

## THE USE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE POSTMODERN WARS

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**Abstract:** *In this article authors depict how the security environment challenges can affect the emerging theory of post-modern war. The 20th century becomes the twilight of modern wars; armed conflicts take the nature of the postmodern wars. The characteristic features of contemporary wars lead to conclusions about the uniqueness of the postmodern wars and the needs for their research. This research is necessary for the understanding of effective ways to use armed force in contemporary and future conflicts and wars.*

**Keywords:** Postmodern war, strategic, armed forces

### 1. Introduction

The decision to use armed force in contemporary operations raises a variety of questions. First, it is necessary to know and understand what has changed in the security and operating environment, wars and conflicts present in comparison with ancient and relatively recent history. To further understand the most common mistakes at strategic, operational and tactical level.

### 2. Fundamental changes in the security and operating environment

In the 20th century the period of the so-called modern wars culminated. They had for more than 300 years a number of common features. In this period the wars were the exclusive domain of monarch. From the second half of the 17th century the basic and original function of the modern state was defense against external aggression. The monarch and later states became exclusive owners of the monopoly on the legitimate power and organized violence in its territory. In addition, they have the right to wage war with other rulers and states in the event that state security or interests were threatened.

What are the main features of post-modern armed conflict, what differs from the modern war?

#### 2.1. Twilight of modern war

Very important for defining of the term "modern war" is the Westphalia system. Contracts concluded in the context of Westphalian Peace (1648), which ended the "30th years' war", established the modern European system of sovereign states. At the same time this system defined the basic attributes of the states, i.e. mutually respected the independence and legal sovereignty, territorial sovereignty and the legitimacy of all forms of Government. The State became the exclusive and legitimate body of international law and at the same time the sole owner of the rights to use diplomacy and war as a tool of its foreign policy.

Modern war was a prolongation of the international policy by violent means. Some certain formal requirements preserved in international laws had to be fulfilled for this announcement. Its way was regulated by a number of guiding limitations, which had its origins in the doctrine of fair war.

The war was the activities organized by the State. During the fight regular army consisting of specially trained experts faced to another army. The use of methods of irregular war, for example, guerrilla, was considered as a deviation from the norm.

The continuing shift away from these principles occurs during period of the 20th century. The two world wars were total wars. The civilian population was increasingly involved in the war effort and therefore increasingly becoming the target of attacks. In the World War II civilians were systemically massacred.

The Cold War (defined by the years 1948-1989) ironically brought about a period of unprecedented stability in Europe. On the other hand, possible armed conflict between East and West threatened to turn into a nuclear war with global repercussions. Both blocks, therefore redirect their military activities to the developing countries. They supported states, regimes or movements in the so-called alternative wars and strictly avoided direct conflict between themselves. Most of the wars occurring in the Third World (or in the Third World periphery) are no longer significantly different from the regular war in accordance to modern European ideal. A major turning point comes up with the end of the cold war and with the split up of the block arrangement.

War in the Persian Gulf (1991) led by coalition forces can be considered as the last great "regular" war and this time is imaginary point of the "modern wars" era. In this time, operation Desert Storm and her previous political process are considered to be the prototype for the future of the collective international community actions for peacemaking and peacekeeping. The following years showed that this was an exception. The major factor was Saddam Hussein strategic mistake. He went to the clash in regular war where was unable to compete with the West.

The war was conducted by conventional weapons and regular armies. Both sides tried to respect all the principles of the law

with the maximum effort. In the context of armed conflict, of this time the war in the Persian Gulf is an example of a properly conducted modern war, with rapid and decisive victory with the minimum losses and collateral damages. Later it shows that for many years it is possibly the last example. The war was conducted by conventional weapons and regular armies. Both sides tried to respect all the principles of the law with the maximum effort. In the context of armed conflict, of this time the war in the Persian Gulf is an example of a properly conducted modern war, with rapid and decisive victory with the minimum losses and collateral damages. Later it shows that for many years it is possibly the last example.

## **2.2. Postmodern War**

Since the last decade of the 20th century the warring parties are using the irregular war methods mostly. In according to records of the 103 conflicts in 1989-1997, there were only six conflicts between states. The proportion of civilians (noncombatants) on the total losses in these wars is approximately nearly 90 percent.

These facts characterize the first pattern of post-modern war. It is evident that war and armed conflict have shifted from the war between states or aliens to the domestic (home or national conflict). In a number of countries with long-running internal conflict there are collapsing state privilege to led organized violence and the war then returns to private form with non-state control. In the post-modern conflict government-led troops with irregular paramilitary groups, often shaped by the warlords in line with ethnicity or religions are fighting with each other. Their military activities are often associated with extensive economic activities of a criminal nature (theft, extortion and kidnapping, smuggling of materials and weapons, drug trafficking, theft and sale of humanitarian aid).

