

SECURITY CRISIS IN THE EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC AREA

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Abstract

The security crisis, in its most serious aspects - such as the imminence of a war, a territorial invasion, immediate threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity, imminent threats before and/or after natural disasters, attacks and vulnerabilities on the national energy resource, critical infrastructure, direct attacks on the intrinsic symbols and values of Romania, traditions and history - requires an integrated effort of systematic planning, management and communication on the major moments of the Romanian society and nation, to which both the political and the military, formal and informal civil society leaders, the media, social groups and simple citizens have to respond.

Systemic inadequacies in addressing the security crisis

The security problems of modern states today represent a set of phenomena and actions under the broad concept of extended security as used by Romanian President, Klaus Iohannis, in the presentation in Parliament in July, 2015, of the "National Defense Strategy for the period 2015- 2019"¹. All nations face dangers, threats and vulnerabilities, which call for more complex countermeasures today than in the past centuries, for reasons of unprecedented dynamics of changes in the international arena, both in terms of national or private capital movements, as well as that of the dangers raised by the magnitude of globalization to the ability of nations to defend themselves, or to respond to the aggressions or asymmetric threats subsumed to international terrorism.

The imperative of unitary action in the management of the moments of maximum security tension strikes hard on institutional, behavioral and

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¹ http://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_1.pdf, 22.07.2016, 12,32

actionable forces, which are equally responsible for the politicians, the military, the leaders in the press and/or the civil society, in the public actions of positioning, self-knowledge and self-referential promotion.

We could remark here an inconvenient paradox regarding the ability of political and/or military systems to accept unitary coordination, both in peacetime and during various periods of crisis, escalating threats to the national territory, or taking measures to counteract hazards or risks, as they are reflected in the new concept of extended security launched by the "National Defense Strategy for the period 2015-2019". Thus, although the political and military institutions hold conceptual and formal structures, communication and rapid reaction, few steps have been taken in the practical application of integrated communication concepts in specific given situations. Despite the fact that human, logistic, financial and high-tech resources are allocated annually for the creation, planning and operationalization of communication directions in the political and military areas, the agendas of political and military entities are often disparate, fragmented, targeted to audiences of particular interest or who manifest themselves in favor of mutual hostility. The outcome? The impossibility of achieving convergent, unitary and integrated communication for the management, settlement and/or overcoming of security crises at national level.

The lack of an adequate, unitary and integrative methodology, based on the lack of interest of the political and military entities to meet in applied communication research teams, with dedicated civil and entrepreneurial support - the academic area and the new technologies (IT, telecommunication, online communication, etc.) has created and will create confusion, uncertainty, disbelief and disengagement of national public opinion, confronted with decisions of politicians and soldiers in security crises.

The lack of a unitary communicative and actionable framework leads to the emergence of the crisis, the inability to respond adequately, efficiently and proactively to the situation outlined above.

Crisis management remains the most important challenge for governments in the modern world. In the absence of a traditional magnitude

war declared as such and triggered by state actors against other state actors, tense events, asymmetric aggressions, diplomatic bottlenecks, improbable or bellicose circumstances, the past ten years have set up a crisis and management map than a history of contemporary international relations in the European and Euro-Atlantic area.

Security crisis. Definitions, limitations, comparative approaches

The North Atlantic (NATO) organization sums up the crisis to this description: « *a situation manifested at national or international level, characterized by the existence of a threat to the values, interests or the main goals of those interested*»². (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies: *Conflict Prevention and Management of Crisis and Conflict*).

The European Union, faced with complex geopolitical situations, attempted to clarify the term crisis of security in the EU Crisis Response Capability document of International Crisis Group Report No. 2, 2001: “*The reference to preconflict situations is a limiting one, for which reason European decision-makers found it equally important to manage the crisis both at the time of the crisis, but also in its development and return to the original status quo. Preconflict-conflict-postconflict seems to be the exact circumstance of the full period of crisis, given that crisis management occurs in a volatile, non-war environment, and is the responsibility of the political decision-maker, not the military commander*”³.

