

In the first chapter, the article summarizes a new theory of asymmetric warfare. The author demonstrates – on the basis of this thesis – that the history of small states' defense strategies is characterized by conventional national defense strategies. This chapter presents some historical examples for the effectiveness of asymmetric warfare. The conclusion of this chapter is that asymmetric warfare can be a feasible national defense strategy.

In the second chapter the author summarizes the supply-chain based logistical support approach. The author also presents major support problems of asymmetric warfare, then he presents a new model of logistical support. He examines the applicability of civil logistics in military supply services as well as the assortment of opportunities.

Keywords: asymmetric warfare, logistics, support

1. Introduction

Historically, the defense policy of small states is determined by their location, the availability of resources and their foreign policy objectives, etc. These states usually built their defense strategies on traditional models, such as having a large state army, joining a federal system, declaring neutrality, or seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. History has provided examples of success and also of failure for these approaches. The questions arise:

- How do small states protect themselves?
- Is there any alternative approach to the above-mentioned defense strategies?
- How is it possible to support an alternative defense strategy efficiently?

2. Conventional national defense strategies¹

Before the analysis we should clarify what small states mean: “A small power is a state that recognizes it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so; the small power’s belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognized by the other states involved in international politics.” [1] Let us examine some of the above mentioned defense strategies drawing on some well-known historical examples.

Throughout history, small states in their nation’s defense policy were affected by their location, availability of resources, their foreign policy objectives, etc. These states usually built their defense strategies on four well-known traditional models.

The first approach for small states is to establish their own armed forces similar to states with large and modern armed forces. This kind of solution, while being of questionable effectiveness, will generate a heavy burden on the economy and give a false sense of security. Historical examples show that the numerical superiority alone is not enough for gaining victory.

The second approach is to join a federal system. Some states – if they want to increase their security – can join a defense organization. Historical examples affirm that a federal system does not always provide sufficient protection for the federal states.

In the third case, small states can declare neutrality. This national defense strategy works as long as the opposing parties acknowledge this neutrality.

Finally, in some cases, small states sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction. This strategy can be rewarding, but it can cause a certain degree of international resistance or isolation.

The four above-mentioned strategies have one thing in common: they all try to apply the principles of conventional forces. :Is there any other option for small nations to effectively defend themselves against an enemy superior in number, and/or military technology? Let’s look at some historical examples when small states fought against a more powerful war machine.

¹ This chapter summarizes thesis of Sandor, Fabian: Professional Irregular Defence Forces: The Other Side of the Coin. Authority: Fabian, Sandor: Professional Irregular Defense Forces: the Other Side of COIN, Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/7338>, this document was downloaded on October 24, 2013.

2.1. Some historical examples of asymmetric warfare

The Yugoslav partisans

In the Second World War the Yugoslav Army surrendered unconditionally to the Nazi armed forces after eleven days of defensive operations. Despite the unconditional surrender, Tito's partisans were able to liberate their country as a result of unconventional warfare. Their success can be explained by the following reasons: firstly, the resistance movement had a tradition, which was not based on the former conventional military strategy. Secondly, many veterans of the Spanish Civil War joined Tito's underground lines, therefore a vast number of people collaborated against the common enemy. The strategy was based on proven mobile guerrilla tactics. This historical example reveals two important facts. An army traditionally equipped, trained and guided by traditional principles can lose in eleven days against a better equipped war machine. But after capitulation of the conventional armed forces it is possible to establish a force which can successfully resist using irregular warfare.

The first Russian – Chechen War in 1994

Russian conventional forces – after a few covered operations – intruded to Chechnya. Less than two years later, the defeated Russian army withdrew from the Caucasus. The secret of success – besides the desire for independence and Chechen national pride – lied in irregular strategy. In addition, a number of Chechen fighters had experience of war-fighting as a soldier of the occupational army. The main lesson of this conflict is that a force which is decentralized, highly flexible, and led by commanders with former professional military experience is able to use small independent units for operations and capable of gaining a military victory against the stronger enemy. For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that when Russian armed forces – well-prepared for counter insurgency operations – returned to Chechnya in 1999, irregular forces were beaten.

The Second Lebanon War

Hezbollah armed forces were specially trained for irregular warfare and were organized into small units that were capable of independent operations in the year of 2000. The most important fact in this war was that the force opposing Israeli armed forces was not an ad-hoc creation of irregular troops after the fall of the conventional army. It was not a conventional military force, but it was not a guerrilla army either.

