

UDC: 355.48:355.231.3(497.11)"20"  
DOI: 10.5937/pnb30-59549  
Original scientific paper

Политика националне безбедности  
(The Policy of National Security)  
Year XVI vol. 30  
No. 3/2025  
pp. 203-222

*Jovan Conić\**

*Innovation Center, University of Niš, Republic of Serbia*

*Aleksandar Đorđević\*\**

*Faculty of Law, University of Niš, Republic of Serbia*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF RESERVE OFFICER CADRES FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA\*\*\***

### **Abstract**

One of the most important factors in achieving a country's national and defense interests is its organized armed forces, which are ready at any moment to protect its independence and sovereignty. According to the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian Armed Forces represent the most important and influential formation on which the national security system is based, to ensure security for all its citizens. Today's armed conflicts demonstrate that, despite the need for a professional army, which is the primary carrier of combat operations, the key role on the battlefield is still played by the number of military personnel, with their inherent training and motivation. The Republic of Serbia, as a militarily neutral country with the concept of total defense, and with a vital interest in preserving its territorial integrity, is obliged to develop and improve its own army due to the risks in the security environment, in order to preserve the state and national existence. In addition to active members, the Serbian Armed

\* E-mail address: [jovanconic96@gmail.com](mailto:jovanconic96@gmail.com); ORCID: 0000-0002-7887-3317.

\*\* E-mail address: [djole@prafak.ni.ac.rs](mailto:djole@prafak.ni.ac.rs); ORCID: 0000-0002-6604-0780.

\*\*\* The work was created as a result of research on the project "Responsibility in the Legal and Social Context" funded by the Faculty of Law, University of Niš, in the period 2021–2025.

Forces also consist of its reserve forces, which together represent a well-organized whole without which the concept of total defense could not function. History teaches us that the officer cadre is the spearhead of every army, and that its training and motivation are key to success. Additionally, the reserve officer cadre is also of great importance, especially in the event of war, when both are equally important. The subject of this paper is the importance of the reserve officer cadre in the defense system and its social role in peace, promoting the highest military values. The concept of training reserve officer cadres in Serbia has a long and rich history that remains alive today, but it needs to be updated in accordance with the current security challenges.

**Keywords:** Serbia, security, officer cadre, reserve, training.

## INTRODUCTION

Serbian state development is closely linked to the development of the Serbian army, which has been the bearer of the national idea and the foundation of statehood for centuries. Military education, which aimed to create a trained and capable officer cadre, played a significant role in the historical whirlwind that befell the Serbian people. In crucial moments for Serbia, both the active and reserve officer corps were a key factor in protecting the homeland. Serbia produced a whole galaxy of active and reserve officers who were top intellectuals and experts in both military and other social fields, with unbreakable moral strength and steadfastness in the service of their homeland. Holders of the rank of Serbian reserve officer included numerous successful scientists, writers, professors, and academics who contributed significantly to the most glorious pages of Serbian military history, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of the paper.

The first part of this paper provides a historical review of the development and education of reserve officers, covering the period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The beginning of the education of active officers in the Kingdom of Serbia is, in fact, connected with the education of reserve officer cadres, which was also a necessity. History has shown that this decision by the state and military leadership was of great importance, especially during the

First World War, when officers educated during this period played a significant role in the Serbian army's victories over the enemy. The following chapter analyzes the development of this type of education in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Nowadays, it is necessary to modernize and harmonize with modern trends in all spheres, and this does not bypass the military sphere. By analyzing the concept of total defense, which unites all existing capacities suitable for defense, the key role of the Serbian Armed Forces, including its active and reserve components, has been recognized. The number of reserve personnel, as well as their good training and motivation, are important elements in the defense system, as well as the reserve officer cadre that manages it.

The following chapter analyzes the educational systems and programs for officers serving in the reserves in the United States of America (USA) and the Russian Federation. The remarkable similarity in this type of civil-military education suggests that such a system yields the expected positive results. Guidelines for improving the education of reserve officers of the Serbian Armed Forces based on domestic and foreign experiences represent one of the chapters of this paper, after which the conclusion is presented.

