MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR (THE U.S. VIEW)

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The end of the Cold War brought about a drastic change in the sphere of international security. The United States and its allies as well as Russia implemented large-scale reductions of conventional and strategic weapons, downsizing their armed forces as a whole, and going ahead with conversion of the defense industry. Nonetheless, the military in virtually any country of the world remains the largest and the most organized institution with defense expenditures as a rule exceeding those of any other ministry or private corporation.

Even before the Cold War came to an end, the United States already had a military-political concept—presented in doctrinal form and tested in practice—for participation in "low-intensity conflicts." Throughout the post-war period, until the late 1980s, the United States was involved in only one regional medium-intensity conflict (i.e., conventional war)—in Korea (1950-1953), although U.S. intervention in Vietnam (1965-1973) at some stages reached the level of medium intensity. As of the late 1970s the need of effectively standing up to "asymmetric" threats in "low-intensity conflicts" was to some degree or other appreciated by the U.S. military-political leadership, which sought to take into account the negative experience in the Vietnam war and its political-psychological implications—above all, the painful reaction by the U.S. public to protracted conflicts involving considerable losses, especially in personnel.

According to the "low-intensity conflict" theory, U.S. security was jeopardized not only by global and generally predictable confrontation with the Soviet Union, but also by growth in tension on the local (regional) level. Unlike potential high-intensity conflicts involving the use of strategic weapons or medium-intensity regional wars (the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988), low-intensity conflicts were defined as military-political confrontation between rival (opposing) states or alliances not reaching the level of conventional war, varying from subversive activity to the use of military force and conducted with the use of combined political, economic, information, and military methods (counterinsurgency operations, support for loyal guerrilla movements,

counterterrorism and counterdrug activity, peacekeeping operations, etc.). Throughout the 1980s, the low-intensity conflict theory was actively applied in practice (say, in Salvador) while participation in such conflicts became one line of U.S. official military policy.[1]

It is important to note that the U.S. strategy of intervention in low-intensity conflicts was predicated not only on the aspiration to break the deadlock in confrontation with the Soviet Union that had emerged in the late 1970s, including on the regional level (against the backdrop of Soviet military presence in Afghanistan), but also on the need to work out a methodology for countering new, limited in scale and intensity, but still increasing regional threats. Thus, well before the Cold War formally came to an end, elaboration and application of the low-intensity conflict concept, designed to search for new forms of force projection and political influence in particular parts of the world, was a kind of a precursor to the subsequent events.

In the last decade of the 20th century, operations in zones of regional (local) confrontation of low- to low-to-medium intensity (oftentimes of a domestic/internationalized kind) passed from secondary to primary tasks for the armed forces, which required a review of the low-intensity conflict theory, predicated on a bipolar world setup. It was substantially expanded in the 1990s, coming to be known as a concept of operations other than war. This concept, just as its predecessor, was developed mainly by U.S. military experts on conflict management and has been actively used primarily by the U.S. military as well as—in modified form—by other major Western countries. It is gradually gaining ground also in civil society. This does not of course mean that civilian specialists lack an independent understanding of or interest in this subject matter. Yet, owing to the heterogeneity of civil society per se (even within one country), it is difficult to expect from it an unequivocal reaction to non-military regional (local) threats. Furthermore, outside the military sphere, the theory of intervention in regional (local) conflicts is far more removed from practice, and there is not such a direct connection between them as there is between the concept of operations other than war, developed by military specialists, and its presentation in the form of military doctrine and army field manuals, which provide guidelines for practical action. Cases in point are peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor.

The term "operations other than war"* itself is formulated by the rule of contraries, stressing their specifics as opposed to conventional military operations. The change of terminology was also supposed to symbolize the difference of the new concept, which placed a special thrust on the non-military character of humanitarian, peacekeeping, and other suchlike operations, from the 1970s-1980s theory of low-intensity conflicts where they were regarded as less intensive military operations. The concept of operations other than war is by definition rather blurry: In U.S. society itself, there are plenty of versions of their definition and classification, as reflected in the relevant documents by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, U.S. Army field manuals, and so forth.[2] The U.S. military doctrine specifies the following main types of operations other than war:

Humanitarian operations in crisis zones that for their part include the following: assistance in natural disasters and other emergencies (say, man-made disasters); assistance to refugees and displaced persons; ensuring the security of humanitarian operations (facilitating access for international humanitarian organization and service officers to disaster areas, and protection of humanitarian personnel, columns of refugees

and areas of their temporary accommodation, humanitarian aid convoys and depots as well as seaports and airports used to deliver humanitarian aid); and technical support—say, in "humanitarian mine-clearing" (not directly connected with military necessity).

