ADAPTATION OF THE MILITARY ORGANISATION – AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR OBTAINING SUCCESS ON THE BATTLEFIELD –

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One of the most significant challenges that military organisations must overcome is the ability to adapt during a conflict, regardless of its scale and intensity. This complex phenomenon begins and unfolds continuously from the period of peacetime, intensifying in wartime in order to recalibrate the possibilities of the military entity to the new requirements of the battlefield. It is frequently misunderstood and inadequately researched, which has resulted in a series of adverse consequences for the actions of the armed forces. Furthermore, the absence or inadequacy of adaptation has, on numerous occasions, led to the failure of armed forces in combat, ultimately resulting in the loss of the war. In this context, the objective of this approach is to ascertain the components of the military organisation's adaptation process, its levels of achievement and the factors that contribute to its success or failure. In order to achieve the proposed objectives, a comprehensive documentary analysis has been conducted, enabling the identification of the underlying foundations of the adaptation process. Taking into account the latter, the analysis of various military conflicts from the perspective of the adaptation process has facilitated the achievement of the research results. These results, in the author's opinion, represent a topic of interest for military leadership, particularly given that the topic addressed is not sufficiently treated by the existing literature.

Keywords: military organisation; adaptation; doctrine; leadership; adaptation's key factors;

INTRODUCTION

The process of adaptation is an inherent and constant aspect of the existence of organisations. It encompasses more than simply modifying the organisation in order to enable it to respond effectively to new challenges in the environment in which it operates. The adaptation of the military organisation is a special phenomenon, and one that is much more difficult to achieve than that experienced by civilian organisations. In contrast to other organisations, military organisations in peacetime must prepare for war. War, a distinct phenomenon of humanity, may materialise at any time in the future, although there is no certainty as to when it will begin. Furthermore, war may be waged against an opponent that the military organisation is not in a position to identify or properly assess. The context of armed confrontation is characterized by a backdrop of violence, friction, chaos, uncertainty and fear, which cannot be replicated in peacetime. The use of a multitude of technologies by opponents in a concerted manner is a key factor in the conduct of armed conflict. These technologies are continually being adapted and developed in order to gain an advantage on the battlefield. It is possible that estimates of the social and political conditions in which war is fought may be inaccurate, as the impact of these conditions has implications for the development of the military organization. Furthermore, in an armed confrontation, the costs of the failure of the military organisation are much more profound than those of the failure of civilian organisations. These distinctions give rise to the specificity of the military organisation, including its adaptation process. At the same time, the aforementioned factors highlight the difficulty of measuring the results of peacetime activities in order to prepare the military organisation for war.

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The period following the Second World War saw a rapid acceleration in technological development, which brought about a correspondingly accelerated pace of change in military organisations.

In order to describe this phenomenon, the Soviet Union introduced the concept of *Military Technical Revolution*, while the Western states, particularly the USA, adopted the term *Revolution in Military Affairs*, the latter remaining enshrined to this day. (Sloan, 2008, p. 8). Although the necessity and reality of continuous change were apparent, the theorisation and description of this phenomenon were relatively reserved. In 1984, Barry Posen's paper *The Sources of Military Doctrine* initiated a new trend in the scientific community to research the phenomenon of military organisational adaptation. In 1990, Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch published *Military Misfortune – The Anatomy of Failure in War*, a comprehensive work analysing the causes of failure in war. One of the causes identified was ineffective adaptation. The work was reissued in 2006, offering a new approach also from the perspective of contemporary warfare. In a 2009 publication, named *Military Adaptation in War*, Williamson Murray identifies a number of factors that contribute to the success or failure of adaptation. David Barno and Nora Bensahel, in *Adaptation under Fire* (2020), identify the key components of military adaptation and describe how it can be achieved at all levels of military operations. They focus in particular on unconventional and asymmetric conflicts. The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict has ensured continued interest among the scientific community in the topic of military adaptation. In his latest publication, *The War for Ukraine: Strategy and Adaptation under Fire*, Australian General Michael Ryan offers a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, particularly in the context of the demands of today's battlefield.

