

A NEW APPROACH TO BUILDING AND DEVELOPING DEFENSE CAPABILITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

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The purpose of the article is to elaborate on the existing theory and practice about Defense Capabilities of the Republic of Bulgaria. Furthermore, by applying the systematic approach, it tries to propose a new method for building the National Defense Capability in order to achieve integrity. As a result, new conditions are established that contribute to the national defense system management; they are to be considered in a systematic context, and thus, social relations are placed at a new conceptual level.

Key words: national security, defense system, governance, defense capabilities

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, we have witnessed significant changes in the global military-political environment, particularly in the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. Typical examples of these changes are the arms race along NATO's eastern flank, the crisis in Ukraine, the continuing tensions in the Balkans, the conflicts in Syria, North Africa, etc. The visible expression of all this is constant instability in the Middle East, growing military activity of Turkey, the US, Russia, Iran and China, increased migration and growing radicalism on the European continent. As a result of these changes, as well as the impact of a number of additional factors from internal (increasing social and ethnic divisions in some countries) and external nature (radicalization and terrorism), there is an increased hybrid impact on different spheres of social life.

It is worth noting that there is a tendency for a certain change in the views on the character of possible risks and threats in the world, mainly in shifting the focus from the common interests of existing alliances to those of individual states. In other words, it can be claimed that globalization seems to be on its way to fail with an increasingly open debate about the process of de-globalization. We are also witnessing individual (with an unclear international legal basis) steps to neutralize the new risks and threats taken by countries (e.g.

Turkey's actions in Syria) in order to protect their national interests, while collective responses in most cases are inadequate or delayed.

In response to this, the Republic of Bulgaria has launched a number of measures, mainly in the legislative sphere, which have been reflected in the updating of some normative acts in the sphere of security and defense - the Law on the Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the adoption of new ones - the Law on the Management and Functioning of the National Security Protection System, the Counter Terrorism Act, Cyber Security National Strategy "Cyber Resilient Bulgaria 2020", Strategy for Counteraction to Radicalization and Terrorism, etc. The aim of these measures was to overcome the existing deficit in capabilities both in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria and in terms of increasing the sustainability and civic readiness of the non-military component of the defense system. For example, the Counter-Terrorism Act regulates the involvement of the Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism, and with the change of the Law on the Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria they have also been assigned tasks for the protection of the state border. On this basis, the Armed Forces formations were defined, and they were to undergo specialized training

in programs, which were coordinated in advance with the Ministry of Interior (MoI). As a result, conditions for closer interaction between the Armed Forces and the structures of the Ministry of Interior were created. This in turn has demonstrated the need to seek new conceptual approaches in defining, building and developing integrated capabilities for joint operations and actions by security forces to protect national security.

Undoubtedly, state authorities, mainly the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, are ambitious to become more committed to the obligations our country has undertaken in the defense sector through NATO. To this end, a National Plan was adopted by the Republic of Bulgaria for host nation support to NATO forces, in view of the NATO Defense Plan. It is also important that our country is an active participant in many exercises, together with our NATO and EU partners.

At the same time, however, there is an ongoing process of deepening the crisis in the structures of the national security system, and in particular those of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior, which is a permanent incompleteness of the armed forces and the structures of the Ministry of Interior, low motivation of staff, obsolete armament and equipment, insufficient financing of modernization processes, etc. There has been no desire to achieve a political consensus on taking long-term and effective measures to stop the process of erosion in the defense system capabilities, nor is there awareness of the vital necessity to carry out a comprehensive strategic review (this has not taken place for nearly 15 years) of the national security and defense systems.

Such a review is needed because there is obvious vacuum in the subsystems of the security and defense systems, and we could even claim that some of these subsystems are missing. Therefore, it is critical to carry out such a review and, on this basis, to develop and adopt a whole new set of security and defense regulations. This is the only way for functional and integrated defense system architecture to be created to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the

mission of the system on the basis of increasing inter-institutional interaction and integrity in defense capacity building in the overall set of preparatory steps for defense.

The need to meet such a requirement was also confirmed in a lecture delivered by the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Order and Security and Minister of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria at the opening of the academic year 2017/2018 at Rakovski National Defense College. He stated that "The changed security environment places new and higher requirements on our national defense capabilities within NATO's collective defense and EU Common Security and Defense Policy ..." [1]. Emphasis was also placed on the need for unified actions of all the elements comprising the national security system. In this sense, "The capabilities of the Bulgarian Armed Forces must be combined with the other instruments of national power in the political, diplomatic, economic, and information spheres. Thus, defense investment leads to increased efficiency of the entire national security system" [1].

