

THE SUBJECT OF MILITARY SCIENCES IN THE SPECTRUM OF MODERN CRISES

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Abstract: Military sciences have formally become an integral part of the review of scientific fields in the Republic of Serbia. Military activity is created by organizing the protection of human communities and practically represents the first organized human activity. In the Republic of Serbia, military sciences have long been in the scientific community and occupy an important place. Although scientific activity related to defence activity in the Republic of Serbia has been very pronounced since ancient times, scientists in the defence system had to find their way and classify the results of their research into other, then existing, scientific fields.

The world and society, in which scientific research related to defence activities should be carried out, has changed a lot, which also has an impact on the constituents of military science. The paper examines the problem of the subject of military sciences modernity in relation to the current view that it is armed struggle (according to some authors it is also war, defense activity, etc.), that is, the reality that armed struggle cannot be viewed as an isolated phenomenon in relation to the environment. The new reality is crises, multi-polar, multi-causal, multi-consequential and multi-causal conditions in which war and armed struggle are just one drop. The presented views of the author, obtained from the analysis of the existing literature, represent a review of the key arguments and conclusions. The reaction of the scientific public to an innovative and out-of-the-box approach to determining the subject of military science will determine the direction and intensity of further research, that is, contribute to reducing the existing gap in views on the subject of military science.

The goal of the paper is not the analysis and elaboration of the approach to defining the subject of military science by the authors at the world level (this will be the subject of future research and the proof of this hypothesis), but rather a reasonable attention to the approach of domestic authors. Namely, the imposition of "armed combat" as a subject of military sciences made sense, until the emergence of hybrid warfare. With the emergence of hybrid war, the armed struggle becomes only part of the spectrum of the resulting crisis, and military capacities are engaged precisely in such an environment.

Key words: military sciences, subject of military sciences, crises, crisis management

1. INTRODUCTION

The controversy over the name and nature of the science(s) that would investigate phenomena related to military activity ended with the adoption of the official name "military science" and its inclusion in the list of scientific fields in the Republic of Serbia. It is very late, but the reality is like that. The question arises as to how much has been missed in the research of phenomena that have an impact on military activity and what are the implications for the defence capability of the Republic of Serbia.

Bearing in mind that a large number of patents, inventions and solutions in various areas of social life were generated in military research, and that the army was the driver of social development, it is interesting that all this happened under the aegis of other sciences. Will the military researchers manage to find their place in the scientific community, researching within the military sciences, bearing in mind that the subject of military sciences is not yet agreed upon among different authors. If this problem is viewed in the spirit of the fact that until the moment of establishment of military sciences, there was no "formal" scientific field that dealt with military topics, the amount of research results is very small. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that there is a huge fund of knowledge, created by the research of phenomena related to military activity, which can mean that it is only a lack of formalism.

Many authors believe that war and armed struggle are the subject of military science research. In parallel with that attitude, a number of authors view war as a broader and more complex social phenomenon, so they believe that it is not only a subject of research from the aspect of military participation. Whereas, armed struggle, i.e. armed conflicts, is something that is unique only to the army, and can be investigated by "primary military disciplines such as: tactics, operations, strategy, leadership and command, military logistics and methodology of military sciences" (Blagojevic et al., 2019). Other forces that are not "military" (police, volunteers, etc.) participate in "combat operations" within the framework of the armed struggle (police, volunteers, etc.), which do not have knowledge of these disciplines, and which are under military command.

The fact is that engagement of military capacities, in modern society, is not only aimed at the performance of combat operations, as the materialization of armed struggle, but at a much wider range of phenomena that are directly or indirectly included in the environment in which armed struggle is conducted. Also, the army does not carry out all its activities in military operations. Military operations are the primary way of engaging military capacities in different conditions of the operational environment. The complexity of phenomena in the modern operational environment, of military formations, corresponds to the definition of a state known and accepted as "crisis". The decision-making of military commanders is not only related to the execution of combat tasks, as if they happen in a vacuum, but monitoring, evaluation and decision-making, taking into account the spectrum of different phenomena in the operational environment.

The approach to the observation of the subject of military science, in this work, is based on the results of the multi-decade development of the defence system of the Republic of Serbia, in conditions when there was no formal "military science", but the research results were based on the postulates of other scientific disciplines. The result of that work is the existing quantum of knowledge about affairs in the field of defence and the defence system of the Republic of Serbia as the materialization of that knowledge.