## **HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION OF THE OFFICER CADRE OF THE WAR FORMS**

The organized education of officers in the Kingdom of Serbia dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the need to improve the reserve officer corps first emerged. Namely, the Law on the Army from 1883 introduced general military obligation and regulated the education of officers for the reserve, so-called war officer corps of the Kingdom of Serbia. After completing civilian education, a student, after five months of active service, took an exam and earned the rank of reserve second lieutenant of infantry (Vuksanović Anić 1993, 83). In this way, young people who completed secondary and higher education, i.e., the intellectual elite of Serbian people, became an integral part of the military system of the Kingdom of Serbia. "The reserve included retired officers of the Serbian Army as well as former active officers who left military service for various reasons. Between

1914 and 1918, a total of 6,725 people held the rank of reserve officer in the Serbian Army. Of that number, there were four generals, 46 colonels, 31 lieutenant colonels, 250 majors, 867 captains of the first class, 1,086 captains of the second class, 1,236 lieutenants, and 3,205 second lieutenants. If we exclude generals, the reserve officer corps consisted of a total of three general staff, 5,292 infantry, 350 cavalry, 486 artillery, 251 engineering, six artillery-technical, 274 medical, 54 judicial, and five gendarmerie reserve officers" (Denda 2019, 17). The Balkan Wars contributed to the rich experience of Serbian reserve officers who emerged as excellent command personnel, especially for tactical units of the size of platoons and companies, "with whom their colleagues from the Austro-Hungarian army could not be compared in terms of expertise and experience" (18).

The epochal suffering of the Serbian people in the First World War ended with the magnificent victory of the Serbian army. A political decision followed that sacrificed Serbia on the altar of Yugoslavism. A new state Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SHS), was created on the foundations of the former Kingdom of Serbia, which invested its own statehood and a quarter of its population in it (Dimić 2021, 24). This situation also significantly influenced the Serbian army, which was gradually becoming more Yugoslav. Numerous reforms also applied to military education, which had the task of rejuvenating the officer cadre that had suffered terribly during the years of the merciless war. In the newly formed state, the Reserve Officer School was established in Sarajevo in 1923. In mid-1934, a reform was implemented, dividing the School into two: one in Sarajevo, where reserve artillery officers were trained, and the other in the famous Bileća, which took over the training of reserve infantry officers (Bjelajac 1988, 55). The School for Reserve Artillery Officers in Sarajevo included a student anti-aircraft battery, which in 1934 grew into the School for Reserve Anti-Aircraft Officers. It is interesting to note that within the Yugoslav Army, special attention was given to the training of reserve pilot officers, which began in 1921 at the Valjevo airfield. Somewhat later, in 1925, the School for Reserve Aviation Officers was officially established in Novi Sad. The Reserve Officer School for Quartermaster Service of the Royal Yugoslav Army was formed in 1931 (Bjelajac 1988, 57).

After World War II, the new authorities retained only the name of Yugoslavia, with the obligatory addition of the words federation

and republic, indicating that it was a state with a completely new social order. The new revolutionary authorities of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia embarked on a total social reform, and the partisan units, as one side in the bloody civil war, became the official state armed force. Namely, socialist Yugoslavia did not interrupt the good tradition of training reserve officer cadres, but instead further developed this type of military education. State and military authorities established new schools for reserve officers who, upon completion of their training and promotion to officer rank, received a war schedule and took over command of military units (Bjelica 1983, 33).

Upon the World War II, the Yugoslav Army trained candidates for reserve infantry officers in educational units within the army command staffs for a period of nine months from 1947 to 1950. In 1948, the School of Reserve Aviation Officers, i.e., pilots for the needs of the Yugoslav Army Air Force, was established in Pančevo. The candidates were recruited voluntarily with a completed university degree or secondary school as a formal requirement (Grujić 1997, 28). In the same year, the School of Reserve Naval and Technical Officers began operating, admitting civilians who had completed schools in the field of maritime and shipping. The first class of reserve artillery officers was educated at the Artillery Officers School in Zagreb, while cadets from the second to fourth classes were trained at the teaching batteries of artillery regiments. The Artillery Officers School, re-established in 1949, became part of the Artillery School Center in 1952, which was renamed the Artillery School for Reserve Officers in 1955. Reserve Officer School for the Quartermaster Service, the Anti-Chemical Weapons (later the Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons Service), and the Financial Service were also actively functioning (Živković 1989, 78).