With the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, the term “*crisis*” finally emerged from the paradigm of classical wars, inter-state conflicts. The new wars, with the new-old actors involved - non-state privatized entities, isolated groups of insurgency and regional or international terrorism - have crushed the world and Europe for decades, without a paradigm shift in the doctrinal level for full reconsideration of the response capacity. Moreover, after the “*Peace of Westphalia*” (1648), armed conflicts, though circumscribed to the

² (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies: *Conflict Prevention and Management of Crisis and Conflict*)

³ *Crisis Reponse Capability*, in International Crisis Group Report no.2, 2001

imperatives of defending statehood and nationalities, often took the shape of private interest and investment. Terrorist networks, mercenaries, parastatal actors who struggle with each other, but also struggle against nations, have maintained a seemingly peaceful state for tens and hundreds of years, for it is obvious that the world is not developing peacefully, almost anywhere on the planet. The black and white binary, war-versus-peace judgment proved to be simplistic and limitative, knowing that as such, in pure state, these two realities are not met in history. War and peace are fluid realities, when they were prefaced by war declarations, and then by peace talks.

In 1969, Charles Herman considered the crisis a “*situation that: 1) threatens high priority objectives for decision-making; 2) reduces the time available for a response before the situation is changed; 3) when it occurs, it surprises the members of the decision unit*”⁴.

In 1982, Karl Deutsch W. postulated four major features of the crisis: event, decision, *threat*⁵ and *time*.⁶ Both Deutsch and Herman considered that the four characteristics can definitively explain the term crisis, although new realities, along with the diversification of transnational actors, include far subtler and far more dangerous relationships, with unexpected and difficult predictable developments and reactions.

The United States addresses the term of crisis from the perspective of its own national defense strategy as “*an incident or situation involving a threat to the United States of America, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions or vital US interests, which develops rapidly and creates conditions of such diplomatic, economic, political or military importance that it derails the engagement of the US Armed Forces and resources to achieve the national goals*”.

In France, the crisis is determined by “*a situation in which individuals, groups and / or institutions disagree with social norms, rules*”.

⁴ *Crisis in Foreign Policy. A Simulation Analysis*, Indianapolis, 1969

⁵ US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02 *Dod Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 2004

⁶ *Crisis Decision-Making the Information Approach*, 1982

and values and organize themselves so as to alter the existing social order”⁷.

In Romania, the crisis situation is defined as: “*the evolving phase of a society, marked by major difficulties arising from the occurrence of a national/international event(s) or threats, risks and vulnerabilities regarding the values, interests and needs of the actors involved, imposing urgent and effective solutions to eliminate the causes and return to normality. The consequences of a crisis situation can be manifested by: interruption/impairment of political, social, economic or other activity; endangering citizens or factories, exposure to major security risks to the population or to a community; regional propagation of the effects of the crisis, with concrete impact on the security, objectives and strategic interests of the state*”⁸.

Sociologically, the crisis can be defined by Catalin Zamfir’s assessment as “*a period in the dynamics of a system in which the accentuated accumulation of difficulties and the conflicting expression of tensions make its normal functioning difficult, causing strong pressure for change. The crisis is the manifestation of temporary or chronic difficulties in organizing a system, expressing its inability to function in the existing way. The exit from the crisis is done either through the structural change of the system or through important adaptive changes of its structure*”⁹.

The difficulty of defining crises comes from their adaptive nature, depending on “*the intensity with which the conflicts and the crisis have manifested, the type of actors involved, the nature of the object in dispute, the aim pursued and, last but not least, the consequences it has generated*”¹⁰.

⁷ J. Bremond, Geledan, *Dictionnaire economique et social*, Ed. Hatier, Paris, 1990

⁸ *Ghidul Strategiei Naționale de Apărare a Țării pentru perioada 2015-2019*, 2015, www.presidency.ro

⁹ *Criză*. In *Dictionar de sociologie*, coord. Cătălin Zamfir și Lazăr Vlasceanu, Editura Babel, 1998

¹⁰ Teodor Frunzeti, Dorel Bușe, *Politici și instituții de securitate*, Editura UNAp, București, 2010, p.15

Different types of conflicts, be they economic, or geostrategic, are generating different types of crisis, “*depending on the communities in which they occur and, consequently, on the perceptions that these communities have on the conflict and the crisis*”¹¹.