2. MODERN CRISES

Elaboration of the assumption that modern crises are the basis for defining the subject of military sciences will be based on the modern definition of crisis, given by a group of authors

led by Paul t Hart, that a crisis represents "a serious threat to the basic structure or fundamental values and norms of a system that under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances require making vital decisions" (Paul t Hart et al., 2001). The above definition has its advantages and disadvantages, but it shows the essence of the situation we call "crisis". Bearing in mind the above definition, three characteristics are distinguished, which determine the character of actions in crisis situations: threat, urgency of response and uncertainty. These characteristics are also hallmarks of the operational environment in which military capabilities are engaged.

Modern crises represent ambivalent and dialectical states. The ambivalence of the crisis is reflected in the feeling and reality of success and failure, destruction and reconstruction, simplicity and complexity of the situation. Ambivalence has a significant impact on the perception of decision-makers in military formations, which can have implications for the success or failure of a military operation. In addition, the dialectical character of the crisis points to the existence of an opportunity and a threat. The very concept of the crisis points to a negativist approach, i.e. negative effects on military capacities and the values they protect. In essence, most of the effects of crises are like that, but opportunities are also created in parallel, the materialization of which depends on the degree of knowledge of the situation and the ability of military commanders to notice them. The crisis calls into question the basic values in the operational environment, the ways and methods of organization and realization of the set goals, it affects the organization of the forces necessary for the execution of the military operation. In such conditions, the crisis can have an impact on the military forces that will lead to the impossibility of realizing the set goals or be the initiator of new solutions for the situations that have arisen. The area of cohesion of ambivalent characteristics and dialectics can best be seen in the unity of the subjective perception of crisis attributes and the objective assessment of the state of the environment. Considering that environment for engagement of military capacities has precisely such characteristics, it is unequivocally clear that the knowledge of military decision-makers must be elevated above the phrase "armed struggle".

According to Holsti, there are four levels of crisis analysis: state level, organizational level, group level and individual level (Holsti, 2002). All four levels are characteristic and affect the execution of military operations. The responsibility of the military commander is to make assessments in all four levels, balance threats and opportunities, and make decisions that will ensure the execution of the set goals. The analysis of the factors and conditions for the engagement of military forces, therefore, implies a wide range of needs for considering the factors of the operational environment, which does not limit military operations only to the use of weapons and the execution of combat operations in armed conflicts. The engagement of military forces requires knowledge, analysis and decision-making in crisis conditions, with a very wide range of phenomena that affect the engaged capacities.

In addition to the elaborate reasons for engaging in armed conflicts, it is necessary to mention that the engagement of military capacities is carried out in different situations that represent a form of crisis situations, but with a more specific object of action. These are certainly emergency situations and the execution of peace-making tasks. Both groups have crisis prerogatives, but they are focused on more concrete phenomena.

The aforementioned elaboration of the concept and character of modern crises indicates that military sciences must include the research of all phenomena that have essential importance for the engagement of military capacities. It is evident that "crisis management" as a scientific discipline of management cannot be omitted from the list of disciplines that determine the subject of military sciences. This attitude supports the fact that the term "management" in the modern practice of defence activity in the Republic of Serbia has received a negative status

and is therefore "bypassed" at every opportunity. Which, on the other hand, implies the assumption that the subject of military sciences will be developed and defined in the future without the elaboration of management postulates applicable to military activity.

3. MILITARY ACTIVITY AND SCIENCE

It is impossible to develop, in a systematic way, sustainable military capacities without the existence of systematic military science. The development and use of military capacities in the Republic of Serbia are based on various normative documents. Maybe some authors will consider it unacceptable to base the argument on the observation and basing of the problem of defining the subjects of military sciences from the aspect of normative documents analysis. But wasn't that the case until the moment when "military science" was declared a scientific field, so the development of military capacities was based on normative regulations, without the support of the parent scientific field. In addition, normative documents are executive in nature and without them it is not possible to carry out even the best scientific research, which confirms the assumption that the analysis of the influence of normative documents on the development of "military science" or "military sciences" is of crucial importance for proving the true nature of the phenomena that are researched in the field of military sciences.

In order to elaborate the problem of engagement of military capacities in the Republic of Serbia, three documents were subjected to analysis: the national security strategy, the defence doctrine and the Instruction for operational planning and work of commands in the Serbian Armed Forces. By analyzing these three documents, essential characteristics can be shown, which prove that the spectrum of phenomena and conditions for the engagement of military capacities is based on much broader foundations than phenomena such as "armed struggle".

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette No. 94/2019) is the highest strategic document of the state, which determines the strategic framework of its security. Aimed at protecting the national values and interests of the Republic of Serbia from the challenges of risks and security threats in all areas of social life, it represents the broadest basis for identifying, analyzing and responding to various "crises" and sizing the national security system in relation to the environment.

