



GENERALITIES CONCERNING THE CAPITALIZATION ON SOME ELEMENTS OF MILITARY ART IN THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

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The article addresses some points of view regarding the particularities of military art, as a result of studying the military actions carried out in the Russian-Ukrainian war, expressing a general character and serving to achieve the proposed objectives. The author focused his attention on the examination of the sources, the elucidation of various phenomena and significant moments about military art, in correlation with the mutations of the battlefield. The mentioned results were obtained following the study of the factual material and the formulation of some ideas from the learned lessons, which will later be useful in the national military art. The author approaches the visions of the operations based on the analysis of the phenomena, laws and established principles regarding the conduct of the armed struggle, the existing conceptions of the universal military thought.

In conclusion, choosing of the correct course of action will depend on the ratio of forces and means of the conflicting parties, the action plans of one's own forces and of the adversary, as well as the visionary capabilities of the commanders.

Keywords: operational art; strategic art; physiognomy of military actions; contemporary warfare; armed forces;

INTRODUCTION

Based on the analysis of the political-military situation and the evolution of the balance of forces, the beginning of the 21st century was marked by a series of military operations, undertaken by the troops of some countries that were at war. Thus, the sequence of events caused the conflicts in the Balkans, then starting in 2014, the violence in the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine (Luhansk and Donetsk), the annexation of Crimea. Currently, within the elucidation of the general aspects of the political-military situation in the theatre of war between Russia and Ukraine, a confrontation between a Western doctrinal conception and some theories of Soviet military art is observed. At the same time, we consider that the forms of military actions have the same content, registering differences only in terms of their physiognomy, as a result of the quality of the forces and means used. It is certainly not the first time in contemporary history that difficulties have been encountered in achieving the objectives proposed by one party participating in the war and imposed by the other party involved. In the context of the recently produced political-military phenomena in Ukraine, there is a resolution regarding the extent of the military phenomenon, determined by political and socioeconomic developments. So, due to the processes and mutations characteristic of the recent period regarding the conduct of military actions, military art goes through a series of transformations by updating and incorporating new contemporary concepts, which polarize the attention of researchers and military specialists in modern states. Starting from these considerations, in the respective study we gather a succinct approach to the evolution of the armed struggle in order to prepare and conduct operations from a theoretical and applied point of view.

We believe that the academic interest in this subject is explained by the complexity of the military phenomenon, being determined by the diplomatic, informational, military and economic dimension (DIME) of the warring parties and the particularities of the operational variables under political, military, economic, social, infrastructure and informational aspects (PMESII).



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PHYSIOGNOMY OF MILITARY ACTIONS: THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS

The study of previous and ongoing military conflicts requires us to examine the physiognomy of modern military actions from different points of view, which in return will allow the generation of a new orientation, as well as the development in peacetime of viable plans regarding the organizational structure, training, equipment and effective use of troops on the battlefield. Thus, in order to comply with the imposed rigors, it is necessary to optimize the organizational structure conceived in peacetime, in which the troops are a force prepared to carry out decisive actions in various forms of military actions. We believe that, theoretically, a special interest in recent years has been registered for the mutations of conducting military actions on applied-scientific basis according to the rules and principles of armed struggle, updated in accordance with the evolution of the modern battlefield. Thus, military actions are distinguished by: active character, dynamic manoeuvring, decisive actions, and a diversity of procedures in order to surprise a possible aggressor. The character and physiognomy of conducting military actions clearly demonstrate that the threats do not come only from the military sphere, but also from the non-military sectors. The analysis of recent military conflicts highlights the need to revise the physiognomy of conducting military actions according to the form of combat actions.

Therefore, the analysis of the history of military art focuses first of all on the components of military art viewed as a whole, then on its separate components. As it is known, *“military art is the art of organizing and leading the battle in accordance with certain principles, norms and rules developed on the basis of the evolution of the physiognomy of military actions. So, it includes the principles, methods, procedures and rules of preparing and conducting military actions, as well as the personal qualities needed by commanders and troops to achieve success in battle”* (Agud, 1994, p. 47). Thus, the War in Ukraine started in the morning of 24 February 2022 by a large-scale offensive air operation, the invasion being launched from Belarus to target the capital of Ukraine – Kiev, and from the northeast – against the city of Kharkiv. The ground actions of the Russian Federation had a rapid character and in the first days they managed to break through inside the Ukrainian territory (<https://ru.euronews.com/2022/12/19/2022-year-in-review-war-in-ukraine-february-may>).

After about five days of fighting, the offensive of the Russian Federation was halted in most directions, so both sides switched to defensive actions on positions. The result of the operation is well known, the units of the ground troops of the belligerents during the period of about 12 months conducted guerrilla warfare. Analysing the combat actions we find that they were carried out by executing strong attacks with the aim of crushing and capturing, through massive mutual actions, the state and military infrastructure.

