

## DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY STRATEGY

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**Abstract:** *The aim of the paper is to point out the important tasks of the theoretical aspect of military strategy, as well as tasks that should be carried out by military strategy as a practice, using new methods of research or military exercises, in order to scientifically verify the chosen strategic concepts. Through a comparative analysis of the literature, approximately six directions of development of the theory and practice of military strategy development were identified. They may not be the most important, but they certainly have a certain importance for the development of this narrow scientific field of military science.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Military strategy, which was created at the beginning of the last century and was developed based on the study of experience from wars, is a system of knowledge and practice for the prevention, preparation and conduct of war. By the way, in classic military literature, the subject of military strategy as a science is defined as "the basic lawfulness of war, especially its essential element - armed combat, but also other forms of manifestation of military force " (Vojna enciklopedija, 1975:171).

The development of military strategy, like any science, had two basic directions of development: 1) the development of theory, that is, the system of knowledge about modern war and 2) the improvement of practical activities for preventing war, preparing for it and conducting it. In this sense, the subject of research is the theoretical and practical aspect of (military) strategy as a narrow scientific field of military sciences. In the theoretical part, military strategy should be more focused on forecasting the nature of future wars and

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developing the theoretical basis of deterrence, active and total defense strategies. The practice of military strategy is, among other things, the creation and study of conflict prevention scenarios, which serve as initial data for the development of patterns and methods of using armed forces in future conflicts.

In this regard, the paper will, through special thematic units, using a comparative analysis of contemporary and earlier historical and theoretical military sources, look at the most important aspects of the development of the theory and practice of military strategy, with the aim of identifying those directions of development of this narrow scientific field of military science that have not lost their actuality and importance (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Aspects of military strategy development  
*Source: Author of the text*

## 2. STUDY OF MILITARY HISTORY AND HISTORY OF WAR ART

Many classic theoreticians, Zivojin Misic and Svecin, speak about the great importance of independent training of officers in the field of military strategy theory. They state that already at the beginning of the service, the officer must familiarize himself with the theory of strategy and war history. In that study, they state that a critical approach should be applied. Svecin talks about the fact that strategic skill is not acquired by participating in many campaigns, nor by observing many combat episodes, but by studying the history of wars in depth. He cites the example of Helmut von Moltke the Elder, who, when he became Chief of the General Staff of the Prussian Army, had little military experience, but through deep studies of the art of war he acquired the knowledge needed for a military leader (Svecin, 1956).

When further considering the importance of military history for the theory of military strategy, it is enough to quote Zivojin Misic who says that military history is an inexhaustible source for the study of military strategy and critical examination of its theoretical principles. (Misic, 1907). Similarly, Svecin states that without military history, the theory of military strategy would be abstract and difficult to understand. According to Svecin, it represents a necessary introduction to military strategy. Any theoretical considerations from military strategy must be supported by a series of military historical facts. That is why military history and the history of the art of war should move from the so-called "war displays" and exposition of events in the broadest outlines to a deep critique of strategic decisions in war (Svecin, 1956). This is a constant and common task of military strategy and military history.

### 3. THEORY OF MILITARY STRATEGY

A long-debated question between military theorists and practitioners of the 19th and 20th centuries is whether military strategy is a science (theory) or just a skill. Duke Zivojin Misic states that the opinions of many military writers in his time on this issue were not only different, but diametrically opposed. Misic, in further consideration of the practical and theoretical aspect of military strategy, states that military strategy as a skill dates back to ancient times, but as a theory it is both young and incomplete, and that it began to be developed as a theory only at the end of the 18th century. In an attempt to answer this question, Misic explains that it is difficult to dispute that the goal of military strategy as a theory is to explain the basic principles that lead to victory over the enemy, and concludes that the essence of military strategy as a theory is to the natural foundations of every struggle are properly understood (Misic, 1907: X-XV).

Also, Svecin's views clearly give us guidelines for further understanding of the direction of strategy theory development, where his view that a strategist should deal with the future is of particular importance. Svecin states that all structural elements of the subject of the strategy need to be viewed in terms of the future, bearing in mind the current cognitive and experiential assumptions and with respect for the past (Svecin, 1956).

In further consideration of the task of military strategy as a theory, the views of Dusan Visnjic should be mentioned, who assesses that "military strategic reality" is the subject of research into military strategy as a theory. Visnjic clarifies that this (military) strategic reality is not only what is realistically given in space and time, but also the virtual one, that is, potentially in the relations of military strategic entities and dispositionally in the psychological sphere of military strategists and strategists of the two conflicting parties, by which Visnjic points out that the theory military strategy should deal with predicting the characteristics and character of future conflicts and future military-strategic reality. Furthermore, Dusan Visnjic assesses that the basic purpose of the theory of military strategy is to achieve the optimal efficiency of military strategic practice, with a satisfactory level of control of the spontaneity of strategic processes in the military environment (Visnjic, 2011: 393).