With the onset of the SFRY's collapse, most of these schools formally ceased operation, while the entire officer cadre of the Yugoslav People's Army faced a significant challenge. Namely, in the military conflicts of the "nineties" on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most significant number of reserve officers actively participated in combat operations. This was followed by the declaration of a state of war in 1999, at which point the difference between active and reserve officers who contributed side by side to the defense of the homeland from the aggressors almost ceased to exist (Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije [MORS] 2010, 195).

In early 2000, by order of the Chief of the General Staff, the KSRO, i.e., the Class of Students for Reserve Officers, was established as a modern military school, succeeding the Reserve Officer School. The students were selected from highly educated citizens who, after a year of schooling at training centers, were promoted to the first officer rank of second lieutenant in the reserve. Initially, the Logistics Training Center was located at the Military Technical Academy in Žarkovo, while Air and Air Defense students were stationed at Batajnica. The Army Training Center was established, with its centers located at various training facilities nationwide. In October 2006, the Training Center was unified in Belgrade, and since then, training of members of all military branches has been conducted at the Military Academy (MORS 2010, 197).

## **THE ROLE OF THE RESERVE OFFICERS IN THE CONCEPT OF TOTAL DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

The National Security Strategy and the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, as the highest strategic documents, envisage the concept of total defense as the most effective way to protect state and national interests. The Republic of Serbia, as a militarily neutral country, is not a member of any military alliance and therefore relies exclusively on its own forces for potential defense in wartime circumstances.

The adoption of this concept of defense is in line with the state-building and national experience, which, along with elements of historical heritage, defines the cultural and identity determinants of the Serbian people, which are “explicitly linked to the army, or rather to the specific relationship between the Serbian people and their army, regardless of the name that army bore in different periods of history” (Starčević and Stanar 2024, 509). “Total defense, in its essence, represents a rational and integrated form of security and defense organization of all subjects of society and includes preparations for military, civilian, and other forms of defense” (Đukić and Vuletić 2023, 621–647).

Based on the example of other militarily neutral states, we can conclude that the concept of total defense, in a slightly modified form, is present as a means of addressing state needs and necessities, and

for the sake of protecting national security. Namely, Switzerland, as a militarily neutral state, bases its defense policy precisely on this concept, which envisages “the participation of the entire society in the defense of the country in the event of an external attack” (Đurašinović Radojević 2016, 58). A legally prescribed military obligation, a functional reserve system, and a well-developed civil defense mechanism form the foundation of the Swiss Armed Forces’ success (Đurašinović Radojević 2016, 59).

The concept of total defense is closely linked to the obligation to serve military service, which represents the pillar of the defense capabilities of countries that are not part of any military alliance. Namely, “neutral countries in Europe mainly base their credible defense capabilities on the concept of total defense, but it also implies a large number of citizens trained for military and civil protection tasks, which calls for the obligation to serve military service” (Starčević and Blagojević 2020, 86).

We conclude that, in addition to the obligation to serve military service or some of its modified versions, a trained reserve force and its command staff are of great importance, as they are not only well-prepared and motivated but also reasonably numerous. To maintain and rely on a strong and well-developed concept of total defense, state and military leadership cannot rely solely on active military personnel, as they may prove insufficient at a critical moment. History, as well as the current military conflicts in the world and Europe, teaches us that state and military leadership must not rely exclusively on professional military personnel, who, despite their high level of training, still represent only a tactical backbone in a strategic-level armed conflict. Readiness for the implementation of the proclaimed and adopted concept of total defense has a strategic character, on which the defense of the Republic of Serbia is based, meaning the activation of all available capacities, their networking, and coordinated action as a whole. We believe that the ability, training, motivation, and number of reserve officers who lead military units consisting of non-commissioned officers and reserve soldiers are essential for the successful implementation of the total defense concept.

The strategic and normative document governing the Serbian defense system is the National Security Strategy, in which “the national security system represents a normatively, structurally and functionally regulated entity whose activities ensure the protection

and achievement of the national interests of the Republic of Serbia" (Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti Republike Srbije [SNBRS] 2019, 13). Therefore, this system represents "a form of organization and functioning of society in implementing measures and activities on a preventive and repressive level in order to preserve the sovereignty and integrity of the state, its constitutionally established order, the rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as all other social and international values from all forms of threat" (Stajić 2005, 439). Namely, according to the aforementioned system, the bearer of military defense, as a key component of the state, is the Serbian Armed Forces, which represents the primary defense force that unites all available state and social capacities. The Serbian Armed Forces consist of an active and a reserve component, the latter being the larger, and its importance should not be underestimated (Stajić 2005, 440).

