MILITARY CONCEPTS AND HYBRID WAR

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Abstract: The article deals with necessity of new military concept developments as a response to new type of warfare called hybrid war. The concept would affect the development and training of armed forces of both coalition and the individual states. The article is part of the project „Development of theory of military art in the age of modern and postmodern wars“, conducted at the Military Art Department, University of Defence in Brno.

Key words: military concept, defence, hybrid war, operation.

Introduction

States have the constitutional duty to prepare their forces and civilians for future threats changes in security environment. The threat, by definition, may have the capability to threaten the very existence of the state. The issue of development and training of the armed forces is thus vital obligation for any state and it should also be a priority of every state.

Contemporary security environment is characterized by various nonconventional and conventional threats. When combined, they constitute so called “hybrid threats” and their impact is massively multiplied. The most recent appearance of this kind of threats could be seen at Eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

1. Methodology

Within the project there were used methods of comparative analyses and syntheses of NATO and EU countries documents and the practice of making military concepts with focus on analyses of operational concepts of foreign partners. Project takes into account the anticipated development of security and operational environment and the likely demands on the ability of the armed forces in relation to the security and defense. Analyses of lessons learned and
2. Approaches to military concepts development

Military concept is the foundation for defence planning. Military concepts usually describe visions and basic ideas about the character of future armed forces. They discuss organizational structure, development, armament and training while trying to achieve a particular goal. They introduce the basic ideas and principles and ignore the particular details. Unlike concepts in other resorts, military concepts usually aim for long-term validity, for up to 15-20 years.

Military concepts are developed as a reaction to the strategic paradigm of the state defence. Strategic paradigm is concerned with the aims-ways-means for state defence (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Strategic paradigm of state defence

2.1. Conditions for the development of new military concept

Military concepts are developed mainly for two reasons:

- as a reaction to the new military threat. In this case, military concept is developed, because the old ways of conducting operations are not effective in the face of a new threat. This new threat might emerge due to several causes: change in security environment, employment of new weapon systems, changes in opponent’s tactics or even by redefining the existing aims in the persisting situation;
- to make better use of existing resources in order to handle the persisting situation. In this case, military concept is developed in order
to find better solutions for the existing threat. This solution might be achieved by the development in the area of technologies, organizational structure, tactics, social sphere etc. (Pikner, Krčmář 2011);

– Fulfilment of one of these conditions should lead to the development of new military concept. Otherwise only a pseudo-concept may emerge, which constitutes less useful document without real value.

2.2. Typology of military concepts

In general, military concepts describe the methods, means and plans and how they will be implemented in order to develop military capabilities and to achieve the goal or intention. These types of concepts are processed mainly in the defense sector and are an expression of a vision:

– how to use the armed forces,
– organization of armed forces personnel composition, equipment and accessories,
– structure and internal processes,
– providing the operational functions and
– methods of construction, development and training of the armed forces.

With regard to their purpose, military concepts may be divided into four main areas as follows:

– institutional concepts that describe the organization and e.g. material and technical equipment of the military institution, its direction and development;

– operating concepts, describing the way how the formations, units or armed forces as a whole are employed. These types of concepts are in the broader sense, an expression of an opinion about the method of employment of troops. It means how the military forces will be employed in operations. In literature we may find terms “Operational Concept” or “Operating Concept”; both with the same contextual meaning. These types of concepts describe how commanders, applying military science and military art, can use the defined capabilities to achieve the set of military goals (TRADOC 2009: 28);

– functional concepts that describe the activities of the various military functions or sub functions (fire, force protection, etc.). Concepts describe the performance (execution, demonstration) of a specialized military area (such as logistics, fire support, manoeuvre, force protection etc.) in a broader operational context;

– enabling (integrating) concepts that describe activities that support through the functions other activities (digitization, robotics, NEC etc.). Enabling (sometimes also called integrating) concepts depict how the individual (specific) task or procedure should be carried out
by applying a particular capability, such as a specific technology, training or educational program, organization or equipment. The enabling concepts, as far as the terminology is concerned, are the most specific ones out of all military concepts. The level of the taken information should be sufficient for the direct specification of military requirements (for modernization, equipment, armament...) (Zůna et al. 2012: 14-28).

