

TRENDS OF BATTLE LINE FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This article presents basic concepts regarding the establishment of the battle lines depending on the level of the warfare. Thus, at the operative level within the operations of the task force level division (brigades) will be used principles that determine the choice of the formation, organization and judicious use of the battle lines yet at the tactical level other principles will be used. At the same time, the article points out that the battle line of troops is an important element of the defensive or offensive structure in the course of the military actions, which exerts an influence on the other elements, due to which there is the possibility of gaining victory.

KEYWORDS:

Military conflict, task forces, operation, defense structure, operative battle line.

1. Introduction

The particularities of the military conflicts from the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century show us that under the present conditions, the tendency of disappearing of the threshold between peace and war is being pursued. The architecture of contemporary warfare is different and it is not the same as in World War II. At the same time, there are numerous opposing discussions between the two extremes and systemic transformations generate a series of debates about their evolutions and consequences on the political and economic systems of the states as a whole. Theoreticians acknowledge that the military actions carried out by the armed forces are structured according to the three levels of military action: strategic, operative and

tactical. Depending on the nature of the military actions, these may be: operations specific to the warfare; stability and support operations; intermediate operations, with a wide range, according to the assigned missions (Cioflină & Habian, 1999). We state that, according to the purpose, operations can be decisive and support. At the same time, operations have fundamental characteristics such as amplitude, density, duration and rhythm (Иванов, 2002). However, the content of these phenomena is not constant it may vary depending on the level of development of the armed forces and the conditions of the warfare. We think that now and in the future within the preparation and conduct of military actions, we have to take into account the determined factors of the warfare: the geographical space, time,

aggressor's profile, ratio of the forces and the provided equipment. As such, the warfare develops according to the principle of continuity. Obviously, through the necessary conclusions, the changes in the combat and the operations were the basis for the modification of the process of planning the military actions. Going back to the principle of dividing the military art into the three levels, we can emphasize that, apart from the elements that differentiate and determine the extent, space and time remain a constant factor. Another trend currently manifested in conflicts for achieving political and strategic objectives is the use of more and more non-military procedures, being motivated by their efficiency. Therefore, the emphasis is on applying various information technologies, humanitarian, economic, diplomatic, political and other non-military methods, with massive involvement of the population and irregular military formations.

2. Trends in the creation of battle lines

One of the key elements in carrying out the operations is its structure, so in the analysis undertaken in this study we will refer to the creation of battle lines. In the opinion of some military experts, the operative battle line is considered to be a key element of the operation's structure which, in turn, has a special influence on the other elements. One of the key elements in carrying out the operations is its structure. The structural elements of the operation differ in relation to the levels of warfare. Thus, at the strategic and operative level, the operation will have the following structure: the task forces necessary to act on the strategic and operative directions, the operation battle line, the attack system and the combat engineering. Otherwise things are at the tactical level, where the structure of combat is composed of three elements: the battle line, the fire control system, the engineer layout of the ground and the relationships between them through which the operation achieves its objectives.

According to the opinion of military experts, it is considered that the operative battle line is a key element of the operation's structure which, in turn, has a special influence on the other elements. Napoleon, quoted by J. Fuller in his work "La conduits de la guerre", expressed that the art of arranging troops is in fact the great art of war, saying that: "*Arrange your troops in such a way that, whatever difficulties the enemy may create, you can reunite in one day*" (Fuller, 2007, p. 41).

According to the military lexicon, the term of battle line (of troops) is defined by "*the way troops of a subunit, unit, and unit (size brigade and up) are dislocated on the ground in order to station, move or execute a combat action*" (Agud, 1994, p. 132). The battle line is constituted to respond to the operational situation created and in accordance with the purpose and concept of the operation (combat), to ensure the fulfillment of the received mission. It represents a specific and temporary grouping of forces and means participating in combat actions, with a varied composition, flexible and possible to be modified. In the opinion of military researchers, the battle lines have the following features: they are diverse, multifunctional, adaptable and homogeneous in relations to the forces participating in the operation or in combat. Starting from the purpose of the actions and the physiognomy of each form of combat, the forces and the means will represent viable systems depending on the level of the military actions. Thus, in military theory, there are the following types of battle lines: stationary, moving, pre-combat and operation battle line (combat) (Țenu, 2005; *Боевой устав сухопутных войск*, 1982). In the Russian specialty literature, the terms about the addressed problem are generally the same. But there are small insignificant differences at the operational level, where a new element appears in the structure of the operation, such as the structuring of the task force. In the opinion of the Russian military

experts, the need to include this element is dictated by the fact that at an operational level, the structure of the task forces is modular, being determined by the objective that is to be achieved. At the same time, they believe that the command system is not addressed as part of the battle line. The dynamics and physiognomy of warfare directly influence the conduct of military actions, including the establishment of operational battle lines. In this context, we consider that the diversity of the battle lines can be analyzed from several points of view, namely in relation to: the level of military art, the forms of military actions, the type of battle line, the configuration of the elements in the battle lines, the arrangement in the space of forces and means.

