

PARTICULARITIES RELATING TO THE RISK MANAGEMENT INTO THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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Abstract: *Complex phenomenon and particularly challenging, the decision-making process in the military field is, perhaps, the place where the risk is defined and is found in “pure form”. The dynamics of actions, environmental factors, technical and tactical characteristics of military structures are just a few items that generate a range of risks which must be managed by each commander, both at the time of the decision, and during its implementation. For these reasons, and not only, we support the idea that risk management in the military field may be the key to success in any mission.*

Keywords: decision, risk, management, military action

1. Introduction

Military actions, regardless of the historical stage in which they took place, have requested from military decision-makers to identify pertinent responses to the interdependencies between the decision and the risk or between the decision-making process and the risk management, given their general and special characteristics. Military leaders, in the planning of actions, pay more attention to the ways in which the “principle of taking the opponent by surprise” can be implemented, both in the framing of probable action courses and in putting them into force. Risk situation means that “*there are several possible variants for each alternative and each can be attached a value and a probability of achieving the results*”[1] Thus, in this context, the identification of risks as well as their management becomes an essential mission of all commanders, under very unfavorable conditions (limited time for analysis, limited number of subordinates supporting this process, high dynamics of

information, conditions of environment, etc.) and it is likely that this process will itself turn into a self-standing risk related to military action.

2. Perspectives of the decision-risk binomial in the military field

The decision, from the point of view of its purpose, is the alternative chosen following judgment on the value of the objectives to be achieved and the ways to achieve them. Obviously, some decisions are the result of voluntary behaviors, others may be the result of involuntary behaviors (forcible decisions for various reasons). But, regardless of the typology of the decisions taken, the risks are present in any decision-making or implementation process. In the military environment, accurate knowledge of decision makers is a desideratum for all the organization’s components so that they are able to make the right decisions and manage the risks.

Risks shape their military decision-making in different forms, but mostly as part of the

environment - a component of the decision-making process, as they are most often identified, localized and analyzed. *"Risk assessment is the scientific process that determines how risky a process, activity or set of things is to produce is an expected goal. It is a process of collecting and analyzing data describing the shape, dimensions and characteristics of the risk."*[2]

A fundamental element - specific to the military field, as an organizational requirement by reference to the obligation to fulfill the mission, the behavioral structure of the decision-makers has major implications for the decisions that are being taken during the military actions. The above context gives rise to more risks related to planning and carrying out missions. Thus, the absence of decision-making or the delay in communicating the decisions taken may arise when the military decision-maker tends to over-assess the elements of the decision, which may lead to a lack of accountability - a matter that should not be characteristic of a military. Also, one must not reach the other extreme, incompletely, erroneously or in a hurry making/determining decisions that will adversely affect the fulfillment of the missions. We believe that the balance can be maintained by each military becoming aware of the elements of entry into the decision-making process and the consequences of the decisions for each stage of fulfilling the missions/orders received. In practice, an individual tends to neglect issues that seem unimportant, but - in the military field - this is unacceptable as it can generate the failure to meet the goals to the amount requested since the mission was transmitted. Logically, we can't take into account all the details of a situation, but the removal of some aspects from the spectrum of elements that characterize a decisional situation must be done after proper analysis and classification.

In general, risks can increase in number and value when the decision maker analyzes

and decides individually, failing to identify all the consequences that may arise in the course of the mission itself or its contribution to the achievement of the higher echelon strategy. Although the military institution is characterized by strict hierarchy and the decisions taken are applied in the form of order, being the overall responsibility of the commander of the structure, the decision-maker must also take into account the opinions and determinations made by the specialized subordinates because one person can make mistakes in identifying or correctly assessing the risks, creating the danger of frustration, tense situations, distrust etc. and turning into threats in achieving the set goals.

