



The 13th International Scientific Conference
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY”**
Braşov, November 8th-9th 2018



**THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN THE RESOURCES
PLANNING STRUCTURES**

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Abstract:

An integral part of the current life, the decision is an inevitable act both at the individual level – of each man, and at the level of the structure/organization – of the leaders. The Final Paper defines the decision concept, the stages of decision making, and the actual decision-making process in the resource planning structures. Its scheme shows that the different stages of the decision-making process, starting from the generating fact, can be chained within a framework after a linear process. In reality, however, the generating fact is the bearer of a strategy in force, and new facts are likely to emerge during the decision-making process.

Key words: organization, resources, planning, information, the course of action, alternatives, optimum, phases, obstacles, risks, rationality, final decision.

1. Introduction

The decision is an essential element of management, being its specific instrument of expression. The qualitative level of the leadership of a structure is best manifested by the elaborated and applied decisions.

Managers, make decisions that concern individual person, groups of people or organizations as a whole, and that decisions can involve different significant resources – material, financial, informational, and/or human. The effect of these decisions can be felt at present or in the longer term, and sometimes even reflects on the career of the adopter.

2. Decision - Definition and Process.

For the DECISION, we can find in the Literature a lot of definitions. As a result of the data provided by the decisional practice, we can formulate the definition of this decision, as follow:

The DECISION is one of the courses, chosen to achieve one or more goals.

The examination of this definition implies that the decision necessarily involves several elements that might be: identifying one or more goals; more solutions to achieve goals; selecting an optimal solution variant - *Final decision*.

The decision is considered to be a man-specific act, although in some management papers it is stated that decisions are manifested itself in animals or even in plants (*decisions determined by species evolution*).

The decision-making environment of the organization/structure consists of various elements existing inside and/or outside of the organization, elements that make up the decisional situation, considered as important, direct and/or indirect influences, which exhibits one or more impacts of different intensity on the decision-making process and subsequently on the results of the final decision.

In the decision making process, the primary factors of the chosen decisions fall into interconnections and interdependencies, which can be reflected in different characteristics

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of the generated decisional situations. Usually, in the decision-making process, three situations are identified, as *Certainty*; *Uncertainty*; *Risk*.

1.1. Managerial decision.

Managerial decision must meet a number of *rationality requirements*, as follow:

- rely on the use of an appropriate scientific concept;
- be adopted by the person having tasks in this respect, the knowledge, qualities and aptitudes, necessary for specific decisional level;
- allow for a correct understanding of the decision, in order to be *clear, concise* and *non-contradictory*;
- be in the optimal period of development and operationalization;
- correlate the ratio between the effect obtained and the effort made;
- include all the elements necessary for the correct understanding and, especially, the implementation of the decision.

The *rationality requirements* are not always fully respected, which affects the quality of the decision.

1.2 Typology of decisions.

Decisions taken by managers in different situations are different and can be categorized by different types as follows:

- by the degree of knowledge of the environment by the decision-maker and by the nature of the variables that influence the potential results that can be obtained a deterministic decision, a probabilistic decision and a decision in uncertain conditions;
- by the time horizon for which they are adopted and the implications of their application to the object being driven - a strategic decision, a tactical decision, an operational decision
- by number of people we can identify an unipersonal decision and a group decision;
- by periodicity there is a regular decision and a random decision
- according to the number of decisional criteria that underlie the substantiation of the decisions there can be: a one-step decision, a multi-criteria decision;
- by the level of structuring - structured decision, semi-structured decision and unstructured decisions;
- the attitude of the parties involved - conflicting decisions and non-conflict decisions

1.3 The decision-making process.

The decision-making process in the resource planning activity, has as a starting point the needs of the structure/organization, but other collateral factors cannot be ignored, such as: planned stocks underway, available stocks, available financial resources, storage potential, assimilation potential, potential market offers, available time or execution speed of planning and decision making, and so on.

The rational decision-making process consists of a series of steps that managers follow formally, either based on rules and principles or based on intuition in choosing alternatives that are considered optimal.

The decision-making process has three important characteristics:

- I. Decisions can be taken by both individuals and groups;
- II. The decision-making process is both logical and complex, and decisions can be made either in a few years or in a few seconds;
- III. Decisions or their speed, are closely dependent on the information they hold.

