THINKING ABOUT DECISIVE FACTORS OF THE ARMED FORCES DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: There exists a close connection between the security environment and relevant capabilities that the armed forces will have to demonstrate in future operations. Some thought of this article point on several decisive factors such global environment, threats and challenges that have had significant influence and impact on development of the armed forces. Between others there are security and operational environment with persisting asymmetry that in principle dictates the way of the training the armed forces need to follow to succeed in future operations. Nevertheless, primary role to cover all security challenges embodies in politicians, their comprehension of difficulty of current environment and taking optimal precautions for security policy of the state and society.

Keywords: Security policy, armed forces development, operational environment, asymmetry.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nations have struggled for years, facing present and future threats and challenges in the complex security environment. There are many determinant factors that emphasize need for the armed forces development to overcome such challenges.

When thinking about the armed forces development, one could have a few questions. What is the reason and why to execute this development? Is this development regular process to reach necessary capabilities for only nation’s internal interests and ambitions? Or is it a broader process to counter particular external challenges, influences and changes to secure higher values typical in human society? We can say yes, all answers are true. The armed forces development should be a process for ensuring broad objectives of security and defense policy in future specific environment. The basic goal of such policy is to reach a status when we will talk about security.

The term “security” means a desirable state of affairs where all risks are reduced to a minimum. These risks may arise from threats to the population, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the democratic establishment and the principles of the rule of law, internal order, property, environment, international security commitments and so forth. The nation’s security policy follows up such desired security status by preventing and eliminating threats and risks arising from these threats. This policy is implemented by means of diplomacy, defense, economy, internal security and public information policy.

It is obvious if any country, coalition or alliance wants to comply with its own ambitions in areas of interest and counter these threats, it must exploit all instruments of national power – diplomatic, economic, informational and military. Especially the last one must be capable and ready to response current and future threats and challenges in specific environment, in specific conditions. The NATO’s Comprehensive Political Guidance emphasized development of international security environment as having increasing impact on lives of citizens of the world. Accordingly, the NATO’s 2010 New Strategic Concept described the evolving security environment as complex and global, predisposed to change, with an unpredictable development.

The chronicles of military history teach us the importance of preparing for the future security challenges. It would be unrealistic to anticipate that the next decades of this century will avoid of conflict. Clausewitz, father of strategy, two hundred years ago observed that every age has been marked with its own kind of war. As in the past each of conflicts in the future will have its own distinctive feature, character, course and result.

2 SECURITY POLICY

The security policy of the state emanates from the security environment and has permanently been influenced due to changes emerging from this environment. Security environment could be simply defined as a place having impact on security policy of state. It is an area where interests and relations of others international participants are being realized and met.

Security policy then indicates possible ways to implement necessary conditions for state’s security. Principal factors that fundamentally influence content of security policy are security threats the state is facing or will be facing in the future. There are also security interests of vital or strategic importance and political-military ambitions which ensure such interests and eliminate risks. The political constitution and the international position, industrial growth, economic and level of technological maturity are other crucial determinants for defining state’s security policy, its characteristics and direction.

Level of security of state has been influenced by threats a measure of their risks, which is periodically evaluated. This level reflects the content and forms of execution of the security policy. The security
policy then determines a strategy how to follow security interests and consequently establishes necessary requirements for the armed forces development.

3 TRENDS OF SECURITY ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Based on characteristics of current security environment, dynamic changes and study security dilemmas, we can observe significant trends that will determine security development. We can expect many security challenges as the new century witnesses continued political, economic, racial and religious tensions. In terms of military, the range of threats will extend from smaller, lower-technology opponents using more adaptive, asymmetric methods to larger, modernized forces able to engage deployed forces in more conventional, symmetrical ways. In some potential conflicts a combination of these types of threats could be especially problematic. We can anticipate the rise of regional nation-state actors. They will attempt to dominate their respective region of the world either by threat or use of military force and which, in some way, will undoubtedly challenge vital, strategic or other important interests.

