

THE PLACE AND THE ROLE OF STABILITY AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN THE PREVENTION AND STOPPING CONFLICTS IN THE EX-YUGOSLAV SPACE

Manuel-Florin ONOFREI

"Carol I" National Defense University, Bucharest, Romania
(manuel_onofrei@yahoo.com)

DOI: 10.19062/1842-9238.2019.17.1.5

Abstract: *Stability and support operations are military operations carried out to achieve national interests and goals, to deter or prevent war, to promote or establish peace, to reduce tensions between the states, to solve international crises, or to assist local civilian authorities in solving internal crises. In accordance with the defense law (national and international) regarding the use of the armed forces, as well as with the obligations assumed by our country within NATO or within the framework of the democratic international structures, the national armed forces will participate in peace-building and peacekeeping operations, as well in operations for maintaining constitutional order, in emergency situations interventions and in supporting public authorities. In this article we will detail some aspects related to the environment of the stability and support operations, to crisis prevention measures, focusing on the specifics of stability and support operations in the former ex-Yugoslav area.*

Keywords: *stability and support operations; conflicts in the former ex-Yugoslav area; preventing and stopping conflicts; international democratic organizations; diplomatic steps ...*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Doctrine of Land Forces Operations (2017) it is emphasized that operations specific to the war represent "the violent engagement of forces, using military equipment and weapons, for imposing their own will upon the enemy by producing human and material losses, its destruction or capture" [1]. At first sight of the contemporary operational environment, compared to the traditional war, no spectacular changes occurred, fact justified by the presence of the continuation of the two operations, the offensive and the defense, respectively, as basic forms of the war. However, the integration into the NATO system has given the opportunity for Romanian military specialists to adapt to new requirements of the contemporary security environment, dominated by new risks, threats and vulnerabilities, as well as global phenomena of international terrorism, organized crime and corruption, dangers that seriously threaten the international democratic world.

The need to combat these dangers has highlighted new types of operations, such as: intermediate operations, stability and support or stabilization and reconstruction operations, etc.

"intermediate operations are precursor or consecutive military actions and activities by which the forces are prepared or brought to the state from which they can carry out the next operation or cease the mission" [2];

" stability and support or stabilization and reconstruction operations are actions and missions which are aimed at discouraging, preventing conflicts, restoring, maintaining, imposing and building peace, preserving / restoring constitutional order, granting humanitarian aid and reconstruction" [3].

They are executed according to other rules and means than the specific operations of the armed conflict, with the possibility that, within the same conflict, to shift from one operation to another, from those specific to the armed conflict to the stability and the support and vice versa. These types of operations are usually nonlinear and isolated and are carried out according to specific principles, respecting, depending on the situation, the principles of the armed conflict.

We believe that studying and understanding the place and role of stability and support operations has a particular role in the development and adoption of policies, doctrines and plans to achieve new military capabilities specific to operations carried out in the joint, international and inter-institutional environment. Basically, by applying the specific features of stability and support operations to these capabilities, they will need to be deployable in several operating areas and to have the possibility of collaboration, interconnection and integration of all systems and devices of military, non governmental and governmental organizations participating in the operation. Due to the numerous stability and support operations carried out in the ex-Yugoslav space, studying how to prevent and stop these conflicts is a valuable source of lessons learned, that can be harnessed by identifying and designing the best solutions for the development of these policies, doctrines and capabilities.

Commanders at all echelons adapt the application of the elements of operative art and of the MEFL-TC factors (Mission, Enemy, Own Forces, Land-Time and Civilians) to the concrete situation of the operational environment specific to the operation.. Operative art designates *"the application of creative imagination of commanders and staff, based on their skills, knowledge and experience, to plan, organize and engage military structures in major campaigns or operations. The operative art integrates the final state, the ways and the means by which it is attained"*. By applying its principles, the commanders establish decisive operations, the modeling of the operational environment or the support necessary for the success of the mission.

The activities carried out to identify the centers of gravity, the decisive points and even the desired final state may be more complex and more demanding / non-routine than in armed conflict operations. When viewing such an operation, the commander must take into account that the enemy must be defined as such, taking into account its specifics and peculiarities. For example, the opponents can be: human groups that are illegally constituted - according to certain criteria and for certain purposes, disease, hunger or the consequences of a disaster, etc. Moreover, the purpose of these types of operations is to meet, for a limited time, the immediate needs of certain groups, until the civil authorities can manage the situation without military assistance. In extreme or exceptional situations, military force can help ease the situation or can provide the direct assistance of those in need. Normally, however, it assists civil authorities or non-governmental organizations to provide specific and necessary assistance until the situation is normalized.

