

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF COMBAT ORDERS IN THE YUGOSLAV PEOPLE'S ARMY AND OPERATIONAL ORDERS IN THE SERBIAN ARMED FORCES

Miroslav JOVANOVIĆ, Mladen KOJIĆ, Slaviša JOTIĆ, Vinko ŽNIDARŠIČ

Military Academy, University of Defence, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
miroslav.jovanovic0212@gmail.com, mladenkojic55@gmail.com,
joticslavisa@yahoo.com, mas.vn.kir@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the content of combat orders in the Yugoslav People's Army and operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces. Utilizing methods of content analysis and comparative analysis, this study identifies key differences and similarities between the two documents, shedding light on their respective advantages and disadvantages. While both documents serve to provide guidance and direction to military units, they differ significantly in structure, language, and emphasis. The analysis reveals that certain points of combat orders correspond to specific points of operational orders in terms of content. However, the operational order offers a more comprehensive assessment of the enemy and places a greater emphasis on decentralized execution compared to the combat order. Notable differences include the level of detail provided, with Yugoslav People's Army combat orders being more verbose and reflecting a centralized command structure, whereas Serbian Armed Forces orders prioritize brevity and clarity. Despite these disparities, both documents underscore the importance of mission accomplishment, personnel welfare, and adherence to legal and ethical standards. They also recognize the need for adaptability and flexibility in dynamic operational environments.

Keywords: combat order, Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), operational order, Serbian Armed Forces (SAF), document

1. Introduction

The structure and content of combat order and operational order play a critical role in ensuring the effective execution of military operations. A comparative analysis of the content of combat orders in the Yugoslav People's Army and operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces provides valuable insights in to the evolution of military command and control practices in the region. The Yugoslav People's Army, established in 1945, served as the unified military force of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until its dissolution in the 1992. During its existence, the

Yugoslav People's Army developed a structured approach to issuing combat orders that reflected the principles of socialist military doctrine. Combat orders in the Yugoslav People's Army typically followed a hierarchical structure and they were used in the Army of Yugoslavia during 1992-2002 and in the Army of Serbia and Montenegro 2002-2006 [1].

In contrast, the Serbian Armed Forces, formed in 2006 following the dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, adopted a more modernized approach to command and control, influenced by NATO standards and practices [2]. The

document through which a commander in the Yugoslav People's Army conveyed his decision to subordinates was called a "borbena zapovest" (combat order). By adopting new doctrinal documents and procedures, modeled on modern armies of NATO member countries, this document has been replaced by operational orders (OPORD).

The aim of this paper is to compare the content of combat orders and operational orders. Using methods of content analysis and comparative analysis, it was able to identify similarities and differences in the content of the documents, and draw conclusions about the advantages and disadvantages of the new document compared to the old one.

2. Content of Combat Orders in the Yugoslav People's Army

According to the provisions of the Yugoslav People's Army rules, the order of the platoon-company commander for combat principally contains:

- Landmarks,
- Enemy data,
- Platoon task, reinforcement, and support,
- Data on neighbors and units in the enemy's and own rear,
- Concept for task execution,
- Tasks for directly subordinate and attached units and support elements,
- Data on support from the commanding officer,
- Organization of NBC, CBRN, and air defense,
- Security of combat actions,
- Organization of command, communication, signals, and reporting time [3] [4].

Land marks are clearly visible objects on the ground that serves to show targets in observation zone. In *paragraph 1* (enemy data) the level and type of the unit, the probable arrangement of combat elements, the intention (task) of enemy are communicated. Data on the enemy's losses

in human, material and technical resources, data on the use of nuclear and chemical weapons, aviation activities and other important known information are reported [4][5][6].

Paragraph 2 (platoon-company task, reinforcement, and support) contains the type of operation, the task (closer, further and next), the readiness time and the fire support data. It answers the questions: what needs to be done, where it will happen, when it will take place, and why it is conducted. Information on reinforcement units, their task and information on support within the unit are communicated [4].

Paragraph 3 (data on neighboring and units in the enemy's and own rear) the schedule and tasks of the units in front, right, left and rear are briefly announced, in order to achieve cooperation[4].