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In conceptual terms, scholastics define adaptation as the process that is characteristic of the period of conflict. The adjustments made by the military organisation during peacetime are often described by the concept of innovation (Murray, 2009, pp. 1-2). It is not uncommon for military organisations, despite their efforts to innovate and adapt effectively, to fail to do so. Failure *"to learn"*, for example, can lead to failure to adapt, and failure *"to anticipate"* can also lead to failure to adapt (Cohen, 2006, p. 63). It is similarly evident that in numerous instances, adaptation has been successfully achieved through innovation in peacetime and effective adjustments during conflict (Finkel, 2011). Concurrently, it is imperative that adaptation should be achieved in a unified and comprehensive manner at all levels of operations, encompassing both institutional and tactical aspects (Ryan, 2024). In this context, it is unclear why military adaptation is so challenging, particularly given that military entities do not always succeed in achieving it in a satisfactory manner. To address this question, we have formulated several subsequent questions, which are intended to direct the research effort:

- *What are the constituent elements of military adaptation?*
- *What are the factors that contribute to the successful adaptation of the military to new circumstances?*
- *What are the factors that contribute to the failure of military adaptation?*

In order to address these questions, an interpretative analysis of the military phenomenon was conducted from the perspective of adaptation during the course of conflicts. Both conventional and non-conventional armed conflicts have been considered, with a particular focus on modern warfare, starting with its 2nd generation. In order to achieve our stated objectives, we have undertaken an investigation into the processes of adaptation at tactical and institutional levels. In both cases, we found it necessary to determine the extent of the propagation of the phenomenon (top-down and bottom-up) in order to identify the factors influencing adaptation. The results obtained serve as theoretical benchmarks that can inform the implementation of innovation and transformation in peacetime and adaptation in the context of national armed forces engagement in conflict.

A comprehensive study on the lethality of weapon systems by Stephen Biddle reveals that, from 1900 to the present day, the lethality of major weapon systems has increased more than tenfold, yet the number of resulting casualties has decreased steadily. It is a consequence of the innovative and adaptive approach adopted by the armed forces.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MILITARY ADAPTATION'S EVOLUTION

A comprehensive study on the lethality of weapon systems by Stephen Biddle reveals that, from 1900 to the present day, the lethality of major weapon systems has increased more than tenfold, yet the number of resulting casualties has decreased steadily (Biddle, 2004, p. 23). It is a consequence of the innovative and adaptive approach

adopted by the armed forces. Prior to the First World War, the pace of innovation and adaptation was relatively slow. The *"lines and columns"* tactics employed in the early days of modern warfare limited the scope for doctrinal transformation. The advent of new technologies has brought advantages at the tactical level, yet they have not been sufficient to alter the fundamental rules of the game and to influence the outcome of battles decisively. The conservatism inherent in military organisations has led to a doctrinaire approach cantered on the Clausewitzean idea of the *"decisive battle"*, which is justifiable given the performance of weapon systems.

By the end of the 19th century, the advent of the machine gun represented a significant advancement in military technology, marking a pivotal shift in warfare. The principle of recoil energy recovery enabled the weapon to fire at a much faster rate than previous firearms, making it a pivotal weapon in the modern era. It resulted in the abandonment of tactics and combat techniques based on the principle of lines and columns, and forces were compelled to disperse on the battlefield. It is evident that there has been an adaptation of battle tactics and procedures, yet the approach to operations has remained unchanged. The development of sea and rail transportation provided the military with unprecedented strategic mobility. It facilitated the concentration of vast numbers of troops by all the belligerents in the First World War. However, the lack of tactical mobility resulted in an operational stalemate, which eventually led to the emergence of what became known as *"trench warfare".* The combatants sought solutions to overcome the stalemate of positional warfare. The use of chemical weapons was highly unpredictable and could easily be countered by wearing protective masks. The development of the airplane and tank was in its infancy, with their use on the battlefield being sporadic and with little significant impact. Both combatants ended up increasing the firepower of their artillery, making defence the favoured form of combat. Enemy positions were hard to take, and once taken, they were even harder to hold.