3. Security and operational environment

The security and operational environment assessment represents a crucial part of the security and defense policy formation process and development of the country’s follow-up security system concepts (among others this system includes the armed forces). It is the main starting point for rational allocation of the country’s limited resources. It stipulates the threats and risks shaping security interests, assesses its severity and imminence and sets their relative order of importance (priorities). The purpose of the security and operational environment assessment is to identify potential future threats and resulting risks the country (or a coalition of countries as a whole) will face and against which they will have to develop their defense capabilities. The identified future threats and resulting risks form the basic framework for the development of scenarios described in the operating concepts.

In defense planning, the future operational environment has a critical influence on the concepts development, defining the employment of forces in future operations. These considerations are the underlying information and decisive elements for the building and development of the armed forces in the long-term horizon. The operating concepts thus become one of the critical elements in the building and development of the armed forces in long-term planning (Pikner et al. 2011).

3.1. Relationship between security and operational environment

The analysis and prediction of security threats is important primarily for the assessment of phenomena and processes taking place in the security environment of the state. This term means the area where the interests of the country are met and get into conflicts with the interests of other stakeholders (countries, international organizations, multinational corporations, international non-governmental organizations, interest groups, etc.) and run the processes that significantly influence the level of security (Pikner, Galatik 2015).

The operational environment may be seen as a set of conditions, circumstances and influences that affect the performance and efficiency of the military force and have a direct influence on the decisions about its employment. In terms of physical specifications, it is primarily the area of deployment of the armed forces. The operational environment determines the requirements for
The military forces build-up, their preparation and employment. It also affects the conduct of operations at all levels of command and control (Pikner et al. 2012).

The principal characteristics of the operational environment include the opponent (enemy), local people and social, political and cultural structure, history and traditions, condition of the environment, infrastructure, technological factors, information technology situation as well as the natural conditions, terrain, climate and other factors (Zůna et al. 2012: 14-28).

4. Hybrid war

Wars nature, as defined by Clausewitz, is still composed of the trinity of emotions, chance and reason. Independent variables (emotions, chance, and a reason), which vary in every war, and new technological improvements have great effect upon the character of war. They affect the tactics, operational art, military strategy and in some cases even grand strategy of respective actors. It is now apparent that character of war is changing. The traditional boundaries between the military and civilians are fading away. Cyberattacks are probably the most obvious example, because they are enablers of action and actions at the same time. Another factor is gathering and evaluating of information. Although it was crucial in all the wars in history, it now achieves still more importance (Anderson, Tardy 2015).

4.1. Threat

Whoever studied the wars of Roman Empire, wars of Louis XIV or even recent Cold War probably agrees that hybrid wars are not a new phenomenon. The concept gained initial credibility during the so-called Second Lebanon war, fought between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006 (Gaub 2015). In recent years the phenomenon gained much popularity and began to perform an umbrella term for various kind of threats: "low-intensity conflict, kinetic as well as non-kinetic threats to international peace and security, cyber war, asymmetric conflict scenarios, global terrorism, piracy, transnational organized crime, demographic challenges, resources security, retrenchment from globalization and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson 2014).

Several of the above mentioned "hybrid" threats are probably as old as war itself. What is new is the possibility of both NATO and EU "facing the adaptive and systematic use of such means singularly and in combination by adversaries in pursuit of long-term political objectives, as opposed to their random occurrence, driven by coincidental factors. It means that hybrid threat is not exclusively a tool of asymmetric or non-state actors, but can be applied by state and non-state actors alike" (Miklaucic 2011:1) (Figure 2).
4.2. Response

Response to hybrid threats should not be based on new technology development (although it might be a part of it) as some may think. What the Alliance, EU and the individual states need, is a new operational concept. They need to figure out how to face the threat within the framework of strategic paradigm.

Military concepts and later developed military doctrines provide guidance for the operational practice. As of today, western armed forces are poorly prepared when it comes to hybrid threats. “It seems as if NATO’s inability and perhaps unwillingness to formulate a binding comprehensive NATO approach to hybrid threats is a testament to the perseverance of an overwhelmingly conservative military doctrinal approach” (Bachmann, Gunneriusson 2014).