Paragraph 4 (concept for the task execution) contains the type and the aim of the operation, the idea of the maneuver (center of action, grouping of forces and form of the maneuver), arrangement of units, the task of the main and auxiliary forces, center of gravity of anti-armor combat and readiness are announced [4].

In *paragraph 5* (tasks for directly subordinate, attached units and combat support units) subordinated units specify the method of carrying out the operation, protection against effects of nuclear and chemical agents, the execution of actions and counter-actions in operation and cooperation with other elements of the combat schedule and neighboring units. The tasks for performing fire support are specified [4].

Paragraph 6 (data on support from the commanding officer) contains data on fire support and anti-armor support by higher unit [4].

In *paragraph 7* (organization of NBC, CBRN, and air defense) the tasks of the company anti-tank group are defined, possible zones of enemy airborne operations are foreseen, the method of combating targets in the air space and anti-aircraft protection [4] [6].

Paragraph 8 (security of combat actions) contains measures within engineering security, local security and rear security. Engineering security measures include assure the survivability, building fighting positions, fortifications, obstacles, emplacement and clearance of land mines. Local security is a security task that includes activities conducted near a unit to prevent surprise by the enemy. Rear security measures include the layout area of the battalion rear stations, the location of the company's supply station and medical transport station, the method of supplying platoons and attached units, method of collecting and evacuating the injured and sick [4] [6].

Paragraph 9 (Organization of command, communication, signals, and reporting time) contains the location of the company commander's observation post, the way to maintain communication, cooperation signals, air radiological and chemical hazards are specified [4].

3. Content of the Operational Order in the Serbian Armed Forces

According to the Serbian Armed Forces the Rules and Regulations, the operational order consists of five paragraphs:

1. Situation
 - a. Enemy
 - b. Own Forces
- 1) Idea (conceptual plan), mission, and concept of operation of higher units.
- 2) Location and task of adjacent units
- 3) Location and task of fire support units
- c. Attachment and Detachment
2. Mission
3. Execution
 - a. Operation Concept (maneuver and fire)
 - b. Tasks to Subordinate Units
 - c. Coordination Instructions
4. Logistic Support
5. Command and Telecommunications [7] [8].

Paragraph 1 (situation) contains:

-Information about the enemy, the operation it is carrying out and the schedule of

combat elements.

-The most dangerous and most likely course of action of enemy.

-Idea, mission and concept of operation of superior.

-Place, task and missions of neighboring and fire support units [7] [9].

Paragraph 2 (mission) is a clear and concise statement that states who will conduct the operation, what needs to be done, where it will occur, and why it is being conducted. The mission statement does not specify how the operation will be carried out [7].

Paragraph 3 (execution) in point a. (operation concept) contains aim of the action which had to be briefly presented through the basic idea of the superior and his tactical plan. The operation concept can be divided into two paragraphs: maneuver (intent, method of task execution, division into phases if necessary, focus of action, and desired end state) and fire (when fire is opened, who receives support during task execution). In point b. (tasks to subordinate units), the tasks for each unit directly subordinated to the commander who issues the order are clearly stated. Each task includes who (subordinate unit), what (task), when, where and why (purpose). Point c. (coordination instructions) contains a way to identify one's own forces in order to avoid friendly fire [7] [9].

Paragraph 4 (logistic support) describes the logistical support of the operation. It should include:

- Schedule of logistics support elements, subsequent areas of the schedule and directions of movement, time of readiness for operation, combat security and the like.

-Data on maintenance units, their locations and placement with extraction and evacuation procedures.

Method of medical evacuation, procedure with prisoners and data on the supply of each group of material resources [7] [9].

Paragraph 5 (command and telecommunications) contains two parts:

a. Command contains position of the commander and his deputy. It can also

contain lines of command (who is in charge) and the layout of observation posts.
b. Telecommunications includes all instructions for the use of telecommunications and electronic devices that will be used during the operation [7] [8].

4. Comparing the Content of Combat Orders and Operational Orders and Identifying Similarities and Differences

A comparative analysis of the content of combat orders in the Yugoslav People's Army and operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces reveals several key differences and similarities. When analyzing the points of combat orders and operational orders side by side, we observe that certain points of orders correspond, in content, to certain points of operational orders (Table 1).