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The decision-making process is nothing more than a process, consisting of a succession of phases in which the decision is being *prepared, developed, adopted* and *implemented*, or the similar succession of other phases as *conception phase, design phase, the selection phase* and the *implementation phase*. Each this two succession phases, are very similar by a concept and the process of decision-making must be similar to.

The decision-making process is greatly influenced by the limits of the mental capacities and emotions of the people, as well as by the environmental factors on which the decision-makers have little or no control. The *stress*, which is part of any activity, can also significantly influence the decision-making process. These traditional patterns render the influence of the human variable in decision making and the fact that decision makers do not always have to make decisions based on uncertain information.

1.4 Engendering of alternative solutions.

At this stage of the decision-making process – which usually is not used at full intensity – creativity is essential. Before a decision is adopted, it is advisable to develop alternatives or more potential solutions to solve the problem, and the potential consequences of each proposed alternative should be analyzed by scientific methods, previous practices, deductions, or others. In pursuit of alternatives, decision-makers face a number of impediments that limit the number of alternatives and can be caused by limited resources and by the human factor in the organization, which can limit the possibility of implementing certain alternatives.

Developing or obtaining alternatives depends directly on quantity and quality of information held and requires expertise, research and, comparisons. Creativity in the development of alternatives can be achieved through the use of human resources held. Searching for alternatives can continue during the assessment, which can reduce the efforts involved and the time involved.

Evaluation and comparison of alternatives are required to estimate an exit related to each proposed alternative. Estimating outputs involves specific processing as decision situations are frequently classified according to the knowledge that decision makers have over the issues.

1.5 Implementing the optimal solution.

As a result of choosing the optimal solution, the final phase is the actual implementation. Implementing the chosen solution is the immediate implementation of a new way of solving the problem.

Before selecting the right alternative, a manager may encounter the following difficulties:

1. In case of the existence of two or more variants of equal alternatives, under these conditions, a more careful analysis and evaluation of these alternatives is needed;
2. The decision maker may be confused because of a large number of alternatives, so he has to make a detailed comparison.

Effective implementation of the chosen solution is dependent on good communication and action planning, the involvement of subordinate people and the use of their experience, testing the merits of the decision.

Implementation is a process that can express a repeat action and can be complicated, being a long process of broad involvement. Successful implementation is equivalent to solving the existing problem, the mistake or the failure - it leads to a return to one of the previous phases. It is important to realize that, although there is a general succession between the *conception, design, selection* and *implementation* phases, there is always the risk of returning to an earlier phase, during the decision-making process. For example, if the manager who is in *selection/adopting* phase, finds none alternatives

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compatible with current ones, it will return to the *design/developing* phase, in order to develop new alternatives.