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In the interwar period, technological innovations gave rise to a series of military innovations. The German armed forces

established a doctrine based on the principle of *combined arms*, which informed the organisation of armoured divisions and the tactics they employed. The development of the tank and the air force paved the way for the integration of air-ground operations. The means of radio communications facilitated the implementation and exercise of *Auftragstaktik* – the command philosophy of the German armed forces. The Germans integrated armoured action with dive-bomber support, all coordinated by means of radio communications, demonstrating a capacity to adapt at the tactical level, which was doctrinally and operationally surprising to the French and later the Soviet armed forces. However, although the Germans demonstrated a high capacity to adapt at the tactical level, the institutional adaptation at the strategic level was dysfunctional, and Germany was ultimately defeated. Mission command, a foundation of German military thinking, was exercised only at the tactical level of operations.

France, despite possessing comparable technological capabilities to Germany, encountered difficulties in integrating these capabilities effectively at the force structure level. It resulted in a lack of innovation and, consequently, a failure to adapt doctrinal approaches during the 1940 campaign. The French primarily utilized tanks in support of infantry operations or for limited pursuit actions. The speed of movement of the tactical structure was contingent upon the speed of the infantry units, in contrast to the German approach, where the tank set the pace for the entire joint structure. Aviation missions were conducted independently, with a primary focus on strategic operations. There was a notable absence of integration between air and ground operations. Radios were utilized as an alternative to other forms of communication and were at the level of combat sub-units. Furthermore, the hesitation of high-ranking commanders, including General Gamelin, to utilize and integrate radio communications at the tactical level contributed to the cumbersome conduct of operations. (Beevor, 2015, p. 98).

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In the initial phase of *Operation Barbarossa*, the Soviet armed forces disregarded the lessons learned from the Napoleonic campaigns. Instead of implementing a *"manoeuvre defence"*, which would have led to the expansion of the German armed forces lines

of communication thus absorbing the shock of the German offensive, they concentrated the efforts on a defence in position. (Bartles, 2022). The inflexible command system, in conjunction with the political factor's interference in planning and conducting military operations, impeded the Russians' adaptation process, resulting in significant human and territorial losses. Despite the Russians' quantitative advantage in terms of human resources and combat technique, the Germans, through extensive envelopment manoeuvres, managed to encircle and destroy approximately two million soldiers in less than six weeks, a rate of attrition that was tenfold greater than their own losses. (Roberts, 2020, pp. 317-323). The *Battle of Stalingrad* can be considered the starting point of the Soviet armed forces adaptation process. The reduction of excessive command control and the confidence instilled in military commanders created the necessary conditions for tactical adaptation. The adaptation of tactical operations was also supported by an adaptation at the level of the entire armed forces, through the forced but effective mobilization of the population and the intensification of the war industry. *Table 1* provides a schematic illustration of the manner in which the three belligerents were able to adapt their strategies in relation to the doctrine that had been implemented prior to the commencement of hostilities.

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Table 1: The adaptation of the German, French and Soviet armed forces in the context of the Second World War (author's design)

	Doctrine	Tactical adaptation	Institutional adaptation
German Armed Forces	correct	yes	no
French Armed Forces	wrong	no	no
Soviet Armed Forces	wrong	yes	yes