Peace support operations: peacekeeping operations, contingent on consent by the belligerents to the presence of peacekeeping forces as well as non-use of force to the extent possible, even in self-defense—say, the UN operation in Cyprus (since 1964) or Cambodia (1991-1992 and 1992-1993); and peace enforcement operations, with none of the aforementioned limitations—e.g., NATO operations in Bosnia (since 1995) and Kosovo (since 1999).

Counterinsurgency and nation assistance (assistance in creating local (national) security agencies—training, arming, technical and information support; humanitarian and other non-emergency assistance, etc.).

Support for insurgency (guerrilla) movements in other countries (support by the U.S. military-political leadership for the mujahedin in Afghanistan in 1979-1989).

Noncombatant evacuation operations in zones of conflict or man-made disaster (e.g., 1991 operations to evacuate U.S. and other citizens from Somalia and Zaire).

Sanctions enforcement (e.g., the 1993 operation along the Haitian coast) and no-fly zone enforcement—in Iraq (since 1992) and in Bosnia (since 1993).

Show of force (patrolling by U.S. Air Force of insurgency bases in the course of a coup attempt in the Philippines in 1989).

Non-combat operations also include short-term actions to deliver pinpoint strikes, controlling proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control (inspections), and interagency military contacts.[3]

Although U.S. military doctrine provides for military participation in operations other than war mainly abroad, it allows for the use of armed forces in operations other than war also domestically. This includes support for civilian authorities—in dealing with strikes, emergencies and natural disasters as well as in search-and-rescue, humanitarian, and other operations; law enforcement agencies—in restoring public order (in the event of mass riots), protection of sensitive installations (e.g., electric power and water intake stations, transport and communication nodes, and so forth) as well as in counterdrug and counterterrorism operations.

Whereas some types of operations other than war provide for the use of force (say, peace enforcement), others (humanitarian or "traditional" peacekeeping operations) do not. Oftentimes both types of operation are conducted simultaneously: Humanitarian operation combined with peace enforcement (as in Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.) is becoming standard practice. Finally, operations other than war can be both multilateral (multinational) and unilateral—i.e., conducted by one or several countries. The most common types of operations other than war are peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

For all the diversity of operations other than war, they have something in common, which sets them apart from military (combat) operations per se—namely, their predominantly political character. Regardless of the role that armed forces play in an operation other than war, it serves above all political, not military, tasks and objectives. Although military operations are in the final analysis also dictated by political considerations, in operations other than war, political considerations prevail over all other considerations. These operations are designed not to achieve military victory, but to

avert, limit, and settle conflicts; keep the peace and provide support to civilian authorities in internal crises; maintain and assert influence in a particular region, and so forth—naturally, in accordance with national interests.[4] They do not include such goals as effective engagement or physical elimination of an adversary; they are called upon to, among other things, create conditions for electoral victory by local political forces loyal to the "international community" or national authorities. Operations other than war are literally permeated with political interests and considerations on all levels while their objectives are always limited (that is to say, are not related to the vital interests of participating countries) and can change often and quickly—contingent on the prevailing situation. Although in theory, specific tasks addressed by armed forces at a particular stage of an operation (say, forcible separation of belligerents) should be subordinated to its general political tasks, in practice it is often the case that political considerations not only do not coincide with military needs at given moment but even are in conflict with them.

Operations other than war are part of an array of measures to achieve a political settlement in a conflict, but they can proceed both within the framework of this process or in parallel. Whereas large-scale peace-keeping operations are as a rule conducted after the belligerents have reached—independently or with international mediation—a peace settlement, humanitarian operations are conducted at a much earlier stage in a conflict, sometimes long before the political settlement process gets under way, let alone truce or peace agreement. Present-day crises and conflicts in the majority of cases are of a complex character, so several types of operations other than war, oftentimes interconnected (say, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations), can be conducted at the same time in one conflict zone.

One important, if not key, requirement in operations other than war is the legitimacy of participating forces and agencies in the eyes of the public opinion of the participating countries, the international community as a whole, and the population of the conflict zone. A formal indication of this legitimacy can be a mandate from an international or regional organization or a bilateral agreement with the authorities of a country affected by conflict or emergency (provided that local authorities are still in place). The greater the scale of a humanitarian or peacekeeping operation, the greater the need for its formal legitimization on the international level. It is noteworthy that unlike combat action, success in an operation other than war to a very large degree hinges on its acceptability to the local population (an operation cannot be effective if it is opposed by the local population). So, from the military point of view, near real-time intelligence and special psychological procedures designed to build a favorable image of the forces and agencies conducting a particular operation as well as the local forces that they support, take high priority.