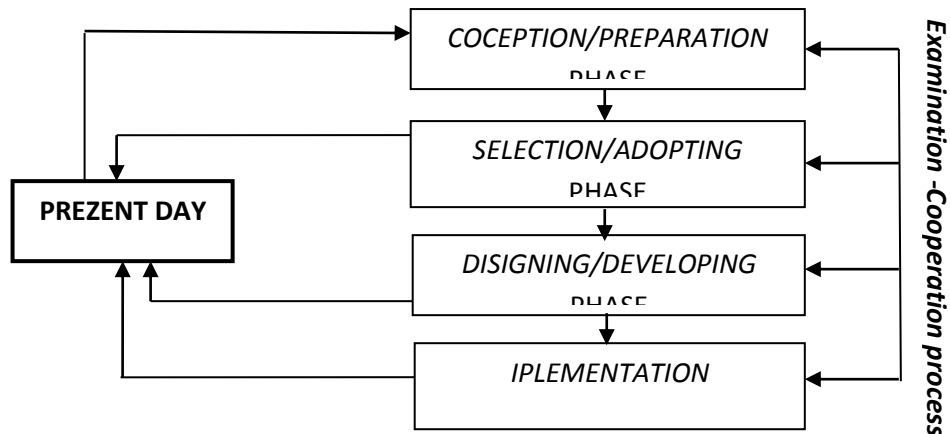
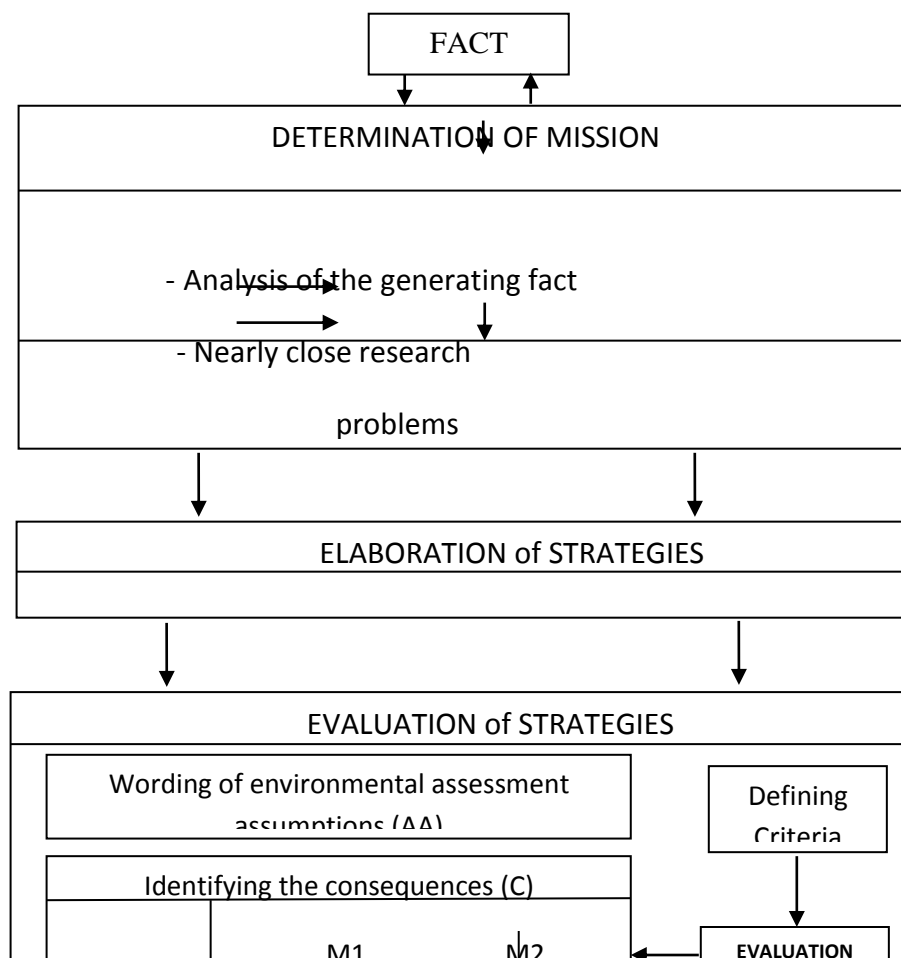


Fig. 1 (decision development phases)

1.6 Action Plan

The strategy chosen to be adopted must be transposed into an action plan quite well understood, so that its realization will not be unclear. In order to actually expose the action plan, some complementary studies are required as part of the action plan. As an advantage in the elaboration of the plan, the synthetic presentation of the results of the validation phase, presented by the decision-maker or in the case of a group decision, by the coordinator, will be used. The final stage will require a consensus on the final document.

The action plan is a synthesis document established by the decision-maker (or group leader) after having obtained the consensus of the participants. It must be based on an order in the course of the planned actions and alternatives. It is also welcomed to evaluate and use other decision-making processes based on the ongoing process. The action plan is a complex decision-making process and at the same time, a safe execution program.



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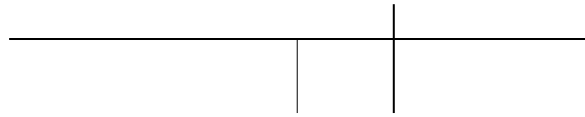


Fig. 2 (scheme of the decision-making process)

2. The purpose and the need for planning

The purpose of the planning function is to establish the objectives, the targets to which the activity will be directed in the future, as well as the modalities - the actions, the necessary resources and their allocation, the implementation - to achieve them. The Planning Function establishes the most appropriate course of future action for the organization, to achieve the desired results. If managers want to master the evolution of their organization they have to plan. If the time horizon for which it is planned should be even greater as the external environment is more dynamic and uncertain, the objectives that are set also need to be broader. Thus, the time between decision-making in the field of planning and the one in which the results are obtained is increasing. The development of the planning function requires managers to consider all the possibilities that may affect the achievement of the objectives set, to find ways to minimize uncertainty and risks. Thus, planning becomes the tool that helps managers to cope with changes.