From what has been said so far, it is clear that the issue of the national defense capability is current, and it must be included in the list of priorities for the government. Moreover, it should not be seen simply as a formal problem falling within the competency of the Ministry of Defense, but as a basis for building the country's defense system. Given the essence of the term "defense", the challenges related to building and developing national defense capability should be addressed and, more importantly, solved through the prism of social relations, because in essence the national defense system is a complex social system.

Therefore, there is an objective justification for the need for research that, on the one hand, reveals the dynamics under the changing security environment, especially the growth of non-traditional and asymmetric risks and threats, and on the other hand, seeks ways to fill the existing vacuum in the normative basis regulating the public relations between institutions and citizens. On this basis, an alternative to meet the resulting organizational and functional challenges in the

construction and development of the national defense capability shall be offered. In this context, *the purpose* of this article is to answer the question: why is there a need to change the approach to building and developing the defense capabilities of the country? The answer to this question involves seeking arguments and justifying a mechanism using a different, mostly systemic, approach to building national defense capability to meet the above-mentioned new requirements.

2. WHERE ARE THE PROBLEMS AND WHICH ARE THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS?

In order to achieve the stated goal, the article addresses *two issues arising from each other*, namely: the presentation of sufficiently clear arguments proving the necessity of changing the views on building and developing the defense capabilities of the country; and a rationale for a new conceptual Model for the construction and development of the national defense capability, which presents separate aspects, revealing the conditions for its introduction, the state and the order for building the defense capability of the country.

2.1. The need to change the views and conceptual framework of the Model

The first problem we will be dealing with it to prove the **need to change the views on building and developing the defense capabilities of the country**. It is well known that the strategic goal of defense policy is to build, maintain and use the defense capabilities of the country that are adequate to the development of the country's security [2] (item 157).

According to the Law on Defense and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria (LDAFRB), "The maintenance of the country's defense capability is an obligation of the state authorities, the armed forces, the local self-government bodies and the local administration, as well as the citizens and the legal entities to whom it is entrusted. It is also stated that "the defense of the Republic of

Bulgaria is carried out with the effective use of the national defense potential, including the armed forces and non-military components" [3] (Art. 7, para. 1 and 2).

In addition, the National Defense Strategy determines that "Defense is a comprehensive, government activity with unified leadership, planning, finances and resources" [4] (item 39, p. 10). For its part, the Law on Defense and the Armed Forces further develops this formulation, stipulating that "The defense of the Republic of Bulgaria is a system of political, economic, military, social and other activities to provide a stable security environment and to prepare and implement armed protection of the territorial integrity and independence of the country. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, the state bodies, the bodies of local self-government and the local administration, the legal entities and the citizens are assigned their rights and obligations to prepare and implement the defense of the country" [3] (Art. 3, para. 1 and 2). Unfortunately, these statements are insufficient in terms of achieving the end goal - maintaining the defense capability of the country. This is due to the fact that there is *no regulation who, with whom, how and why should interact, and what the interrelationships and dependencies are between the elements of the national defense system* in order to build collective, integrated defense capabilities within the scope of activities and tasks of preparing the country for defense.

This thesis is also confirmed by the analysis of the main strategic documents in the field of security and defense, which shows that they, apart from lack of coherence and coordination [5], do not consider either in theoretical or in practical terms, any formulation mechanisms and approaches to build the country's capabilities needed to reliably defend its territorial integrity and independence; i.e. its defense capabilities. The documents do not specify the steps and ways to build the capabilities of the military and non-military components, how to integrate them and implement them within the country's defense system, or how to build and maintain

interoperability capabilities between individual components.

On the other hand, strategic documents refer mainly to collective (allied) capabilities, or to the defense capabilities of the armed forces, to individual structures or subsystems. It is true that in the Updated National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (UNSSRB) in 2018, together with the multiple use of the concept "abilities" in different contexts, for the first time, emphasis was placed on the need for certain capabilities of the National Security Protection System, as one of the priorities of the country's security policy [2] (item 78). This list of capabilities, however, is too vague, mainly related to the modernization of the armed forces and complementing the incomplete structure of the Security System but does not make any demands on the capabilities of the non-military component. And this is because the methodology and the logical link between the main strategic documents have been violated. In this case, the updated Strategy was adopted two years after the next in the hierarchy – the National Defense Strategy, which is in fact its subordinate, sectoral strategy.