Military concepts and doctrines should provide foundation to develop capabilities to protect the subject from all forms of threats, conventional interstate wars as well as new hybrid threats. However, the essential fact remains that “only society as a whole can protect itself, a task which is not limited to the military only, but which, on the other hand, cannot take on this huge task alone. An integration of the capabilities at interstate level, something NATO refers to as ‘smart defence’, and increased defence cooperation may be the only way forward to counter the multitude of ever-evolving threats in the future” (Bachmann, Gunneriusson 2014).

4.3. Possible concept of military response to the hybrid treats

Military attack on the members of NATO or EU seemed unlikely just a few years ago, but nowadays, with the appearance of new character of war, it has become a real threat. Both EU and NATO now stand before the challenge of coping with the new security environment. Increase in military capabilities of
EU is essential for the union to be able to face new kind of threats. Foundation of this increase should be operational concept, which would make military capable of (Anderson, Tardy 2015):

- act as a deterrent. Capability to deter Russian aggression lies with no other instrument of power but military forces. Not one member of the union is strong enough to withstand a large-scale Russian operation on its own, but even a small capable military force may have direct impact on the calculation for any opponent contemplating hybrid operations;
- quickly react even without outside help. Country’s military and security forces must have the capability to rapidly respond on their own. The very nature of hybrid operations makes rapid collective defence responses difficult – if not near impossible – in consensus- and rules-based organizations such as the EU and NATO;
- rapidly deploy to another EU or NATO member state in case of request and need. While the US keeps a rotating force of 150 troops in each of the Baltic states and Poland since April 2014 (occasionally joined by similar-sized units from other NATO allies), more troops would be needed in the event of a crisis;
- effectively support civilian authorities and police. The concept of military response to hybrid threats must be developed in accordance with other instruments of the state for waging the war. In cases of large-scale violent riots or acts of domestic terrorism associated with hybrid operations, police forces may be overwhelmed, contributing to the sense of confusion and hopelessness. In some countries, the police have the possibility to draw on military assets and personnel to act under civilian command.

4.4. Hybrid war as a concept

As any proper concept, hybrid war has to have its limits and boundaries to make it analytically useful. Commonly used definitions of hybrid war vary a lot and they are often vague as well. It is therefore necessary to state what hybrid war is and what it is not. To explain what the authors mean by the term hybrid war, it is necessary to look at war from the perspectives of hierarchical levels of war.

On the level of strategy, every war is hybrid. Governments and rulers use all the available tools and methods (including non-military ones) to achieve their political goals and at the same time, to deny the same goal to the enemy. At this level, war is always inherently interactive, with both sides trying to break the opponent’s will to resist. Therefore, it makes no sense to talk of hybrid war on this level. What makes war the hybrid one must be found on the lower levels of war.
Lower level is the realm of military operations. This is the level to which most of the commentators refer, when they write about new kind of warfare. Whether it was Hezbollah pushing back an IDF offensive in 2006 or it were Russian separatist troops harassing the Ukrainians in 2015, the way they conducted their operations seemed as a new kind of warfare to many observers. Their operations were characteristic by crafty combinations of regular and irregular troops used simultaneously, to achieve operational objectives. Hybrid war on this level simply means the combination of operations different in its characteristics but orchestrated so as to achieve some kind of military objective.

On the tactical level, the changes occur due to the application of new weapon systems and technology and the use made of these changes by regular, irregular and non-state forces. For example, different kinds of guided missiles offer whole new possibilities and high firepower not only for their own troops but also for the enemy. This in turn leads not only to tactical possibilities but also to the emergence of new threats. Hybrid war on the tactical level means that the weapons systems are now capable of achieving disproportionately high strategic effects.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

Contemporary security situation constitutes one of the conditions for the development of a new operational concept for waging war. It is necessary to develop operational concept for conducting operations utilizing the resources and forces at our disposal. The states approach of conducting operations with non-military tools and means will also be vital. In other words, to counter the hybrid threat, it is necessary to respond with holistic approach.

Experience and approaches utilized during the process of military concept development constitute vital part of development of operational concepts for conducting hybrid warfare. The concepts, later converted into policy and strategy would be an essential instrument for maintaining the sovereignty of both the coalition and individual states.

The article is one of the outputs of the project for organizational development called "Development of theory of military art in the age of modern and postmodern wars", conducted at the University of Defense. Part of the project is dedicated to systematic issues of military concept development as a reaction to the changing security environment.

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