In 1973, the Egyptian armed forces sought to avenge their 1967 defeat in the *Six-Day War* by employing a technological and doctrinal surprise attack on the Israeli armed forces. The *Yom Kippur War*, as it came to be known, found the Israeli armed forces unprepared and beholden to an outdated doctrine. The fundamental principle of the Israeli doctrine was the use of tank structures to penetrate the depth of the enemy's defence, while holding air superiority and benefiting from constant air force support. The failure to anticipate the need to change the doctrinal approach, in light of the development of new weapon systems such as guided anti-tank missiles and ground-to-air anti-aircraft missile systems, contributed to the failure of the Israeli armed forces in the initial phase of the operation. Finally, the tendency of Israeli military leaders to underestimate the Egyptian armed forces and to approach the military phenomenon exclusively from the perspective of their own experience of previous wars delayed the reconsideration of the doctrine. Nevertheless, the Israeli armed forces, which had a high degree of flexibility in their leadership, were able to adapt to the unexpected and ultimately emerge victorious. (Kober, 2011, p. 177). In contrast, the Egyptian armed forces, which benefited from an innovative doctrine, failed to adapt during the conflict, despite the initial success. The main cause for the mentioned failure was the significant interference of the politico-military leadership in setting tactical-operational objectives and conducting operations. The rigid command system did not allow the exploitation of strategic surprise, superior doctrine and significant technological advantage. The adaptation of the two armies in the conflict, which commenced from disparate doctrinal foundations, is illustrated schematically in *table 2*.

The Israeli armed forces, which had a high degree of flexibility in their leadership, were able to adapt to the unexpected and ultimately emerge victorious. In contrast, the Egyptian armed forces, which benefited from an innovative doctrine, failed to adapt during the conflict, despite the initial success.

Table 2: The adaptation of the armed forces of Israel and Egypt during the Yom Kippur War (author's design)

	Doctrine	Tactical adaptation	Institutional adaptation
Israeli Armed Forces	wrong	yes	yes
Egyptian Armed Forces	correct	no	no

Another conflict that merits our attention is the *Vietnam War*. The superior firepower of the US military proved insufficient to defeat the North Vietnamese forces and Vietcong guerrillas, who were able

to quickly overrun American-held territory. The lack of adequate doctrine required American forces to adapt, often at significant cost in terms of casualties among the soldiers. From a technological standpoint, the tactical adaptation was relatively slow. The malfunctions identified by the soldiers were often downplayed, with the M16 assault rifles being a notable example. These malfunctions significantly affected the soldiers' morale (O'Connell, 2020). Perhaps the most significant reason for inadequate adaptation was the failure of senior leaders to understand the type of war they were fighting and the enemy they were dealing with. General Westmoreland, Commander of the US forces in Vietnam for four years, repeatedly referred to his combat experience from the Second World War and the Korean War. It resulted in a lack of adaptability to the specifics of the battlefield (Bensahel, 2020, p. 98).

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The US Armed Forces, through the Department of Training and Doctrine/TRADOC, developed the *AirLand Battle* doctrine in the context of the Yom Kippur War. The doctrine was designed to ensure victory in a potential confrontation with the Soviet Union, based on the technological outrunning of the enemy while integrating air-to-ground operations and expanding the battlefield in space and time. The doctrine was to be tested in the 1991 *Gulf War*, ensuring coalition forces a resounding success. The same doctrine gave US forces a quick victory in *Iraq* in 2003, but the inability to anticipate the potential of a large-scale insurgency created serious problems in adapting doctrine and technology. The lack of a doctrine to counter insurgency was also due to the US military's unwillingness to retain expertise in this area after its *Vietnam War* experience.

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, Western militaries have gradually developed doctrines to respond effectively to unconventional and asymmetric conflicts, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Technologies have also been adapted, and superiority in this area has given NATO forces dominance in all areas of operations. This new reality, inherently, has resulted in the blurring and loss of some of the knowledge of large-scale armed combat operations, and the capabilities for this form of armed confrontation have also been greatly reduced. Perhaps the most damaging consequence of the aforementioned developments has been the shift in perspective among military

leaders regarding conventional warfare. In the current context, it is of paramount importance to facilitate a mental recalibration among these leaders, as well as to reconsider military doctrines in an environment marked by unprecedented technological developments.