2.1. The resource planning organization's mission, goal and objectives.

Every organized social grouping has a mission, a general purpose for which it exists and functions. The mission of a resource planning structure is to produce and bring to use on a continuous and uninterrupted basis certain types of goods and/or services. A common model of an organization's statement of intent is as follows: "To develop the well-being and quality of life of all risk holders." Risk-holders are all who suffer if the activity and outcome of the plan fails: leaders, employees, consumers/beneficiaries and the whole organization.

The resource planning organization's mission is to be a consumer-centred structure that provides goods and services, striving to achieve perfection by meeting consumer needs according to established needs. The resource planning organization's goal is to be recognized as professionals in terms of the value of goods and services that they offer to consumers. Objectives are targets, purposes, goals, levels of outcomes for the organization's activities. They represent not only the planned goal of the organization's activities, but also the focus of other managerial functions: organization, leadership and control. The strategy is a general program of action of the organization, the sizing and allocation of resources necessary to achieve the objectives. The strategy outlines how the organization's management plans to achieve its goals. Strategic planning sets direction and

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objectives, while operational planning refers to day-to-day decisions at lower levels of the organization.

Strategic planning is geared towards doing good things, and *operational* planning to do things well. The following figure shows the correlation between the strategic plan and the operational plans, where the strategic plan is implemented by developing operational plans in accordance with the objectives, the mission and the organizational strategies:

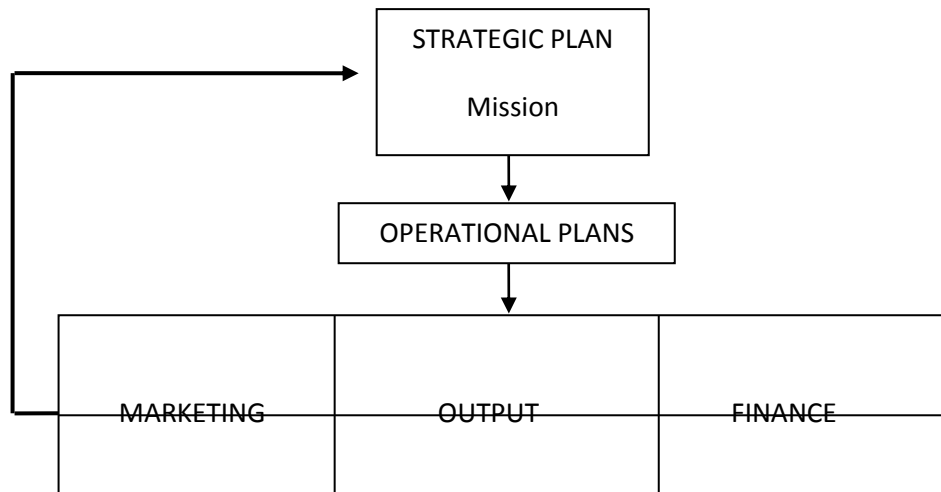


Fig. 3 (relationship between strategic plan and the operational plans)

No one denies the importance of good planning in any kind of organization and every department. Without planning, it is not possible for the organization to know where it is going, for the simple reason that without planning, no one knows what is the intention and direction to go.

The preparation of resource planning is an organized and logical way of presenting all the important aspects of the organization's needs. Resource planning is a repetitive process of identifying, collecting, analysing, and interpreting of information related to the organization's activity to complement its mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans for a specified period.

The logical consequence of activities related to resource planning is as follows:

PLAN → EVALUATION → ACTION → EVALUATION → PLAN

This involves planning activities and resources; continuous evaluation of the results obtained and their comparison with the ones proposed, analysing possible failures and their causes; identify ways to solve problems and adapt the plan to the new conditions.

The main point of the resource planning process is the analysis of external and internal elements in the current situation, the development of objectives, strategy and trends for the upcoming period.

This process requires:

- collecting information;
- establishing the type of plan (short, medium, long);
- determination of the areas of resource planning;
- distribution of responsibilities.