And Stanko Nisic makes significant assessments about where the development of the theory of military strategy, especially postmodern strategy, should go. Stanko Nisic assesses that in the concise definition of military strategy, where it is defined that this narrow scientific field of military science deals with research into the legalities of preparing and conducting armed combat and that it represents the activity of the military leadership of the state, there is essentially nothing superfluous, but that there are shortcomings, which mainly concern the breadth of the research subject. Nisic explains that the focus of this expansion of the subject of military strategy is on understanding the new conditions in which forces and resources are being prepared and predicting the resolution of conflicts in perspective, as well as understanding the physiognomy of future armed conflicts and other forms of application of force and violence in the global world (Nisic, 2011: 124). Nisic explains that the field of military strategy research refers to strategic reality, which in modern conditions is subject to rapid changes in accordance with the development of the technology of combat equipment. In this regard, strategic thinking must not stop at static reality. It should also extend to the dynamic, changing reality, striving to reveal the causality of conflicts in the future, as well as the methods of conducting "war in peace". In this sense, it is worth considering the scope of the new theory of postmodern military strategy, which marks the information age (Nisic, 2011: 110-125).

According to the stated views of theorists regarding the specific tasks of military strategy, it can be concluded that what Visnjic says is recognized as a permanent task of the theory of

military strategy, that it deals not only with the current strategic environment but also with the future, potential military strategic environment. In this connection, the independent task of the theory of military strategy was and remains to:

- predict the features and character of future conflicts, armed struggle and future military-strategic reality.
- develop and modernize the theoretical bases for the preparation of the state and the armed forces for war as a whole,
- develop new "military strategies" for conducting armed struggle.

Historically speaking, when analyzing the characteristics of wars and military strategies throughout the centuries, in the process of its development, military strategy has gone through several stages of evolution - from the strategy of destruction, exhaustion, nuclear deterrence, indirect actions and subversion, even terrorism is mentioned in professional circles as type of strategy. Great powers and military allies, in accordance with the aggressive vector of their foreign policy, plan and carry out military actions of an offensive nature, such as "multidimensional battle in many spheres", use technologies of "color revolution", tools of "soft power", using "the protest potential of certain internal structures of the attacked country, as well as by engaging the mechanisms of international financial and economic structures in order to destabilize the internal situation of the opponent.

When we talk about the characteristics of modern conflicts, it can be seen that with the emergence of new spheres of confrontation, the methods of struggle are moving more and more towards the integrated application of political, economic, informative and other non-military measures that are carried out in cooperation and with the support of military power. Despite this, the main content of the military strategy is still the issues of preparation for war and its execution through the armed forces. Also, in current conflicts, the ways of conducting warfare are expanding significantly and their content is changing significantly. The number of subjects participating in the armed struggle is increasing. Along with the armed forces of the states, various paramilitary organizations, private military companies and self-proclaimed "quasi-states" are fighting. (Gerasimov, 2019). The means of economic, political, diplomatic, informational action are actively used, as well as the demonstration of military power in the interest of strengthening the effectiveness of military measures. In the mentioned conditions, the armed forces must be ready to conduct wars of a new type using classical and asymmetric methods of action. Therefore, the search for rational strategies for waging war with various adversaries is extremely important for the development of the theory and practice of military strategy.

Special attention should be paid to the tasks defined in the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia in order to develop measures of non-nuclear deterrence against aggression in all domains. In relation to the principles stated in the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia or in the Doctrine of the Serbian Armed Forces, certain principles and principles gain importance (Strategija odbrane Republike Srbije, 2019: 25-27; Doktrina Vojske Srbije, 2019). Thus, the principle of prevention implies a timely prediction of the development of the military-political and strategic situation in the interest of timely identification of military threats and timely response to them. The principle of good and timely preparation of the state for war is ensured by constant high combat and mobilization of the armed forces, as well as by the creation and maintenance of strategic reserves. In modern conditions, the principle of warfare has been developed based on the coordinated use of military and non-military measures with the decisive role of the armed forces. The principle of achieving surprise, decisiveness and continuity of strategic action remains relevant. Acting quickly, we must preempt the enemy with our preventive measures, timely identify his vulnerabilities and threaten to inflict unacceptable damage on him. In this way, the realization and retention of the strategic

initiative is ensured. Work on clarifying existing and new principles should continue with the consolidation of the efforts of the entire scientific community. It is necessary to develop principles of a general universal nature and principles of action in relation to a specific situation.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY OF MILITARY STRATEGY**

However, as the great Russian military leader Alexander Suvorov said: "theory without practice is dead...", which is why the scientific activity of military strategy cannot be imagined without its practical justification (Suvorov, 2005: 123-148).