The Defence Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette No. 94/2019) is the highest doctrinal document aimed at realizing the defence interests of the Republic of Serbia. Challenges risks and threats to the defence system of the Republic of Serbia, observed in the broadest form, at the local, regional and global level, where "the complexity and dynamics of international relations, international security integration, the increase in unpredictability and instability in the world" apostrophes as the basic features of the security environment of the Republic of Serbia. It is precisely these characteristics which indicate that these are the characteristics of crises. Defence doctrine divides the defence system into military defence and civil defence in conditions of peace, state of emergency and war in relation to the widest range of challenges, risks and threats. A number of authors will oppose the analysis of doctrinal positions in the function of scientific analysis, but this is precisely the proof that the existing solutions are based on some past research, and the foundations of the development of military sciences are practically based on the solutions of that time. In order to avoid a similar trap in the future, the conclusions from this analysis are very significant.

The Law on the Army (Official Gazette No. 116/07 with amendments) materializes and specifies the engagement of military capacities in various conditions. On the basis of the Law on the Army, "instructions for operational planning and work of commands in the Serbian Army" were prepared as a basic document for planning operations during the preparation and execution of the Army's missions and tasks. This document explicitly links the planning

process to "crises". This fact indicates that armed conflicts as a phenomenon or set of circumstances in a certain environment are not only related to the engagement of military capacities in order to carry out combat operations. The instruction itself envisages planning the engagement of military capacities in various non-combat operations, which represents a specific environment. The conclusion can be drawn from the above that military capacities can be engaged in different situations, which do not have to be characterized as "combat operations" and do not have to include the use of weapons. Perhaps it is not usual, that legal solutions (and all that arise from them) are used as arguments to prove facts, which can have an impact on the subject of science. It is a fact that the system of defence activities of the Republic of Serbia is being developed based on those solutions, which may indicate that it is developing in the right or wrong direction. In the end, if these solutions are the result of scientific research, then it is unequivocally clear that the subject of military science is not determined in a proper way. On the other hand, if they are not, then they should be subjected to scientific criticism and re-examination.

From the presented facts, it can be concluded that military activities are not only activities with armed attributes. Even, bearing in mind the determinations in the analyzed documents, the use of weapons represents the smallest part of the total activities of the defence system. The spectrum of phenomena that must be subjected to scientific research is wider than the use of weapons in armed conflicts. The authenticity of military activity also requires an authentic scientific discipline, which can reliably investigate the phenomena inherent in it within realistic frameworks. It is unequivocal that military science has a developed theory, subject, language and method, as constituents that make it an authentic scientific discipline. Considering that the theory, language and method of military science are sufficiently developed to have a minimum preference for authenticity, the subject of military science is elaborated in the following text. This constituency was singled out, because the previous approaches of the authors who were involved in its elaboration did not realistically cover all areas of engagement of military capacities. In such a way, the subject of military sciences is narrowed, and it seems disproportionate in relation to the reality of phenomena that affect the engagement of military capacities.

4. SUBJECT OF MILITARY SCIENCES

There are different understandings in modern military theory about the quantum of phenomena that are the subject of military science research. The majority of authors support the opinion that the subject is covered by the phrase "armed struggle". The very term "armed" limits the subject of research to situations in which weapons are used in the engagement of military capacities. The specifics of phenomena that characterize the environment in which military capacities are engaged go beyond the framework defined by "armed struggle". The term "struggle" in this case has a key meaning and indicates that the engagement of military capacities is carried out in specific conditions, where in addition to the use of weapons, a number of phenomena occur that have a decisive or secondary impact on the engaged military capacities in a given environment. The use of different weapons certainly has a decisive influence and this is a primary phenomenon in the subject of military sciences. However, secondary phenomena can be: climate changes, migrations, diseases, natural disasters, rebellions, terrorism, etc., viewed from the security aspect, which can significantly affect the engagement of military forces, and thus call into question the realization of the set goals. In addition to the above, military capacities are engaged in special activities related to maintaining peace in the world, i.e. peacekeeping operations. In peacekeeping operations, they are exposed to special challenges: political, economic, ecological, security, religious, etc., which tempts them to make decisions according to the knowledge they have in relation to the situation.