Therefore, reserve officers and the units they command are of vital importance for the army of any state, since in wartime they represent a key combat component, while in peacetime they can participate in responding to crisis events (Griffith and Ben-Ari 2020, 1–26). We believe that the management of complex operations in wartime at the tactical level is primarily the responsibility of reserve officers, and their peacetime training is of paramount importance for the functioning of the defense system and the successful implementation of the concept of total defense.

## TRAINING OF RESERVE OFFICERS IN THE ARMIES OF THE WORLD

It is widely accepted that the USA and the Russian Federation represent the countries with the most powerful armies in the world. Namely, in addition to the technical superiority and size of their armed forces, we believe that the foundation on which their power rests is actually the system of military education. The experiences of many generations have contributed to the ongoing improvement of the system of training military officers, which in times of difficulty for these countries has proven crucial to their success. Based on research in this area, we can draw conclusions that we will explain in more detail later in the paper: both superpowers view the training of reserve military officers as a strategic defense issue and have traditionally paid special attention to it due to its great importance. Upon completing

this type of military-civilian education, a student graduates with the rank of first officer in the reserve, along with significant rights and privileges, as well as responsible obligations. We believe that in recent years, the systems of reserve military officer education in the USA and Russia have become increasingly similar, a trend that will be further explained in the continuation of this paper. Based on this, it can be concluded that such systems are also among the most effective. We will attempt to describe the functioning of education for reserve officers and officers in these complex military systems as concisely as possible.

In the USA, there is a long tradition of this type of education, but we will concentrate exclusively on the present day. Namely, in the Armed Forces of the United States, the so-called ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps). The Reserve Officers' Training Corps is a highly developed officer training program that operates at numerous universities and colleges in the United States. The mission of this program is “to educate officers who will meet the expectations of the active military and reserve forces in terms of quality, quantity, and academic disciplines”. It is further stated that the mission of the program is to produce and “educate officers in academic disciplines that are consistent with the special needs of the military”. The goal of the ROTC program, according to official documents, is to attract, motivate, and prepare selected students to serve as officers in the regular military, national guard, or reserve forces. Enabling cadets to acquire knowledge in the field of military sciences and skills while developing leadership, a strong sense of personal integrity, honor, and responsibility, and a sense of importance to the national security system is also stated as a goal of utmost importance (Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC [HD AW] 2011, 145–1).

This is achieved through the cooperation and joint efforts of the military and the host institution to provide the best possible training for future officers in the interest of US national security. This program exists at all major universities and numerous colleges throughout the United States and operates voluntarily. Namely, every university that has an accredited ROTC program within the Department of Military Sciences (as an academic and administrative department) allows its students to be included in this program in parallel (with the civilian) and voluntarily, acquiring theoretical but also practical knowledge and skills in military sciences. An essential component that the US military

provides to young men and women who are participants, cadets of this program, is “a scholarship that ensures financial stability through full or partial payment of tuition”. It is interesting to note that by receiving a scholarship, cadets acquire “an additional obligation to complete a semester of learning a foreign language from the Indo-European or Asian region” that they did not know before (HD AW, 145–1).

During their schooling 2011, they undergo numerous practical training sessions in the field, and the highlight of their education is an extensive military exercise where the knowledge and skills they have acquired over the years are showcased. This display is held annually, typically in the summer, at the Advance Camp at Fort Knox, and lasts almost a month. It is the largest military exercise of the US Army each year (U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Command 2025). This type, which we can freely call military-civilian education, although it does not make too much difference whether the cadet will become an active or reserve officer, is absolutely dominant in the US Army. Data from 2020 indicate that 70% of newly appointed active-duty officers in the US Army have completed the ROTC program (National Security Analysis [CAN] 2017).