In other words, it can be argued that the approach used in defining and building the defense capabilities of the Armed Forces and the non-military component of the national defense system is again predominantly institutional. Proof of this is the lack of coordination between them and their relationship with other documents. For example, the Program for the Development of Defense Capabilities of Bulgarian Armed Forces 2020 [6] states the requirements for armed forces capabilities - planning method, input-output measures of assessment, engagement with mission capabilities, including within NATO. By a Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria of 2011 [7], a "List of the basic defense capabilities of the country (civilian component)" has been defined, in view of the assigned wartime tasks in defense of the country. Thus, the parameters of these capabilities are related to the wartime needs of the country for the production and delivery of military and civilian production in view of

wartime tasks. However, the analyses here show that the requirements for the capabilities of the civilian component are not in line with the contemporary needs of the Armed Forces, the new socio-economic conditions, nor with our country's commitment to NATO membership and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the EU. As a result, an integrated national approach is not provided and the necessary conditions for full coverage of the defense tasks of the country are not created.

It is therefore appropriate to adopt a new conceptual *Model for building and developing the defense capability of the country as a basis for planning and building capabilities of the Armed Forces and the non-military component of the national defense system*. The rationale behind this is the perception that the country's defense capability is built up as a result of the two sets of capabilities - *functional and operational* defense capabilities.

Among experts, it is generally accepted that the defense capability of the country is a complex set of military and civil (non-military) abilities that are built and developed to perform defense functions and related tasks. In this context, the design and development of the national defense capability should be considered as a process involving activities in the creation of *functional areas of defense capabilities* (FADC) covering different areas in which defense takes place. For example, management, information impact, cyber defense, intelligence, strategic deployment, protection of the population and infrastructure, etc.

In turn, each functional area of defense capabilities is formed by bringing together the relevant operational capabilities developed by the different institutions and structures with assigned tasks in the defense system (see **Fig.1**). It is a prerequisite that the operational capabilities of each functional area be interoperable. Compatibility can have different dimensions and can be achieved at different levels. For example, compatibility may be military, technical, information, resource, procedural, administrative, doctrinal, etc.

If we have to summarize everything that has been said so far with regard to the need to

change the views on building and developing the defense capabilities of the country, we should reiterate the fact that, from the point of view of functional areas of defense capabilities, achieving compatibility between assets and resources both in the Armed Forces and in the non-military component of the national defense system will require the development (presence) and implementation of common concepts, doctrines, procedures, projects, etc., in order to achieve and maintain interchangeability or uniformity. This can and must be implemented by applying standards and models of training and exercises, enabling them to carry out operations effectively together, in fulfillment of their assigned missions and tasks.

In other words, a key feature of the proposed Model appears to be the most important imperative in building the country's defense capability, namely to achieve interoperability between the capabilities of the Armed Forces and the non-military component of the national defense system. For this reason, it can be argued that the Model is significant, not only theoretically but also from a practical point of view, because it contributes to the systematic and comprehensive consideration of the process of construction and development of national defense capability and creates conditions for increasing inter-institutional interaction within the national defense system, i.e. it leads to the improvement of the national defense system management

