

THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY ART

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The issue of Military Art is becoming more and more complex as we approach the contemporary age. The main reason is the natural evolution of mankind correlated with the permanent changes in the international security environment and, in this framework, the triggers are globalization and the Revolution in Military Affairs. Thus, the contemporary Military Art is subjected to a complex process of evolution that includes both adaptations and transformations of its core elements at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. All these adaptations and transformations lead us to the idea that in the near future the military action will take place probably in a fluid and multidimensional battle space, whose main features are: asymmetric actions; mobility; decentralization; maneuver; flexibility; a wide range of air, ground, naval, outer space, information, psychological and special actions that will be conducted simultaneously at the strategic, operational and tactical level, etc.

Analyzing the history of the military art we can conclude that the problem related to it becomes more and more complex as we approach the contemporary age in our scientific research. The main cause is triggering a set of alert transformations in security and defense once the Berlin Wall fell, which symbolically marked the end of the Cold War. The international security environment features have changed significantly in the last two decades, making the world armies reconsider their existence and organization at all levels of action: strategic, operational and tactical.

Faced with non-state actors (terrorists, war lords or Jihad fighters) and given simultaneous missions of counterinsurgency, reconstruction and peacekeeping, the international security states and organizations started a complex process of adaptation to the new security and defence challenges. New concepts were developed, the methods and means of waging war were diversified, combining the theoretical and conceptual plan with the technological one, all leading to the idea that contemporary military art is in the middle of a revolution in the military (Revolution of Military Affairs)¹. Thus, the debates within

¹ **FOOK WENG LOO, Bernard**, *New Problems, New Answers? The Revolution in Military Affairs in an Era of Changing Security Concerns*, Proceedings of the NIDS Symposium on International Security Affairs Military Transformation in the 21st Century: Challenge for New Security Environment, February 2006, Tokyo, electronic version:
<http://www.nids.go.jp/English/dissemination/symposium/e2005.html>.

the subject matter of strategic security and defense studies are based on the idea that the radical changes in military technologies and related areas fundamentally and dramatically change the way in which the military forces are organized, the way they work and carry out their strategic functions.

1. Contemporary military art, under the influence of a new stage of the revolution in military affairs.

The beginning of the 90s meant the initiation period of the current stage of revolution in military affairs (RMA²). During the Gulf War (1990-1991), the peak of using the information technology for military purposes had been reached. The new technologies increased the capacity of the coalition forces to exchange information, but also to prevent the enemy from communicating with its own forces³. However, the most important capability highlighted in this war was the so-called “surgical strike”, which represents the ability to hit and destroy objects with maximum accuracy and minimal collateral damage remotely, through missiles and arms systems, in any weather conditions.

The distinctive transformations of the new stage of RMA which have influenced contemporary military art are obvious, especially in the case of the United States of America, in the interventions in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Björn Möller, one of the most important RMA⁴ experts, in the case of the Balkans the initial strikes were direct cruise missile launches against the air defence and command system of the Serbian troops. In the last phases of the war, the effort was directed towards strikes against the Serbian forces in Kosovo, but with no extraordinary effect. The reason was the air campaign conducted on the grounds of “zero victims”, which dictated special flight patterns (i.e., high altitude strikes) for the B-52 bombers. It should be noted that A-10 ground attack aircraft or helicopters which would have effectively engaged the enemy forces but would have produced casualties were not used⁵. It is obvious that the intervention in the Balkans was an “RMA war”, but its results raise questions in this respect.

In December 1998, Operation “Dessert Fox” proved how an RMA strategy, which worked in the case of Kosovo, might fail if applied in other areas, such as Iraq. Iraq’s compliance with the Security Council’s resolution no. 687 from 1991 was considered unsatisfactory, so that the USA raised the problem of the unilateral use of force. In

² *We chose to use RMA, because, no matter the origin, it has become a habit to use the American abbreviation for the revolution in military affairs.*

³ **IBRUGGER, Lothar**, *The Revolution in Military Affairs*, Special report, Science and Technology Committee, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 1998.

⁴ **MÖLLER, Bjorn**, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Myth or Reality?*, The institute for Peace Study, Copenhagen, 2002, <http://www.copri.dk/copri/researchers/moeller/bm.htm>.