Thus, the multifunctionality of the battle line is characterized by the capacity of the elements to engage and successfully carry out military actions with the enemy performing their operations in all environments.

The diversity of forces and means involved in the operations, as well as their different character, imposes important features on the physiognomy of military actions, which will be carried out within the operation, based on the principles and laws of the warfare. The adaptability of the battle line consists in the capacity of restructuring, through regrouping and replacements, according to the situation created. It is difficult to assume, and the experience of contemporary military actions confirms this – that a battle line, once adopted, will remain the same until the goals of the operation are fulfilled. Therefore, following the scientific research carried out, we reached the conclusion regarding the factors that influence the constitution of the battle lines, such as: received mission, the situation of the enemy, the situation of own forces, the physical-geographical characteristics of the area of operations. In this regard, receiving the mission from the upper echelon, depending on the type of combat and created situation, the task

forces (size brigade) will adopt a battle line for rapid deployment of troops and their engagement in the operation. The nature, value and probable conception of action of the enemy will have a major influence on the adoption of the battle line. Another determining factor is the state of our own forces, we emphasize that the multitude of units from different branches in the structure of a large operative units, in cooperation with the forces that can be temporarily subordinated, will constitute a diverse range in the adoption of the battle lines. The last of the mentioned factors is the physic-geographical one, with a special influence in the establishing of area of operations (directions) where the troops will concentrate the efforts, as well as the way of task forces creation and dislocated. In the specialized literature, the subject can be presented in this way, regarding the works elaborated by the Romanian authorities, the battle lines are adopted, being established in the calculation of time. Thus, in the Romanian conception it is possible to work with other elements: battle line, reserves and logistics. In turn, the battle line includes immediate response forces (IRF), command system, subsequent response forces (SRF) and support forces (Bădălan, 2006).

The subject is treated differently in the military science of the Russian Federation, where in the formation of the battle lines the emphasis is placed on the spatial factor. Therefore, the operative battle line of units (size brigade) will include the following elements: echelon one, commanding system, echelon two, the elements of the battle line of combat support forces, reserve and logistics system (*Боевой устав сухопутных войск*, 1982).

Another viewpoint is given by the American military experts, according to whom the battle lines are adopted according to the importance of the directions of action. In this context, the operations battle lines will include forces on the main effort direction, forces on another effort direction,

support forces of the main forces and the reserve (Гришин, 1985).

In the local specialized sources we found a different and controversial approach which is influenced by the military science of the Russian Federation as well as the one from Romania. So far, a common understanding has not been reached on this topic.

Thus, we can find some combat manuals, in which the forces are spread out, with first and second echelons to which the spatial principle is applied, and to other echelons is applied the temporary principle, and the distribution of forces in the battle line is called IRF and SRF.

In our opinion, in accordance with the requirements of the modern battlefield and the characteristics of the contemporary warfare, we believe that it would be more appropriate for the spreading out of forces to be applied the spatial principle. Therefore, certain elements must be included: the first echelons, commanding system, the second echelons, the element of battle lines of support forces, the reserves and the logistic system.

3. Conclusions

The analysis of military conflicts in the first decades of the third millennium clearly highlighted the mutations that took place in the course of the military actions,

which will take place simultaneously on the terrestrial, air and maritime environment. At the same time, the armed struggle will spread in all environments, and the combat systems will have the capacity to hit any target immediately after being discovered, no matter where it is.

We mention that the development of contemporary military actions has shown that the establishment of battle lines is an increasingly complex phenomenon of warfare, which is included in the conception of a unique plan for conducting military actions by troops depending on the level of military actions. This fact gives us the right to establish certain rules to be applied to establishment of the battle lines. We consider that the realization of the operative battle line, as a rule, will be established according to the created situation and the received mission or after the conduct of the combat actions from one battle line to another. Usually, the troops intended to build the battle lines will perform grouping and replacement or dislocation in order to create a new battle line.

Consequently, we can say that in the theory and practice of military art there are two processes to act in order to establish the battle lines: simultaneously, with all the forces and the means and successively, according to the created situation.

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