

STRATEGIC DIMENSIONING OF THE DEFENSE SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA BASED ON THE PHYSIOLOGY OF MODERN ARMED CONFLICTS

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Abstract: Armed conflict as a social phenomenon is an often studied topic, but its research is always a challenge, especially since it is a changing social phenomenon that evolves in time and space, with all its peculiarities, carrying a part of its unchanging character. For all those who in any way participate in the formulation of the defense strategy, it is extremely important to first accept that there have been changes in the physiognomy of modern armed conflicts and that, for the sake of its understanding, strategic, conceptual, critical and systemic reflection is imposed as necessary access. The defense system represents the overall organization, equipment and capability of the state, its citizens, the army and other subjects of society (defense force) for the defense of its sovereignty, territory, independence and constitutional order. In this regard, the paper points out that modern armed conflicts, bearing in mind that they have always been the most serious form of threat to security, determine the way of dimensioning the defense system of the Republic of Serbia.

Key words: defense system, Republic of Serbia, armed conflict, national security

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the defense system of a country plays a key role in preserving its security and sovereignty. However, nowadays, modern forms of armed conflicts impose the need for a new approach to the strategic dimensioning of the defense system. In this sense, this paper deals with the strategic dimensioning of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, based on the study of the physiognomy of modern armed conflicts.

The Republic of Serbia as a country went through turbulent times during the 20th century, including two world wars, wars in the former Yugoslavia and NATO bombing. All this has

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influenced the development of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, which today faces numerous challenges, risks and threats, including terrorism, cyber attacks, organized crime and instability in the region.

The development of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia must be harmonized with modern trends in armed conflicts, which are increasingly complex and dynamic. This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of modern security threats and their impact on the strategic dimensioning of a defense system that is capable of overcoming them.

2. PHYSIOLOGY OF ARMED CONFLICTS

The physiognomy of armed conflict deals with the study of various aspects of conflict, including military tactics, strategy, psychology, geopolitical frameworks, and social conditions that influence conflict. Modern armed conflicts are characterized by the speed of development, the mobility of forces, the scope and range of targets and the use of sophisticated techniques. Consequently, the actors and participants in the conflict have evolved. Therefore, it is necessary that the strategy and approach to the defense of the Republic of Serbia adapt to these changes and be based on the analysis and understanding of the physiognomy of modern armed conflicts, which is dealt with in the rest of the paper. The specificity of modern armed conflicts requires new approaches to observation and analysis of causes and consequences. Namely, the perpetrators of armed conflicts are not only military forces, but the character of the conflict includes all factors in the territory it covers. In addition to military forces, the civilian population, economy, social stability, critical infrastructure, etc. are also important factors.

2.1. The evolution of the physiognomy of armed conflicts

It should be emphasized that armed conflicts, and with them the army and weapons, have been constant companions of the development of human society since the emergence of organized socio-economic communities (societies). This was the case in all previous socio-economic formations: slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and even failed socialism, with each new conflict being greater than the previous one both in terms of intensity and scale.

German General Franz Uhle-Wettler wrote: "Earlier, the commander could be sure that the future war would be similar to past and current wars. This allowed him to analyze appropriate tactics from the past and present. The one who commands the army today no longer has that possibility. He only knows that whoever fails to learn from the past war will surely lose the next one." (Williams et al., 1989).

In modern armed conflicts, with the development of technology, the physiognomy of the conflict has changed even more. Today, armed combat is mostly conducted from a long distance, with the use of drones and autonomous weapons, which significantly reduces physical contact between opposing forces. Also, modern technology enables better tactical planning and coordination of participants in armed combat, which leads to more precise and efficient execution of tasks.