"Any human activity involves a set of risks and threats related to the process of achieving the proposed objectives, and for the military organization this set is much more complex, considering the three plans in which specific activities can take place: peace, in situations of crisis or war."[3]

Lack of knowledge of the risk as well as the lack of an alternative to limit its negative effects will call into question the results of the work to be carried out. If for a company the losses are quantified in financial resources, which can be recovered with a later decision, for a commander who does not correctly analyze the risks this can lead to losses in the human resource, which can no longer be recovered.

The existence of laws and regulations that sometimes limit the commander's freedom of action in the activities he performs compels him to find solutions that will allow him to achieve his goals without violating them and which may become prerequisites for the emergence of new risks in the decision process. In the decision-making stages, the implementation phase of the decisional elements is neither risk-free, nor can they change the course of action previously established. The confrontation between the initial design and reality will lead to the reconfiguration of the plans and

the preservation / adjustment / redefinition of the actual means of effective action in the accomplishment of the ordered missions, on the one hand, and the subsequent risk management and their management, on the other.

The non-use of a clear decision-making algorithm or the non-standardization of the decision-making process leads to a reduction in efficiency in achieving the objectives and the creation of a climate of

instability - that is why commanders in particular use standard procedures (MDMP - military decision-making process; OPOD - operation order etc.) in view of the best management of the risks related to the military action. Thus, in MDMP, the 7th stage is allocated to risk assessment, a stage where commanders, together with subordinates, identify the risks and "make an initial assessment of the level of risk for each hazard"[4]

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| Step 1. | Analyze the higher headquarters' order. |
| Step 2. | Conduct initial intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). |
| Step 3. | Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks. |
| Step 4. | Review available assets. |
| Step 5. | Determine constraints. |
| Step 6. | Identify critical facts and assumptions. |
| Step 7. | Conduct risk assessment. |
| Step 8. | Determine initial commander's critical information requirements (CCIR). |
| Step 9. | Determine the initial reconnaissance annex. |
| Step 10. | Plan use of available time. |
| Step 11. | Write the restated mission. |
| Step 12. | Conduct a mission analysis briefing |
| Step 13. | Approve the restated mission. |
| Step 14. | Develop the initial commander's intent. |
| Step 15. | Issue the commander's guidance. |
| Step 16. | Issue a warning order. |
| Step 17. | Review facts and assumptions. |

Figure 1: The steps in the mission analysis from MDMP [5]

That is why, in the military environment, emphasis is placed on training, rehearsals/ practice, to achieve cohesion at the subunit level from both the inter-human point of view and to achieve coordination within and between the decision centers. The existence of several decision-making centers in the conduct of a military action leads to the establishment of several decisions which, for transposition, require their coordination by the higher echelons of these decision centers. The existence of an adequate and functional information system is imperative in the whole decision-making process (initiation, decision making and implementation) as well as in the risk management related to this process. The

implementation of inadequately detailed, contradictory, inaccurate, incomplete decisions, as well as the lack of detailed instructions for their implementation, obliges subordinates to act in a manner that can lead to increased negative consequences of the risks associated with the respective military action, which will endanger the goals set from the beginning, the entire mission itself.

3. Methods of risk analysis and application prerequisites in the military field

In the literature, the following risk management phases are considered:



Figure 2: Stages of risk management

Without going into detail, we will briefly present a series of risk analysis methods and how they can or may not be used effectively in the military field, thus:

a) *Questionnaire*. In the form of a checklist, they can be based on the opinion of specialists/good practitioners in the field, including the specific elements to be followed in the mission analysis and generating the entry requirements in the decision-making process for the future action, to avoid situations that can lead to errors. Thus, by setting minimum thresholds or intervals, the application of questionnaires supports the risk management process by identifying risk early, even before starting the decision-making process. We believe that these questionnaires/checklists should be made on the specifics of the military branches/military specialties or the level of military structures to reflect the reality of the field, in this case the real risks.