Table 1 Comparative presentation of the content of combat orders and operational orders

Points of combat order	Paragraphs of the operational order:
Orientation 1. Data about the enemy 2. Company mission, reinforcement, and support 3. Information about neighbor in gun its and units in enemy and own rear areas	1. Situation: a) Enemy b) Own forces - Idea (conceptual idea), mission, and concept of operation of the higher unit - Location and task of adjacent units - Location and task of fire support units c) Attachment and detachment
2. Company mission, reinforcement, and support	2. Mission
4. Execution plan for the mission 5. Tasks to immediately subordinate and attached units and support elements 6. Information about the support of the higher command 7. Organization of combat support, combat service support, and air defense 8. Security of combat operations	3. Execution a. Operation concept - Fire - Maneuver b. Tasks to subordinate units c. Coordination instructions
8. Security of combat operations -Rear area security	4. Logistic support
Points of combat order	Paragraphs of the operational order:
9. Organization of command, communication, signals, and reporting time	5. Command and communications a. Command b. Telecommunications

Paragraph 1 of the operational order encompasses points 1 to 3 of the directive, but it is more comprehensive and provides more information about the enemy. In the enemy assessment in the operational order, besides the elements of the enemy's combat disposition, the variant of use of the enemy is analyzed in more detail. In assessing own forces, the operational order focuses on the

mission and the commander's concept, while in the directive, the focus is on the task derived from the superior's directive, so we can say that this part of the documents differs in content.

Paragraph 2 (mission) of the operational order is, in content, identical to point 2 (mission of the platoon, reinforcements, and support) of the directive, in the part that

relates to the platoon's task. Both points answer the questions: what needs to be done, where it will happen, when it will take place, and why it is conducted, but they do not provide an answer to how the operation will be conducted.

Paragraph 3 (execution) of the operational order encompasses points 4 to 8 of the directive. Point 3 of the operational order, besides the operation concept and tasks to subordinate units, also includes the organization of actions, with an emphasis on anti-tank and engineering actions as well as security and protection of forces. We can conclude that there are no significant differences in the content of point 3 of the operational order and points 4-8 of the directive.

Paragraph 4 of the operational order contains point 8 of the directive in the part related to rear security (technical, logistical, and medical security), and in this part, both points are identical in content.

Paragraph 5 (command and telecommunications) of the operational order and point 9 (organization of command, communications, signals, and reporting times) of the combat order are completely identical in content.

One notable difference is the level of detail provided in the respective documents. Orders in the Yugoslav People's Army tend to be more verbose and comprehensive, reflecting a centralized command structure and a top-down approach to decision-making. In contrast, operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces prioritize brevity and clarity, emphasizing decentralized execution and the empowerment of subordinate commanders.

Additionally, the language used in orders in the Yugoslav People's Army often reflects the ideological rhetoric of socialism, with an emphasis on collective action and the primacy of the party. Operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces, on the other hand, employ more neutral and professional language, reflecting a shift towards a depoliticized military establishment and a focus on professionalism and efficiency.

Despite these differences, both the Yugoslav People's Army and the Serbian Armed Forces share common elements in their approach to command and control. Both documents emphasize the importance of mission accomplishment, the welfare of personnel, and adherence to legal and ethical standards.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, a comparative analysis of the content of combat orders in the Yugoslav People's Army and operational orders in the Serbian Armed Forces highlights the evolution of military command and control practices in the region. While rooted in different historical and ideological contexts, both documents reflect a commitment to effective leadership, mission accomplishment, and the professionalization of the armed forces.

Contemporary conditions for conducting combat operations, the need for international military cooperation, and participation in multinational operations require equipping with modern weapons and equipment, adapting tactics for unit deployment in operations, and adjusting documents for preparation, organization, and execution of operations to the standards imposed by the collaborating forces. In practice, it has been shown that procedures, combat documents, unit deployment tactics, or processes that are effective in the military of one country may not be equally effective in the military of another country if they are not adapted to the specificities of military organization, state, and the people living in it [10].

The advantage of the operational order over the directive is its precise form, which allows for the correct decision to be made in a short time, as it is preceded by a precisely defined sequence of activities that guide the commander in this process, which is crucial in combat operations in modern conditions. From the paper, it can be concluded that a combat document (directive) used in the Yugoslav People's Army has been adapted to the form used by

the armies of NATO member countries and other Western countries but has retained the previous elements of content.

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