2.2 Planning classification

We can classify the planning process in few Dimensions of planning according to:

- **Time:** Long-term, Medium-term and Short-term;
- **Domain:** Strategically and Operational;

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- **Frequency:** Disposable and Permanent;
- **Managerial Level:** Top, Middle, Base.

a. Classification of planning, according to time

Long-term planning is the planning that covers complex technological and strategic aspects of an organization's leadership and involve the allocation of resources. Long-term planning includes research and development, capital expansion, organizational and managerial development and meeting the organization's financial requirements.

Medium-term planning is usually designed for one to three years. While long-term plans serve as general guidance from the strategic planning process, medium-term plans are usually more detailed and more relevant to medium and low-level managers.

Medium term plans usually refer to the company's organic functions, such as finance, marketing, or production. Due to the fact that long-term plans need to take into account a large number of variables, the emphasis lies in many organizations on medium-term plans.

Short-term planning as well as medium-term ones, are derived from long-term ones. They have a time horizon of up to one year and have a greater impact on managers' day-to-day business than medium to long-term plans. They include some plans to achieve financial goals (budget), inventory, advertising, employee training.

b. Planning classification, depending on the domain

Strategic plans. They influence the entire organization, are usually developed by managers on higher hierarchical levels and are by definition long term. Strategic plans describe the mission and purpose of the organization and decide what must be the organizational goals.

Operational plans. While strategic plans set the overall planning framework in the organization, operational plans cover a narrower range, focusing on the daily or monthly activities that need to be done to meet strategic plans and achieve strategic goals. Operational plans are sometimes called tactical plans and generally have as their object allocation of resources and programming of activities.

Companies generally use the following business plans:

- Marketing plans, aimed at selling and distributing the company's products or services.
- Production and supply plans, oriented to the facilities, appearance, methods and equipment that are needed to make the product to be sold.
- Financial plans, aimed at managing the funds a company has and obtaining the necessary funds to implement the strategic plans.
- Personnel plans, focused on the recruitment, selection, integration and training of human resources that the organization needs.

Operational plans involve more than others the coordination and control of internal resource flows.

c. Classification of the planning, according to the frequency

Disposable plans are designed to solve a problem that is unlikely to occur in the future and may be programs, projects or budgets.

- Programs. A program is a disposable plan created for activities that include different functions and interactions.
- Projects. A project is a disposable plan more punctual in terms of orientation than a program, but more complex. Each project represents the responsibility of designated individuals, who are provided with the necessary resources (in the form of a budget) and the date of conclusion.

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- Budgets. Most programs and projects are developed and controlled on a budget basis, which is a plan to allocate financial resources to organizational units or activities. Budgets record entries and exits and provide targets to control activities and / or units.

Permanent plans are designed to drive regular activities. Due to the fact that similar situations are solved in a predetermined way, managers save time and energy in the decision making process. The main types of permanent plans are policies, standard operating procedures and rules.

- Policies are general guidelines for the decision-making process; they determine the boundaries between which decisions are made and usually result from organizational objectives and strategies. Policies are usually defined by managers on higher hierarchical levels.

In conclusion, policies guide managers' decisions and allow the implementation of strategic plans. A good policy is:

- communicated - all those interested are notified, because a policy can effectively guide managers' decisions only if it is known;

- easy to understand - a policy will influence the behaviour of managers only if they understand the purpose of the policy;

- constant but not inflexible - without changing too often, policies need to be managed with flexibility and have to withstand the changes that print changes.

- Standard procedures are forms of permanent plans. A procedure describes exactly the actions to be taken in specific situations and is how policies are implemented frequently. Standard procedures are detailed instructions designed to guide the employee who has to perform a task and ensure a consistent approach within the organization to recurring situations.

- Rules. A rule is a form of a permanent plan and is not intended to guide a decision, but to substitute for that action. The rules guide the actions of employees who have to perform certain tasks and their only choice is to apply or not the rules.

d. Classification of the planning, depending on the managerial level

Pyramid of planning. Planning is considered by many to be the basis of management. To be effective, it must be done at all managerial levels, even if the planning types differ from one level to another.

Top managers are involved in strategic planning (the process of setting the organization's long-term goals and determining how to reach them).

Managers at *average hierarchical levels* determine the objectives of the unit or the group through medium-term planning (the process of determining the activities that can be performed by individual units within the limits of the allocated resources).