MILITARY ADAPTATION COMPONENTS

A historical perspective on military adaptation reveals the inherent challenges of such a process and its role in achieving success on the battlefield. Factors inherent in the nature of warfare, such as friction, chance, uncertainty, chaos and fear, present obstacles to adaptation. Conversely, the following factors, which define the nature of war, directly and variably influence adaptation: doctrine, technology and leadership. Research findings highlight the role of the latter in a highly hostile environment. In this context, it is pertinent to cite the views of Nora Bensahel and David Barno, *"Rigid doctrine, inflexible technology, and dogmatic leaders are a recipe for disaster, given the uncertainty, chaos, and surprises that characterize every war"* (Bensahel, 2020, p. 22). In light of the empirical results presented, the following components of adaptation have been identified: *doctrinal, technological, leadership components*.

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❖ *The role of the doctrinal component*

The term *doctrine* has its roots in Latin and is used to describe both an *accumulation of teachings* and a *set of instructions*. The content of doctrine emphasises both its descriptive and educative aspects, as well as its prescriptive nature. The concept of *military doctrine* is concerned with how the military organisation generates, plans, organises, trains and deploys its available resources in order to achieve its military objectives, within the context of the national security policy, including the *"grand strategy"* of the state (Posen, 1986, p. 13). The formulation of doctrine for a given period of time is a complex and continuous process, requiring adjustments as a result of reassessment of the security environment, the new characteristics of the operating environment, the potential threat and the capabilities available. In this regard, J.F.C. Fuller, more than a century ago, stated that *"formal doctrine develops in peacetime and continues to evolve*

in times of conflict". (UK Ministry of Defence, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2011, p. 2.2).

In the context of preparing the military organisation for war, the doctrine must regularise its activity and provide a series of predictable outcomes regarding the evolution of the military phenomenon:

- It should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the battlefield.;
- the regulatory function of the organisation enables it to make a relevant assessment of the battlefield and identify the need for change;
- the predictive function enables the identification of doctrinal solutions and their integration at all levels of operations;
- following the dissemination of new doctrinal ideas, it is necessary to conduct a rapid evaluation in order to obtain feedback on their effectiveness.

It is essential for the military organisation to be aware of the possibility of a need for change and to mentally accept it, facilitating the transformation of doctrine as needed. Only in this way will adaptation be timely and effective, contributing to success.

In light of these milestones, it becomes evident that there is a necessity for military doctrine to be more descriptive than prescriptive. It would allow commanders to act on principles rather than be constrained by detailed regulations. It is also important to consider that while a doctrine may be effective at the outset of a military confrontation, this aspect may not be sufficient. Furthermore, the possibility of adapting an inappropriate doctrine may outweigh the benefits of a precise but inflexible doctrine. In this context, it is essential for the military organisation to be aware of the possibility of a need for change and to mentally accept it, facilitating the transformation of doctrine as needed. Only in this way will adaptation be timely and effective, contributing to success.

❖ *The role of the technological component*

New technologies have consistently influenced the character of warfare, as military forces strive to incorporate them into their new weapons systems. Military conflicts have demonstrated that military victory is contingent not only on the quality of weaponry, but also on the quality of weapon-carrying platforms and the equipment that integrates them (Scipanov, Totir, 2023). Technological adaptation can yield noticeable results in the short term, helping to temporarily solve

a problem. However, effective adaptation also requires technological adaptation at the institutional level. In the initial phase of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, US military personnel worked to improve the armour of HMMWVs to increase protection against hits from portable grenade launchers and improvised explosive devices. Subsequently, the US Army developed and integrated MRAP and MATV vehicles into its forces, designed to withstand these threats. Given the above, I would like to draw attention to some concepts that are relevant to technological adaptation, at both tactical and institutional levels:

- it is important for low-level leaders to be aware of the potential for encountering technological issues and to be willing to address them in a creative manner;
- it is necessary to identify a mechanism that will allow the implementation of adjustments as close as possible to the operational area;
- the rapid dissemination of temporary technological solutions for deployment by all units is a crucial aspect of this process;
- the objective is to maintain communication between the organisation's decision-making bodies and the leaders of the tactical level structures in order to identify any technological malfunctions or shortcomings;
- the necessity to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in order to implement change in a timely manner.