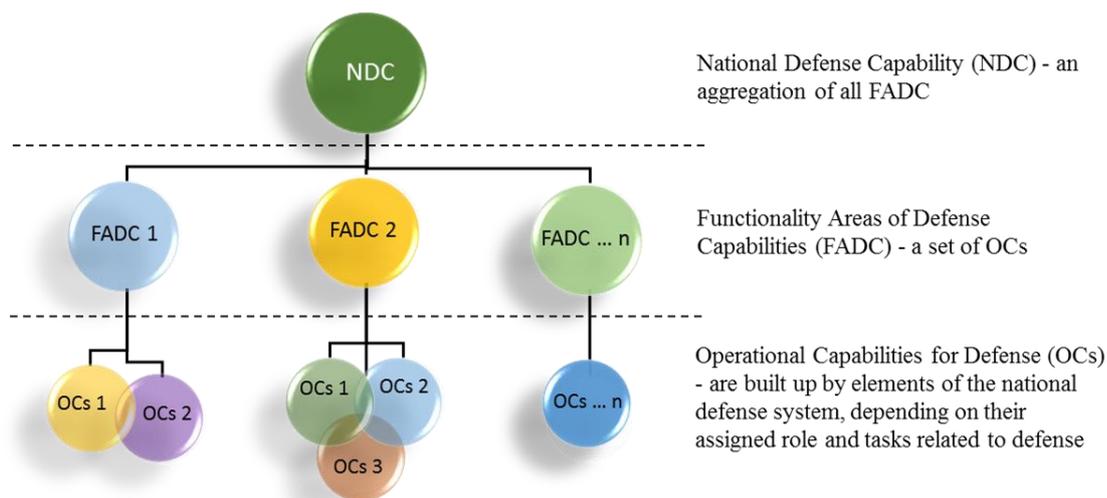


Fig. 1. Model for building and developing the defense capability of the country

2.2. Methodological imperatives in applying the Model for building and developing the defense capability of the country

2.2.1. Prerequisites for implementation of the Model

The second problem requires creating the conditions for introducing the proposed new conceptual Model, the approaches to assess the current status, and the order for building the defense capability of the country.

As mentioned above, currently there is no existing model, algorithm or system of theoretical steps and approaches to the order, conditions, stages and logic in the construction of the national defense capability. It is undisputed, however, that *such a model is needed and it is essential that it be set as a conceptual idea in the provisions of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria.* Thus, the National Security Strategy will state what capabilities are to be built up by the armed forces, what other capabilities shall exist in the other spheres of public life,

and their mutual interdependence will be determined. This will provide guidance for developing sectoral strategies - defense, information, social, economic, political, environmental, etc., which will ensure the emergence of their integral component and achieve more effective inter-institutional interaction in time of crises and conflicts.

It is also important that the Model for building and developing the defense capability of the country be accepted as a *methodological basis for the development and accomplishment of the objectives of the National Defense Strategy*, as well as in the other doctrinal defense documents. Along with the issues related to the objectives, functions, tasks and priorities of defense policy, a detailed description of the approaches to building, developing and using military and civil capabilities of the defense system shall be present. It should also be explicitly stated who, how and what operational capabilities are to be built in functional areas, as well as the steps of their provision and joint use, in case of necessity. This is particularly important to achieve a new, higher level of interaction within the country's defense system.

After the National Defense Strategy develops the Model and defines the objectives, functions, tasks, steps for building, development and use of military and civilian capabilities of the defense system, *the doctrines and plans shall elaborate on the deadlines, stages, means and responsibilities of the institutions and organizations with responsibilities assigned to the defense of the country*. Thus, at the lower governance levels, coordination will be ensured in building functional areas of capabilities, and conditions will be created for better synergy in shared use of assets.

The defense capability of the country is a function of the degree of development of military and civilian capabilities, and is therefore assessed by conducting periodic reviews of defense and/or force structures. One or another level of the defense capability is the result, on the one hand, of the political will and ambition of the state leadership, and on the other - an expression of the real actions undertaken to build and maintain military and

civilian defense capabilities. All these aspects are generally reflected in the defense policy of the country, and in practice the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of these levels are achieved by implementing a number of programs and/or plans to develop the capabilities of the armed forces and other forces, structures and institutions in the defense system. The degree of realization of political ambitions, the effectiveness of defense policy and the implementation of plans and programs are evaluated annually, and the results shall be reflected in the Report on the State of Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Report shall be discussed and adopted by the Security Council of the Council of Ministers and then submitted for adoption by the Council of Ministers.

2.2.2. Methods of building and developing the defense capability of the country

When it comes to the methods of building the defense capability of the country, the following principles shall be taken into account: modern defense management; planning, based on capabilities and probable scenarios; technological development of the defense system and rearmament of the armed forces, applying lessons learned from participation in missions and operations; preparation and training of human resources in the defense; increasing our involvement in joint structures, programs and projects with our allies and partners; incorporating the national defense technological and industrial base into the development of research/innovation capabilities; updating concepts and doctrines on the development and use of military and civilian components of the defense system, etc.