Managers on the *lower hierarchical levels* deal with operational planning (focused on the daily or monthly activities required to run strategic and operational plans). Each level of planning is important and can only exist in correlation with the others.

3. The decision-making process in the planning resources structure of the Ministry of Defense of Republic of Moldova

The decision-making process, as in any other planning structures, within the framework of the resource planning structure within the Republic of Moldova's National Army (hereinafter National Army) consists of a set of actions taken from the facts that generate these actions until the timing of an action plan and the generation and adoption of one or more decisions.

Each Action Plan is usually based on choosing an option from several existing alternatives, based on some exigencies, needs, directions of travel, objectives and / or missions to be accomplished, coming from the internal structure of the National Army

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structure (hereafter NA), which, after an appropriate assessment, aim to meet the required criteria.

In order to choose the optimal option from several existing alternatives and therefore, in order to develop an appropriate Action Plan, it is important to establish two stages: the determination of the objectives or the mission / missions and the elaboration of the strategy / strategies of the Action Plan. Resource planning generally refers to the allocation of resources, based on the identification of needs in order to achieve the objectives. Due to the fact that the nature of resources is limited one, the resource planning structure within the NA, aims at assigning them to the best distribution.

Due to the undeniable fact that planning is a continuous and uninterrupted process, it imposes a dynamic layout on planning documents. In this respect, any change of the previously established objectives, or the alteration of other elements within the NA's fundamental process, will require the updating of the planning documents, observing the classification within the distributed financial resources. Planning of resources within the planning structure which is component of the Main Staff of NA, is carried out at the *operational* level for short term (one year) and *strategic* level for different periods: medium term (2-5 years) and long term (6-10 years). This planning is ongoing and is carried out annually with the establishment of strategic needs for the long term, the establishment of strategic needs for the medium term, based on the needs set for the long term period and the establishment of the needs for planning the resources at the operational and strategic level for the short term, based on the needs set at strategic level for the medium term. This process is a complex one, requiring continuous updating of databases, with operative and evidence-based information and availability for each planning period (short, medium and long term).

As a result of these, the decision making process in the resources planning structure of NA, is strictly related to operational and strategic planning process.

3.1 Resource Planning Structures within the Ministry of Defense of Republic of Moldova

As is well known, any organization based on its operation, has different resources without which it is indispensable. Resources are known to be of a financial, material, informational nature and, last but not least, of human resources. Similarly, within the National Army of the Republic of Moldova, are responsible certain structures for the planning of each type of resources.

a. The Financial Resources Planning Structure, is functionally independent subdivision of the Ministry of Defense, empowered with the function of planning budgetary resources for financial assurance. The subject of financial management and internal control is the activities and processes within the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff (including budget planning and distribution, elaboration of specific programs and policies for military financial assurance, financial regulation, reporting and monitoring).

b. The Material Resources Planning Structure is J4 Logistics Directorate and has the mission to implement the policies developed by the Ministry of Defense on logistic support and support as well as the planning of defense resources for the needs of the National Army and the elaboration of proposals to correlate available resources with existing capabilities. At the same time it manages, monitors and organizes the distribution of material goods in troops, to ensure the core activities of the National Army, in accordance with strategic plans, organizes the centralized keeping of evidence of weapons, military equipment, ammunition, other technical means and material goods.

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c. The Human Resources Planning Structure is the J1 Personnel Directorate that plans and manages the active and reserves human resources in the area of expanding its responsibilities, organizes and controls the selection, incorporation and distribution of personnel to complete military structures according to the operational requirements. At the same time, the structure manages and coordinates the activities of psychological and sociological insurance of the staff in the military structures, civic education of the youth, preparing it for the military service in the Armed Forces. The Directorate also plans to complete the military structures effectively, develops the current and prospective requirements regarding the potential of the sources of incorporation, and organizes the recruitment and incorporation into the military service.

The same time, the directorate manages the activity of personnel structures from the armed forces, the educational structures within the armed forces categories and the administrative-military organs.

d. The planning of information resources is covered by several structures within the National Army, the basic being the Analysis and Information Directorate of the Ministry of Defense and J6 Directorate of Communications and Information Systems within the General Staff of the National Army, which ensures the elaboration and implementation of the concepts, policies and plans in the field of information, communications and informatics, frequency management and electromagnetic compatibility, as well as planning, organization and ensuring the functioning of information systems. Also, the directorate ensures information security in communication channels and computer networks and represents the National Army in cooperation with counterparts from the armies of other states, with institutions and organizations and other structures in the field of information, communications and informatics.