⁵ **BYMAN, Daniel, A.; WAXMAN, Mathew C.**, *Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate*, in *“International Security”*, vol. 24, no. 4 (spring 2004), pp. 5-38, MOELLER, Bjorn, cited work, 2002.

consequence, the USA launched a 4-day air campaign against Iraqi targets, the operation being a clear example of an “RMA campaign”⁶.

The war against the Taliban is a successful campaign because it succeeded to conquer Kabul, eliminating the Taliban regime. On the other hand, the campaign failed to achieve its main purpose: Osama bin Laden’s capture. Moreover, the level at which the air operation succeeded to carry out a ‘clean war’, with a small number of collateral victims, is not known. Part of the artillery used did not comply with this requirement but the efficient American control on mass-media managed to prevent pointing to civilian casualties⁷.

From the recent conflict in Afghanistan two elements emerged connected with the new type of war: on one hand, emphasizing camouflage and special operations and, on the other, renewing the short-term partnerships with local groups and hiring them as combatants or political agents. This “innovation”, which is, in fact, a revival of the Cold War practices, is expected to meet the deficiencies stressed in the Balkans campaign and in the Operation Allied Force in Yugoslavia, as well as the lack of land troops or agents. The technique and technology used by the USA in Afghanistan allowed for quick intervention and pursuit of some ambitious operational objectives and also for the launch of the operation on several lines (unlike in the Balkans and the Gulf War). However, the Afghanistan war shows some challenges which the USA and, by extension, other states will face in the following years and for which the RMA will be called upon to provide solutions.

The ongoing *war against terrorism* is a new clue for the RMA existence. It is obvious that the USA is preparing to face the asymmetrical conflicts; the 2001 terrorist attacks prove that a developed society is vulnerable to other forms of terrorist attack and, although they do not involve the use of weapons of mass destruction, they can have disastrous effects. In this context we should not ignore the danger of cybernetic terrorism, as a way of action of the terrorist networks, the al-Qaeda included⁸.

The Americans’ response to the 9/11 attacks was a multidimensional one. Next to the Afghanistan campaign, it included both diplomatic and legal initiatives and stressed once again the sphere of defence and domestic security (Homeland Security) of the United States of America. While the domestic security measures of certain institutions are obvious, it is difficult to identify the military prevention system to terrorist attacks, not to mention one which would be a revolution in the military.

The examples above show that the implications of technical and scientific development of mankind on the military marked a new stage in the history of military art. The procedures, methods and rules of classical military art were re-evaluated and adapted

⁶ MÖLLER, Bjorn, *The Never-Ending Iraqi Crisis: Dual Containment and the New World Order*, in *Oil and Water, Cooperative Security in the Persian Gulf* (London: L.B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 196-225, apud. Moller, Bjorn, cited works, 2002.

⁷ CONETTA, Carl, *Operation Enduring Freedom: Why a Higher Rate of Civilian Bombing Casualties*, in *Briefing Report*, no. 11 (Cambridge, MA: Project on Defense Alternatives, Commonwealth Institute, 2002), apud MÖLLER, Bjorn, cited work, 2002

⁸ ARQUILLA, John; RONFELDT, David; ZANINI, Michele, *Networks, Netwar, and Information-Age Terrorism*, in Khalilzad & White (ed.), *The Changing Role of Information in Warfare*, pp. 75-112, apud MÖLLER, Bjorn, cited works, 2002.

both to the new stage, requirements and possibilities of the combat means, and to the new types of military and nonmilitary risks, dangers and threats to security. Since the military art, as a scientific theory, includes strategy, operational art and tactics, i.e., elements that are interwoven, all these re-evaluations and changes are noticed at all levels, theoretical and practical, of organizing and waging the armed combat.

2. Contemporary elements of the military strategy

Currently, the strategy is dedicated to promoting peace in the same measure in which it analyzes the issues of waging war as a whole. If in the past centuries war was considered one of the main driving engines of change in the international relations system, in the last couple of decades preserving peace through nonmilitary means has been the most important goal of contemporary times. The complexity of the current features of the international security environment forces us to reconsider the idea that the military factor is essential in the security management.