Postmodern war does not creates the differences between the military and

civilian domains, progressively and deeper interfere with the life of society as a whole. In the postmodern war violence became reality of everyday life. The weapon is part of the civil population daily needs. It is a war without linear lines; the war is dispersed in space as the geographical and social too. It is difficult to distinguish between the forces, because it is usually beyond the criteria of the just wars doctrine. The killing of civilians in these conflicts is not the secondary product of war, but one of its basic objectives and tools too. This fact is illustrated by the increase in the number of refugees seeking protection from the war in other states same as internally displaced persons, wandering within the state, where the armed conflict is.

It is typical that after the relatively quick combat phase of the operation, or the phase of the deployment of forces there is very long stage of stabilization. Intervening forces capabilities is center of gravity during this phase. Time horizon for the stabilization phase termination is vague and as a rule it can be counted in months, but rather in years. As example operations in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly shows the stabilization phase progress and duration.

### **3.2. Comparison of modern and postmodern wars**

When comparing the modern and postmodern wars characteristics there are distinct features that these wars clearly divided from each other. We can compare war in accordance with:

#### *Period:*

- a) World wars were relatively short. WWI last for 4 years and WWII lasted 6 years.
- b) Postmodern wars, e.g. wars in Iraq and in Afghanistan too, lasted more than 10 years.

#### *Conclusion of war (fighting phase):*

- a) Modern wars have been terminated normally in capitulation or peace treaty. The subsequent phase of stabilization was very short. The power and security structures of the fallen state were functional to ensure continuing state safety.
- b) Postmodern War are not usually due

terminated by capitulation to there are no typical surrenders. The security forces (police, gendarmerie, the judicial system etc.) do not exist or are not able to ensure the fundamental safety of the population. The stabilization phase is extremely long and usually includes the combat activities aimed against the terrorists and the guerilla and organized criminal elements.

#### *Operational environment:*

- a) Modern wars have been conducted normally outside the settlements. The main effort was concentrated on destruction of the enemy armed forces.
- b) In postmodern war, the combat activities taking place in the civilian population environment mostly. Experts begin to talk about the war in the social environment, in the urban areas and other sites. Actors of postmodern war are using guerilla methods and irregular forms of warfighting in heavily accessible terrain for modern forces which eliminates technological advantages.

Stabilization forces are, more than ever, operating where the human factor predominates and action on the ground and the capacity for discrimination in the use of force are vital for success. In operations that take place “amongst the people”, this forces face opponents for whom asymmetric attack is the norm.

### **4. The Armed Forces use in Postmodern Wars**

Efforts to find the best ways of using the armed forces in the postmodern wars were reflected in a chain of concepts applied in the NATO and ally. It was, for example, Concept of Effects-Based Operations (EBO), Effects-Based Approach to Operations Concept (EBAO) or Comprehensive Approach, which was a practical response to the changes and challenges within operational environment. Each of these concepts has developed series of (future) operating concept for forces, but all were facing to number of problems.

The main aim of the military intervention is to secure the population and neutralize the insurgent. Analyzing this aim allows the

commander to establish the military objectives as to secure the population, to isolate the insurgents from their support and to neutralize the insurgent armed organization.

At the strategic level of war there is the fundamental problem to determinate clear militarily achievable objectives. Nearly almost, documented examples of Iraq and Afghanistan are counted with a quick military operation, after which the end of war can quickly establish law and order, restoring democracy and the state functions. From a military point of view there was no problem to win the decisive battle with the adversary and fulfill military target of the operation. The biggest difficulties can be identified in achieving the political objective of intervention that cannot be the task of the armed forces. Nevertheless the armed forces often perform this task given by political level of command. The armed forces do not have any type of the forces or means for the political objectives realization.

Military target of operations cannot be associated with the political aims; military target and its fulfillment can only create a condition for the realization of the political objectives.

The Land Forces demonstrate their unique role at the operational and tactical level of war. Experience show that fighting enemy only with the Air Force and Special Forces may have a short-term effect, but as the overall concept of operations this is the fatal mistake. An example is the American

intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld pushed for just such a method of conducting counterterrorism operations. The initial air strikes on a site of the Al-Káidá proved to be a success, but the subsequent rise of the Taliban's ultimately requested the deployment of ground forces. Presence of Land Forces for at least a limited stability in the Afghanistan region is necessary for more than 12 years.

Many of the problems resulted mainly from subjective decision-making on issues of the armed forces usage and in the setting of unrealistic (political) tasks, which are not the armed forces missions.

## 5. Conclusion

Strategic mistakes in the use of force are resulting from the ill-judged and often amateur strategic thinking of current political elites, without deep analysis of versatile effects of military intervention. The use of the armed forces must comply with the intent of achieving a political objective. Military target can only to support the objectives of the policy in case of necessity. Objectives and tasks for the armed forces have to be in accordance with the nature of contemporary, i.e. the "postmodern" wars and should correspond to the Clausewitz war theory.

Even after 180 years since Clausewitz released his book „The war“ it is possible to conclude this article that many of the proposals and conclusions are fully applicable and currently.

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