DEVELOPMENTS IN ROMANIAN MILITARY POLICY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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Abstract: After the First World War, the Romanian army underwent significant reforms, and the modernization process was crucial for adapting to the new realities of the XX century. The first world war and especially the Union of 1918, subject the Romanian society to new challenges, and one of the most important problems faced by the Romanian authorities during the entire period between the two world wars was the one related to the institutional-legislative unification and integration the new united provinces. The evolution of the Romanian army throughout the interwar period and up to now has been influenced by several factors, such as the international context, political, technological and strategic changes.

Keywords: interwar period, reforms, modernization, military policy, doctrine;

Introduction

The interwar period witnessed significant changes within the Romanian army, and its evolution took place in a complex context marked by the First World War. Over the decades that followed, the Romanian army has constantly adapted its structures, strategies and equipment to meet the ever-changing challenges of international security.

At the beginning of the XX century, the first world war and especially the Union of 1918, subject the Romanian society to new challenges, and one of the most important problems faced by the Romanian authorities during the entire period between the two world wars was the one related to the institutional-legislative unification and integration the new united provinces. For a short period in the united territories there continued to be parliamentary institutions with regional attributions: The Great National Council in Transylvania, the National Council in Bukovina and the Country Council in Bessarabia. *(Salagean, 2013 pp. 10-11)*

Although the picture of international life in the interwar years was marked by the existence of strong contradictions between the great powers, germ-bearing contradictions some new world conflict, a defining feature of this era is the staggering efforts of those states interested in finding new means to ensure their national independence and territorial integrity. It is primarily the newly created or re-united states following the collapse of multinational empires that put above all the maintenance of peace and territorial status quo in the world, because only under these conditions could they start the huge program of economic, social and cultural recovery. Unfortunately, the political-diplomatic and military actions undertaken by these states in order to maintain and consolidate international peace and security have not been successful and this is due, first of all, to, the fact that their efforts did not receive the proper support of France and especially Great Britain.

In front of the reunified Romanian state, there was a need to make large social, administrative, political and military changes, required by the progress of the Romanian society in the new historical stage in which it had stepped. *(Topor R., 2023 p. 86).*

The development, modernization and improvement of the military body took place in completely new conditions, because the political, economic, social factors, geographically and demographically generated by the completion of the process of formation of the unitary Romanian national state have also determined the change of the doctrinal-strategic orientation and of the structure of the Romanian military system. *(Olteanu C., 2002 p. 31)*

Military reforms after the first world war

The political-military alliances realized by Romania in the interwar years aimed at the defense objectives set by the general policy of the unitary state, to reject any aggression, to maintain the status quo. peace and security in the southeast and east of the continent, at the level of all Europe. The Romanian political-diplomatic approaches started from the recital that Romania, in alliance with other small and medium-sized states in Europe of anti-revisionist orientation, he could play an important role in countering the aggressive actions of the forces of war. *(Vlad, I. 2010)*

After the First World War, the Romanian army underwent significant reforms, and the modernization process was a crucial aspect for adapting to the new realities of the XX century. In the overall rethinking of the country's armed power, the need to expand the armed force, created and consolidated in the Old Kingdom, had to be taken into account. Romania's military structure had to be adapted to the new state changes in southeastern and central Europe. Among other things, Romania had to take into account not only the new reality, the fact that the number of its neighbors had increased from four to six, their attitude towards it, he said, but also by the fact that, for the moment, some of the great powers had disappeared from its borders.

The material endowment, an essential factor of the war potential, constituted one of the most difficult problems faced by the Romanian Army in the First World War, the interwar period and during the Second World War. The causes are multiple, complex, and a detailed analysis of them may be the subject of a separate case study. After the Great Union of 1918, for about 15 years, the endowment of the army, the creation and development of their own defense industry took a second place in the concerns of political decision makers, Romania has experienced great delays in this area. *(Nicolau I., 2013)*

At the beginning of the fourth decade of the twentieth century, the Romanian state was in a situation of being able to procure from the internal market only in modest quantities of armament, weapons, equipment and equipment for the defense of the country.

In this sense, it should be noted that in the interwar period, on the issue of army endowment, there was a continuous dispute between two approaches that were diametrically opposed by their content. The first was about promoting the idea of developing a national war industry, considered as the only way to achieve economic independence, at least in the military field, without being conditioned by imports from other countries. The second way highlighted the weak development of the Romanian industry, its impossibility to supply the necessary equipment and equipment to the army, and considered that the provision of such materials could only be achieved, at that time, through imports. [1]

Roughly, among the main reforms and changes that took place during this period, some refer to:

a. General reorganization. So as part of the reforms, divisions were abolished, and mobile brigades and more flexible troops were introduced in their place to better respond to the demands on the battlefield.

b. Technological modernization. As part of the modernization process, tanks were introduced to the equipment of the Romanian army. This represented a significant change in military tactics and allowed greater mobility on the battlefield. Regarding the development of the air component, military aviation was developed, and Romania began to use aircraft for reconnaissance and air support.

c.Significant efforts have been made to improve the training of officers and NCOs. Therefore, the Officers' School in Sibiu was reorganized and modernized to meet international standards.

d. Modernized infantry and artillery. The infantry and artillery were equipped with new and modern weapons, including automatic weapons and large-caliber artillery pieces.

e. Development of the navy. As part of the modernization efforts, special attention was paid to the development of the Navy to ensure security in the Black Sea.

f. Internal security measures. Steps have been taken to reorganize and modernize the police force, keeping in mind the importance of internal security.