The above argumentation indicates that the subject of military science is not only armed struggle, but also various crises and crisis situations, which have an impact on the engagement of military capacities, that is, on decision-making in order to prevent or respond to crises. In practice, this conclusion is based on the fact that doctoral dissertations and projects implemented in the Ministry of Defence cover phenomena that are much broader than armed struggle. Of course, elaboration can be taken into account, prof. Sakana, that armed struggle includes all phenomena that accompany it, which is not in dispute, but it is obvious that in practice this is not the case. In such a way, space is left for subjectivism and generalism, which leads to the possibility of using "formal power" in order to determine what is, and what is not, a phenomenon covered by the subject of military sciences.

If the reality is accepted that the subject of military science must be defined more broadly than armed struggle, space is opened for the application of a greater number of methods for researching phenomena, that is, a complex of methods that provides more relevant research results. In the light of the above arguments, starting from the generally accepted definition that the subject of science is "the area of social reality to which the statements of a given science refer", the subject of military sciences should be harmonized with the reality that characterizes the engagement of military capacities. The formulation that would correspond to the reality of military capacities engagement, and determine the subject of military sciences, should include crisis situations that contain armed conflicts and other types of impact on values for the protection of which military capacities are developed and engaged.

The subject of military sciences, defined in this way, gives researchers the breadth of various phenomena that affect the process of military capacities engagement, respecting the causality, complexity and reality of the environment. Therefore, everything that was learned in crises (crisis situations) through the process of thought-cognitive activities of people participating in those processes, and elaborated as knowledge, and serves as a basis for improving the practice of engaging military capacities in different situations, improves and makes the theory of military sciences more realistic. Armed struggle, in this case, remains a part of the subject of military sciences and constitutes a very important part of it, but it also finds its place in the real environment, as part of crises in which military capacities are engaged.

The presented approach to defining the subject of military science can serve as an argument for advocates of war as a subject of military sciences. As the war represents the ultimate outcome of the failed application of all other instruments used to solve "problems" between states, in the form of a multidimensional conflict, it is clear that, nevertheless, it represents a situation that has all the hallmarks of crisis. Of course, the dimensions of the war conflict may coincide with the dimensions of the resulting crisis, but this only indicates that the crisis is of a procedural nature, and that it develops from a "small" event to a situation with catastrophic consequences.

5. CONCLUSION

The importance of military science as an authentic scientific discipline is indisputable in the Republic of Serbia. It is obvious that the definition of the subject of military sciences is yet to be seriously debated. The subject of military sciences is of supreme importance for determination of other constituents of military sciences, i.e. for their development in relation to the existing state of definition. One gets the impression that the existing subject of military sciences, "armed struggle", has introduced researchers in this scientific field into a comfort zone, so their thoughts do not go beyond that limit. However, reality is the best indicator of the need to define the breadth and scope of phenomena that affect the engagement of military capacities in different situations.

The research of phenomena important for military sciences must be differentiated according to certain primary disciplines. In the existing opus, the primary disciplines are: strategy, tactics and operations, and leadership and command. Blagojevic and others propose a somewhat broader list of primary disciplines and add military logistics and the methodology of military sciences, which is methodologically correct. However, recognizing the fact that the subject of military science must be defined more broadly than the existing one focused on "armed struggle" implies the need to review the existing disciplines and add new ones that would include the subject of military science. The argument for this claim is found in the fact that the specificity of military science has its foundations in the activity of the army. That is completely true, but a new question opens up, whether the scope of military science subjects can be included in the proposed primary disciplines, or whether it is necessary to expand the list of disciplines.

Observing military activities in the spectrum of "modern crises" significantly changes the perception of the subject of military sciences. In this way, military sciences create a platform for understanding the realities in which military capacities are deployed. The subject of military sciences, defined on the basis of the concept of "crisis", enables a true confrontation with what the army does in reality. The basic activity in military activity is "making decisions" in conditions of lack of time, incomplete information and pressure, as well as preparation, in the broadest sense, for making decisions. In military practice, this process is known as commanding. Therefore, the purpose of command, inherent in military systems, is the successful resolution of crisis situations.

Elaboration of the problem of military science subjects in the spectrum of contemporary crises opens the issue of additional definition of the military science constituents. It is indisputable that military sciences have an important place in the development of military activity and the activity of society in general. The complexity of military activity raises it to the very top of importance in the system of social activity. Therefore, it is necessary to define the subject of military sciences in this light, so as not to lose the character of complexity, and to maintain specificity in relation to all other sciences.

As a final point from the previous analysis, it can be concluded that military sciences should identify the strategic, operational, tactical, political, economic, psychological, social and technological elements of the operational environment necessary to maintain the relative advantage of military power in order to increase the possibility of realizing the set goals directed towards the development of optimal capabilities in peace (as a preventive option) or victory in war.

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