Firstly, it must be noticed that military strategy exceeded national borders. If we take into consideration NATO's idea, military strategy is "that particular component of national or multinational strategy, which makes reference to the way in which the military power should be developed and applied so that the national objectives or those of a nation's group could be accomplished"⁹. It is about the need for integrated planning of military, political, social, economic and environment instruments, both nationally and internationally, in order to achieve and maintain an optimal security level.

By analyzing the large military strategy scope, we notice that the above mentioned changes are reflected even here.

Military strategy represents the highest level of military art, a system of scientific knowledge with reference to the armed conflict phenomenon. Taking into account this definition, we can state that military strategy is the result of joining the military doctrine principles with the experience of military confrontations, the analysis of current political, economic and military situation, and, last but not least, forecast on future wars. So, military strategy in its whole cannot be addressed solely in the light of present time, but, when referring to contemporary military art, it must be also analyzed through its contemporary elements.

Military strategy is influenced by globalization, and this aspect has been less analyzed by experts. The September, 11th 2001 terrorist attacks proved that, for example, terrorists can develop a global strategy by exploiting the specific elements of this type of phenomenon, as well as communication technologies, financial networks and people's freedom of movement. On the other hand, the military campaign that followed in response to the terrorist threat was considered as "the first war of the 21st century"¹⁰ and, implicitly,

⁹ *Military strategy*, in "NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French), AAP-6(2006), electronic version <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag/aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>.

¹⁰ *According to the statement of the former American President George W. Bush, apud CAMPBELL, Kurt M., Globalization's First War? in "The Washington Quarterly", Winter 2002, pp. 7-14.*

of globalization¹¹. Although these collocations do not meet the experts' consensus in terms of strategy, the main idea is that globalization has determined some significant changes in terms of waging war.

Some strategists think globalization reduces the use of military power in its dimension of war fighting capability and leads towards a decline in the use of force. Other experts think globalization is the way to opening new opportunities and methods of using military force in new types of conflicts¹². We believe that these two traits of globalization coexist and that the analyzed phenomenon currently gives both constraints and also freedom in using military power and outlines some new types of wars.

The impact of globalization on military strategy is neither universal nor uniform, but complex and unforeseeable. Military strategy is now based on cutting edge technologies, and one of its basic principles is to reduce the number of casualties and to improve the efficiency of military actions. The contemporary elements of the military strategy bring to the fore concepts such as network-centric warfare, the effect-based operations approach, the 5th generation of warfare, the long war, etc.

Network-centric warfare (NCW) is a concept specific to the current stage of RMA, its basis being the fundamental changes of the contemporary western society, especially in the areas of economy, technology and information, such as: the variation in the center of the C4-type network-centered platform (central network), the difference between independent vision (action) and the specific vision of a complex dynamic system that continuously adapts itself and, last but not least, the increasing importance of strategic options for adaptation and even survival in such changing systems¹³. NCW was based on integration in real and virtual networks of the collection and information processing systems (sensors), of the command and control systems and of the arm systems (battle platforms). This type of warfare ensures the speed of the management cycle, so that the difference between information and strike is reduced to a minimum, and the action (reaction) thus becomes immediate. In consequence, NCW is a modern warfare type, where C4I2SR systems are used, organized in a centered network, a sensor-based network and a fighting platform network, all using information technology, highly performant weapon systems and outstanding technical capabilities¹⁴.

The NCW concept was criticized for a long time by the supporters of another concept specific for contemporary military art, namely "the fourth-generation warfare". This type of conflict, analyzed for the first time in the article "The changing face of War:

¹¹ VENNESSON, Pascal, *Global Fear, Local Ways of War: How Military Institutions Adapt to Globalization*, 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 30th – September 3rd, 2006, electronic version http://www.allacademic.com/p_mla_apa_research_citation

¹² VENNESSON, Pascal, *Global Fear, Local Ways of War: How Military Institutions Adapt to Globalization*, 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 30th – September 3rd, 2006, electronic version http://www.allacademic.com/p_mla_apa_research_citation.

