

DOCTRINAL APPROACHES OF THE LAND OPERATIONS AT TACTICAL LEVEL

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Abstract: *The character of armed conflict will be further granted by the use of conventional military forces, of professionalized but high-tech armies - as it has been enshrined in recent finished confrontations as well as in the ones currently underway- the manifestation area and the intensity of the threats have extremely diversified and expanded in the context of the operational environment. This meant the need for new approaches of the specific operational framework for the conduct of military operations, with consequences for the structure of the operation of groupings of forces and the way of conducting actions.*

Keywords: doctrine, combat functions, effects based action, tactical techniques and procedures

Introduction

To describe the character of operations at the tactical level, the elements determined by the doctrine as well as the characteristics of the ground operations and the operating framework of the tactical level are appropriate to be debated. Ground operations are characterized by factors such as uncertainty, violence, complexity and hardship which manifest on the battlefields where chaos, hazards, stress and asymmetric events are dominant. Under these conditions, the battle requires realistic judgment and a solid calculation of the risks based in direct proportion to the adverse events.

The use of violence by those means which oblige the enemy to act according to our intentions causes effects such as: hazard, surprise, shock and fear. The instruments which may result in a state of indecision regarding the action to be performed immediately by the enemy are: determination, accurate organization,

coherent command, amid maintaining a high morale. Its applicability is to be found in what principles of the armed combat say: making simple plans, implementation of procedures, the risk-based management and a pragmatic approach (experience-based), which can cause significant unforeseen effects of the ground battle and turn them into advantages.

1. The doctrinal level of the tactical operations

The doctrinal elements concerning the activities of the ground forces rely on a specific *hierarchy of documents* in which all operations are designed, *the principles of warfare, the actions based on effects, the maneuver approach and command through missions.*

The document whose primary objective is to ensure the basic notions related to the planning, implementation and support of operations conducted in all possible frames (joint at the national level,

response to the crisis under the command of NATO/EU, and OSCE mandates under UN or coalition), is- General Staff-103, *The Romanian Army Doctrine*. This document develops the principles, rules and concepts specific to the Romanian military art, takes the ideas of the North-Atlantic Alliance doctrine and provides the necessary framework for planning and conduct of campaigns and operations.

The natural hierarchy, based on the previous document, follows F.T.-1, *The Doctrine of the Land Forces Operations*, a reference source that provides guidance and principles for planning and execution of operations, in joint and multinational context, being adopted in accordance with the NATO documents "ATP-3.2, *NATO Land Operations and AJP-3.2.2, Command and control of Allied land forces*. F.T.-3, *Field manual of general tactics of the land forces*, Bucharest, 2013, is already in the area of military art by specifying the role of the land forces and specific missions temporally bounded.

The publication of the manual has provided the development, in detail, of the aspects regarding the general tactics adopted by the land forces for the carrying out of the main types of military operations. Thus, the general tactic manual secures the principles guiding the way of the use of the land forces in the full range of operations conducted for the tasks intended to peace, crisis or war. Furthermore, the manual develops the way of using the types of capabilities specific to the land forces in order to carry out both missions ordered nationally as well as within collective defense, including the results of the study of national and allied joint doctrines, similar manuals of NATO armies and the analysis of lessons learned from national and multinational exercises and missions in the theatres of operations.

The continuity in the publications referred above is given by granting the importance of aspects relating to the *state of readiness* and *force projection*. Readiness

(effectiveness) requires that the units should be trained, organized and equipped to carry on operations as well as for the timely force projection. The capabilities that meet the requirements of effectiveness are: *responsiveness, deployability, actions with lethal effect, survival and supportive ones*. Responsiveness calls planning, execution and evaluation of the operation, involving at the same time training, planning and preparation for deployment. Within the doctrine of the battalion and brigade echelons there are also elaborated: F.T.-2, *Field Manual of the activities of the staff of Land Forces headquarters in operations*, 2012 F.T./I.-1, *Field Manual for mechanized brigade combat (infantry, light infantry)*, 2004, F.T./I.-2, *Field Manual for infantry battalion combat 2012t*, and the field manuals of other similar structures which provide a better understanding by the commanders and their staffs of the integration of ranches and specialties in the composition of a structure, in order to carry out the tasks under the conditions envisaged for the success.