The above-mentioned thoughts of this military great point to the conclusion that with the increasing complexity of modern warfare and the armed forces, greater strategic skills of commanders are needed. In this sense, Svecin makes certain observations and recommendations. He says that what happens is that strategic experience is not gained during maneuvers, but rather that maneuvers often represent gigantic tactical parades. He believes that commander's trips are useful if the mission of the trip is similar to the real assumptions of our strategic and operational development. He also states that the value of war games as a method lies in the study and analysis of new issues, to spread certain strategic viewpoints, but that war games will not fulfill their role if they are not well prepared, in the sense that they allow for discussion of certain strategic issues. He therefore suggests to strategic formations that strategic thinking and solving strategic issues should be given a prominent place during commander's trips, military exercises and war games. (Svecin, 1956).

All of the above indicates that one of the important tasks of military strategy is to create practical methods for studying and checking predictive scenarios for conducting military conflicts using various forms of military exercises, war games, as well as artificial intelligence and other methods. Simulation exercises and simulation systems can be used to check certain strategies of the army, navy, air force or the country or the army as a whole. The use of artificial intelligence in this direction is widely present today in the processes of developing the military strategies of certain countries of the world. These are reasonable forecasts of possible conflict scenarios that serve as initial data for the development of practical patterns and methods of using armed forces. Work should be done to ensure that the theoretically developed forms of use of the armed forces are practically checked and confirmed, and within the framework of practical measures, a special place should be the check of strategic deterrence measures.

Military strategy as an interdisciplinary science has the privilege of using the methodological achievements of other natural and social sciences. In this sense, especially for researching the entire virtual strategic reality, military strategy can also use system modeling methods. Thus, Visnjic proposes methods for further research in strategy, primarily methods of: (a) strategic causation and (b) strategic forecasting (Visnjic, 2011).

#### **5. PRACTICAL ACTIVITY OF MILITARY STRATEGY**

Considering the practical aspect of military strategy, Mistic emphasizes that the essence of military strategy as a skill consists in the fact that the theoretically determined principles "are applied together in the necessary proportion on a given occasion, and then they bring victory, and if there is a disproportion in the application of these principles in at an opportune moment and in a given opportunity, then lack of skill in this brings the defeat of the army". In connection with the practical aspect of military strategy, Mistic particularly emphasizes the importance of skill, noting that in addition to natural talent, senior commanders should have strong technical knowledge and a strong scientific background (Mistic, 1907:121-122).

When further considering the question of the tasks of the practical aspects of military strategy, we should mention the views from *Lista Ratnik* from August 1911, which our military historian Velimir Ivetic relates to Radomir Putnik, in which it is stated that the true knowledge of strategy is not in the sense of theory, but rather real knowledge of strategy in the ability to penetrate into the strategic situation of the operation as a whole, to be able to think in the field of objective and not school situation and strategy. In the mentioned article, it is stated that the correct understanding of the strategic situation is the first step for the successful solution of the strategic problem, and in peace this is usually what is required for the teaching objectives. According to the views of the author of the article, war does not require the application of theoretical principles on the grouping of forces and decision-making, but what is in accordance with the situation, and which affects the weakest and most sensitive enemy side. In this regard, the author of the article, who is believed to be Radomir Putnik, states that in the training of officers, one must not rely only on theoretical knowledge, but commanders must master the skill of commanding and practice, and that they must study other people's war experiences particularly studiously (*List Ratnik*, 1911:7).

In modern conditions, the priority direction of the development of the practice of military strategy, in addition to improving the commanding skills of high-ranking officers in large-scale strategic groups, is the study of the issue of increasing the combat power of the armed forces, increasing the number and quality of the armed forces, improving technical equipment, morale and psychological state, the level of training and combat readiness of the forces, and all for the purpose of achieving military superiority "at the right place and at the right time", i.e. to effectively use militarily superior units "where needed, when needed and as needed" as Zivojin Misić says (Misić, 1907). Also, traditionally, an important direction is the improvement of the system of ideological, moral and psychological stability of the population, and above all of the military personnel. For this purpose, the system of moral and psychological work in the armed forces should be rebuilt and strengthened.