¹³ POPESCU, Mihail, ARSENIU, Valentin, VADUVA, Gheorghe, "Military art over the millenniums", 2nd volume, Military Publishing-Technical Center, Bucharest, 2004, pp. 301-302.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 302-303.

into the fourth generation”¹⁵ in 1989, was characterized by blurring the razor edges between political, military and civilian and involves elements such as: complexity and long duration; terrorism; highly decentralized transnational base; direct attack on the enemy’s culture; psychological war of high complexity, especially through media manipulation; use of all types of available pressures (political, economic, social and military); involvement of actors from all networks in a low intensity conflict. Also, this concept is criticized because it is believed that, in fact, we are talking about insurgencies, the analyzing pattern of generation-based warfare being inefficient in identifying the actual changes.¹⁶

Today, they speak about the Fifth generation warfare, which touches upon the specific issues of the previous generation. The fifth generation warfare is exclusively a war against nonstate actors¹⁷. In this type of warfare, the gravity center is not a big enemy leader that can be killed or an enemy army which can be destroyed. For instance, while the Islamic radical organizations are divided, they become more and more dangerous because it is not their capacity which disappears but their mass and gravity center that can be struck. The fifth generation warfare implies terrorist spontaneous and anonymous attacks against some undifferentiated targets (civilians and military personnel), its sole purpose being to create confusion and fear¹⁸. This concept is not yet fully structured, but it is obvious that it is a product of the new technologies, hence of the contemporary stage of NCW.

In fact, both fourth generation wars, as well as the the fifth generation ones are *dissymmetric and asymmetric wars*. On one side there are the high-tech powers, on the other side there are the antinomian entities which regard both access to high technologies and the preservation of certain conservative or retrogressive attitudes¹⁹. In theory, dissymmetric wars make reference to two completely different forces, usually disproportionate and inconsistent, situated face to face, and only one of them has the possibility to influence the other (or without one influencing the other)²⁰. At the same time, the asymmetric wars imply two totally distinct forces, usually disproportionate and inconsistent, but which influence each other asymmetrically and efficiently.²¹

The issue of dissymmetry and asymmetry and also of symmetry often comes to the terrorist war and to the war against terrorism. The world’s whole conflict state – military or

¹⁵ LIND, William S.; NIGHTENDALE, Keith; SCHIMTT, John F.; SUTTON, Joseph W.; WILSON, Gary I., *The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation*, in Marine Corps Gazette, 1989.

¹⁶ ECHEVARRIA, Antulio J., *Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths*, November 2005, p.10, electronic version <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil>.

¹⁷ COERR, Stanton S., *Fifth Generation War. Warfare versus the Nonstate*, in Marine Corps Gazette. January 2009, p. 63, electronic version <http://www.marinecorpsgazette-digital.com/marinecorpsgazette>.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*

¹⁹ MURESAN, Mircea; VADUVA, Gheorghe, *War of the future, the future of war*, National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 275.

²⁰ VADUVA, Gheorghe, *The symmetry, dissymmetry and asymmetry in current military conflicts*, National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, pp. 15-16.

²¹ *Ibidem*

non military – goes to this spectrum that combines the three dimensions, sometimes by very precise rules applied with a lot of ingenuity and sometimes at random or chaotically. Between the precision of some rules established by the early wars and armed conflicts and the imprecision and unpredictability of some combinations, mergers, flexibilities, evolutions and chaotic revolutions there is the entire art of confrontations, but also of armed conflicts and crisis management²².

Another concept specific to modern days is the *effect-based operations*. Some experts call this approach *action and concerted planning* or *comprehensive approach*²³. It is an effect-based process in which the commandant is told about the effects that must be accomplished on the battle field, and he is the one who has the liberty to make his own decisions regarding the way in which the effects are achieved. The strategic effects have an impact on the specific target-audience, which comprises all political, military and economic capacities, as well as its psychological stability. In a battle scenario, one of the strategic effects might be the annihilation or limitation of the enemy's ability or will to lead or continue war, by destroying or disorganizing the gravity centers and other targets or groups of vital targets. The gravity centers generally include the command and control system, war production, the land forces and the infrastructure key-elements that support the war effort. The strategic effects can be the result of the actions of land, air and naval forces, carried out at a lower level of commitment and usually take more time to be manifest than the tactical or operative ones²⁴.