According to the majority of the allies' doctrines, the range of the tactical actions includes three main types: offensive, defensive, and stability, complemented with intermediate actions. To avoid any confusion and to produce a maximum impact through the simultaneity of enforcement actions, it is necessary an understanding of the operational framework, either by describing the purpose of the planned actions or through the description of the role of each action in relation to the others. At the tactical level, one can describe the networking and operations under both the notion of time and space in a geographic way, using for this purpose the terms of operations *in depth, in contact and rear*, drawn by time, space, organization and most often by the fire range of the weapons used. An example for understanding the operations framework can be applied to the offensive operation, in which the main attack constitutes a

simultaneous operation to contact with operations in the depth of the forces that are infiltrating (scouts, snipers) with the specific mission of harassing enemy logistics or command. At the same time *rear* operations refer to support actions and to ensure freedom of movement.

2. Effects Based Action (EBA)

The effects are described as the consequences of actions performed. They are achieved only through the action against the enemy in particular and depend equally on the actions and reactions of an addressee or other parties, but also on the influence of the environment. EBA focuses on clear results and is carried out in the most efficient way by integrating at the strategic and operative level of lethal and non-lethal means. At the tactical level the EBA principles are contained in the two fundamental concepts *maneuver approach* and *command through missions*.

The maneuver approach, is evidenced by the implementation of some lethal and non lethal actions having the precise aim to affect the capability of the opponent to foresee the operating plan of its own troops and, moreover, to weaken the cohesion and will of its forces to continue the fight. All these effects given are to facilitate the achievement of their own goals proposed at the beginning of confrontation. By the maneuver approach, the commanders intend to apply force in vulnerable parts of the enemy, to gain and maintain the initiative using actions unpredictable for opposing forces, to bring the opponent in a critical situation that will affect the cohesion of the actions and the will to fight, affecting the centre of gravity of the enemy force using the basic functions: *search, fix, hit and exploit*. The characteristics of this approach: *"application of force against weaknesses; orientation towards the destruction of enemy forces and not on maintaining the buildings or the ground positions; attacking, respectively the destruction of the*

enemy's will to continue the fight; the destruction of the enemy's cohesion; use of combat aviation." [1]

Command through missions emphasizes the primary responsibility to take action outside the boundaries of the commander's intent based on the following principles: *the importance of understanding the intentions of the upper echelons and the responsibility of compliance with them; the adoption of decisions in a timely manner; perseverance of the commanders review plans. Command through missions is adopted for promoting a robust system which ensures that, at all levels, "getting a balance between unity and freedom of action."* [2] This is directly influenced by the level of decentralization of the command, of the speed of action and initiative at all levels.

3. Integration of the combat functions within operation

The combat functions are: *mission command, information, movement and maneuver, fire support, protection and combat support services*.

The mission command integrates all combat functions to create the conditions to obtain the planned effects in achieving goals. The command is a process that provides the consistency and continuity, horizontally and vertically, during the planning of operations and ensures the coordination and control of subordinate forces and other elements of power on runtime operations. Command and control refers to the acquisition of information required to estimate whether it is a new decision, the determination of the right response and the adequate measures to be taken and to perform other functions.

The control is the process by which the commander, assisted by the command team, organizes, directs and coordinates the activities of his forces. To achieve this, standard operating procedures-SOP- and tactics, techniques and procedures-TTPs are used in conjunction with the C4I for the

command and control system-C2.