2. THE SPECIFIC OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF STABILITY AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS

In order to make an objective analysis of the specific environment for the conduct of stability and support operations, we consider it necessary to identify and analyze, first of all, the general conditions that lead to the occurrence of crises generating such situations.

We believe that the most exposed structural organizations to the emergence of crises and which can therefore be the subject of a stabilization and reconstruction operation are the '*fragile*' states or so-called '*failed*' states.

In the contemporary era, some natural shocks (in the form of disasters, and the example of Haiti and Japan we consider to be the closest) or man-made, can be so strong and with such profound consequences that they have the opportunity to push not only fragile nations or shaky regimes, but also modern, organized and stable states, in a spiral of self-destruction, accentuated by multiple elements, of a governmental and social nature.

If a government is weak, corrupt, incompetent or unable to exercise its authority, a trigger-shock event leads to an escalation of an already existing difficult situation, generating the spread of suffering, increasing popular claims, and sometimes popular movements, all can be intensified by several interrelated factors, consisting of [5]: the absence of an adequate internal security environment; essential public services and other key government functions ineffective, sometimes corrupt; inability of the Government to exercise its authority; spreading crime in an atmosphere of anarchy or conflict between ethnic, tribal or religious groups or between government forces and violent opposition; very poor economic performance due to internal disorder, outdated infrastructure and the destruction of key economic assets; massive unemployment and increased economic disparities between social groups, that create general dissatisfaction and fuel the recruitment pool for opposition groups.

Once these conditions are met, the directions of instability and conflict tend to amplify, developing a heightened degenerative cycle, in which the sense of insecurity of the population increases. Without the intervention of a force, often external, intervening to interrupt this cycle and counterbalance the situation, the elements of the crisis may increase, further destabilizing the system. This is, in our view, the fundamental element that can lead to the emergence of the operational environment for stabilization and support operations.

From the perspective of the foregoing, we consider that the evolution towards a specific operational environment is characterized by the existence of a favorable environment, constituted by fragile or failed states, and by the emergence of the specific favorable conditions that shape it: ethnic and religious rivalry, accentuated urbanization, global media networks, relative technological development and the multitude of actors involved in resolving the crisis.

Failed States can reach such a situation as a result of the effects of globalization, economic collapse, and competition for resources, corrupt governance or the failure of efficient management of social infrastructure. The conditions created like this can be a conducive environment for the development of dictatorial regimes, organized crime, tribal leaders or fundamentalist religious authorities, which can lead to the emergence of groups that substantiate their actions on people's grievances and the need to help those in distress, by appealing to popular support for supporting the causes they represent and can provide shelter and refuge for criminals and insurgents. Moreover, in the situation of power takeover, terrorists, drug dealers and criminal elements can use government areas as bases for operations that spread their influence among domestic and foreign populations.

The example of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan is well known in this regard.

Stabilization and reconstruction operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq have been triggered, in some cases, or, in other cases, have been heavily influenced by *significant ethnic and religious differences*. That is why we believe that from the point of view of stabilization and support operations, inter-ethnic and religious conflicts can create a serious challenge for local civil authorities and the involved forces in these operations. Moreover, the conflicting states of ethnic and religious nature that have long been smoldering, rarely can be solved only by the intervention of external forces, their resolution can only be found in political and social reconciliation.

Inter-ethnic conflicts tend to occur when identities are caused by major social changes, accompanied by modernization and globalization. While ethnic divisions are currently geographically centered, in the future, ethnic dynamics can have a major impact on regional power balance. The recognition and the understanding of the ethnic dimension of the operational environment remains a critical condition in most crisis situations to intervene in stabilization and support operations.

Religious ideology can be, under certain circumstances, power-bearing, by leading political and social forces. Groups aiming at achieving national, regional or global dominance can promote religious engagement, in some cases in its extreme form, as a means of motivating the dissatisfied population. Religious fundamentalism is attractive to those who feel threatened or victims of the cultural and economic impact of globalization and social interconnectivity. Additionally, it creates the opportunity to win followers, speculatively empowered by religiously grounded political movements, when secular civic institutions or political authorities are unable to successfully manage social challenges, whether local or global.

Urban centers can provide a continuous influx of youth, disappointed and without prospects of social self-realization, to be recruited and transformed into insurgents or terrorists. In addition, the complexity of urban space offers asymmetric advantages to terrorists and insurgents, including more advantageous targets and a stronger impact of the undertaken actions.

In many of the crowded urban areas, the inability of governments to provide basic public services increases the potential for chaos and dissatisfaction among the population. Infrastructure in these situations is austere/ severe (poor water supply and sanitation, limited or non-functioning power supply services, inadequate education opportunities and medical services).