We conclude that this system of education and training offers a great deal to the participants, but also demands as much from them in return. It is based on rights such as paid tuition, scholarships, bonuses, seniority, and status. Upon completion of the program, if an officer joins the reserve forces, their rights include a monthly financial allowance, personal and family healthcare, various bonuses, additional vacation days, scholarship-based continuation of education, and other benefits. The obligations of newly commissioned officers in the reserve are primarily loyalty and devoted service to the army, which is practically reflected in the annual two-week military exercise and one weekend during each month spent in the unit to which the officer is assigned (U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Command 2025). Incidentally, a large number of American presidents were officers in the reserve of the US Armed Forces, such as T. Roosevelt (colonel), Truman (colonel), Kennedy (lieutenant), Johnson, Nixon (lieutenant), Ford (lieutenant), Carter (lieutenant), Reagan (captain), and both Bushes (lieutenants). Additionally, P. Colin, who served as the Chief of the US General Staff from 1983 to 1993, completed ROTC (Powell 2012, 54).

The Russian Federation, as the successor state of the Soviet Union, has continued to nurture the tradition of training officers for

military formations. We believe that the former Soviet Union based its potential defense on what it had an advantage in, namely, the massiveness of its army. A million-strong army of well-trained and equipped soldiers, who had cultivated the cult of the successors of the warriors of the Great Patriotic War, had to have a well-developed system of training reserve officers and leaders who would lead that army. The Russian Federation has maintained the foundation; however, for many years, it has worked to improve this type of military training, which is reflected in the functioning of the so-called military departments at civilian universities, where training is carried out, as we will analyze in more detail below. Namely, the modern concept was regulated by the decree of the President of the Russian Federation, which came into force in 2019, when the so-called VUC (Военный учебный центр) military training center<sup>1</sup> (Government of the Russian Federation [GOV RU] 2018, N 309-Ф3) was introduced.

Therefore, students of civilian universities have the opportunity to, in parallel with the academic obligations that their home faculties provide, be voluntarily included in the VUC program (training begins in the second year of study). The main conditions for admission include the student's physical fitness, health condition, and security check. Students have the opportunity to receive a scholarship during their studies by participating in a military training program, which helps ensure their financial stability. VUC students who have chosen the program for active officers are entitled to a special scholarship. Namely, students attending the military training center have one so-called military day each week, which they spend at the VUC centers, located near the university. On that day, groups of subjects in the field of military sciences are studied, and practical military training is also carried out.

During the military day, lectures in civilian subjects are not held, both for VUC students and for students who do not attend the training. The crown of the training is similar to the American ROTC, culminating in an extensive military exercise lasting 30 days in the summer, after which students are eligible to take the final exam (Dolgosheva 2019).

---

<sup>1</sup> As of 2024, it is estimated that more than 137 military training centres have been established, with over 60,000 students participating in this form of civilian military education.

Upon successful completion of training and graduation from the faculty, the student receives an officer rank in the reserve and is assigned to a reserve military unit. As newly promoted reserve officers, they are exempt from mandatory military service in Russia and can also establish a permanent employment relationship with the Russian military, thereby becoming active officers. Upon successful completion of schooling and training, they receive a military ID card with which they exercise numerous rights in civilian life, mainly when employed. Namely, by completing the VUC program, graduates who were “in the active officer program” continue their military careers as active officers in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for a mandatory period of three years (Poulsen and Staun 2021, 198–222).

We conclude that the long-standing tradition of training reserve officers in Russia remains a priority for state and military authorities today. Popularizing the officer vocation among young, college-educated individuals is of exceptional importance because it fosters an intellectual elite that is patriotic and highly motivated to defend the country. In this way, the social elite becomes inextricably linked to its own army with which it identifies.

## **GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING THE TRAINING OF RESERVE OFFICERS OF THE SERBIAN ARMY**

The examples of the most powerful armies in the world, previously analyzed, clearly demonstrate that the system of training reserve officers is of great importance for national security. A modern army, although professional, does not necessarily have to be small in number. We believe that a well-formed and well-trained reserve and its officer corps are the guarantor of the successful defense of the state from potential war threats. Therefore, we will examine the system of training reserve officers of the Serbian Army and propose particular possibilities for improving it.

Namely, since 2006, the Class of Students for Reserve Officers, also known as CSRO, has been operating at the Military Academy of the University of Defence in Belgrade. Participants, i.e., students, may be citizens with a university degree who are medically fit and have passed a security check. The training of students lasts six months, of which the first four months are spent on regular and special forms

of teaching. In the second period, which lasts slightly less than two months, students undergo internships in various organizational units and institutions of the Serbian Armed Forces. The training is carried out in two cycles per year (within the March and September generations). Upon successful completion, students of the CSRO are promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in the reserve, with the possibility of establishing a permanent employment relationship with the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces as active officers (MORS 2010, 198).