As a combat function *the information* is submitted as a system essentially modular, having the ability to integrate systems and related capabilities at all echelons involved in accomplishing the operation. In this respect, in every situation and for any type of operation, one will pursue from the very beginning the formation of a system of integrated information, accurate and anticipatory in the benefit of the command act. Activities in the field of *information*, i.e. the collection, processing, dissemination and use of data and information about the combat space, deployed both prior and during the operations, are rated as being vital to achieving success. All these activities on line of information are directed towards creating, in particular for the command system, of that unique image Common Operating Picture-COP, clear and comprehensive of the battle space. For this purpose, there are absolutely necessary: a centralized leadership of the whole effort of getting information, a simultaneous deployment of this effort at all levels and a timely dissemination of data using information system elements.

Movement and maneuver, as an operating system, is used for the purposes of achieving the compulsory conditions for success in operations. During the materialization of the decision of the commander in the plan of operation, this will set both priorities and the relations between *the maneuver* and all other combat functions. We consider the maneuver to be a of the fundamental combat function that underlies the decision of the commanders, because it ensures the observance of the principles of the maneuver approach of the operations and, at the same time, it also represents the combining of the fire support movement, through planned effects or other capabilities. Moreover, let us not forget that although the maneuver runs mainly in the physical plan, its concerted execution will determine that it always will have the

morale effects within the enemy (insecurity, confusion and even powerless / petrification). During an operation the maneuver is used throughout the space battle and implies carrying actions in all three components of this space: in contact, in depth and in the rear.

In each of these actions, designed and implemented onto the mentioned levels, are planned to obtain the effects, which summarized, determine success, i.e. those of modeling, decisive and support. The success of a maneuver can be ensured by highlighting the mental qualities of anticipation and agility of the commander and as well as by carrying out joint effective movement with the fire power and with ensuring the protection of the subordinate forces.

Fire support is considered to be the action of the hit means in all categories of forces (naval, air, land), executed simultaneously and under a single coordination to support operations at all echelons, being one of the most crucial elements in the successful completion of the operations. Achieving fire support is provided by integrating and synchronizing execution of fire and their effects (delay, disruption, or destruction of forces and means, of the operating systems and installations). The fire is planned and run in strict coordination with the maneuver and with the information operations, for the purpose of simultaneous engagement of targets and relying on getting some joint and complementary effects. The fire support system presents an architecture that consists of four main systems: of command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I), insurance data, employment/impact and logistics support.

The use of all fire or hit means requires compulsory measures for coordinating fire support, namely precise and clear fire support coordination measures (FSCMs), which should be correlated in a very close manner with air coordination measure (ACMs), of the

intervention of aviation both from the perspective of the coherence of the obtainable effects and that of avoiding fratricide and specifically, of that given by hitting their own air assets with artillery fire.

Protection represents the totality of the means and actions to reduce the vulnerabilities of the force against any threat or situation. A very important aspect which is often neglected at the tactical level is the securing or protecting of the rear area. The potential of the threats in the rear is considerable, the danger of having a multitude of ways such as: asymmetric actions carried out by the insurgents, either individually or collectively against military and civilian targets, conventional actions deployed by the enemy (reconnaissance, diversion, airborne) and information operations staged by various specialized vectors. The elements of infrastructure or deployment which may become possible targets and have to be thoroughly analyzed and included in *The Plan of Protection* of the force are: command points, support forces battle order, reserve forces, logistics areas, storages, airfields, ports and works of art. It should not be neglected any political leaders or military presence in the area of responsibility, which may also be put under threat of attack directly or indirectly.

The last combat function, but not least, is *combat service support*, widely used in the last period with the acronym CSS (Combat Services Support) from NAT literature, i.e. combat support service. The logistic system is tailored in close dependency with the unit system, or depending of the situation, of the superior echelon. Thus, the *logistical system* can regroup subunits consisting of several branches and specialties which include technical capabilities and support activities.