The above-mentioned examples show that irregular warfare can be a feasible alternative for states which are opposed by an enemy with numerical or technical superiority. This is particularly true – especially in the light of the experiences in the second Lebanon war – if the irregular military forces have been prepared for battle before the start of the conflict. Detailed research shows that the overall military success begins to dynamically shift towards the irregular party. (Figure 1)

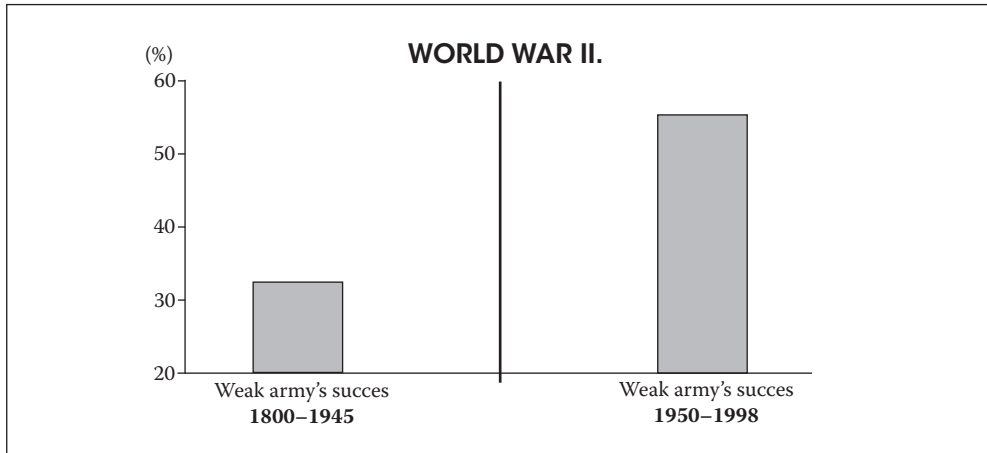


Figure 1: Military successes of asymmetric warfare²

After the above-mentioned examples the question is logically raised: Is it possible to prepare a professional army based on the principles of irregular strategies? How can we sufficiently support such armed forces? What are the principles of the logistical support in professional irregular armed forces?

2.2. Professional Irregular Forces

These historical examples show that irregular warfare is a possible alternative for small countries to protect themselves against a numerically and/or technically superior enemy. The possibilities of irregular warfare are better exploitable if this type of armed struggle is led by professional soldiers. Irregular warfare will have the greatest chance for success if the armed forces are trained for this kind of struggle before the conflict. As the analysis showed, the strategy of irregular warfare must be adopted prior to the armed conflict and supporting infrastructure must be created. It must be taken into account that the support organization can be very different from the traditional one in the course of armed struggle.

For example: Significant territorial losses can occur in a short period of time; the aggressor armed forces may occupy the territory of a small country without fight. The dragging on of the war will increase the pressure on the civilian population. The objective of this article is to look at the possibilities of irregular warfare, not to target its *raison d'être*.

² Authority: Sandor, Fabian: *Professional Irregular Defense Forces: the Other Side of COIN*, Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/7338>, this document was downloaded on October 24, 2013.

3. Logistical support of asymmetric warfare

3.1. Asymmetric warfare vs. supply chain

The logistical support of alliances which are able to deploy a significant force [2], like the alliance of which Hungary is a member state, is based on supply chain. [3] The strategic, operational, and tactical levels keep the stored supply in the operations area and at the home bases. At the end of the supply chain you can always find a target to be achieved, or a supported person. The primary objective of logistics is to satisfy user requirements. The logistics encompass the entire supply process from production to utilization, including reverse logistics. The support chain is a system of thinking which operates across organizations and borders. It trusts in the organization (NATO) and it is operated by the supply chain. The system is led by the operational and tactical levels (pull principle). [4]

The logistics of asymmetric warfare are substantially different from the traditional warfare and a number of challenges must be met: The numerically superior opposing party will probably occupy large areas. The superior technical capabilities of the opposing party will cause air superiority as well, therefore air delivery is likely to be impossible and the delivery of supply is forced to the ground. Due to the rapid loss of territory the strategic and operational inventory level will be inaccessible for the tactical level, hence the subunits will be cut off from the accumulated stocks. In conclusion, the conventional supply chain will be interrupted.

These initial conditions must be overcome by logistics: the right equipment and material must be made available for the end user at the right time in the right place and at the right quality. The first priority is self-preservation to ensure mobility. All this needs to be in a manner that supports the mobility of autonomous subunits. It is necessary to resolve the contradiction between the interrupted supply chain and the users' requirements. Sustained support must be organized without follow-on transport. [1]

To meet the requirements of the logistical support of asymmetric warfare more is needed than bunkers, weapons, ammunition depots and covered hospital systems. Logistical support of the asymmetric warfare requires a radically new approach.