Finally, one of the latest concepts used in the contemporary military strategy is the *long war*. We are referring to the war against terrorism, initiated by the USA, whose large spectrum determined the experts in military strategy to call "long". Some of them define it as a large-scale battle with enemies determined to create a united Islamic world that would replace "the western domination"²⁵, while others consider that the long war is nothing but an extension of the war against terrorism²⁶. Quite recently, in 2004, it was brought into discussion by General John Abizaid, the former Commander of USCENTCOM. Far from being a concept at that time, the term has subsequently been used in various papers such as the book *Winning the Long War: Lessons from the Cold War for Defeating Terrorism and*

²² **VADUVA, Gheorghe**, *The symmetry, dissymmetry and asymmetry in current military conflicts*, National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, p.70.

²³ Interview with general Lance L. Smith, *The Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation*, in *NATO Magazine*, 2006, summer, electronic version <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue3/romanian/interview.html>.

²⁴ **GRECU, Dan-Florin**, *Notions regarding the term "effect" used in general concept of effect-based operations*, in "Land Forces, Military theory newsletter", no. 2/2009, electronic version http://rtf.forter.ro/2009_2_t/01-trsf/02.htm.

²⁵ **PERNIN, Christopher G.; NICHIPORUK, Brian; STAHL, Dale; BECK, Justin RADAELLI-SANCHEZ, Rick**, *Unfolding the Future of the Long War. Motivations, Prospects, and Implications for the US Army*, RAND Aroyo Center, 2008, p.1.

²⁶ **BORER, Douglas A.; BERGER, Mark T.**; *All Roads Lead to and from Iraq: the Long War and the Transformation of the Nation-State System*, in "Third World Quarterly", volume 28, No. 2, Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group, 2007, pp. 457-463.

Preserving Freedom, written by James Jay Carafano and Paul Rosenzweig Washington and published in 2005, also in the January 2006 speech of the US President on the State of the Nation and in *Quadrennial Defence Review* (QDR) in 2006.

Even if this concept was criticized, being considered a mere core justification for promoting a permanent war, its introduction in the analyses of the American Department of Defense propelled it to the debates on military strategy at all decision levels. Thus, some analysts remarked that, although its four basic aims – i.e., the defeat of the terrorist networks, the in-depth defence of the American territory, the guidance of the decisions made by countries at “strategic crossroads” and the prevention of the acquisition and use by the hostile states of weapons of mass destruction – are specially important to accomplish national security goals, QDR does not explain why these features are specific for long wars²⁷. Other experts, as the former Chief of the Naval Operations, Admiral Michael G. Mullen, and the Commander of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway, state that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan do not constitute unique events, but a part of a set of fights associated to long war. Also, Admiral Mullen uses this term to explain the length and dimension of the actions that will be necessary in order to solve the security problems of the Middle East²⁸, as well.

Therefore, we notice that both the new stage of RMA and the characteristics in a permanent change of the international security environment determined the emergence of new concepts at the strategic level, which allow for the adjustment to new types of risks, dangers and threats of military and non-military nature to the national and international security. Following the levels of military art, these conceptual changes and innovations were also extended to the tactical and operational level, as we will further show.

3. Contemporary elements of the operative art/operational level of war

Operative art is dependent on the technological development, whereas it elaborates the processes of planning and command of operations according to the principles of military science, means of action and characteristics of the military theatre of operations.

In the American literature, operative art is defined as the application of creative imagination by commanders and the personnel, supported by their skills, knowledge and experience, to design strategies, and operations meant to organize and engage military forces²⁹. Here, and also at NATO level, we can talk about the operational level of the war as a level at which the important campaigns and operations are planned, commanded and supported, in order to reach the strategic objectives on the theatres or other operation

²⁷ PERNIN, Christopher G.; NICHIPORUK, Brian; STAHL, Dale; BECK, Justin; RADAELLI-SANCHEZ, Rick, *op.cit.*, 2008, p.6

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p.8.

²⁹ *Operational Art*, in „DoD Dictionary of Military Terms and Associated Terms (As amended through 31 October 2009)”, electronic version:
http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/o/37.html

zones³⁰. Thus, operative art is considered to be a creative process by which the necessary actions meant to meet strategic aims can be realized at the operative level.