b) *Brainstorming*. The previous method, the questionnaire focuses on determining the typology of risks, but can not identify the source of that risk, as it can not otherwise detail how the materialization of the risks affects the activities. Brainstorming can eliminate these shortcomings. Brainstorming can be directed to determine a broader range of risk sources that may affect the decision-making process. The major state is the structural component that supports the commander in making and implementing decisions, so this type of method can be used successfully in the military field, the essential requirement is to fit into the time allocated to determining and choosing the course of action most favorable to the fulfillment of the mission entrusted. The staff is the structural component that

supports the commander in making and implementing decisions, so this type of method can be used successfully in the military field, the essential requirement is to fit into the time allocated to determining and choosing the course of action most favorable to the fulfillment of the mission entrusted.

c) *Logs*. "The logs are useful tools for tracking the activities for a specified period of time, which is usually a month." [6] Given that we are referring to a series of recordings of notable events during one or more activities, they must be related to the elements of the identified risk system and the consequences arising from their occurrence. As part of the military actions, the aspects that have characterized their implementation are noted, but in order to obtain information relevant to risk management in the decision-making process, these should not only be recorded but also explained by what happened in actual terms with the evolution of risks in taking and implementing those decisions.

d) *Diagrams*. One of the most used diagrams for risk identification and analysis is the Cause-Effect Diagram (or the Ishikawa Diagram). "The method uses a combination of visual representation and brainstorming to obtain the causes: the primary branch - the effect, the major branch - major causes, the minor branch - the more detailed causal factors". [7] Although we find this method being mainly used in the productive field or in connection with the use of a technical means, it can be easily applied in the military decision-making process as it contains all the elements necessary for the construction of some probable courses of action: human resources, technical resources, control

methods, management methods and the environment, on the basis of which an appropriate decision can be taken to carry

out the mission entrusted.

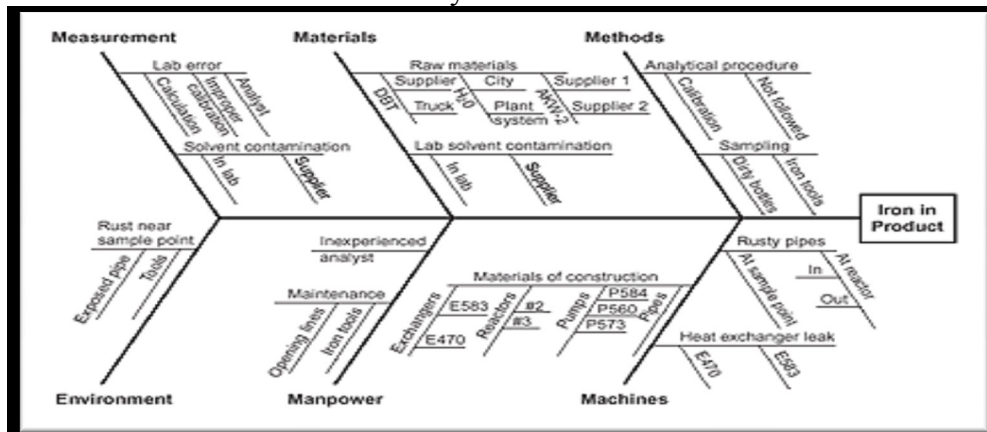


Figure 3: Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram-example [8]

e) *Periodic meetings with the staff involved.* In most organizations, one of the most commonly used and determining best results in the risk identification process, is the method of regular meetings between managers and staff involved in the activity being analyzed. And in the military field, this method is widely used by commanders consisting of information briefings conducted before, during and after the decision-making process, because the dynamics of the factors that make their mark in military action is very high, even from one hour to the next. We only highlight the requirement that risk analysis should be a distinct stage in these meetings, knowing that the participants are either highly specialized staff or commanders from the hierarchically inferior level.

4. Conclusion

In military action, there is never any certainty, but uncertainty must be avoided - in the sense that, on general or specific elements, through specific activities, a minimum of information is generated that generates a set of risks associated with that military action subsequently managed so that the mission is completed, with minimal losses from any resource category. Risk Management Scientific Instruments can be “tried” during training/ exercises/ applications to choose the most appropriate method for identifying, analyzing and managing risk as an intrinsic part of an efficient decision-making process at each military structure, in any context.

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