One of the key tasks in an operation other than war is the provision of minimum "security conditions" in a conflict zone. Whereas with respect to armed forces in a combat operation this task is limited to self-defense, here it is necessary that security guarantees be extended to noncombatants (international agencies and NGOs) as well as the local population.

Operations other than war require extreme caution and restraint in the use of force—i.e., the search for an optimal balance between security considerations, the conduct of an operation per se, and its political goals. Excessive use of force increases the

antagonism between the belligerents and undermines the legitimacy of international organizations involved, oftentimes producing an opposite result, increasing the authority of the side against which the operations is conducted in the first place. So the use of force in such operations is far more limited and restrained by political considerations, compared to conventional combat operations.

Operations other than war are as a rule protracted and "uneven": Local outbreaks of violence alternate with periods of lull and political maneuvering. Local arms formations are built around a small professional core which can, as necessary and contingent on seasonal factors, be reinforced with paramilitary groups or home guards. Forces involved in operations other than war need flexibility and the ability to quickly respond to changes in the situation. Likewise the structure of command and control in an operation other than war should be less rigid and hierarchical while its lower levels should have greater freedom of action.

The volume of tasks in operations other than war is so large while their character so special than the role of personnel in performing them increases dramatically. Attainment of goals in operations other than war requires a greater amount of manpower, physical presence and direct contact, and cannot be ensured in a stand-off mode—i.e., predominantly with modern arms and military equipment.

Finally, since the goal of an operation other than war cannot be winning a victory over one of the belligerents, its effectiveness cannot be assessed in military terms. Success of a humanitarian, peacekeeping or other operation other than war is predicated on the general political, socioeconomic, and psychological environment in a post-conflict zone. Perceptions about the goals and criteria of effectiveness of an operation can change substantially throughout its duration, contingent on the prevailing political situation. Therefore, it is impossible in advance to clearly define exit strategy—that is to say, the time frame and form of ending an operation.

Even in the most favorable conditions, operations other than war are extremely complex and labor-intensive from the point of view of planning and conduct, are subject to the impact of many political, economic, social, military, cultural-psychological, and other factors, and do not produce quick results. Participation in such operations can oftentimes be no less of a challenge to armed forces than the conduct of full-dimension combat operations—moreover, not only politically, psychologically, and ethically, but also militarily. On one hand, forces involved in it need special preparation and training in policing, administrative, and other skills. On the other, participation in operations other than war is complicated by the fact that they are oftentimes part of a broad range of crisis response activities, which can also include combat action.

Operations other than war are conducted, as a rule, in peacetime—that is to say, without declaration of war (hence one of their designations: "peacetime operations"). Nonetheless, the average intensity of modern conflicts, their regional (local) character and possibility of escalation can result in that operations other than war are often accompanied by military action or the use of force. So combat operations and operations other than war can be conducted simultaneously in one conflict zone or theater of operations (e.g., NATO air strikes on the FRY in 1999 proceeded at the same time as humanitarian assistance to Kosovo refugees in Macedonia and Albania). Furthermore, it is not always possible to draw a line between purely military and non-military aspects of crisis response, especially given that both types of tasks are oftentimes performed by the

same forces (formations). So in situations when non-military operations are accompanied by combat action, it is impossible to regard them in separation from each other.

Even this brief overview shows how diverse and multifaceted operations other than war are. Nevertheless, they have one distinguishing feature in common: Owing to their predominantly political character, all such operations are based on interaction between armed forces and a large number of non-military structures, organizations, and groups—civilian, humanitarian, and law enforcement. Analysis of military-civilian interaction provides a key to understanding the character and specifics of operations other than war and is a major criterion of their effectiveness.

NOTES:
1. Principles of U.S. military participation in "low-intensity conflicts" were formulated in a number of DOD documents, including field manuals (see: Low-Intensity Conflict Field Manual #100-20 (FM 100-20), U.S. Dep. of the Army. Wash., 1981; Low-Intensity Conflict Field Conflict. Field Circular #100-20 (FC 100-20), Ft/Leavenworth (Kans.), 1986); the post of a special assistant for low-intensity conflicts was created at the Pentagon with a corresponding subdivision set up within the National Security Council staff.
2. Peace Operations. FM 100-23, U.S. Dep. of the Army. Wash., 1994 (hereinafter FM 100-23); "Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War," Joint Pub. 3-07, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Wash., 1995 (Joint Pub. 3-07); etc.
3. For more detail, see: "Types of Military Operations Other Than War," Joint Pub. 3-0. Pub. III-1-III-15; K.E. Bonn, F.E. Baker, Guide to Military Operations Other Than War. Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Stability and Support Operations, Domestic and International, Mechanicsburg (Penn.), 2000, pp. 13-17.
4. Joint Pub. 3-07, pp. I-1, II-2.