A clear example in this sense is the analysis of the operational requirements of the *network based war* (RBR). As we previously showed, RBR compacts the time and space of the fight, at the same time with the extension of the coverage and ambush area of the actions and reactions. Access to data base and real-time information, to the network and the quasi-concomitant decision with its execution lead to an increase of the integrality of the actions and operations and, obviously, of the strategies to be applied³¹. Having to do with an integrated combat space, the operations specific for RBR are also of an integrated type, with the following characteristics: space-time amplitude, sequenced activities which take place throughout it, from the preparation stage to the final one; sequence of actions which vary according to the concrete conditions on the theatre of operations, of the combat and war space; capacity for self-adjustment. In the integrated type operation all these elements are interdependent, i.e., each varies depending on the others, in a certain succession or simultaneity of moments or phases and reconfigures itself according to a certain role, to the prevailing maneuver, which is flexible, adaptable in each phase to its new situation in this type of war³².

Another concept which reflects at the operational level the new characteristics of the international security environment are the *expeditionary operations*. Although from the content point of view it is not new, this concept was brought again into discussion especially after the end of the Cold War.

NATO defines this type of operations as the “projection of military power beyond the lines of communication extended in a remote operational area meant to fulfill a specific objective”³³. The concept of expeditionary operations is one of the main domains (along with informational superiority, NATO’s network-based capability, efficient engagement, congregated maneuver, civil-military strengthened cooperation, and integrated logistics) that will lead to the fulfillment of the three objectives of transformation: i.e., coherent effects, congregated dislocation and sustentation, decisional superiority³⁴.

The USA refers to the same type of operations by two concepts: *expedition* and *expeditionary force*. Expedition is defined as a “military operation led by an armed force in

³⁰ *Operational level of war*, în „DoD Dictionary of Military Terms and Associated Terms (As amended through 31 October 2009)”, electronic variant: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/o/37.html și în *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, AAP-6(2006), electronic version: <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag-aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>

³¹ VĂDUVA, Gheorghe; RĂDUICĂ, George-Teodor, *Cerințe operaționale în războiul bazat pe rețea*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare “Carol I”, București, 2007, pp.31-32.

³² *Ibidem*, p.32.

³³ *Expeditionary operation*, in *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, AAP-6(2006), electronic version: <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag-aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>.

³⁴ ALEXANDRESCU, Grigore; BĂHNĂREANU, Cristian, *Operații militare expediționale*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare “Carol I”, București, 2007, p.10.

order to fulfill a specific objective in a foreign country”³⁵, and expeditionary force as an “armed force organized to fulfill a specific objective in a foreign country”³⁶.

Although these concepts are currently applied in all services of the USA, they were initially and exclusively used by the US Marine Corps. In their acceptance, expeditionary operations and forces serve the interests and national security and are indispensable for crises response. The handbook “Expeditionary operations” of the Marine Corps sets the defining characteristic of an expeditionary operation as the projection of the force in an external environment, on the scene of a crisis or conflict³⁷. Thus, the effective expeditionary operations do not refer only to the projection of military power, but also to the sustenance of the respective power throughout the expedition (by creating advanced bases and logistical support, necessary transport and maintenance). According to the American concept, expeditionary operations consist of five phases of the action which imply strategic, operative and tactical considerations: force deployment in the area of operations, introduction of the forces on the foreign territory, preparative actions, decisive actions and withdrawal of the forces or transition to a permanent presence³⁸.

Expeditionary operations are divided into two categories: fighting expeditionary operations and expeditionary operations for stability and support. The first category refers to conflict military operations, which take place during the war, representing the most virulent, and also the most expensive component of power projection.³⁹ The second category refers to power projection with an international or at least multinational agreement. The records of the political-military practice of these last few years emphasize that this type of operations underlies the great majority of the expeditionary military operations. The two components (i.e., stability and support) are inter-conditioned, they have common parts, and also specific features (fields of action). Expeditionary forces can participate in these operations, along with forces of the host nation, as well⁴⁰.