4. Characteristics of the techniques and procedures at tactical level

At the tactical level *initiative winning* consists in imposing the combat

power in the manner necessary to force the enemy to act merely in reaction to the action of forces. The reaction of the enemy's forces must comply with the conditions and pace determined by a good planning and a precise implementation of own forces and it assumes or may also include the loss of the freedom of movement by the enemy. The initiative is achieved by: determining the enemy weaknesses, timing and place of contact with its forces and carrying out the attack using principles of surprise and *simultaneity*.

Synchronization technique mainly involves the concentration of forces, means and actions to implement a maximum of the combat power in a decisive point of battle characterized by time and identified location. Synchronization can also be carried out through detailed coordination of the different types of forces and means that will track the involvement of each element when and where it has the maximum intake in effects thus contributing to the final victory.

A relatively new term in the military literature and vocabulary and which the "Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (2nd Edition reissued and revised), Bucharest, 2009" let us use, is *tempo*. Gaining and maintaining tactical advantage in the military confrontation have always belonged to the one who manifests consistency in the decision-making and leads the actions with the greatest speed. The tempo factor of a structure can be either high or low compared to another presence. To have a high tempo, physical speed in all situations is not mandatory, rather, it is considered that the carried out maneuver should be performed faster during an operation compared to the rate of recovery of its opponent.

The main effort requires identification of the opportunity of the concentration of force in an area or in a determined action as being crucial, at some point, in order to achieve the objective of the operation. The integration of main effort

is run by accurate and clear delineation of the activity using mandatory criteria such as: location, time, or momentum, the forces directly involved and the expected effect of the action.

The surprise, as technique in tactical warfighting, is considered by most doctrinal approaches as being the main factor responsible for ensuring the fraction of the enemy's combat cohesion and for determining the shock necessary for its defeat, according to the initial intention. The evolution of the capabilities of the military structures fundamentally determined by the technologies and in relation with the up-date of the techniques of action makes surprise during the operations to be either total or only associated to the response capacity of the enemy to the impulses of the friendly force.

Misleading the opponent is studied extensively in the main military schools of thought. This technique can be considered as a vital element of tactical operations that provide added value to the specific actions of concealing of the real operations battle order and, in particular, of the location/timing of the main effort. *Misleading* comprises three parts: camouflage, diversion and disinformation. *The misleading plan* is an important document of planning done with careful analysis of the nature of the operations data constraints, time, means and forces available, and which contains the elements of the course of action of its friendly troops intended specifically for the misleading of the enemy.

The use of *forces acting in support of the main effort* (which may be assimilated with the second echelon) and *the reserve* are techniques that can exploit the opportunities of any kind offered both by both the expected and unexpected

tactical success. In this regard, the planning process shall take into account the difference between the roles of the reserve (kept at hand for unexpected situations) and the forces of the 2nd echelon (prepared in advance for the execution of tasks and engaged as planned and according to the evolution of the actions, in particular to maintain the inertia). With the claim to be considered both technique and fundamental principle of the planning of operations, the integration of the *logistics support* is one of the determining factors in supporting the concept of the operation and getting the final victory in every stage of execution.

Conclusions

A first conclusion which I have reached, relates to the fact that in order to understand why certain things happen in a certain way at a tactical echelon, we need to understand the general framework that influences the system, in what situation it is found and why certain measures must be taken in a certain way and for a certain duration of time, measures which relate to the form, mission, equipment, skills and so on. For a better understanding of the land operations at the tactical level, I have presented aspects related to the doctrine and the nature of operations at the tactical level, with the endorsement of a series of principles and techniques needed to any approach.

I found that the current field manuals do not make concrete references to the organization for combat, with the exception of the organic ones with the subordinations and attachments known so far. Thus, I think that the introduction of more knowledge concerning the organization of the forces for combat or for the mission, beginning with the battalion is appropriate.

References

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- [2] *Ibidem*, p. 2-2.

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