The environment in which the armed forces will be committed might be effected by disruption of the flow of vital resources that threatens the natural systems that sustain life on Earth, overpopulation, urbanization, economic degradation mostly in unstable regions with growing problems of poor infrastructure and environment. These all aspects are real or possible threats that can be inter-related or combined and are likely to be the main risks and challenges in the future.

To cover these challenges the Armed forces will encounter a variety of conflicts in a number of different environments. The armed forces will have to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including through non-Article 5 crisis response operations, stabilization operations and military support to post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The armed forces will mostly have to be prepared to respond:
- Regional hegemony with asymmetric capabilities, such as weapons of mass destruction and missiles, designed to deny access to vital areas and resources.
- Global threats including terrorist groups, transnational criminal and drug organizations, warlords as well as so-called non-warfighting problems like environmental security issues, health and disease problems, illegal migrations and others.
- Problems in regions that require peacekeeping and stabilization, humanitarian assistance or national reconstruction.
- Inevitably, there is also resolution of domestic emergencies that exceed the capacity of other national or local officials to handle.
- Realizing such broad range of tasks, we need to answer several essential questions about the nature of the armed forces development and relevant capabilities.
- What do we need the armed forces must be able to do?
- What kind of the armed forces do we need to do it?
- How the armed forces will fulfill required tasks?
- What means and resources would be used for those purposes?
- And finally, can we afford this kind of the armed forces?

Considering these questions from a broad perspective, and answering them should be based on an assessment of security situation and should end in a clear statement of governments that advocate their vital and strategic interests, engagements and political-military ambitions. Through governmental procedures, decision makings and directives there is a road to initiation of further steps in organizing, financial arrangements, doctrine, training, and equipment of the armed forces needed to meet all possible commitments. Assumed missions have significant political, economic, humanitarian, cultural, and social impacts in society which, let us supposing, understands and supports the role and missions of the military. If yes, there is nothing to restrain the armed forces development. However, reality has been in many cases different.

4 THOUGHTS ABOUT GEOPOLITICS

Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, stated: “The principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” As in the past, these geopolitical fault lines will continue to witness ethnic, religious, economic, and political confrontation. Let’s suppose it will be true.

We can suggest that the Informational Age will probably not change the perpetual characteristics of geopolitics. Geopolitical interactions based upon the
pursuit of international order, stability and the balance of power will continue to influence the vital, strategic, national and other interests of nations and/or coalitions. The nation-states will remain fundamentally the same. These states will be identifiable political entities limited by geographical parameters.

Competing states, contrary, will seek to gain dominance over their neighbors. Conflicts will occur as some nations redress historic grievances and try to recover from old wounds that have been stifled for hundreds of years. The spread of information also strengthen ethnic groups and contributes to cultural frictions within troubled regions. Some states may disintegrate into smaller, ethnically based units. This fragmentation will cause both interstate and intrastate conflicts in specific geopolitical and cultural fault lines, in the specific security environment.

5 OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Operational environment is usually defined as a composite of conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military forces. It encompasses physical areas and factors (of the air, land, maritime, and space domains) and the information environment. There are the adversary, friendly, and neutral systems relevant to the specific operation. Operational environment is a place where all aspects of military capabilities transformed from state policy, modern technology, doctrinal and operational training will be applied.

There are numbers of critical factors that define the nature of the operational environments in which military activities may occur. These factors are so called “variable components”, the exact nature of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that make up the operational environment will vary according to the particular situation. While there are almost infinite numbers of variables that can be used to describe the specific environment, there are twelve basic that tend to have the greatest impact on military operations. Those components are:
- Physical environment
- Nature and stability of the state
- Sociological demographics
- Regional and global relationships
- National will
- External organizations
- Infrastructure
- Military capabilities
- Technology
- Information
- Economics

Each part of this list is important and must provoke politicians and leaders to the thoughts about how to integrate these components through diplomacy, economics, technology and others areas to the development of versatile, dominant and full spectrum capability based military force. These components are interrelated and sometimes overlap. In different situations they will be more or less important, but they are all common to any operational environment.