Synthesizing the above, we can extract the most important characteristics of the expeditionary operations: they are fighting or stability and support ones; they can be strictly military or can also include civilian components (for example, in the case of humanitarian missions); they presume the existence of a force capable to execute such operations (prepared/instructed and with according supplies), generally named expeditionary force; the force is projected in a risk, crisis or conflict zone, outside the national territory or outside the area of responsibility; the force is supported by adequate logistics, transport and

³⁵ *Expedition*, in „DoD Dictionary of Military Terms and Associated Terms (As amended through 31 October 2009)”, electronic version: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/e/8825.html.

³⁶ *Expeditionary force*, in „DoD Dictionary of Military Terms and Associated Terms (As amended through 31 October 2009)”, electronic version: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/e/4086.html.

³⁷ U.S. Marine Corps, *Expeditionary Operations*, MCDP 3, pp. 32-33, electronic variant: <http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/MCDP%203%20Expeditionarz%20Operations.pdf>

³⁸ ALEXANDRESCU, Grigore; BĂHNĂREANU, Cristian, *op.cit.*, 2007, p.9.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.27.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p.28.

maintenance elements, which ensure short-notice deployment and high mobility; the command and control structure has the capacity of controlling the military actions of the deployed force.

By their characteristics, expeditionary operations reflect the changes and transformations of political-military nature at the global level, and, as a consequence, contemporary elements of military art. Thus, it is obvious that operative art represents the link between strategy and tactics, thus any change achieved within the framework of the strategic level of military art also reflects in the tactical one.

4. Contemporary elements of military tactics

Tactics is the most dynamic area of military art and is closely linked to the evolution of RMA. The relation between tactics and other areas of military art is undeniable, because it is configured according to the level of development of the armament and combat technique, and also by the strategic vision over the character of a possible war and the concrete missions which derive from the operative art. Both theory and tactics practice change with technological progress and improvement of the armed combat means, of the moral and defence capacities of the army.

The dedicated literature uses the concept of *tactical level*, representing that level of war in which fighting (combat actions) are planned and executed in order to accomplish the military objectives given to the units and tactical formations. The activities at this level are based on commitments and maneuver of the fighting elements, according to the situation of the enemy⁴¹.

If during the Cold War and the following years most discussions were about classic conflicts in which two armies faced each other, in the last decade the new operational-acting structure which the action devices have, especially for the land forces, determined the diversification of the tactics. To each of the types of forces- combat forces, combat sustaining/support forces and logistic support forces – a type of tactics corresponds: the combat forces tactics (the combined arms tactics), the combat support forces tactics and the logistical support forces tactics.⁴²

All types of tactics stated above have a series of common features which gain new valences in the context of globalization and of the current phase of RMA. One of this features – *ways, means and limited ends* – reflect the fact that contemporary military operations have started to have more and more limited strategic objectives, which could be defined once with the triggering of the military actions and could be modified during the confrontation based on clearly defined but flexible rules of engagement. We also talk about

⁴¹ *Nivel tactic*, in „Colecție de termeni militari selectați din „Lexicon militar“ și „Dicționar de terminologie militară – NATO - logistică“, Ministerul Apărării Naționale, electronic variant: <http://www.defense.ro/dictionar/> and in *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, AAP-6(2006), electronic version: <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag-aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>

⁴² **NEAG, Mihai; VIRCA, Ioan**, *Noi provocări în tactica Forțelor Terestre în contextul integrării euroatlantice*, in „Buletin Științific“, nr. 2/2004, Academia Forțelor Terestre „Nicolae Bălcescu“, electronic version: http://www.armyacademy.ro/buletin/2_2004/

the *forces projection*, as a way of preventing, deterring or stopping the potential belligerents, as well as the conflict itself. In contemporary conflicts the availability of the necessary transport capacities, both national and international, and of the adequate infrastructure is particularly important, because these determine the size and structure of the deployed forces, as well as the pace they need to become operational.

Another particularly important feature of combat and its related engagements refers to the *multinational character of the forces*. During the past years the armed forces were used significantly in alliances or ad-hoc coalitions, military operations becoming a consequence of fulfilling some commitments established by a treaty, respectively a mandate issued by an international security organization. In this case, the main factors which determine the planning of the military actions are: the interoperability of the forces both at conceptual and logistical level; the scope and complexity of the operations and, last but not least, the rules of engagement, which have to be harmonized and understood accurately from the very beginning of the action.