Some cities may be ungovernable by favoring the emergence of criminal networks or criminal interest groups, often supported by corrupt politicians or malicious people in the local or central government. The existence in the same urban area of several divergent ethnic or religious groups may fuel the present tensions for a long time, endangering the fragile existing balance.

3. THE UE/NATO GLOBAL STRATEGY ON CRISIS PREVENTION MEASURES AND OBJECTIVES

Crisis prevention measures are those measures taken either when it is possible to avoid aggravation of problems in dispute and incompatibilities of interest, or after their outbreak. This includes peace building and peacekeeping. Achieving peace means seeking a negotiated solution to situations perceived as conflicts of interest between the parties and comprises as ways of achieving: imposing a solution by coercion (by violence or by force); legal settlement of the crisis; the political-diplomatic resolution.

In a world that is defaced by old and new challenges, it is increasingly difficult to design a crisis response standard, close to what it would be wanted globally. Under such circumstances, it is normal that the concerns caused by the evolution of the security environment should be increased, as long as organizations such as the U.N., whose stated purpose is "*to maintain international peace and security...*", and the OSCE, whose *destination is evident even in the name*, are in many cases inefficient. The spectrum of a crisis, in the NATO concept includes the following stages: peace, escalation (including disagreement, confrontation, armed conflict), and detente (including reconstruction and achievement of new stability).

Equally important in this conceptual debate is NATO's definition of crisis management: "*coordinated actions initiated to avoid a crisis, prevent its escalation into armed conflict, and stop hostilities, if they arise*" [6] Thus, in the crisis management process, NATO identified five phases: the observation of indicators and the warning of a potential or current crisis; assessing the crisis situation in terms of its development and potential, and establishing implications for alliance security; the development of recommended response options to guide the NAC/DPC decision-making process; the planning and execution of the NAC/DPC decisions and directives and the return to stability.

The alliance's crisis management objectives are the following [7]: contributing to reducing tensions and preventing their transformation into crises; managing the crisis that manifests itself in order to prevent it from escalating into a conflict; ensuring, in advance, civil and military training for crises of varying degrees; in the event of an outbreak of hostilities, controlling the response, preventing escalation, and deterring any aggressor from starting the attack and withdrawing from the territory of the alliance. Obviously, this goal is not applicable to technological, humanitarian and natural crises. The detente activities are important, with the aim of restoring normality, after the escalation or hostilities have been stopped or are under control, as well as the application of the "lessons learnt" from other similar experiences.

After the Cold War, NATO focused its attention on preventing and managing crisis with roots in: ethnic tensions and antagonisms, extremist nationalism, internal political struggle, inadequate political change, domestic economic problems, etc. Since 11 September 2001, interest has been focused on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, as sources of crises, but also on inter-institutional cooperation, in particular with the European Union.

An important aspect in the EU's foreign and defence policy is crisis management, considered a key factor in ensuring peace and security both in the region and around the world. In this respect, in the year 2016, the Union adopted the *EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy*, which aims to strengthen its role as a leading actor in the European security environment and to increase its contribution to global peace and security.

4. STABILITY AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAV AREA

Peace Building is a method of post-conflict intervention that runs on the basis of Chapter VI of the UN Charter and involves assistance in controlling the withdrawal of forces on the demarcation line, returning to recognized borders, the control of the exchange of prisoners, the restoration of civilian infrastructure, the realization of new political structures, the deployment and demobilization of forces (example-operation in Cambodia).

All these actions can be performed at the same time in ways of intervention, which can be performed as types of stand-alone operations or as stages of the same operation in support of Peace therefore they can be part of "special operations, Other than war" and, at the same time, constitutes ways of intervening in modest military conflicts, representing an important operational element of the UN (OSCE) for conflict prevention and crisis surveillance, in the context of physiognomy of the political process of/ in resolving disputes within or between states, thus contributing to the preservation of peace and stability in the world [8].

The participation of the states in multinational peace support operations is determined by the current scale of conflictual situations, by the mutations produced in contemporary conflicts, and will certainly remain, in the future, a major and effective way to manage crises. For a good while, peace-support operations as a means of intervening in military conflicts will remain a first-rate mission of international organizations, governments and armed forces in all states. [9]

Methods and mechanisms for conflict prevention have taken different forms. In some disputes, the UN acted through peacekeeping forces, situation assessment teams (sent by the Security Council or the General Assembly), election surveillance, relations improvement missions, mediation teams and special representatives. In other issues, plenary debates and a channel for peaceful diplomacy were ensured.

