

KEYSTONES OF IRREGULAR WARFARE

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Abstract: *The current security environment is evolving towards a global complexity of unpredictable events. The risk of state and non-state actors attempting to achieve their goals through destabilization exists. In the operating environment, this implies a blurring of the boundaries between state and non-state actors (such as insurgents, terrorists and criminals) and NATO may confront an adversary who uses traditional (conventional), irregular warfare or both (hybrid warfare). The aim of the article is to find, analyze and describe the key elements that fundamentally differ irregular of traditional (conventional) and hybrid warfare.*

Keywords: irregular, traditional, hybrid, warfare, tactics

1. Introduction

The security environment is evolving towards a global complexity of unpredictable events. It is characterized by a wide range of threats and risks posed important security-political challenges of the 21st century. It can be defined as global, complex, multilayer and variable. It is characterized by high dynamics, turbulence, increasing diversity of actors and their interests. Adversaries can become not only the traditional nation-states, as well as organized entities represented by non-state armed actors, insurgents, terrorists or criminal networks. [1]

Modern armies have become extremely dependent on sophisticated technologies. Without these instruments their economies can no longer be working and their infrastructure would breakdown. Thus technologies offer a high standard of life to societies but on the other side present vulnerability. [2]

The most common manifestations of contemporary conflicts are insurgency and terrorism, but also various forms of criminal activities, public riots, subversion

or cyber war. Judging from publicly available sources, the issue of modern, so-called "irregular wars" is in Slovakia for many politicians, journalists, opinion makers and even for military personnel still a big unknown. The eventual debate on the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and so-called "Islamic State" shows that many people still are not quite acquainted with the basic set of rules that dominate the current armed conflict characterized by asymmetry and other irregular activities. Therefore, the aim of this article is to identify and briefly describe the key elements that clearly distinguish irregular conflict from conflict traditional or hybrid.

2. General definitions and characteristics

Irregular warfare is one of the oldest form of warfare. It is also called as a little or small war, low-intensity conflict or tribal warfare. There have been more than 80 irregular wars, since World War II. They include civil conflict in Somalia, rebellions in Chechnya or insurgencies in Algeria, Iraq or Afghanistan. These conflicts involved irregular fighters fighting against other

irregular fighters, regular army of a state, or an international intervention force. [3]

The term irregular warfare defines conflicts that manifest actions usually do not include traditional confrontation military forces. Term “irregular” used to describe a deflection from the classical conventional form of warfare where adversaries may use non-traditional methods such as guerrilla warfare, terroristic attacks, subversion, and insurgency for control of local population. This is a summary of the activities of military, political, psychological and economic nature guided by local, non-state actors (insurgents) for use primarily irregular activities.

Irregular warfare is defined as „a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favours indirect approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will“. [4]

It is a big confusion between terms irregular warfare and counterinsurgency (COIN). COIN is a specific subgroup of irregular warfare involving comprehensive efforts

civilian with military actors taken to defeat an insurgency and address core grievances. [5]

Traditional warfare (also called “conventional” or “high intensity conflict”) is a war between states (state-to-state war) that employs direct military confrontation to defeat an adversary’s forces, destroy an adversary’s capacity, or seize territory in order to force a change in an adversary’s government or policies. [6]

Another category of conflict is called hybrid warfare. This "modern" term is a combination of a number of conventional and irregular warfare tools (diplomacy, economic and information warfare, propaganda, cyberattacks etc.). The hybrid warfare is characterized by synchronous engagement of regular forces and non-state actors using a mixture of regular and irregular activities. This conflict executed by both state and non-state threats that employs conventional capabilities, irregular tactics, and criminal disorder. [7]

Hybrid warfare involve traditional and irregular warfare forms crosswise the full spectrum of conflict. Figure 1 shows a pattern of approaches that could be included in hybrid form of warfare. [6]

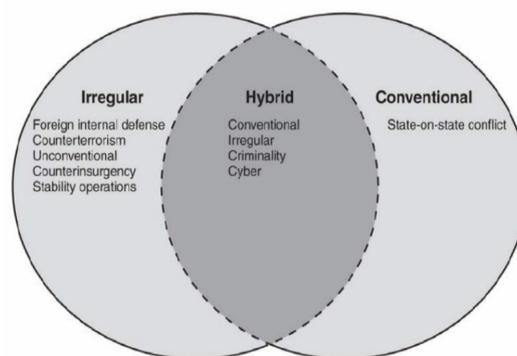


Figure 1: Contrasting Traditional and Irregular warfare [6]

3. Contrasting Dimensions of Warfare

There are few of fundamental dimensions which traditional (conventional) and irregular wars will differ.

3.1 Participants

Traditional (conventional) warfare is essentially state-to-state war. Actors in this

type of conflict are symmetric armed forces of opposing states or alliance of states.

In contrast, irregular warfare is characterized by blurred the boundary between war and politics, the military and civilians. States have lost their monopoly on the conduct of armed conflict.

In the irregular conflict is one of the rival forces represented aggressive asymmetric non-state actor (irregular forces or insurgents). The characteristic features of insurgents are decentralized and often multinational base. [8]

3.2 Motivation and main goal

Motivation for traditional (conventional) war is territory, economic (for example seizing natural resources) or political change. The result of such a military confrontation is usually easily measurable, such as liberation or occupation of certain territories, destruction, defeat or elimination of a known enemy and so on. [9]

On the other hand, the motivation of irregular war is usually ideology, religious extremism, ethnic separatism, colonialism, culture. On the contrary, the aim of irregular war is not military defeat the enemy but various forms of influence on domestic government to achieve change (elimination or weakening of the authority of government, change of control of the whole territory or part of the existing government, or achieve political concessions in sharing political power). [8]

3.3 Centre of gravity

Both irregular and traditional (conventional)

warfare try to solve conflict by forcing change in enemy's behaviour. However, they contrast importantly in focusing its effort.