In this context we remark another feature of the tactical actions which suffered important changes in the post Cold War period, i.e., the *maneuver-like approach* to actions. In the asymmetric war, when executed either horizontally or vertically, the latter offers new, unexpected solutions, to defeat the will and cohesion of the opponent by a combination of surprise, shock, simultaneity and rhythm. Linked to it, we can also enumerate other specific features of combat and engagements at a tactical level: *the professional expertise*, without which we cannot talk about combat power of the military structures; *the physical and moral cohesion of the combat structures*, which reduces the effect produced by surprise, shock actions and massive destructions; *the sap of the enemies' will*, which together with other factors produces the rapid knock-out of his structures; *the hazard of the cohesion of the enemy*, which presupposes the exploitation of his vulnerabilities by maneuver and fire (precise, surgical strikes) and maximum surprise, superior pace and synchronization of actions, so that a shock and de-structuring effect on the cohesion of the enemy forces is accomplished.

The tactical level is the one where the *idiosyncratic* character of the military actions is most significantly visible, by factors like stress, friction, chaos and time pressure. In addition, the *asymmetry and dissymmetry* which characterize the contemporary military conflicts emphasize these factors. As fighting is one of the most stressful human activities, during military actions the reduction of creativity and the amplification of the preservation instinct can be registered, both as regards to the commanders, and to the fighters, at the tactical level of war. Friction refers to the frustration induced to the militaries by the actions performed, transforming the simplest actions at a tactical level in specially complicated ones, even impossible for the engaged ones. Also, in contemporary military conflicts the commanders of the tactical military structures can confront with situations in which they have to command their subordinates in an environment characterized by incomplete, contradictory or untrue information, which limit their perceptions and produce confusion and chaos. Finally, tactical actions take place under time pressure, the commanders of the basic levels of the military organizations having the complex task of orchestrating the different forces and means available for them, which reduces the time for the subordinates

to prepare the fight. In order to counteract these effects, it is necessary for the commanders of the higher echelons to anticipate the way of response to the pressure exerted on the militaries in the subordinate structures. The commanders of the strategic and operative level structures, being outside the fight itself, have a clearer perspective over the course of the developing military actions, which allows them to maintain the unity of vision and action of all the fighters who are in a different context. Thus, the unity of effort on base of the unique military objectives and the unanimously recognized military values is preserved.

Conclusions

Military art has not been spared of the events and phenomena which determined the evolution of mankind after the end of the Cold War, but has continuously adapted.

Globalization is one of the phenomena which have influenced military art, by gradually changing the nature of war. The armed combat remained the organized form of practicing violence, but it includes now an important civil component; objectives with maximum psychological effect are carried out, unnecessary casualties and damage are avoided. The classical principles of armed combat have not changed radically, but have received new valences, new completions which illustrate the physiognomy and nature of contemporary conflicts. Thus, these can be synthesized as follows: the clear and concise definition of the objective/mission, the unity of command, the freedom of action, maneuver, surprise, concentration of efforts in the decisive points and at the right moment for fast victory, economy of forces and means, security of actions, force protection, few human and material losses, as well as little environmental damage.

The revolution in the military area which is in turn influenced by globalization has also a direct impact on military art. The pivotal problem is that that no military force can afford to be static from the point of view of its nature and capabilities. Military and related technologies are upgraded permanently, and the capabilities and equipment become outdated. That is why, in order to remain credible and efficient, military forces have to transform periodically, both in technique and capabilities, and in concepts, doctrines and strategies. Thus, military organizations have to internalize not only new technologies and capabilities, but also – first and foremost – their *modus operandi*.

All these adaptations and transformations lead to the idea that in the near future military actions will probably take place in a fluid, multidimensional combat space. The main features will be: asymmetric actions, mobility, dispersability, decentralization, maneuverability, flexibility, integration of a wide range of air, land, naval, space, information, psychological and special actions, simultaneously led at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, continuously and at a sustained pace, aiming the decisive strike at the decisive points of the enemy and leading to fast victory by the latter's psychic and physical defeat.

Finally, we can state that contemporary military art is subjected to a complex evolutionary process, which includes adaptations, as well as transformations of its elements, from the strategic level to the operational and tactical ones. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of military art do not change, in the same way as the human society evolves without changing its essence.

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