In order to fully clarify the mechanism for building and developing the defense capability of the country, we will present *some considerations* related to the description of its main components, in which the two groups of capabilities of different institutions and structures of the defense system are built.

Firstly, the following requirement is laid down in the National Defense Strategy: "the development and improvement of the country's

defense capabilities is a necessary condition for building a modern and effective defense system" [4] (item 38, p. 10). Unfortunately, there is no further information on the mechanism or method of fulfillment of this good wish, nor does the document mention who is to implement it. It only speaks about the defense capabilities of the armed forces - their components, requirements and the principles of their construction. Therefore, we consider it unrealistic that national capabilities, which are the resultant dimension between those of the armed forces and the capabilities that are built up by the various non-military component institutions and organizations, automatically unite in an integral entity and form *the defense capability of the country*.

An important and indispensable condition for all the capabilities of both the armed forces and individual institutions and organizations is that they are viewed as a common set of multiple dimensions united by common goals, tasks and efforts planned and used in a particular design and by a single control body. For this reason, it is imperative that the National Defense Strategy, along with the components, requirements and principles of building capabilities of the armed forces, stipulate the same requirements on the capabilities of non-military component institutions and organizations. Only when all of them are united by functional areas, common scenarios, and unified leadership, a higher level of interaction between the individual entities in the system can be expected, and a greater effect with fewer resources will be achieved.

Secondly, the National Defense Strategy states that "the implementation of a comprehensive approach to crisis and conflict management becomes vital to successfully countering hybrid forms of war. It is crucial that the actions of the Armed Forces be synchronized with all governmental and non-governmental organizations and structures within a single strategy and plan" [4] (item 39, p. 10). In this case, however, the National Defense Strategy is not specific enough about the ways and approaches to achieve this goal, and does not determine in practice who will implement it. This determines the need to

elaborate and, at the same time, to centralize some of the functions of governance. Comprehensiveness in planning is impossible without trust and a desire for joint work and integration between the various actors. All this is achieved only if there is a single (common) national decision-making model with clearly defined decision-making rights, roles, responsibilities, models of interaction, etc.

Third, the National Defense Strategy states that to ensure defense the armed forces and the non-military component of the defense system build and maintain capabilities to perform tasks [4] (item 49, p. 12). A number of tasks that they should be able to perform are listed. In view of the practical realization of the Model, one possible approach is to group these tasks in the following **four areas**:

- intelligence and surveillance (related to the so-called intelligence community, which is part of the early warning system for direct threats to security and defense);
- covering the threatened section of the state border and ensuring the deployment of Allied forces and NATO assets on Bulgarian territory (ensuring strategic deployment of the defense system, demonstration of force and conditions for conducting joint defense operations under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - host nation support by Bulgaria);
- protection of state borders with non-combatant neighbors where and when necessary; protection and defense of critical sites on the territory of the country; fight against landing, diversion-intelligence and terrorist groups of opposing forces; maintaining public order and internal security (covering defense activities on the territory of the country in wartime);
- providing civilian resources in the interest of defense; maintenance, recovery and technical cover of national infrastructure; assistance in disasters, accidents and catastrophes; restoration of destructions, etc. (covering the bulk of civil defense activities).

The operational capabilities of the Armed Forces and the structures of the non-military component should be built for the

accomplishment of the tasks in the four distinct areas. Thus, the functional areas for the “Defense” Mission and the related operational capabilities will become basic and will be used in accordance with the specific conditions of the crisis or conflict. The need to pool tasks in areas from the point of view of the capability of interaction between military and civilian entities stems from the fact that most of them will be implemented jointly. This, in turn, raises the requirement for joint preparation of authorities and assets, and ability to carry out operations and actions jointly, i.e. interoperable military and civilian capabilities will be required.

It is worth noting a fact related to the lack of tasks in the “Defense” Mission *information* field, occupying the fifth domain of modern crises and conflicts. This FADC requires the development of operational capabilities by all institutions for participation in information campaigns and operations, as well as cyber security and defense capabilities.

Of course, due to the specificity of this article on the defense capability of the country, we reckon *it is appropriate to add one of the most important FADC in defense - the defense system management*. This capability also requires building, maintaining readiness for immediate use and continued development of operational capabilities by all institutions for sustainable governance and defense management at all levels to fulfill the above groups of tasks.