So, the failure of the first offensive to conquer Kiev demonstrated to the West that the Russian army is far from the reputation it has promoted over time. In the end, both sides miscalculated that the war would be a short one, resulting in Russia's victory, with Ukraine standing no chance against the military colossus.

We propose to present a variant of the situation evolution and formulate some ideas from the lessons learned based on the analysis of the political-military situation of the evolution of the balance of forces, the factors that determine the fighting capacity regarding the conception and conduct of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In the idea of the scientific support of the strategy, we analysed the manner of action of the law, the ratio of forces, and the balance of forces from both sides, addressing the actions triggered by the Russian Federation. Thus, following the study on the way of preparing and conducting military actions, the following conclusions emerge:

At the strategic level:

- Planning the operation based on the Blitzkrieg concept; the establishment of the strategic fighting order, from 2014, allowed the strategic enclosure of the Ukrainian troops (Ib.);
- The plan of ground actions within the ground stage of the offensive operation was developed on several operative directions and, as a consequence, strikes were executed on the strategic civil and military infrastructure of Ukraine;
- The conception of the land operation was foreseen by concentrating the effort in several directions, the setting of unrealistic objectives of the troops led to unjustified failures within the offensive operation;
- The error of emphasizing the support of the Ukrainian population in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine created great difficulties for the strategic leadership in the conduct of military actions;



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- An important reason was in the initiation of hostilities carried out without announcing the mobilization and as a consequence the insufficiency of the of group forces (army corps) in the operative directions for the achievement of the operative objectives was registered;
- Lack of motivation and low level of will of the Russian military.

Operations planning at operational level:

- Unsatisfactory organization and conduct of operative and strategic reconnaissance; as a result, the strategic and operative objectives were not clearly established (Gareev, p. 349);
- Achieving success in operations using technological advantages at the operational level: reconnaissance, aviation, missiles, high-precision strike weapons, considering that the achievement of operational results will depend on the effects of aviation and missile strikes;
- Tendency to use group forces unsuitable for the theatre of military actions, which had the consequence of diminishing the scope of the operation;
- Incorrect establishment of the direction of effort within the operation;
- No group forces suitable for offensive operations were created (Ib., p. 339).

At the tactical level:

- Unsatisfactory training of the military personnel in order to use those ingenious and more diversified forms and methods of action in close combat, for combining fire with movement, not using the advantages of the terrain etc.;
- Preparation, organization and carrying out under the limit of combat insurance; during the march: non-establishment of march security, disorder of the march order, tactical reconnaissance, anti-aircraft defence led to large losses in personnel and combat equipment;
- Unsatisfactory organization of the logistical support of the battle (supply, maintenance, transport of materials, medical support and others) led to multiple failures at the tactical level, such as: unjustified losses of military equipment and weapons;
- Combatant units left on the battlefield without ammunition and fuel; soldiers inadequately equipped for battlefield requirements; abandoned military equipment;

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- Conduct of military actions is related to communications and focused on the fight for control over places (towns);
- Formation of the tactical group based on infantry battalions, very massive and heavy tactical structures, which had a high weight of fire, but at the same time, a very weak striking power and manoeuvrability. The precise composition of these units can vary, but they generally comprise a large number of armoured vehicles and relatively few infantry troops.

Within the military strategy of the political-military leadership of Ukraine, the most diverse methods and peculiarities were used in order to prepare and conduct military actions, in a certain perspective, aiming at the achievement of the final goal – military victory and the reintegration of the territories under Russian occupation. Thus, we consider that in the combat actions carried out by the Ukrainian Army, the goals of the defence were partially achieved; succeeding only in holding back the offensive of the enemy forces and causing them maximum losses. At the same time, the failure and partial loss of territory did not allow to fully defend the integrity of the country's territory and create favourable conditions for the transition to the counteroffensive. So, as features of Ukrainian Military Art, applied in military actions, we can mention the following:

At the strategic level:

- Incorrect prediction regarding the physiognomy of the future war, so military conflicts are initiated due to political, ideological, economical, religion problems as well as territorial issues following by the incorrect elaboration of war projects and plans with different action hypotheses, the configuration of the initial period of the war, the goals pursued by the belligerents, the forces and means used, the extent, duration and intensity of the war (Gareev, p. 338);
- Starting and conducting of combat actions, without announcing the mobilization, created an insufficiency of forces and means, and as a consequence there were considerable territorial losses;
- Unpreparedness of the territory for defence, creation and development of civil and military infrastructure;
- Defence in a difficult strategic configuration and strategic semi-encirclement forced the Ukrainian Army to divide its forces into several operational directions, carrying out military