Assuming the return of regular military service, which is eagerly awaited and announced in Serbia, the number of soldiers who would undergo training annually would understandably be in the thousands of young men and women. In this way, the Serbian Army, i.e., its units that are filled with reserve personnel, would be greatly rejuvenated, and in this regard, a crucial need arises for a larger number of reserve officers. We believe that the current system of education at the CSRO would not produce a sufficient number of reserve officers unless the number of students increases significantly. It is also understandable that reserve officers, after completing their voluntary education at the CSRO, largely decide to continue their active career in the army, while formation positions in reserve units remain vacant. We conclude that in this way the CSRO represents an additional opportunity for the metaphorically “production” of active officers, while only a smaller number of them remain deployed in the reserves. To improve this situation, it is necessary to refine the system of this type of education in accordance with the aforementioned models and programs.

It is ambitious to compare the system of education for reserve officers in the Serbian army with those of the United States and Russia, which have incomparably greater needs and capacities, but it would undoubtedly be beneficial to implement viable examples of good practice. Namely, the model of hybrid civilian-military education would be feasible if, in addition to numerous other fields, military sciences were introduced at certain civilian faculties in Serbia, which would also study military sciences from the perspective of the main scientific field that the particular faculty specializes in. Students in these fields would undergo practical military training in the army units closest to them or located in their city. They would be provided with scholarships, and upon graduation, they would receive their first officer rank in the reserve. In this way, the army would increase the

influx of young officer cadres for the reserve, but would also receive potential active officers, specifically the deficient personnel that the army needs, and the academy does not “produce”. Such a potential modality requires profound changes in various areas, but making a strategic decision that would move towards this or a similar solution would be of immeasurable importance.

A specific action that would be extremely important, and at the same time easily achievable, is the possibility of opening military science centers at all civilian universities in Serbia. Within their scope of competence, they would carry out active, systematic, and planned information and promotion to students about the possibilities of continuing their education in the field of military science after graduation by enrolling in the CSRO. The director of the center could be someone with a teaching or scientific title from that university, who also holds the rank of officer in the reserve. Namely, the analyzed programs in the aforementioned armies of the world are based on the principle of specifically established rights and obligations. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary for future students of the CSRO, i.e., Reserve officers, must have specific benefits and obligations. The state needs to recognize the desire and specific patriotic work of the trainees to serve their homeland, in addition to their civilian careers, by allowing them to wear a military uniform. Upon returning to civilian life and its everyday activities, they must be holders of specific privileges, such as financial allowances, healthcare, tax relief, employment benefits, and identification. The obligations of reserve officers must not be reduced to a potential military exercise once every three years, but to frequent theoretical and practical training. Technological progress in the military sphere represents an obstacle that can only be overcome through serious training. It is necessary to organize courses for the training of senior reserve officers and their training for staff duties.<sup>2</sup> Work on achieving the greatest possible cohesion between active and reserve officer cadres, as well as soldiers, through various types of activities that are not exclusively of a military-training nature, such as organizing lectures on military topics and seminars. We believe that this way of developing and improving the education of reserve officers is a sure path towards a stronger Serbian Armed Forces, which

<sup>2</sup> As the former course for training commanders of war units at regimental and brigade level, intended for reserve officers of the Yugoslav Peoples Army.

is the guarantor of the sovereignty, independence, and security of the Republic of Serbia.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the Serbian Armed Forces, as the foundation of the national security system, play a crucial role in the concept of total defense, which entails all societal subjects participating in an organized and planned manner in the defense of the country's sovereignty and independence. We conclude that, in addition to the professional forces, the Serbian Armed Forces also have a reserve force that is many times larger, and its role should not be underestimated or its training neglected. The training and motivation of both active and reserve officers are a prerequisite for success, and their education is of exceptional importance. An analysis of the education systems for reserve officers in the USA and the Russian Federation reveals that they are widely available through a hybrid model of civilian-military education at hundreds of universities and faculties in these countries. We believe that for the Republic of Serbia, as a militarily neutral country with an adopted concept of total defense, the introduction of mandatory military service is a practical necessity. In this regard, it is necessary to improve the system of training reserve officers, giving special attention to quantity without neglecting quality.