Some voices appreciate that the emergence of conflicts and, implicitly, crises, produce the following typologies: “*interstate conflicts that involve two or more states; extra-system armed conflicts that occur when faced outside a space by a state with a group of non-state actors such as colonial wars; international armed conflict when faced with state-owned government forces with paramilitary grouping supported by other states; purely internal armed conflict*”¹².

As international relations gained increasing influence and legitimacy, the risks of reaching an open inter-state conflict diminished. After World War II – because of the deregulation of the economies, following the conflagration, and the significant changes in capital markets, which show a specific sensitivity to any kind of conflict and crisis - the great nations realized that the wars, beyond the position of power, through statements of patriotism and interest, jeopardize the very economic development of industrialized countries through the human and material losses they cause, whether they lose or win the war or the conflict in which they are engaged. From the concept of “*total warfare*”, by which a nation or a bloc of allied nations demanded the surrender or surrender of the opponent both territorially and economically, the new international circumstances redrawn as a result of the phenomena of globalization - in which the commercial, private and the emergence of capital markets generated the appearance of actors who were openly competing and also deliberately preventing states from imposing their influence - the nineteenth century forever reset the appetite of states for wars, of course those wars in which they are not directly involved. Accepting the demarcation made by Ilie Bădescu between the different stages of conflict development - from the dynastic conflict, between the monarchs, the conflict of the peoples,

¹¹*Ibidem*, p.16

¹² Small, Melvin, J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816 – 1980*, Beverly Hills, CA, SAGE 1982

between the nations, passing through the ideological conflict communism, fascism, liberalism and ending with the internationalization of conflicts as a result of deep interconnections globalization products - the contemporary phase of conflict leads to the emergence of "logistic warfare". It has at hand a "logistic weapon, aimed at shattering the resistance of a whole people, without attacking the armed forces, without bullets, by attacking institutions, symbols, visions, religion, mythology, the way of being an entire people. The effect of humiliation is huge, the perplexity is total and generalized, the paralysis of the soul is also generalized, hence the generalized logistics weapon"¹³.

The twentieth-century nations were prone after their two world wars to regulate their influence and interests by engaging in low-intensity conflicts, and making the international fragile balance a screen to conceal their true intentions of economic hegemony and capital. Faced with the emergence of non-state forces with sectarian and anti-Western goals, the twentieth-century states have sought out various forms of security solidarity.

International terrorism, perhaps the most pernicious phenomenon resulting precisely from the hegemonic, bellicose and lasting geopolitical behavior of the great powers of imposing itself on the international scene over the last two hundred years, is the direct result of the greed and the thirst for power of the richest and most influential nations of the planet. Taking full advantage of the process of globalization, unprecedented expansion and access to new technologies, terrorists - in groups, soldiers or retailers - hit major nations with their own weapons: trade and free movement, unhindered access to today's communication technologies, the mainstreaming of human, women, family and child rights.

As a result, the 21st century will, by far, be responsible for internationally agglutinating mechanisms to increase the ability to counteract conflicts and asymmetric attacks by crucially accessing the resources of solidarity, cooperation and co-operation of all the world's states, against the unseen enemy here, near me and near you, at home, on the street, in your city and your country. The role of communication, the

¹³ *Tratat de geopolitică*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2004

media-consumer relationship with the media, public relations between institutions, authorities and citizens is the quest and battle front for finding solutions to prevent/anticipate, manage and resolve crises.

Crisis from a military perspective

Militaries consider the crisis to be related to conflict and war but also to the conflict itself. This happens just because, for some, the crisis is “*a dysfunctionality within an existential, systemic normality, or on the contrary - a catastrophic state, a point of inflection of a fatal process*”¹⁴.