The collective content of all components will define any operational environment the Armed forces could face, whether they are involved in stability and support operations, smaller-scale contingencies, or high intensity warfare. Studying Operational Environment will allow us to look at the major trends of its changes. We can identify the friction points and the root causes of war and what might be the general operating conditions for the armed forces anywhere on the globe.

6 ASYMMETRY IN THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The famous study of strategy and warfare “The Art of War”, written by Sun Tzu, warned: “In battle one engages with the orthodox and gains victory through the unorthodox.” The concept of asymmetric warfare is critical to understand the operational environment. Nations and non-state actors in various regions of the world generally see the NATO as a major dominating power, with large technological, economic, and material advantages and overwhelming military capability. Given this strategic assessment, potential opponents will seek to avoid this strength while exploiting perceived weaknesses.

We can see asymmetry as an ideological, cultural, technological, or military imbalance where a disparity in comparative strengths and weaknesses exists. In the context of the operational environment, asymmetry means an adaptive approach to avoid or counter dominant strength without attempting to oppose it directly, while seeking to exploit weaknesses. Consideration about question what do we need the armed forces must be able to do; we have to judge the potential enemies of the future. These will include warlords, tribal chiefs, insurgents, terrorists as well as cyber-bandits. These enemies might be sometimes children warriors with rich fighting experience and skill.

In this case, asymmetry will still be a significant determinant for development of the armed forces to face an opponent who will try avoiding open, force-on-force battles and relying on hit-and-run tactics, deception, camouflage, dispersion and the use of
guerilla warfare, and/or terrorism. Each kind of the environment will require a specific approach to succeed and reach desired objectives. Asymmetry will stay a dominant characteristic of the armed conflict in specific operational environment.

7 MILITARY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARMED FORCES

We can ask what general implications for the Armed forces are. Following the broad approach to security defined in the NATO Strategic Concept, the armed forces will have to provide the fundamental military tasks to cover all challenges of developing security environment. Therefore the Armed Forces must adopt a holistic aimed approach (global, integrated, interdisciplinary), at developing highly synergic operational capabilities suitable for the carrying out all named missions.

There also exists a strong connection between the operational environment and the training of the forces. While most of security questions are matters of higher policy, training is the only one business of military professionals where development of the armed forces is highly visible. Warfighting in complex operational environment requires preparations of the armed forces in the similar environment and innovative training and education methods. It means allowing asymmetry to be a valid, legitimate partner in battle training, education, exercises, simulation and experimentation. Training and education must incorporate asymmetry from beginning as an inevitable fact of life. The goal of realistic operational environment conditions in the training is to produce an objective force of leaders, soldiers and units capable of rapidly adapting and optimizing capabilities to achieve mission objectives in a complex and evolving environment across the full spectrum of conflict.

Future set of missions will require trained forces that can be rapidly configured to their different typologies, mobile, sustainable in time, highly interoperable and flexible. If these capabilities, in combination with trained and high-tech equipped force meet the goal, it will enable NATO’s countries coalition to remain the world’s dominant strategic power during the next decades of this Century.

There is a common understanding if any soldier in operation is come to have his boots on the ground there cannot be any shortcomings. His capabilities must be adequate conditions of specific operational environment. This fact should be alpha and omega at all stages of political and military hierarchy. Why? Not hard to answer it. Because of ensuring vital interests and security, because of political and military engagements and because of tasks the state policy wants to guarantee in specific operational environment. In this case the armed forces development from a broader perspective just follows conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military forces. The more care from politicians the bigger probability the armed forces will succeed in future operational environment.

8 CONCLUSION

To precisely define all elements having influence on the armed forces development is necessary to assume nature, complexity and difficultness of the changing security environment. Just few were mentioned. There must be greater emphasize put on understanding of physical, economic, technological, informational and other domains of this environment and all consequences must be taken in consideration. Primary role embodies in politicians, their comprehension of difficultness of current environment and its impacts on the security policy of state. All implications of the armed forces development must be understood from a broad perspective. Nevertheless, it is changing global security environment, which determines the way the armed forces development must be directed to cover all present and future emerging challenges.

References


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