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- actions with a shortage of forces, which resulted in the rapid surrender of important areas of territory, especially in the south of the country;
- Application of the defence concept aiming at the organization of points of resistance in large cities;
- Rejecting the enemy's attempts to achieve the objectives of the strategic operation, based on the concept of blitzkrieg;
- Lack of strategic reserves led to the deployment of a static defence at a strategic level, unable to retaliate by executing counter-strikes to destroy the enemy's forces, which penetrated the defence of the Ukrainian Army;
- Insufficiency of aviation and anti-aircraft defence means allowed to hit important cities and multiple strategic objectives; the reduced application, at the beginning of the war, of tactical missiles on the enemy's objectives from the strategic depth allowed the freedom of manoeuvre of the enemy's reserves from the operative-strategic depth;
- Threat on several operational directions forced the leadership of the Ukrainian Army to excessively disperse its armed forces, creating impediments to the strategic leadership in establishing the direction of effort, the lack of strategic mobility in defence;
- Weak response to the airstrikes on the first day of the war led to the imbalance of the Ukrainian defence in the first months of the military actions;
- Massive support of the population, especially in the areas of military actions, significantly raised the will of resistance of the Ukrainian Army.

Actions carried out at operative level:

- Establishment, on the threatened operational-strategic directions, of some inadequate group of forces, which led to massive surrenders of territories right from the first days of the war;
- Success of the operations depending on the result of the defence of urban centres of regional importance;
- Organization of deep supply routes (centred on the communication routes), which led to the production of maximum losses to the enemy;
- Effective action within the supply routes of some forwarded units – size of Motorized Infantry Brigade or Motorized Infantry



- Company, as well as the value of the force depending on the importance of the communication;
- Insufficiency of aviation and anti-aircraft defence means constrained the conduct of defence operations in the conditions of the enemy's air superiority;
- Operative disguising measures were not fully executed, which led to the destruction of multiple military objectives from the beginning of the war;
- Results of the defence operations led to the partial achievement of the defence goals, the excessive dispersion of forces, on a front of approximately 2,000 km, led to the organization of an unstable defence in most directions and the partial fulfilment of the goals of the defence operations.

At the tactical level:

- Organization of the supply routes/advanced positions with emphasis on road communication routes;
- Organizing ambushes on communication routes, in separate support points, positioned on key points in the field, supported by artillery fire;
- Establishing positions and points of resistance organized in defence based on urban centres;
- Use of drones, guided anti-tank missiles and artillery fire to effectively hit the enemy while moving;
- Organization of unsatisfactory cooperation between the Armed Forces branches led to many tactical failures.

CONCLUSIONS

We consider that, based on the lessons learned in order to prepare and plan military actions in the Russian-Ukrainian war, it is necessary to take into account the following factors:

- strategic leadership of both sides did not apply to a large extent the main activities regarding the preparation and conduct of military actions;
- complex use of measures such as the collection, transmission, centralization and processing of information regarding the political-military situation and the conduct of combat actions;
- elaboration of operational documents and the planning of military actions in order to execute the concepts adopted on the conduct of military actions;

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The analysis of the contemporary armed struggle confirms that the methods of using troops have essentially changed the physiognomy of military actions.

- communication of action orders, directives in the established time to executors;
- transition of the system of leadership from peacetime to the state of war and control over planned activities in due time;
- optimizing the organization of cooperation at all levels of military art;
- logistics planning according to supply norms;
- the organization of mobilization after the start of military actions and the establishment of operational forces capable of ensuring strategic coverage during the entire period of strategic deployment with observance of disguising measures;
- insufficient preparation of the civil and military infrastructure for transition to a state of war;
- establishment of appropriate group of forces on the main operative directions, depending on the situation created;
- organization of the coverage within which forward units of battalion/company size will act, which will be focused on the main communication routes;
- organizational structure of large combat units and subunits to meet the requirements of the modern battlefield.

At the same time, the analysis of the contemporary armed struggle confirms that the methods of using troops have essentially changed the physiognomy of military actions. In this context, if, in the recent past, military analysts and specialists moved away from the classical use of ground forces, currently the actions of the Russian-Ukrainian war contradict the previous statements.

Concerning the preparation and conduct of defensive operations, they will continue to remain a factor that provides and ensures the sovereignty and integrity of the state.

In this context, according to some military analysts, the offensive will remain the form of carrying out military actions and will consist in the successive or simultaneous destruction of groups of enemy forces with the liberation of important objectives and territory.

Simultaneously with the actions of the troops, information operations will be carried out on a large scale with the involvement of Special Operation Forces. Particular attention will be paid to the physical-geographical conditions of the country, which will influence the preparation and conduct of the armed struggle. In the context of the above, it is necessary to take into account possible risks and threats

to the country's security and integrity, the selection of forms and procedures for the use of forces in contemporary conditions, which will be based on the political-military situation. From the above, it is clear that the use of forces in contemporary operations demonstrates essential changes in the way they are used, which include the following: reduction of the economic-military potential and the military and civil infrastructure; conduct of military actions on all dimensions consistent with symmetric and asymmetric actions; hitting targets; sole command of forces and means.

In this context, from an organizational point of view and in order to adopt decisions, coordinate and cooperate actions starting with those at the state level and ending with those of the troops, it is necessary to organize a management system for the successful completion of missions.

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