2.2. New actors and participants in armed conflicts

In the last few decades, the world has witnessed the emergence of new actors and participants in armed conflicts. Based on the analysis of the literature in which different actors and participants in armed conflicts were analyzed, the conclusion can be drawn that traditional state actors, such as the army and the police, have faced new enemies such as terrorist groups, paramilitary organizations, private military companies, criminal networks, non-governmental organizations, hacker groups, etc. These new actors differ from traditional state forces in terms of structure, motivation and mode of action, as they do not rely on state resources and authority, but act in accordance with their own goals and interests.

Terrorist groups represent a global security challenge because, through a violent form of political activism, they threaten the security of the state and its citizens. Their goal is to achieve changes in society, the state or the world through political or ideological means. Terrorist groups are small, mobile and operate in secret. They often use guerilla warfare tactics, such as surprise attacks, sabotage and assassinations.

Paramilitary formations are organized military or police units that work outside the framework of regular institutions. They are usually formed by individuals or groups who want to achieve their goals that do not comply with laws and regulations. Paramilitary formations often use violence as a means to achieve their goals and are often associated with organized crime. They are also prone to violating international humanitarian law, such as rules on the protection of civilians and prisoners of war.

Private military companies are a relatively new phenomenon in armed conflict and are usually contracted to provide security and military services to the government or other organizations. However, they are often criticized for their lack of transparency and oversight, which can lead to abuse of their powers and human rights violations.

Criminal networks have also become a significant actor in armed conflicts, especially in countries with weak institutions and high crime rates. They use various forms of violence, including kidnapping, blackmail, drug and human trafficking, and other illegal activities. These networks are capable of creating a major impact on society and the economy and represent a serious security challenge for states and international organizations. They are often connected with political and economic interests, as well as with terrorist and paramilitary groups. Criminal networks are often used as a source of financing for other actors in armed conflicts.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are established outside the state and political structures to deal with social, humanitarian and political issues. Non-governmental organizations play an important role in providing assistance to victims of armed conflicts and implementing peaceful solutions to conflicts. Their work can be threatened by violence and instability in the countries where they operate. However, some NGOs have been criticized for political or ideological biases^b.

Hacker groups can be said to be new entrants to armed conflicts in the sense that they use cyber-attacks to influence world events. These groups may have politically or ideologically motivated goals, as well as the goals of violating privacy, stealing financial resources, and threatening the security of companies or countries. Hacker groups have proven to be "powerful" players in the cyber security world and can cause significant damage. In addition, they can influence elections and political processes, providing support to one or the other side

^b Examples of some non-governmental organizations that have been criticized in modern armed conflicts:

- Human Rights Watch - an organization that deals with the protection of human rights in the world, but was criticized for its political bias in the case of Syria and Palestine, as well as for its non-objectivity in portraying some events.
- Médecins Sans Frontières - an organization that deals with medical aid to countries at war, but has been criticized for political bias in the case of Syria and Palestine.
- World Peace Council (World Peace Council) - an organization that advocates for the peace process in the world, but was criticized for its ideological bias in the case of Syria and Yemen. These criticisms are not necessarily entirely accurate, and each organization is entitled to its own opinions and views. However, it is important that non-governmental organizations are open to dialogue and work to protect the interests of the wider community.

in conflicts. However, it is important to note that hacking is illegal and cyber security breaches are punishable by law. Therefore, investing in cyber security and training personnel in this area is considered important and necessary, in order to defend against potential cyber attacks.

The above indicates that the emergence of new actors and participants in armed conflicts represents a challenge for traditional state forces and the international legal framework that regulates this area. In order to respond to these new threats, it is necessary to adapt the approach to the defense of the state. It is necessary to recognize the differences in their structures, motivation and methods of action, as well as to find new ways of fighting against them while simultaneously respecting international humanitarian law and human rights.

2.3. Basic characteristics of modern armed conflicts

The wars that were fought or are being fought after the breakup of the Eastern Bloc are called by most analysts the wars of the modern era (Delibasic et al., 2017). It is very difficult to apply the classic Clausewitzian approach to modern armed conflicts, which implies that war begins with the declaration of war, and that it is based on cruel but legitimate actions.

