



AFTER ACTION REPORT

CIOR SEMINAR 2025

CIOR STRATCOM

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

1. Event Summary

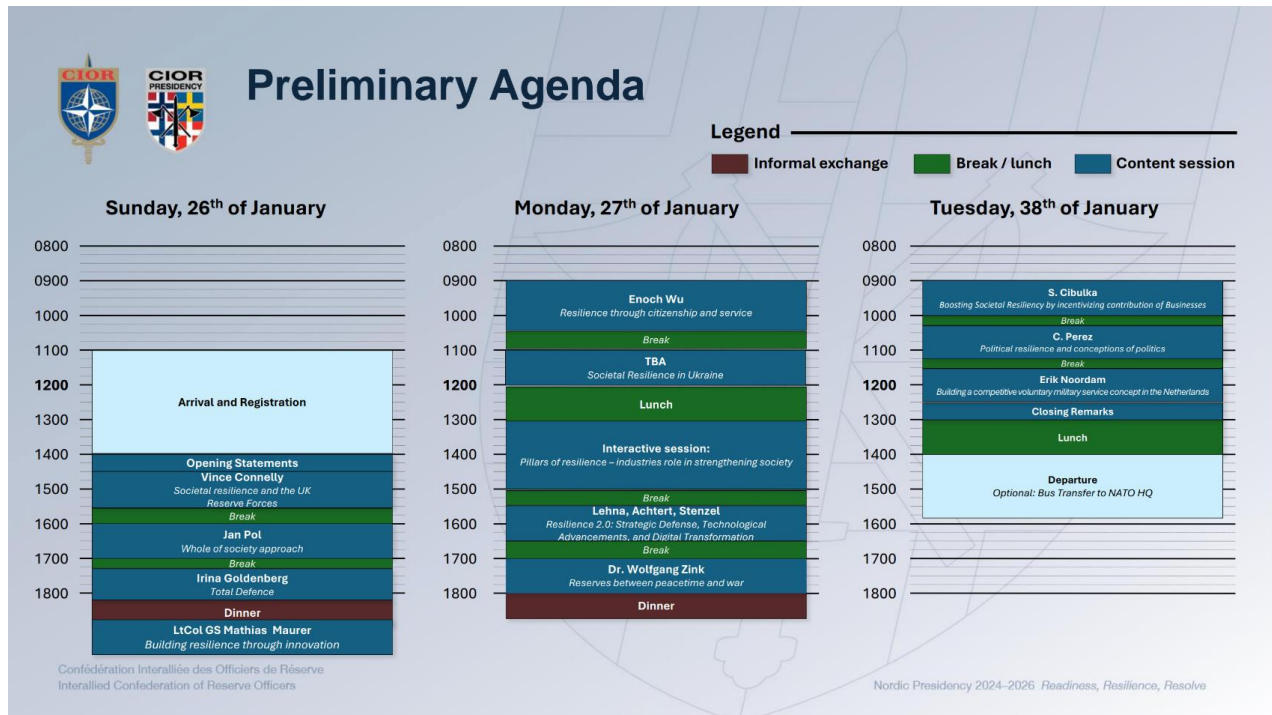
The CIOR Seminar 2025 focused on the critical theme of **societal resilience**, bringing together military leaders, policymakers, industry experts, and academics to explore strategies for strengthening communities, economies, and defense capabilities in an era of geopolitical instability. Discussions covered key dimensions of resilience, including **military preparedness, economic stability, technological security, and political adaptability**, emphasizing the need for cross-sector collaboration and strategic innovation. The seminar highlighted the importance of mobilizing and sustaining reserve forces, integrating businesses into national resilience frameworks, and leveraging technological advancements to mitigate emerging threats such as cyber warfare and economic disruptions. By examining resilience through the lenses of governance, civic engagement, and defense strategy, participants identified best practices for building adaptive, robust societies capable of withstanding crises. The event reinforced CIOR's commitment to strengthening NATO's reserve forces, enhancing international cooperation, and fostering knowledge exchange to ensure long-term security and stability.