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Nevertheless, despite the organisation's endeavours to adopt technological advances, this process may prove unsuccessful, particularly due to shortcomings in the management of other adaptation components. Consequently, it is imperative to achieve a unified approach to the various components of military adaptation.

❖ *The role of the leadership component*

The adaptation of leadership in wartime is a challenging endeavour, considering that *"some systems of command make adaptation to unexpected or unforeseen circumstances relatively easy, while others make it virtually impossible"* (Cohen, 2006, p. 451). It is leaders who initiate the adaptation process, both at both tactical and institutional levels. It is through them that the components of military adaptation

are linked at all operational levels. In order to meet these demands, leaders must be adaptive. Thus, they must:

- rapidly assess the situation on the battlefield and identify the necessity for change;
- cease utilising procedures that are no longer aligned with the demands of the battlefield while identifying and implementing suitable alternatives;
- the utilisation of effective reporting mechanisms is imperative to ensure that any issues pertaining to the efficacy of tactics and procedures, or the suitability of weapons and combat techniques, are brought to the attention of the relevant authorities in a timely and transparent manner;
- identify promising concepts, to allocate the necessary resources to their development, and to coordinate the efforts required to implement them.

It is a fundamental objective of all military organisations, whether in peacetime or wartime, to identify the optimal formula (encompassing conceptual, educational, organisational, technological and command-related factors) to guarantee their success on the battlefield.

THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF MILITARY ADAPTATION

It is a fundamental objective of all military organisations, whether in peacetime or wartime, to identify the optimal formula (encompassing conceptual, educational, organisational, technological and command-related factors) to guarantee their success on the battlefield. Adaptation is a universal experience among combatant entities, irrespective of the outcome of a specific battle or the overall conflict (Ryan, 2024). In this context, it is not possible to precisely define success or failure in adaptation. However, we have identified a number of factors that contribute to or, on the contrary, hinder success on the battlefield. Factors facilitating success in military adaptation include:

- the existence of a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the nature and scope of military adaptation;
- the objective is to achieve military innovation, taking into account the lessons learned from conflicts and existing trends in the changing character of warfare;
- the identification of potential triggers that can become decision points for initiating change;
- the identification of risks associated with the initiation and implementation of the adaptation process;
- the assessment of adaptation processes entails the implementation of performance and efficiency indicators;
- the establishment of a functional framework for the rapid correction of weaknesses and malfunctions identified by the evaluation is a crucial step in the process;
- the identification and assessment of potential threats, in order to direct innovation and adaptation to neutralize or mitigate them in the event of military conflict;
- the training of leaders to accept failure, to be aware of the need to adapt and to demonstrate initiative in initiating the process.
- In a similar vein, a number of factors have been identified which limit the adaptability of the military organisation in times of conflict:
- the excessive bureaucratisation of military organisations through the implementation of a series of standard operating procedures, functional rules and regulations is intended to reduce uncertainty. However, change inherently generates uncertainty, and thus bureaucracy is an impediment to change;
- the continued implementation of ineffective military equipment programmes by politico-military decision-makers, despite the evaluation of the adaptation process, represents a significant obstacle to the advancement of military capabilities;
- a lack of investment in research and development (R&D) programmes;
- the failure to take into account indicators and reports from the battlefield that highlight ineffective tactics, techniques and procedures/TTPs or ineffective weapons systems;
- the failure to apply the lessons learned during peacetime constitutes a missed opportunity for learning. Furthermore, the neglect of lessons identified during conflict impedes the pace of adaptation, at both tactical and institutional levels;
- the implementation of a unidirectional, top-down institutional adaptation, without consideration of feedback from the beneficiary;

The failure to apply the lessons learned during peacetime constitutes a missed opportunity for learning. Furthermore, the neglect of lessons identified during conflict impedes the pace of adaptation, at both tactical and institutional levels.