According to the UN Charter, conflict control measures known as peacekeeping operations have been authorized by the Security Council (or, in exceptional cases, by the General Assembly), normally with the consent of the parties, to enable the UN to restrain hostilities, to prevent their resumption and to normalize the situation. There were two such types of operations: UN observer missions; UN peacekeeping forces.

Military observer missions were composed of unarmed officers made available to the UN at the request of the Secretary-General by the Member States. The mission's function was to observe and report to the Secretary-General (who in turn informed the Security Council) on maintaining a cease-fire and to do everything possible to improve the situation [10]

Peacekeeping forces are comprised of contingents of armed troops made available by Member States. These forces usually support preventing the resumption of battles, restoring and maintaining order and promoting return to normal conditions, as follows:

* UN Interim Administration Mission of Kosovo (UNMIK, 1999), with full authority over the population and territory (legislative, executive, administrative and judicial);

* OSCE Observation Mission in Macedonia (2001) with a mandate for: compliance with the ceasefire agreement; respect for human rights;

* OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM, 1999), with a mandate for: assistance to local authorities; supervising compliance with the ceasefire agreement; compliance with the agreements.

* United Nations Protection Force mission in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR, 1992-1995), with a mandate for: the demilitarization of the conflicting factions; monitoring security zones; protection of humanitarian convoys; border control;

* NATO Peace Implementation Force mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR, 1995-1996), with a mandate for: monitoring the implementation of the Dayton

Agreement; surveillance of separation zones; ensuring freedom of movement; supervising demining operations;

* NATO Stabilization Force mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR, 1996-2004), mandated for: ensure safety conditions for humanitarian and genital assistance; support for the restoration of infrastructure; ensuring human rights; election observation and normalization of economic and social life;

* NATO Kosovo Force Mission (KFOR, 1999), with a mandate for: compliance with the ceasefire agreement; assistance in transition; observing the conduct of elections; humanitarian aid.

The participation of states in multinational peace support operations is determined by the current magnitude of conflict situations, by the mutations produced in contemporary conflicts, and will remain, in the future, a major and effective way to manage crises.

CONCLUSIONS

The conflicting situations of ethnic and religious nature that have long been smoldering, rarely can be solved only by the intervention of external forces, and their solution can only be found in political and social reconciliation.

The religious dimension of a conflict remains an important indicator in the security analysis of power relations, as it refers to a factor that dynamizes conflicts according to the level of discrimination accused or the nature of the claims formulated.

The link between ethnicity and religion, based on the fundamental principle of assumed or practiced religion, was not once an alibi or pretext for post-Cold War conflicts, a kind of curtain behind which geopolitical, geo-strategic or geo-economic interests were hidden, conflicts in which muslims and christians (albanian-serbian, macedonian-albanian) or christians among them (orthodox serbs and catholic croats) faced.

Neither the belief nor the confession was the basis for confrontations in the former Yugoslav area, but rather the claim of legitimacy in the act of government, the struggle for power addressing for its own benefit a certain political-religious turn, that affected or influenced social coexistence, government policies and local security.

REFERENCES

- [1] ***, *F.T. 1, Doctrine of Land Forces Operations*, Bucharest, 2017, p.12;
- [2] ***, *F.T. 1, Doctrine of Land Forces Operations*, Bucharest, 2017, p.20;
- [3] ***, *F.T. 1, Doctrine of Land Forces Operations*, Bucharest, 2017, p.20;
- [4] ***, *F.M.3.0 Operations*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 2008, p.6.3
- [5] ***, *Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations Joint Operating Concept*, US Department of Defence, 2006, p. 12, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joc_ststro.pdf?ver=2017-12-28-162022-680 , (accessed on 20 February 2019);
- [6] ***, *Joint Publication 1-02. DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, US Department of Defense, 2004;
- [7] KRIENDLER, John, *NATO Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention*, in: *Conflict Prevention: Is the European Union Ready?*, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2003;
- [8] BĂLĂCEANU Ion, RĂPAN Florian, HANGANU Marius, MARTIN Iulian, DRAGOMIRESCU Valentin, MUREȘAN Doina, *Interaction of Strategies in Modern Armed Conflict*, "Carol I" National Defense University Publishing House, 2010, p.220;

The Place and the Role of Stability and Support Operations in the Prevention and Stopping Conflicts in the Ex-Yugoslav Space

- [9] MARTIN Iulian, *Rationale and reasoning in the planning of operations*, "Carol I" National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p.21;
- [10] MOLDOVAN Marius, BĂLĂCEANU Ion, *Reconfigure the military power balance in the eastern area of strategic interest of Romania*, "Carol I" National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, p.93.