3.2 Resource planning process in Ministry of Defense of Republic of Moldova

At the Ministry of Defense of Republic of Moldova, the decision-making process which is connected to resources planning, is starting based on the strategic plans of the organization, in each structure related to its planning domain, and has its course through the respective domains, up to the highest level where the decision-making process has its purpose.

Each planning structure is responsible for its planning area (financial, material, human and informational), but also in the planning process it co-operates and coordinates its work with the structures responsible for the other planning areas for purpose of correlating and structuring jointly the planning in accordance with the strategic plan and the vision of the Ministry of Defense and the Main Staff of the National Army. The responsibility to establish and coordinate resource planning areas with a view to generalizing and forwarding them for decision-making, is the Structure of Financial Resources Planning.

3.3 Comparisons

Comparing functional in practice of the planning resources system and decision-making process in structures from MoD of Republic of Moldova, with the theory which was presented in that workpaper and existing theory in many books of specialty literature, we can find many similitudes and divergences.

As in many other organizations, a decisive role that can have a different impact, both positively and negatively, both in the analysis/evaluation process and in the decision-making process, is the human factor, namely the level of perception, professional training, the level of response capacity, depending on the time allocated to solving the problem. The human factor problem in the resource planning structure within the Ministry of Defense of

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the Republic of Moldova is connected to the lack of an adequate system at national level for the preparation of human resources for the fields of resource planning of National Army. At the same time, another aspect of the issue of human factor or rather of human resources, is the *social package* and poor *remuneration* of existing human resources, which have a high level of professional training and are at risk of leaving the system, finding more advantageous alternatives.

To speak about issues in planning resources structure of MoD of Republic of Moldova, currently there is one structure responsible for material resources planning at both the strategic and operational levels and even responsibility of control and audit at tactical level. Due to the big amount of different missions at operational level, the structure is hard to face the challenges of strategic planning, especially research, innovation, the creation and implementation of new strategies and/or policies of planning, management and control. In this specific situation, it is strictly necessary to create a new structure, which will operate at the operational level and will take-over all responsibilities connected with operational planning and responsibilities for control and audit at tactical level.

Conclusion

The decision is one of the most important responsibilities of a military commander at any level of command and is particularly critical in action. Traditionally, battle decisions are taken in accordance with the commander's ability to estimate the situation. The estimative term highlights the key role and importance of the commander throughout the decision-making process or the course of action - commander/leader and no one else, must be solely responsible for making a decision. Therefore, the commander is required to know the whole situation in detail with all the details and to be deeply involved in each stage of the estimation process. Making a decision is largely an art and not a science. The experience and judgment of the master are the most critical factors in making a sound decision.

Making a decision is increasingly turning into a lengthy process with analyzes, research, debates and ways of identifying and excluding the risks, as much as possible.

Definitely, from the point of view of theory, this process is a fair and logical one, which aims at evaluating as thoroughly as possible and right, the alternatives with the goal of making a decision with a positive impact in terms of achieving the visions and fulfilling the established objectives, with the possibility to involve the minimum of the existing resources. But we also have another part of the coin, the practical one that is dependent of external faculties such as time, the permanent changing of environment, the actions of competitors (in business) and enemies (in combat actions), social, political, legal and other restrictions. For this reason the decision-making process has to be divided into two large categories, the *theoretical decision-making process* and the *practical decision-making process*. Categories that are based on each other and are complemented in order to choose the optimal way of decision making. The difference between these two categories may only be that in the practical decision-making process, some steps can be omitted or simplified due to the decision-maker's ability to evaluate the situation due to his involvement in the planning and decision-making process, due to the deductive and intuitive owned experience and the level of risk assumed by the decision-maker.

A fast decision can be taken by anybody, but fast and correct decision will be taken by decision-maker with experience and professional intuition.

Quote:

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“And certainly there were many others... from whom I had assimilated a word, a glance. But of whom as individual beings I remembered nothing; book is a great cemetery in which for the most part, the names upon the tombs are effaced”

Marcel Proust „Time Regained”

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