Fourth, by analogy with the definition of operational capabilities in the National Defense Strategy, it can be assumed that **the defense capability of the country** is *an opportunity to carry out activities and actions to achieve a specific objective(s) or a desired end result (protection of national interests) under certain conditions in space and time in accordance with accepted standards*. Similar to the common understanding in the National Defense Strategy for building operational capabilities in the Armed Forces, the national

defense capability can also be considered as a *set of indivisible components* that can be distributed in the following three areas: ***cognitive, social and technical*** (see Fig. 2).

The cognitive area includes a well-ordered, synchronized and adequate to the security environment regulatory framework, an organizational and functional structure of the architecture of the national defense system, and a purposeful joint preparation of the structures and forces. *The social area* includes qualified and trained managerial, expert and executive staff with the necessary expertise. The technical area includes the resources (tangible and intangible) and functionally built infrastructure for defense of the country. Every structural element of the defense system may develop more than one operational capability and every functional capability may be provided with more than one structural element.

The cumulative result of the degree of development of the components in the three areas of the national defense capability is present in the *physical sphere*, i.e. in the effectiveness and efficiency of realization of the planned goals and effects.

Fifth, the construction and maintenance of the country's defense capacity *shall be inextricably linked to the defense planning process*. This is because it is precisely in the course of this process that the identification of the necessary and the acquisition of new capabilities or the release from existing ones is carried out with a view to the future development of the defense capability of the country. Defense planning includes decision-making with a different horizon and cycles which, in their entirety, must ensure universality, flexibility and timely response to changes in the environment, the formation and implementation of national and allied defense policies. It is based on a capabilities-based approach.

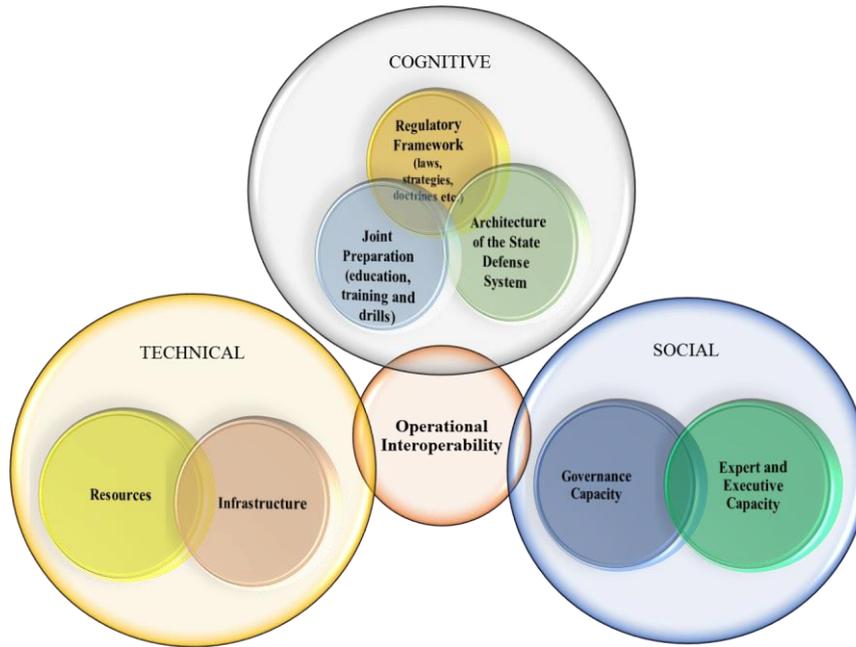


Fig. 2. Main components of the national defense capability

The defense planning process in the Republic of Bulgaria takes place in two directions, covering military (armed forces) and civilian capabilities. The process of armed forces capability planning has been well developed and is in fact integrated into the overall process of building NATO allied capabilities. This does not apply to civilian capabilities, though. Although civilian capabilities within the Alliance are planned by NATO Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee, in practice in this area of capabilities, our country has undertaken partial commitments to their development. Civilian capabilities actually exist and are being built; however, there is no clarity regarding the extent of their availability and readiness to use. This is because they are not controlled and reported in the Annual report on the Defense and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, nor do they comply with the Alliance requirements and the commitments undertaken by our country.