Modern armed conflicts are more and more complex and often differ from the classical conflicts in wars as we knew them in the past. The causes of armed conflicts are complex and diverse, and the actors participating in them are increasingly diverse. Precisely because of this, modern conflicts are characterized by some basic characteristics that make them unique. Based on the analysis of the literature dealing with various aspects of contemporary armed conflicts, the following common features can be drawn:

1. Asymmetry: Modern armed conflicts often involve an imbalance of power between opposing parties. Generally, one side is better equipped, trained and has more resources than the other side. This can lead to various forms of armed conflict, such as guerilla warfare, terrorism and other forms.

2. Continuity: Modern armed conflicts do not exist in the form of formally declared wars, but take place through a series of minor incidents, terrorist attacks and other forms of violence. This can lead to a big difference between the conditions of peace and war and affect the stability of society and the state. A frequent phenomenon in the modern world is that there is no clear boundary between the state of war and peace (Kovac and Stojkovic, 2009).

4. Interdependence and cooperation of interspecies forces: Modern armed conflicts within the framework of modern operations will be conducted primarily as joint interspecies operations. Since the danger of weapons of mass destruction has increased significantly, the armies are required to be trained to successfully carry out combat operations in the conditions of the use of nuclear, chemical and biological warfare agents (Kovac and Stojkovic, 2009).

5. Use of new technologies: Modern armed conflicts include the use of new technologies, such as drones, autonomous weapons, biological and chemical weapons, etc. This can affect the way armed conflict is conducted, as well as the possibility of protecting civilians in combat zones. The development of modern means, tools and weapons enables, at the same time, the successful conduct of combat operations on land, sea, airspace, underwater and outer space (Kovac and Stojkovic, 2009).

6. Connectivity: Contemporary armed conflicts involve an international network of participants, state and non-state actors. This can lead to the spread of conflict, making it difficult to establish peace.

7. Impact on the civilian population: Contemporary armed conflicts affect the civilian population in a variety of ways, including forced displacement, injury, destruction of

infrastructure and economic destruction. This is why the protection of civilians has become an important aspect of modern armed conflicts.

8. Struggle for dominance over the adversary on the IT front: It is important to timely collect accurate information that is delivered to commanders at all levels in order to make adequate decisions, but on the other hand, to prevent the successful activities of the enemy on that front.

9. Contemporary armed conflicts are often not isolated but part of contemporary crises: Contemporary armed conflicts are often not isolated and independent events, but are part of a wider crisis context that may include economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. For example, a conflict in a state may be the result of a political crisis that has resulted in social unrest and rebellions against the government. These conflicts can also have a regional or international impact, making them part of a wider global context. Contemporary armed conflicts that are part of a wider context can have serious consequences for the security and stability of states and regions. They can lead to humanitarian disasters, loss of life and property, population displacement, radicalization, strengthening of extremist movements and terrorism.

Analyzing the mentioned characteristics of modern armed conflicts, one gets the impression that they are becoming more and more difficult to find a solution. Therefore, it is necessary to invest more efforts in understanding these characteristics and to look for new and innovative ways to overcome modern armed conflicts, especially through strengthening international cooperation, protecting the civilian population and preventing the escalation of conflicts to a new level of violence. Understanding the basic features of modern armed conflicts is also key to creating a more stable and secure environment.

3. DEFENSE SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter defines that the right to defense is one of the basic principles of the national security policy, which is based on the basic rights and sovereignty of the state. This right provides every member of the United Nations to defend themselves in the event of an armed attack. Consequently, Serbia, as a member of the United Nations, has the right to defend itself in the event of an armed attack. The defense interests of the Republic of Serbia are realized through the defense policy, which is one of the elements of the national security policy

The defense system of the Republic of Serbia is part of the national security system and represents a unique, structurally organized and functional unit of defense forces and entities whose goal is to protect the defense interests of the Republic of Serbia (Kovac, 2009). Protection of defense interests is a unique function of the state and is realized through military and civil defense. The bearer of military defense is the Serbian Army, and in the implementation of civil defense, state bodies, state administration bodies, bodies of autonomous provinces, bodies of local self-government units, business companies, public services and other subjects and forces of the defense system are involved.