Academic citizens, i.e., individuals with higher education, conditionally represent the intellectual elite of a country that largely determines the social movement of the entire population. If this "elite" has no points of contact with its own army and views it as an essential unknown, serious problems will undoubtedly arise, leading the social movement astray. The training of reserve officers at the Military Academy represents, in addition to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical training of future officers, the promotion and dissemination of top officer values in society. By creating a powerful officer corps within the military, a social stratum is established in the civilian community that represents one of the primary guardians and promoters of actual national, ethical, and military values. Top-notch academic knowledge from a specific scientific field that has been acquired for years in the civilian community, combined with knowledge of military sciences through mandatory practical training,

physical fitness, and moral worthiness, creates a true intellectual and officer for whom the patriotic ideal is a matter of honor. By performing everyday duties in responsible social and state positions in the civilian community, the values of which the Serbian Armed Forces are the protector and guardian, will permeate the entire academic social community through the reserve officer corps.

What a reserve officer acquires, in addition to knowledge of military science and professional qualifications, by receiving an officer's rank is officer honor. Colonel Rajić emphasized that the officer's honor of reserve officers is significant and that it must not be separated from the honor of professional officers (Rajić 2001, 114). Namely, officers, even if they are very professional and competent, are unreliable and insufficiently capable if their honor is vague, superficial, and especially false and duplicitous. Those with "built and unbreakable honor with the necessary military knowledge, skills and abilities are capable, reliable and worthy even in the most difficult war conditions" (144).

## REFERENCES

Bjelajac, Mile. 1988. *Vojска Краљевине SHS/Југославије 1922–1935*. Beograd: INIS.

Bjelica, Obrad. 1983. *Vojna akademija kopnene vojske 1944–1984*. Beograd: CVVŠ Maršal Tito.

Denda, Dalibor. 2019. „Srpska vojska 1914–1918 (Brojno stanje, organizacija, formacija i opremljenost).” U *Prvi svetski rat – 100 godina kasnije*, ur. Dalibor Denda, 15–34. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski glasnik.

Dimić, Ljubodrag. 2021. „Kraj Velikog rata i jugoslovensko ujedinjenje.” U *Srbija 1918: oslobođenje domovine, povratak ratnika, život u novoj državi*, ur. Ljubodrag Ristić, 13–33. Čačak: Međuopštinski istorijski arhiv.

Dolgosheva, Anastasia. 2019. “Farewell, military department. Where students will learn to defend the Motherland.” *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*. February 22, 2019. [https://spbvedomosti.ru/news/country\\_and\\_world/proshchay\\_voennaya\\_kafedra/](https://spbvedomosti.ru/news/country_and_world/proshchay_voennaya_kafedra/).

Durašinović Radojević, Dragana. 2016. „Švajcarska oružana neutralnost.” U *Uticaj vojne neutralnosti Srbije na bezbednost i stabilnost u Evropi*, ur. Srđan Korać, 52–76. Beograd: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu; Hanns Seidel Stiftung.

Đukić, Andelija, i Dejan Vuletić. 2023. „Organizacija sistema odbrane prema konceptu totalne odbrane na primeru Švajcarske, Švedske i Srbije.” *Međunarodni problemi* 75 (4): 621–647. DOI: 10.2298/MEDJP2304621D.

Grujić, Zlatomir. 1997. *Avijacija Srbije i Jugoslavije 1901–1994*. Beograd: NIU „Vojska”.

Griffith, James, and Eyal Ben-Ari. 2020. “Reserve Military Service: A Social Constructionist Perspective.” *Armed Forces & Society* 20 (10): 1–26. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X20917165.

Government of the Russian Federation [GOV RU]. Federal Law No. 309-ФЗ, August 03, 2018. <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/> Last accessed May 4, 2025.

Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC [HD AW]. Army Regulation No. 145-1, September 06, 2011. [http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r145\\_1.pdf](http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r145_1.pdf). Last accessed May 10, 2025.

Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije [MORS]. 2010. *Srpsko vojno školstvo*. Beograd: Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije.

National Security Analysis [CAN]. 2017. “Table B-30. Active Component Commissioned Officer Gains.” *CAN*. September 30, 2017. [https://www.cna.org/pop-rep/2017/appendixb/b\\_30.html](https://www.cna.org/pop-rep/2017/appendixb/b_30.html).