Therefore, the defense planning process *should be integrated at national level*, and taking into account the requirements of our country's membership in NATO and the EU, it should be *harmonized with the decisions taken by the political bodies of the two alliances* in the form of political and strategic guidelines,

as well as their common defense planning. In addition, the necessary structures and strength of both the armed forces and the civilian component of the country's defense system must be closely connected with the capabilities required by the defense planning process to ensure effective implementation of defense related tasks.

Sixth, the National Defense Strategy generally addresses the issues of financial provision for defense capacity building, setting the requirement that the process of maintaining and building the defense capability of the country under the conditions of reduced financial resources will be planned in stages by defining specific priorities for each stage, in order to implement the defense policy for a medium-term period (6 years), on the basis of the three-year budget forecast approved annually by the Council of Ministers [4] (item 121, p. 22). In practice, the national budget on the "Defense and Security" function regarding defense policy priorities provides only for the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces, whereas building non-military component capabilities in the system of defense-mobilization preparation for wartime military activities and tasks is carried out on the basis of requests for the next budget year. Thus, the non-military component institutions and

organizations are provided budget subsidies from the state budget annually through the budgets of the respective first-level budget spending units, and the activities related to defense mobilization training in the municipalities are financed with funds from the state provided for “Defense and Security” function.

A more appropriate approach appears to be the one in which **the funds for maintaining the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces are separate from those allocated for building and developing defense capabilities under the “Defense and Security” function.** This will form a separate budget for building national defense capability within the framework of the country's preparation for defense, and this budget will be broken down into separate parts directly related to the functional areas of capabilities. It is appropriate to divide it into sub-paragraphs - for the armed forces and non-military component institutions and organizations. It is important, however, to determine its amount as a percentage of the national gross domestic product and to indicate certain financial resources in the long-term as part of the country's preparation for defense. Such an approach ensures the complex implementation of the overall process of building and maintaining national defense capability, while planning and spending financial resources in the long run should also apply the *program approach* and *project management* in capacity building.

2.2.3. Expected effect from the implementation of the Model

To summarize the conditions for Model implementation, the mechanisms for assessment of the status, and approaches to build the national defense capability, we shall assume that for the building, maintenance and development of an adequate defense capability of the country, it is necessary that the National Security Strategy specify what capabilities will be built by the armed forces and what other defense capabilities should exist in other spheres of public life. The National Defense Strategy shall elaborate on the approaches to

building, developing and utilizing military and civil defense capabilities, while the planning process shall take into account the requirement for interoperability.

In the process of national defense planning, it is important to develop in detail and provide resources for a *National Defense Capability Development Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria, following the logic of the presented Model and components for its formation.* The plan shall be developed on the basis of the implementation of a program approach and project management in building the capabilities to be implemented in the defense procurement of defense products, linked to the opportunities for development of modern technologies and innovations and to the national economy. The assessment of the level of development of the country's defense capability, the need to build new capabilities, or the elimination of existing ones shall be determined as a result of periodic strategic reviews of the defense system. With a view to efficiency and effectiveness in the development of national defense capability, as well as the unified management of the defense planning process, *it is appropriate for a single national body* to plan, coordinate and control the activities of all the institutions responsible for the construction of the defense capabilities required for the fulfillment of their tasks.

It can be assumed then that the proposed Model and Guidelines for building and development of the national defense capability will essentially form a single national mechanism that will provide the defense system with management in a systemic context. This also answers the question raised at the beginning of this article - there is a need to change the country's approach to building and developing defense capabilities, in addition, a new approach to the development of the national defense capability is possible. Moreover, this new approach not only creates the conditions for consistency and comprehensiveness, but also enables social relations in social systems to be placed at a new conceptual level. Thus, the effect on the development of the whole society is expected to lead to sustainable economic and financial growth and hence to create favorable

conditions for overcoming many social challenges facing the state governance.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the arguments presented not only show the necessity of introducing this approach, but also claim that through the implementation of such a governance mechanism, conditions will be created to achieve a high level of interaction in the security and defense systems, integration of the process of development of national defense capability as a complex set of military and non-military capabilities, and hence the reliable protection of national interests. This implies both the existence of *systematic thinking and understanding of the essence of the processes and tendencies in the construction of the security system architecture, as well as political will, high expert capacity, excellent staff training and proactive civil society.*

The present study does not claim to be comprehensive but the authors are convinced that the proposed Model for building and development of the defense capability is universal in nature and can successfully serve as a basis for defense planning in other partner countries as well.

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