- the organisation's rigidity in accepting new doctrinal ideas and integrating new technologies;
- the continued use of outdated technologies and equipment in the context of armed conflict can have significant implications for the operational effectiveness of military forces. These technologies and equipment may become vulnerable to disruption or destruction, leading to a chain of malfunctions that can rapidly collapse the operational capabilities of the armed forces engaged in operations;
- a lack of effective implementation and exercise of mission command.

The permanent contradiction between maintaining a high degree of control specific to a disciplined organisation and the need to adapt quickly is one of the dilemmas of politico-military decision-makers. Bureaucracy and a strict command system can slow down or even block adaptation initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this analysis provide an answer to the question of *why military adaptation is so difficult*. One of the main reasons that hinder effective adaptation is the organisation's resistance to change. The permanent contradiction between maintaining a high degree of control specific to a disciplined organisation and the need to adapt quickly is one of the dilemmas of politico-military decision-makers. Bureaucracy and a strict command system can slow down or even block adaptation initiatives. Furthermore, a philosophy of detailed command will not provide subordinate commanders with the requisite *"power"* to act in accordance with the commander's intent to capitalise on opportunities on the battlefield. The prospect of having to relinquish some peacetime innovations that have entailed significant material costs also makes adaptation challenging. Additionally, the reluctance of high-level leadership to recognise and acknowledge the existence of dysfunctions in peacetime force preparation, the erroneous anticipation of the nature of war, or the lack of proper implementation of new doctrinal concepts also create the preconditions for slow adaptation. Finally, the inability of the organisation to integrate new technologies or to modify or adapt its doctrine in order to exploit those technologies contributes to a reduction in the effectiveness of adaptation.

In light of the empirical evidence, it is imperative to adopt an adaptive approach to armed combat and warfare in general.

The success of adaptation is contingent upon the success of peacetime innovation in key areas such as military doctrine, the forces organisation and training, and their equipment with new technologies and weapon systems. The more effective this innovation is, the quicker and less costly the adaptation will be. It necessitates a continuous and frank evaluation of the process, with the establishment of performance and efficiency indicators. Concurrently, in order to guarantee the successful adaptation of the military organisation in times of conflict, it is essential to direct particular attention to the past, with the analysis and lessons learned from previous conflicts also being carried out from the perspective of adaptation. The failure to acknowledge historical precedents may result in the perpetuation of past errors. However, it is crucial to recognise the potential pitfalls of relying solely on past experiences and knowledge, particularly in the context of evolving conflict dynamics. In this regard, it is essential for leaders to demonstrate adaptability, while institutions must cultivate an environment conducive to such flexibility. The implementation and exercise of *mission command*, the command philosophy adopted by Western armed forces, including the Romanian Armed Forces, appear to be a solution that facilitates the creation of a framework that enables both innovation and adaptation.

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The Russian-Ukrainian conflict provides a contemporary illustration of the process of adaptation of the military organisation during an unconventional conflict between two opponents with relatively equal capabilities. Both combatant states make substantial efforts to adapt, which represents the essence of the strategy used to win the war. Adaptation takes place not only at the tactical level of operations but also at the institutional level. Tactics and combat procedures are adjusted to ensure a position of advantage while increasing the chances of survival on the battlefield. The organisation of tactical structures is in a constant state of flux, striving to meet the demands of operations in urban environments or the necessity to disperse forces, while also integrating new technologies and weapon systems. Concurrently, both countries are attempting to streamline their recruitment activities and enhance the training of their forces, while simultaneously reinvigorating

the war industry. During this process of adaptation, decision-makers, both political and military, consider the needs on the battlefield, the economic possibilities of the state, the readiness of allies, the determination of the population to support the war effort and the time prospects of the war. It is challenging to forecast the outcome of this conflict, but it is evident that the adaptation of the military organisation will be a decisive factor. The precise doctrinal fine-tuning, effective integration of new technologies and flexible leadership at all levels of operations, and at a faster pace than the enemy will most likely set the stage for success on the battlefield.

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