Poulsen, Niels Bo, and Jorgen Staun. 2021. *Russia's Military Might – A Portrait of its Armed Forces*. Denmark: Djof Publishing.

Powell, Colin. 2012. *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*. USA: Harper Collins.

Rajić, Rade. 2001. *U ime oficirske časti*. Beograd: Medija centar „Odbrana”.

Starčević, Srđan, i Srđan Blagojević. 2020. „Uloga služenja vojnog roka u razvoju srpske strateške kulture.” *Vojno delo* 72 (4): 85–104. DOI: 10.5937/vojdelo2004085S.

Stajić, Ljubomir. 2005. *Osnovi sistema bezbednosti*. Beograd: Draganić.

Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti Republike Srbije [SNBRS]. „Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije”, br. 94/2019.

Stanar, Dragan, i Srđan Starčević. 2024. „Vojna obaveza kao deo srpskog etosa.” *Sociološki pregled* 58 (2): 505–525. DOI: 10.5937/socpreg58-49221.

U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Command. 2025. “Find your path, Army ROTC.” *U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Command*. Last accessed March 29, 2025. <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/find-your-path/army-officers/rotc>.

Vuksanović Anić, Draga. 1993. *Stvaranje moderne srpske vojske*. Beograd: SKZ.

Živković, Milenko. 1989. *Centar vojnih škola kopnene vojske 1945–1985*. Beograd: VINC.

Јован Џонић\*

Иновативни центар, Универзитет у Нишу, Република Србија

Александар Ђорђевић\*\*

Правни факултет, Универзитет у Нишу, Република Србија

## ЗНАЧАЈ РЕЗЕРВНОГ ОФИЦИРСКОГ КАДРА ЗА СИСТЕМ НАЦИОНАЛНЕ БЕЗБЕДНОСТИ РЕПУБЛИКЕ СРБИЈЕ\*\*\*

### Резиме

Један од најважнијих фактора у остваривању националног и одбрамбеног интереса сваке државе представља организована оружана сила која је у сваком моменту спремна да заштити њену независност и сувереност. Војска Србије према Стратегији националне безбедности Републике Србије представља најважнију и најмоћнију формацију на којој се заснива систем националне безбедности, а са циљем обезбеђења сигурности за све њене грађане. Оружани сукоби данашњице нам показују да и поред потребе за професионалном војском која је главни носилац борбених дејстава, кључну улогу на бојном пољу и даље имају бројност војног састава уз подразумевану обученост и мотивисаност. Република Србија као војно неутрална држава са усвојеним концептом тоталне одбране, а са својим виталним интересом очувања територијалног интегритета, у обавези је да због ризика у безбедносном окружењу развија и усавршава сопствену војску зарад очувања државне и националне егзистенције. Војску Србије поред активних припадника чине и њене резервне снаге које заједно представљају једну добро организовану целину без које концепт тоталне одбране не би могао да функционише. Историја нас учи да је официрски кадар врх копља сваке војске, те да је његова обученост и мотивисаност кључна за успех, те је поред активног од великог значаја и резервни официрски

\* Имејл адреса: [jovanconic96@gmail.com](mailto:jovanconic96@gmail.com); ORCID: 0000-0002-7887-3317.

\*\* Имејл адреса: [djole@prafak.ni.ac.rs](mailto:djole@prafak.ni.ac.rs); ORCID: 0000-0002-6604-0780.

\*\*\* Рад је настало као резултат истраживања на пројекту „Одговорност у правном и друштвеном контексту“ који је финансирао Правни факултет Универзитета у Нишу, у периоду од 2021–2025.

кадар међу којима у случају рата готово да постоји знак једнакости. Предмет истраживања овог рада управо је значај резервног официрског кадра у систему одбране, те његова друштвена улога у миру као промотера највиших војничких вредности. Концепт школовања официрског кадра у резерви у Србији има дугу и богату историју која живи и данас, али коју је потребно усавршавати у складу са безбедносним изазовима данашњице.

**Кључне речи:** Србија, безбедност, официрски кадар, резерва, школовање.

---

\* This paper was received on June 16, 2025, and accepted for publication at the Editorial Board meeting on October 15, 2025