Special attention should be paid to the tasks defined in the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia in order to develop measures of non-nuclear deterrence against aggression in all domains, bearing in mind the complexity of the war environment today, where the military forces are only one small part of that modern complex strategic environment. Also, the current conflict in Ukraine indicates that an important direction in the development of military strategy and the task of military science is the search for new approaches to the development of links between military strategy and the economy. In the interest of preparing the country's economy to solve the defense problem, the strategy was designed to answer the following questions: What kind of war is possible and in what directions should the economy be prepared? How to ensure its survival, stability? How is it more expedient to set up economic facilities taking into account their protection? The thesis of one of the classics of military strategy, Aleksandar Svecin, that "the economy will be able to overcome the nature of military operations", which he stated almost 100 years ago, has become an objective reality, because it is obvious that this war, like those in the past, "they win at the front, but lose in the background".

## **6. RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

The main task for military science today is the continuous, purposeful conduct of research in order to determine the possible nature of military conflicts, to develop a system of forms and methods of action of forces, both military and non-military, as well as to determine the directions of development of weapons systems and military equipment. It is extremely important to quickly apply the results of fundamental and applied military research in the practical work, training and exercises of units. Solving these tasks is primarily the responsibility of military-scientific institutions.

The creation of research institutions for military-strategic studies was caused by the need to find solutions to problems of a military-strategic nature based on comprehensive fundamental research. The main purpose of these institutions is the implementation of applied research on the most important problems of military strategy and operations, as well as the scientific support of ways of solving them and introducing them into the practice of the military forces (Красная звезда, 2020). In these conditions, there is an urgent need for comprehensive studies of problematic issues at the strategic and operational-strategic level, including asymmetric ways of combat and deterrence, as well as measures to counter new threats to state security. In this sense, close scientific cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and research organizations and enterprises of the defense industry is needed. By interacting with the bodies of the Ministry of Defense, research institutions, defense industry and the Army, close relations are ensured, the fusion of military science with practice.

In research, special attention should be paid to the study and generalization of foreign and domestic experience from modern military conflicts. The obtained results should serve as a basis for long-term determination of directions for the construction and use of the armed forces. Accordingly, it is extremely important to ensure that, after theoretical research, fundamental and applied research is quickly carried out through practical exercises of the armed forces. Bearing in mind that "practice is the strongest judge of theory", i.e. that the main purpose of applied research is to examine the truth of theoretical positions, by strengthening the capacity of military-strategic scientific and educational studies for applied research, the time needed to prepare the armed forces for conflicts and scenarios close to realistic features of military operations of future conflicts, which will be conducted under conditions of "no peace, no war", with unclear boundaries between them, as well as hybrid war and combat in multiple spheres on the military, informational, economic, political, socio-cultural and other levels fields.

The complexity of modern weapons is such that it is unlikely that it will be possible to establish its production in a short time after the start of hostilities. Therefore, everything that is necessary should be produced in the required quantity and delivered to the units in peacetime. Every effort must be made to ensure technical and technological equality, and especially organizational superiority over the opponent. That condition should become crucial in determining the tasks for the military-industrial complex in order to develop a new type of weapon. It will enable enterprises to carry out long-term planning, and scientific organizations will receive guidance for the development of fundamental and applied research in military science.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Contemporary military conflicts indicate that the future military strategic reality will be increasingly complex, which is why the theory of military strategy must not remain in the analysis and assessment of the character of future conflicts. Also, it is very important that the practice (skill) of military strategy must not lag behind the theory or vice versa. Unity is needed in their functioning and their development.

From the point of view of this research, the preliminary conclusion is that the main directions of development of the theory and practice of military strategy do not change significantly, that the methods of their development change in accordance with the changes in the nature of warfare, armed combat and the development of military science, and that the unity of theory and practice of military strategies, a prerequisite for their harmonious development, and the ultimate goal.

By analyzing the relevant classical and contemporary literature, the following important and constant directions of development of the theory and practice of military strategy can be identified: 1) the importance of the independent training of officers in the field of military strategy theory, 2) the importance of the development of research in the field of military history and the history of war art as a basis for the development of the theory of military strategy, 3) the development of the theory of military strategy primarily in order to predict the features and character of future conflicts, armed struggle and future military strategic reality, 4) the development of research methodology of the theory of military strategy, 5) the importance of research institutions both for theory and for the practice of military strategy, because applied research examines the veracity of theoretical viewpoints and shortens the time needed to prepare the armed forces for conflicts close to real ones, and 6) the tasks of the practice of military strategy as such, primarily in the direction of improving the ability of senior officers to quickly assess the strategic situation of an operation as a whole, improving the skill of commanding large strategic groups in complex situations, and in accordance with the situation, to "hit the weakest and most sensitive side of the enemy", i.e. to achieve military superiority with an appropriate maneuver for the efficient use of the Army "where needed, when needed and how should".

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