2. The Topic of the Seminar

The CIOR Seminar 2025 brought together military professionals, academics, and industry experts to discuss the theme of **societal resilience** in an era of geopolitical uncertainty and evolving threats. The seminar examined resilience from multiple perspectives, including **military, economic, technological, societal, and political** dimensions. The event featured a diverse agenda of keynote speeches, expert panels, and interactive discussions aimed at fostering collaboration and sharing best practices among reserve officers, policymakers, and industry leaders. Participants explored ways to strengthen communities, enhance operational readiness, and develop innovative defense strategies to address crises such as cyberattacks, economic disruptions, and armed conflicts. The seminar also highlighted the role of businesses in resilience-building and the importance of strategic leadership in times of crisis.

3. Agenda overview

The seminar featured several distinguished speakers who shared insights based on their expertise. **Vince Connelly** addressed *societal resilience and the UK Reserve Forces*, while **Irina Goldenberg** spoke on *Total Defence*, emphasizing the integration of regular forces, reservists, and civilian support structures. **Jan Pol** introduced the *Whole of Society approach*, stressing the role of businesses and communities in national security efforts. **Celestino Perez, Jr.** examined *political resilience and conceptions of politics*, highlighting the necessity of strong governance in crisis management. **Stefan Cibulka-Rothauer** discussed strategies for *boosting societal resiliency by incentivizing business contributions*, and **Erik Noordam** presented **a competitive voluntary military service concept in the Netherlands**. **Enoch Wu** explored **resilience through citizenship and service**, underscoring the importance of civic engagement. Additionally, **Matthias Lehna**, **Werner Achtert**, and **Jörg Stenzel** conducted a session on *Resilience 2.0*, focusing on *strategic defense, technological advancements, and digital transformation*. **LtCol GS Mathias Maurer** discussed *building resilience through innovation*, while **Dr. Wolfgang Zink** addressed *the role of reserves between peacetime and war*. A great surprise was presented to the participants by a delegation from Ukraine. Deputy Minister of Defense Brigadier General Serhii Melnyk delivered a powerful speech. The subsequent session on the *importance and contribution of culture* in societal resilience in Ukraine provided valuable insights into resilience under active conflict conditions. The moving musical performances by soldiers of the Ukraine Cultural Forces were, in their own unique way, highlights of the entire seminar.



Throughout the event, interactive sessions encouraged discussions on how industries could strengthen societal resilience, fostering cross-sector cooperation between military, political, and economic stakeholders. The closing discussions reinforced the importance of strategic planning, adaptability, and innovation in resilience-building, particularly in light of recent geopolitical developments. The seminar concluded with a panel discussion on future resilience strategies, emphasizing the need for continuous collaboration and preparedness. The event successfully facilitated knowledge exchange and professional development for reserve officers and policy leaders, reinforcing CIOR’s mission of strengthening international cooperation and defense capabilities. Participants left with practical insights and strategies to enhance societal, economic, and military resilience in their respective domains.

4. Key Takeaways

The CIOR Seminar 2025 highlighted various dimensions that contribute to societal resilience. Keynotes emphasized the importance of preparedness across military, societal, economic, cultural, and political domains. The seminar underscored the need

for proactive measures to anticipate and mitigate potential threats, ensuring a society can adapt and overcome challenges effectively.

1. Military & Reserves

To manage crises effectively, the military must be well-prepared, with reserves playing a crucial role in extending capacity. Key themes include:

- **Availability of Reservist Information:** It's essential to have up-to-date contact details and medical status of reservists to facilitate quick mobilization. This ensures that the military can reach out to reservists promptly during a crisis.
- **Access to Basic Equipment:** Reservists should have access to necessary equipment, either stored centrally or kept with them. While having equipment with the reservist allows for flexible deployment, it can pose challenges if the reservist and equipment are in different locations during a crisis.
- **Adequate Training:** Reservists must be sufficiently trained, with training programs varying by country. Western countries often view reservists as a specialized talent pool for specific missions, while Eastern European countries focus on their contribution to wartime strength. Proper training ensures reservists know their roles and can reduce friction during mobilization.