These reforms and modernizations were essential for strengthening the capacities of the Romanian army and adapting it to the new challenges of the era. The significant contribution to the modernization of military tactics, the introduction of advanced technologies and adaptation to new geopolitical conditions were essential to prepare the army for the interwar period and to face future threats.

Romanian military thinking and doctrine in the interwar period

Romanian military thinking has evolved over time, being influenced by the historical, geographical and geopolitical context. Traditionally, the Romanian military strategy was oriented towards the defense of the national territory and throughout its history it had various periods of intensification or reduction of military activities, depending on the political situation and external threats.

Recognizing, generally unanimously in the era, the need to develop a doctrine to guide the armed activity, the opinions were grouped at a given moment, broadly, into three currents (Olteanu C., 2002, p. 32). The first recommends the adoption of foreign military doctrines proven to be the most effective, in particular the French one; the second current one advocates the adaptation of foreign doctrines, especially the French one, but not the one of the First World War, which proved to be bankrupt, but the Napoleonic doctrine of manoeuvring warfare, of movement[2]. The exponents of the third current militated for an indigenous military doctrine, based on the realities of the country and the traditions of the Romanian people. Although during the First World War new types of weapons had appeared, such as armour and aviation, predominantly offensive weapons, which were to lead to notable changes in the procedures of battle and operation, to recreate the concept of operations, Romanian military specialists remained, in the main, on the old positions.

Romanian military thinkers still considered the infantry as the main army, and this will be the case for many decades, appreciating the cavalry, along with artillery, tanks and aviation, as a mobile weapon, capable of decisive actions in the war of movement. This, while German military theorists, for example, placed great emphasis on the element of mobility and, in context, on the role of tanks and aviation.

The First World War had demonstrated the need for essential changes in the proportions between types of weapons, the tactical field combat procedures and the organic composition of units. Along these lines, in the process of reorganization and modernization of the Romanian army, the aim was to create a flexible defense system in which the division would be able to carry out independent combat actions. The need to increase the firepower and mobility of the troops was also taken into account, as well as the equipping and equipping of the units with modern weaponry, with special attention being paid to the weight of new types of weapons, especially "technical" weapons and mechanized means.

The Romanian military doctrine was the result of a process of deep knowledge and analysis of the economic, political and military domestic and international realities of the interwar period; it was based on the knowledge of the Romanian people's experience of struggle for the defence of their national and national identity, on the traditions and specific features of

our army, on the lessons and experience gained by the Romanian army in the war of national liberation and state reunification (1916-1919), as well as on some of the principles that guided the military doctrine and art of other countries.

In accordance with all these factors, the Romanian military doctrinaires were keen to point out that since the Romanian state was not considering the seizure or annexation of foreign territories, it completely excluded the idea of an aggressive war against any country, as well as the use or threat of force in international relations. The only war admitted as legitimate and in accordance with national interests was the war of defence against any aggression that would endanger the unity of the independent national state and the sovereignty of Romania.

Many of the Romanian military thinkers were fully convinced that to achieve the "armed nation" required special efforts; it required a lot of organization and a long time for every citizen to become aware of the necessity both in peacetime and in wartime to participate in the general defense effort and to achieve an army and a territory organized and equipped according to the requirements of modern battlefield defense. In this sense, the economic factor was at the forefront of interwar military thinking. The literature of the time increasingly believed that victory in the war of the whole nation would be decided by its economic preparedness.

Conclusions

The evolution of the Romanian army from the interwar period to the present reflects its adaptability to geopolitical and technological changes. From the initial modernisations after the First World War to the post-communist reforms and integration into NATO structures, the Romanian army has evolved to respond dynamically to the challenges of the times. Thus, looking back and forward, its evolution serves as an example of the transformations brought about by history and the changing needs of global security.

The evolution of the military policy of the great powers in the inter-war years fully confirms the words of Winston Churchill who, as early as November 1919 when he was Minister of War, declared: "Do not be unjust to the army now that the war is over. You may need the dance again, with all the League of Nations in which we have put so much hope". It was in this complex and contradictory international context that Romania's military policy evolved in the interwar years.

Today, the Romanian Army continues to adapt to today's challenges and improve its capabilities to face the complex threats of the 21st century. Active participation in international military exercises and contribution to NATO missions demonstrate Romania's commitment to global security.

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