Traditional (conventional) warfare concentrates on dominion over an enemy's ability to hold its operational capability, but population is generally out of the main attention.

Irregular conflicts are absolutely focused on their attitude, which is considered the central point of interest, means to achieve the objectives. The aim therefore is not militarily defeat the enemy but various forms of influence on people in order to achieve a change in his thinking and policy decisions of the government (Figure 2). [5] Irregular war requires the active or hidden support of the population concerned. External recognition or approval of other countries or political parties is not necessary. Success in this conflict is directly determined by the degree of support from host country populations. Indigenous people become the heart of efforts of both rival forces. This ongoing fight is focusing on "hearts and minds" of the population of the host nation. [8]

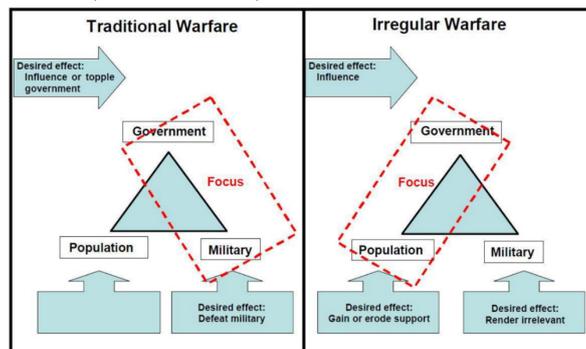


Figure 2: Contrasting Traditional and Irregular warfare [5]

3.4 Terrain

One of the main differences between conventional and irregular war is connected with meaning of territory.

While conventional conflicts are characterized by basic connection stakeholders in the geographical area, the insurgents used the so-called "Fabian's strategy" thus they do not seek to gain

control of cities, infrastructure and territory. The advantage of the irregular forces is that they are not tied to the territory and normally a waiver in order to gain time. If they are forced to leave the base, settlement or position, they transfer their activities to another area, where conventional forces, due to limited resources or political constraints present a lower risk. The

paradox becomes that the military weakness of the insurgents is also an essential source of their strength. [9]

3.5 Duration

Observance of traditional conflict is that it should end as soon as possible, in irregular war, it is not. If insurgents feel time is on their side, they are more likely to adopt a lower risk approach and avoid becoming resolutely engaged. If they perceive time as being against them, that will push them towards higher risk activities. Insurgents have the ability to protract a conflict, which may be extremely costly for both state authorities and international forces. Insurgents win a war when they don't lose, while the counter-insurgents lose when they don't win. [10]

3.6 Overall Strategy and Tactics

In both types of conflicts, conventional and irregular, the actors seek to resolve conflicts by acting on the enemy. However, they differ inherently in strategy, tactics and using means.

In conventional conflict is applied direct overall strategy - orchestrate military offensives to eliminate the enemy. Tactical expression balance of power in the irregular conflict in most cases strongly suggests the predominance of regular armed forces (numerical, technological, situational and conceptual) to those irregular. [11] They have better training, better equipment and better system of command and control in combination with the option to request support using modern weapon systems. Insurgents will therefore enter into a confrontation only in case of favourable circumstances. The aim of irregular fighter will often only caused to bereavement in the hope that the home countries deployed regular forces will decrease the political will to continue the conflict.

Tactics of non-state actor responsible way asymmetrical warfare. Fighters generally organized into small independently operating over groups with different levels of resolution and readiness do not want to be directly confronted with regular forces.

They achieve their goals through regular and irregular activities that can take many forms (propaganda, convince civilians to collaborate with insurgency, subversion, kidnapping, rape, suicide bombings, terrorism e. c.). They profit from fear factor. Act of faith "to kill one and frighten ten thousand." [12].

Insurgents primarily use infiltration and surprise, after the implementation of impact (mainly by attack by fire, ambush or raid) followed by immediate distraction and entanglement in a crowd present population ("hit and run"), which is a typical feature of guerrilla warfare. [13] Their work is characterized by using of methods and means that are unusual and often at odds with humanitarian, moral and ethical rules. The asymmetry in military terms thus against each other the activities carried out in accordance with military standards and international law and various methods of fighting guerrilla way, ignoring the Geneva conventions. [8]

4. Conclusions

The difference between the traditional (conventional) and modern irregular war is confirmed by the American authors, led by W. S. Lind, who have divided a history of modern wars, respectively military art, into four warfare generations. Based on the results of their work is possible contemporary conflicts, characterized by their complexity and long duration of the action of non-state actors utilizing sophisticated psychological and irregular activity or terrorism, may be integrate in the so-called "Fourth generation warfare". [14] The nature of modern conflict is changing. Modern warfare is different type of war, recent in its intensity, olden in its origin war by insurgents or guerrillas, war by ambush instead of by combat, by infiltration instead of aggression, seeking victory by exhausting the adversary instead of engaging him. [5]

The primary object of confrontation is not the armed forces, but the society and its

support. Whoever is able to be successful in the battle of "story" is mostly successful in the war and conflict.

Ability to face irregular threats from conventional forces required to understand the specific nature of the irregular conflict, its context and the participants. Their

efficiency in this type of conflict is therefore subject to the application of a different approach, a different range strategic and operational thinking, and quite different sort of force, fully different capabilities, and therefore a significantly different species of military training. [15]

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