2. Society and Population

A prepared civilian population can alleviate military burdens during crises. Key points include:

- **Basic Preparedness Measures:** Citizens should stockpile essential goods and be aware of the fragility of modern infrastructure. Being able to survive without electricity, fresh food, and water for some time allows for better planning and a more coordinated response.
- **Active Civilian Roles:** Civilians can contribute by taking on non-combat roles, such as first responders or shelter builders. Educating civilians to participate in crisis management can significantly enhance resilience.
- **Leveraging Social Structures:** Utilizing existing social structures, like churches, can ensure higher engagement and regular updates of knowledge. Pre-existing trust and informal "chains of command" can facilitate swift action during crises.

3. Economy & Businesses

Civilian companies can provide critical support during crises. Key themes include:

- **Agreements with Companies:** Governments can enter agreements with companies to reserve or free up capacity during crises. This ensures that business expertise and resources are available when needed, potentially offering more efficient solutions than military options in lower-threat areas.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Businesses can contribute to military resilience by providing innovative equipment and solutions. Closer alignment between military and business on requirements and volumes is essential for effective support.
- **Utilizing Business Capabilities:** Companies with capabilities useful in crises, such as catering, housing, and infrastructure, can play a significant role in supporting military and civilian efforts.

4. Culture

In times of crisis, a sense of belonging and purpose is vital. Key points include:

- **Promoting Positive Narratives:** Emphasizing collective values and identity can motivate citizens to endure hardships. A positive narrative helps maintain morale and unity.
- **Humanitarian Law and Human Rights:** Reinforcing the importance of humanitarian law and basic human rights is crucial, especially when facing adversaries who may not respect these principles. This helps prevent own forces from resorting to similar measures.

5. Politics & Institutions

Maintaining functional institutions and decision-making bodies is essential. Key themes include:

- **Protecting Governing Bodies:** Ensuring the safety of decision-makers through military protection, bunkers, or "Doomsday planes" is crucial for maintaining governance during crises.
- **Political Resilience:** Resilience against destabilization and information warfare is increasingly important. This includes preserving the ability for constructive debate and reaching consensus within society.
- **Constructive Political Discourse:** In a polarized environment, it's vital to maintain a political discourse that can withstand attempts to manipulate public opinion. This is one of the biggest challenges in ensuring political resilience.

All these aspects must be considered at both collective and individual levels, with tailored measures to enhance resilience. Anticipating potential threats and preparing

proactively are crucial for reducing impact and ensuring quick adaptation when risks materialize.

5. Venue & Partners

The Theodor Heuss Akademie, named after Germany's first federal president and situated in Gummersbach, Germany, stands as a beacon of political education and democratic engagement. Established in 1967, it operates under the auspices of the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, dedicating itself to the promotion of liberal values and political participation both in Germany and internationally. The academy is recognized for its comprehensive educational offerings, including seminars, conferences, and training sessions that attract nearly 5 000 guests annually from across Germany, Europe, and the world. Its programs are diverse, catering to adults and offering seminars for school groups in cooperation with schools, making it a hub for learning, training, and shaping political discourse.

The institution prides itself on fostering a lively dialogue based on tolerance and mutual understanding, essential foundations for intercultural exchange and the development of core liberal values. It has become a permanent site for art exhibitions, showcasing works by artists from the region and beyond, thus merging political education with cultural enrichment.

Hosting the CIOR Seminar 2025 at the Theodor Heuss Academy of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) was essential in enabling the event. The great support and efforts to organize the event highlights their exceptional commitment and support in fostering international geopolitical dialogue. Their dedication to advancing freedom, democracy, and liberal political education aligns perfectly with the aims of the CIOR seminar, creating an ideal backdrop for discussions on strengthening relations between the military and the economy. This partnership not only elevates the seminar's impact but also highlights the vital role of educational institutions like the Theodor Heuss Akademie in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.