In Serbia, the first National Security Strategy (NSB) was adopted in 2009^c. This part of the document, by title, is identical in both strategies. The main difference between the new document (2019) and the previous one (2009) is: 1) challenges, risks and threats are more correctly systematized and named compared to the 2009 document; 2) certain challenges, risks and threats are stated differently; 3) formally, the number of identified challenges, risks and

^c Before that, the documents that defined the challenges, risks and threats to security were: The White Book of Defense of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro from 2005 and the Strategic Review of Defense from 2006.

threats is smaller in the new document (2009 National Security Strategy and 2019 National Security Strategy).

The mentioned challenges, risks and threats are not only a problem of the Republic of Serbia, but also of the entire region and the world. That is why it is important that the state and the authorities of the defense system accept these facts and take measures to improve the security of all citizens and protect the state from external and internal threats. Such an approach requires long-term and systematic planning, cooperation with other countries and international organizations. Finally, with good planning, cooperation and investment in security, the defense system of the Republic of Serbia can provide a safe environment for all its citizens.

The defense system is based on the existing Constitution of the Republic of Serbia^d, its laws and international agreements and conventions ratified by the Serbian Parliament. The defense of the Republic of Serbia is realized by the engagement of available human and material resources, and is ensured by the use of the Serbian Armed Forces and other defense forces to protect sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and security (Law on Defense, Belgrade, 2007).

The structure of the defense system, as a part of the national security system, consists of the bodies of the legislative and executive authorities of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian Armed Forces, civil defense and other entities important for defense. The bodies of the legislative and executive authorities of the Republic of Serbia, within their regular competences and responsibilities prescribed by the Constitution and the law, manage the defense system and ensure the conditions for the stable functioning of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, both in peace and in times of war and emergency. The Serbian Army defends the country from armed threats from the outside and performs other missions and tasks in accordance with the Constitution, the law and the principles of international law that regulate the use of force (Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, 2019). Civil defense is part of the unified defense system. It is organized at the level of the Republic of Serbia, autonomous provinces and local self-government units (Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, 2019). Other subjects important for the defense of the Republic of Serbia are institutions that deal with affairs in the fields of diplomacy, security, economy, education, health, science and information, as well as legal entities whose activities contribute to the functioning of the defense system. Holders of jobs and activities of importance for defense perform tasks in coordination with entities of the defense system, in accordance with the law (Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, 2019).

The structure of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia is complex and includes subjects, forces and institutions in the country. The structure of the defense system is aligned with the defense strategy of the Republic of Serbia and aims to defend the country against various threats to national security. This implies the immediate defense of the territory, participation in international peacekeeping missions, all with the aim of ensuring peace and stability in the region and the world.

^d In addition to the Constitution, the defense system of the Republic of Serbia is governed by the following laws: Constitutional Law for the Implementation of the Constitution of R. Serbia; by the Law on the National Assembly; by the Law on the President of the Republic; Law on Government; by the Law on Ministries; Law on Defense; the Law on the Serbian Armed Forces; Law on the use of the Serbian Armed Forces and other defense forces in multinational operations outside the borders of the Republic of Serbia; Law on Military Security and Military Intelligence Agency; The Law on Military, Labor and Material Obligation, and the Law on Civil Service

4. DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEFENSE SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA DEVELOPED ON THE BASE OF THE STUDY OF MODERN ARMED CONFLICTS

The defense system of the Republic of Serbia aims to protect the territory and the population, as well as to contribute to peace and stability in the region and the world. In this sense, it is necessary for the defense system to be developed in accordance with the requirements of modern armed conflicts and to have appropriate characteristics that will make it efficient and reliable. In this paper, some of the most important characteristics of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia are discussed, namely: permanence, adaptability, ability to update, transparency and specificity. These characteristics were developed based on the study of modern armed conflicts and aim to prepare the defense system of the Republic of Serbia for the challenges that await it in the future.