Military theory defines the crisis as an intermediate stage between peace and war, or the result of the accumulation in time of disorganized processes and the generation of perverse social processes that destroy or break the links between the three functions of the nation and produce tensions and social conflicts. Sociologist Lucian Culda believes that “*a social crisis becomes a state of crisis of the nation, in the conditions in which the actions and behaviors of the political decision makers make the situation of people insecure, so that the public management processes can no longer be functional*”¹⁵.

Communicators basically regard the crisis from a relational perspective, without giving it a negative connotation. Henri Wad believes that “*the crisis is a constituent factor in the genesis and development of man and culture*”¹⁶. Furthermore, Peter Bruck believes that the jolt of media shows and dramatizes the journalists to offer distorted information to the public to turn them into crises, which they cover without criticizing them. “*This dangerous game of media refraction of reality in attractive and perfectly plausible virtual realities deploys the media consumer in the immediate reality and carries it into a meta-reality, weighted by rating and advertising quotas, and raises new obstacles to understanding the crisis, the role and the stake of communication. Insidious communication techniques*

¹⁴ Teodor Frunzeti, Dorel Bușe, *Politici și instituții de securitate*, Editura UNAp, București, 2010, p.23

¹⁵ Lucian Culda, *Devenirea oamenilor in procesualitatea socială*, Editura Licorna, București, 1997

¹⁶ Henri Wad, *Hommo Loquens*, Editura Hasafer, București, 2001

often succeed in creating the appearance of a crisis, whether political, military, economic or social. The paradox of the enterprise in question is that, as new media mechanisms come into play, the appearance of the crisis becomes a fact in itself and claims its real crisis status. The game of perceptions through the media leads to the creation of a new type of truth, reality: the truth of television, the reality of the press”¹⁷.

If, in the terms of communication science, conflict is nothing more than a form of communication, such as cooperation, it is obvious that a more complex form of communication is needed to resolve the conflict. Communicative failures responsible for triggering conflicts or crises are required to be managed through integrative and consonant mechanisms so that the resolution of the conflict or the crisis can be achieved.

Media induced crises

A vital area of knowledge is the knowledge of the media phenomenon. Mass media, its role in triggering, sometimes generating and amplifying crises, is one of the most important operating tools in crisis management situations. Permanent monitoring of media institutions that can propagate and sustain social tensions, attack national values and symbols, launch biased opinion polls, or coincide false, unverified information on topics of national interest. All press can be a real support by publishing analyses and indicators on the degradation of some situations, at the attitude of some external actors about the country or a specific area, the resumption of a revisionist discourse, revenge, measures taken by international bodies, information with regard to paramilitary or terrorist groups, the detection of the existence of organized crime networks.

Press is a splinter of opportunities and transparency, but also the place where a crisis can be triggered, then be propagated through the new media tool, and transmitted to the consumer with the validation of sources as a factual fact. The informational warfare, mass influence operations, psychological operations (*psyops*) employing overwhelming institutions and

¹⁷ Peter Bruck, *Crisis as Spectacle: Tabloid News and Politics of Outrage*, in vol *Media Crisis and Democracy. Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, Sage Publications, Londra, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 1995

press media in numbers and credibility are the challenges that a national security system has to face.

Media crises are induced and generated by internal and external factors and are based on the fact that it engenders the emotional level of perception, taking advantage of the fact that there are few witnesses to the event they are real spectators and consequently controls the messages and builds them in a regime its own arrangement. Of all types of crises, media crises are the most likely to be obscured and trigger unpredictable and unmanageable effects. As a consequence, perceptual issues are the most important elements to be addressed by crisis management in the field of media crises. A well-known postulate in successfully managing crises sounds like this: *“To admit that you are facing a crisis means taking the justified steps to remedy the situation, being seen taking them and heard by saying the right words”*¹⁸.



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¹⁸ Michael Regester, Judy Larkin, *Managementul crizelor și al situațiilor de risc*, București, Editura comunicare.ro, 2003, p 143

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