3.2. The solution – the other side of the coin by a logistician

Simply speaking any given force can be characterized by three basic criteria: maneuverability, firepower and protection. To ensure victory the enemy must be surpassed in at least two of these three aspects. A similar characterization is true for logistics: the maneuverability of logistics is the transport capacity; the (fire) power is the speed with which it is capable of replacing the losses of goods; the protection is the ability to preserve stocks.

The capabilities of the opposing party – the logistics capability too – should be exceeded. Logistics – just like the armed struggle – has to be organized according to the principles of asymmetry.

3.3. Transcending the Supply Chain

To surpass the technical and numerical superiority of the enemy's supply chain, it is necessary to be faster. Since the enemy does not fight on its own territory, it needs to maintain a longer supply chain than the irregular force. Consequently everything takes longer in the occupying force's supply chain. If the irregular force can manage to cause greater losses to the enemy than it is capable of replacing, the enemy will eventually be forced to withdraw. One of the elements can be the reduction of the supply capacity of the opposing party. On the other hand the supply of the irregular force must be maintained. Therefore it is necessary to reconsider the supply-chain based logistics approach to fulfill the special (operational) requirements of the users. The independent groups are likely to need independent plans of care. Thus the supply chain can be transformed into the supply network. The main advantage of the network architecture over the chain one is that it is able to provide (limited) supply even when (partially) cut. The supply network of groups can be very flexible and fast compared to the rigid supply chain. This new approach allows large-scale cooperation among subunits. It seems that decentralizing logistics operations might be the answer to the operational challenges: it can deliver fast and cover large distances despite the difficult environment. A decentralized and extensive supply network with a number of network nodes might provide the solution for irregular warfare. [5] The operation of the system does no longer require successive steps of operational logistics.

3.4. The equipment

In order to surpass the technical and/or numerical superiority of the enemy's resupply capabilities, irregular forces need to be able to resupply themselves faster than the opposing party. During the preparation phase of an asymmetric conflict leaders must take into account the possibility that their units will be separated from the central supplies. The vast majority of irregular troops needs equipment that can be replaced from other than the central supply. For example, they need to use equipment that can be easily found in civilian life, therefore it is interchangeable. (e.g. commercially available cars.) Following this principle, during the preparation the forces combat service support system already must use the outsourced services of the national economy (financial, food, transport,

fuel supply, storage functions, administrative functions). Similar radically outsourced logistical functions have existed in civilian logistical solutions for a long time (4PL logistics). This kind of procedure – outsourcing material, financial, human resources – would cause a possible reduction in overall costs. This kind of combat service support system could be described as an all network sub-systems. The outsourcing would significantly reduce the hierarchy of the system which can result in a dramatically reduced turnaround time.

Using civil procedures of modern logistics in the preparation phase could provide additional options. The virtually connected hubs to the system give additional options for outsourcing. The primary feature of the new system is its flexibility, in which reason the benefits are reduced, and the basic (operational) requirements of the user – the flexibility – can be met. [6]

3.5. Training Kit

The vast majority of combat supplies can be placed with the small units; the equipment must be well-chosen for the necessary tactics and operations. On a strategic and operational level the major role is to store military supplies and weapons in hidden bunkers, ammunition depots and other indoor facilities. The stocks should be as close as possible to the point of use, in anticipation of an expected loss of territory. This kind of logistical inventory for the military task is far from unknown. [7] [8]

4. Summary

The analysis of the historical examples shows that asymmetric warfare can be successful against a numerically and technically superior military force. The chance of success is even greater if this kind of force has been consciously prepared for asymmetric warfare prior to the start of the conflict. Therefore the idea of applying the principles of asymmetric warfare as national defense strategy can arise. Examining opportunities of logistics, it appears that the superiority in chain oriented military logistics supply can be beaten, or its benefits can be made irrelevant.

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Az aszimmetrikus hadviselés logisztikai támogatása

BODORÓCZKI JÁNOS

Az első fejezetben a cikk egy új elméletet összegez az aszimmetrikus hadviselésről. A szerző erre alapozva történelmi példákat mutat be a konvencionális nemzetvédelmi stratégiákról. E fejezet néhány történelmi példán keresztül bemutatja az aszimmetrikus hadviselés hatásosságát. A fejezet végén a szerző következtetést von le a hadviselési mód alkalmazására mint nemzetvédelmi stratégiára vonatkozóan.

A második fejezetben a szerző összegzi az ellátási lánc alapú logisztikai támogatási szemléletet. Rámutat néhány problémára, majd új szemléletű logisztikai támogatást mutat be. Néhány példával vázolja a civil logisztika alkalmazhatóságát a katonai ellátásban.

Kulcsszavak: aszimmetrikus hadviselés, logisztika, támogatás