Continuity – the defense planning process is continuous, planning cycles are repeated, plans are extended and updated. Permanence is one of the desirable characteristics of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, which implies that the defense system should be able to function in the long term, to meet the needs and conditions of future generations, and to be able to adapt to changes in state policy and global changes. This means that the defense system must be reliable and continuously functional. In modern armed conflicts, the speed of reaction and the efficiency of the defense system are key factors for achieving success. The permanence of the defense system means that there must be constant concern for the maintenance of the system, its modernization and improvement in order to maintain the ability to act in the conditions dictated by modern armed conflicts. The permanence of the defense system implies regular training and equipping of the forces of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, which is of key importance for ensuring their readiness at all times.

The defense system of the Republic of Serbia should have a stable and sustainable financial model, have well-planned and pre-prepared reserves of material and technical assets and reserve units, have established plans for training and education of the forces of the defense system, and have high technological empowerment. A sustainable defense system also includes good cooperation with other states, institutions and organizations, in order to ensure peace and stability at the international level.

Adaptability - defense planning should have the ability to adapt to changes in the environment and ensure the constant transformation of the defense system. Adaptability is another important characteristic of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia, because new tactics and technologies are constantly being developed in modern armed conflicts. The defense system must be able to adapt to new challenges and adopt new technologies, so that it can effectively fight against modern security threats. The adaptability of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia implies the development of flexible and modular systems, which are easily adapted to changes in the environment, as well as the development of strategies that enable a quick response to unforeseen situations.

The adaptability of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia also implies quick decision-making in situations that require an immediate response, such as terrorist attacks or aggression by other countries. In such situations, the defense system of the Republic of Serbia must be flexible and capable of quickly adapting to new situations in order to ensure effective protection of citizens and territory.

In a world where technologies and strategies change rapidly, the ability to adapt is vital to effectively protect the state and citizens. For this reason, the defense system of the Republic

of Serbia must be constantly improved in order to remain adaptive and capable of dealing with all the challenges that may arise in modern armed conflicts.

Updateability – defense planning should ensure that plans are updated based on changes in the environment (threats, resources, priorities). This desirable feature of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia implies regular updating of the system, including IT equipment, as well as the policies and procedures used to manage the defense system. The defense system must be able to quickly adapt to changes in technology and tactics used in modern armed conflicts, as well as to changes in geopolitical circumstances. The ability to update a defense system can be crucial to maintaining its efficiency and effectiveness in the function of national defense.

Transparency - Transparency refers to openness in the operation of the defense system, including decision-making, costs, equipment procurement, resource management, etc. The Republic of Serbia strives to ensure transparency in its defense policy in order to enable greater efficiency and effectiveness, but also to gain the trust and support of the public.

It is often complained that the defense system of the Republic of Serbia is not transparent enough, especially when it comes to costs and the procurement of equipment. It is precisely for this reason that transparency is one of the key desirable characteristics that develop on the basis of modern armed conflicts. Transparency in the operation of the defense system also helps prevent corruption and misuse of resources, which is vital for protecting national security.

Propaganda and disinformation are often used in modern armed conflicts, so it is important for the defense system to be transparent in order to provide accurate information about the situation on the ground. This will help fight misinformation and manipulation and ensure that the public has a clear and true picture of the events that are taking place.

A high level of transparency in the defense system can improve cooperation with other countries, which is of great importance in international relations. This may include the sharing of information on military exercises and operations, the joint planning and execution of operations, and the sharing of expertise and technology.

