York Cambridge Press, 2010;

the real chances of development of education, and to generate a confident attitude in the future of education.

The return of education, and educational system in general, is positive in a society aligned with world values, where the factors involved in carrying out the educational act as a whole meet the requirements of developing the intellectual environment of society building a real and viable structural connections with the business environment and public life. The state, through competent institutions, has the obligation to be firmly involved in removing the state of regression of the quality of education, as it is currently received by the population. We must not forget that the performance and assertion of a nation are determined by the degree of education of its members.

Education is a sure and profitable long-term investment on which the future of any nation depends and an important smart power tool for achieving the national security goals. The educational system is part of the national power instrument called complementary capabilities and is mainly of a soft nature, with the focus on improving the education system to Western standards. In all three strategies brought to our attention, we found actions that indicate that the educational system is an important smart power tool that contributes to ensuring national security. Therefore, education must be treated as a process that prepares the younger generations for the challenges of the future and takes place throughout life, encouraging innovation, meritocracy, constructive critical thinking, curiosity, conduct and emancipation and seeing it as an important part of the national security dimensions is vital and as we could observe comparing the three strategies, it needs more and more focus on its reform and applicability in all the environments.

Another aspect of the education domain that is highly important from the perspective of achieving national security is military education, because that is one of the main assets of the military force together with modern technologies. Military education, while using soft power means, has hard power ends.

A fundamental component of training, military education is responsible for initial training and continuing professional development and is the Armed Forces' most important investment in human resource

development and increase of the military structures performance. The initial and continuous training of military personnel is based on a normative framework defined by general regulations developed by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, and the National Qualifications Authority, as well as specific normative acts issued at the level of the Ministry of National Defense. The mission of military education is to train officers, military foremen, and non-commissioned officers with professional and transversal skills in accordance with the requirements and needs of military structures, corresponding to the specific qualifications of military occupations, with the potential to become creative, innovative, determined to perform and to assume a responsible military career.

We note that Romania's progress, prosperity and national security are in a direct relationship with the country's human capital. Capitalizing on human potential is, in my opinion, the essence of developing society so that a state can achieve the development of a competitive market economy, increase the well-being of citizens and offer a high standard of living. The effects of the education system have implications for the whole society, making it indisputably the subject of a security strategy at this moment in history. Thus, we observe, once again, the interdependence between two areas essential to ensuring the security of a country - the educational field and the economic field. But, if we continue the analysis, we will still see that education has several other implications at the national level. At the same time, the essential problem that the educational system should solve is related to the production of elites. It is necessary for the school to train the people that the state needs.

After taking a closer look to the way the educational system is emphasized in some of the most important national defense strategies of Romania, we can definitely say that the next national strategies must include a perspective on improving national military education, since this segment has a double importance, one being the economic aspect and the other being the military one, and this makes of it one of the most important assets in assuring national security. Combing the social aspects of education with the economic impact of a good educational system and the development of

human resources in the military field is the perfect picture of smart power with high importance in assuring national security.

Conclusions

At the base of building a society, a strong country, is the population. And building a strong country is done only through education. A country built on values, competencies, patriotism, integrity and strategic vision is a country that can guarantee the rule of law, security and national security. An educated population that has a culture of security will never be easy to manipulate, will not turn a blind eye to the slippage of the rule of law and will exercise its rights and responsibilities as a real citizen of the Romanian state. Incompetence, the destruction of national values, the absence of a culture of security among the population and the absence of a strategic vision only ensure the impossibility of consolidating democracy, of solid institutions, creating a vulnerability difficult to manage within the state.

Also, people, who have a real knowledge of national values and of the national interest, are able to imagine strategic visions for the Romanian State. Thus, the essential problem that the educational system should solve is related to the production of elites. It is necessary for the school to train the people that the state needs. Therefore, the state must intervene in supporting the process of educating those who stand out from the crowd and facilitate their access to knowledge. In fact, this must be a constant preoccupation of the State, namely, the education of those people capable of taking over the leadership of this country. In this process, we observe, once again, the interdependence between two areas essential to ensuring the security of a country - the educational field and the economic field.

Looking ahead, we realize that military institutions and units are now preparing students and pupils to use advanced or new technologies, and the enhancement of abilities as autonomy, creativity and mobility, in order to be innovative in the face of the problems, it will become widespread practice in the military organization. Thus, from the evolving context of the societal and security environment in which the military organization operates, military education has the mission to provide the national armed forces with a highly qualified, innovative human resource, capable of converting all educational capital into a source of knowledge and competitive advantages,

adaptable and able to carry out a wide range of missions so that military structures remain effective in the face of any challenges.

The priorities in the development of the military education system result from the missions of the Romanian Armed Forces and the national legislation in the field, and the human resources decision-makers in the military system should support all legal steps aimed at increasing the quality of the educational act, ensuring the efficiency of the military education system and developing military scientific research as the human resource is the most precious resource of the organization.



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