Specificity - each country should have a specific defense planning system that is harmonized and interoperable with defense planning in international organizations (eg with defense planning in NATO or the EU). Specificity can also refer to the ability of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia to adapt to the specific challenges and threats it faces. In the modern world, armed conflicts are very diverse and can be of different nature, from terrorism to hybrid wars, cyber attacks and other new forms of aggression.

The specificity of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia may also be the need to respond to the specific geographical conditions and circumstances of modern armed conflicts. The territory of the Republic of Serbia includes mountains, forests, rivers and lakes, and it is also located in an unstable region. To respond to these specific circumstances, it is necessary for the defense system to be able to adapt to different terrain conditions and to use different tactics and strategies that are effective in different environments.

Due to all of the above, it is necessary to adapt the defense system of the Republic of Serbia to new and specific forms of armed conflict that occur in the modern world. This capability is achieved through the development of new strategies, tactics and technologies. It is also important to carry out continuous education and training of subjects and forces of the defense system in order to adequately respond to new forms of modern armed conflicts. The specificity of the defense system is crucial for ensuring an effective and efficient defense of national security.

The research of modern armed conflicts provides important guidelines for the strategic development of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia. The fact that armed conflicts are continuously changing and developing emphasizes the importance of constant improvement of the defense system, as well as the need to develop the ability to adapt to new circumstances. It is important that the defense system be transparent and enable citizens to participate in the decision-making process, while at the same time being specific and adapted to the needs of the Republic of Serbia. Taking into account the above characteristics, it is possible to develop an effective defense system that will ensure the protection of the state and its citizens in the modern world.

5. CONCLUSION

The strategic dimensioning of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia based on the study of modern armed conflicts is essential for the preservation of national security. The evolution of the physiognomy of armed conflicts and the appearance of new actors and participants represent a challenge for every country, including the Republic of Serbia. Therefore, the defense system must be adaptive and able to be updated, with transparent and specific characteristics. The management of the defense system must be in accordance with the principles of functionality and efficiency. Only such a system will be able to ensure the safety of citizens and the state in modern armed conflicts.

Conflicts in the surroundings of the Republic of Serbia are a current threat, with no prospect of ending in the future. The quantity and immediacy of this threat are the subject of future research and analysis, but they certainly have a significant place in the dimensioning and development of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia. The elaboration of the characteristics of the defense system in this paper shows that the defense system must not only be a representative of the physical force with which it should guarantee its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The physiognomy of modern armed conflicts points to a broader spectrum of challenges, risks and threats that have an impact on the security of the Republic of Serbia. In this light, it is necessary to research and determine the characteristics of the defense system, based on which it is possible to dimension the defense system, with capabilities that enable adaptability to all challenges, risks and threats.

Contemporary armed conflicts and their characteristics are of essential importance for the dimensioning of the defense system of the Republic of Serbia. Given that the Serbian Army is a pillar of the development of the ability to conduct armed conflicts, the ability to deter aggression based on its equipment with modern combat systems and an organization that enables the performance of set tasks is given a special dimension. The essential element of the aforementioned capability is the development of the necessary defense resources, when the internal element is concerned, that is, the development of alliances and the support of friendly states, when the external element is concerned.

A significant feature of modern armed conflicts is the multidimensionality of the consequences for the civilian population and critical infrastructure. Although, by definition, military force should act according to military objectives, modern conflicts show that more than military units and resources, civilian soldiers, cultural heritage and the environment suffer. This is proof that armed conflicts are no longer isolated, in terms of time, space and consequences, but that they are part of a wider picture of crises in a certain area. As crises do not have defined frameworks, armed conflicts, of which they are a part, have undefined frameworks, ways and goals of action. Although the actors try to show that their goal is to act on military goals, the fact is that with one military goal, a greater number of elements of civil society suffer. The above indicates that the modern defense system of the Republic of Serbia must be based on a multidimensional analysis of challenges, risks and threats observed in the light of modern

crises, in order to analyze all aspects of the consequences of armed conflict and ensure adequate development of the capabilities of the defense system.

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