

# **Baltic Security and Defence Review**

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## Notes from the Editor — Issue 2, 2010.

*Dr. James S. Corum\**

*The Baltic Security and Defence Review* is a peer-reviewed bi-annual academic journal that focuses on Baltic regional security issues, Baltic region military history, small state security issues, and current conflicts. The journal has a broad mandate to encourage, and to provide a forum for, the academic discussion of issues that concern the security and interests and history of the Baltic States. It is the intention of the Baltic Defence College, the publisher of the journal, to support a high standard of critical academic discussion.

We welcome members of the international academic community to submit articles to the *Baltic Security and Defence Review*. The *Review* is published in June and December every year and articles ought to be a word document file between 6,000 and 12,000 words, using Chicago Manual style and endnotes. Every submitted article must pass muster through two reviewers. Articles can be submitted to the editor, Dr. James Corum, at the following email: [james.corum@bdcol.ee](mailto:james.corum@bdcol.ee)

We have some interesting articles in this issue, ranging from outlines of strategic concepts, to analysis of national experience in current operations. On strategy we have Colonel Lin of the Singapore forces with an analysis of Sun Tzu's principles of strategy and how aspects of his and other strategic theories might be applied to modern conflicts. Dr. Christiansson provides a useful analysis of the current Swedish strategic defence policy.

As for our focus on small states, we have an article by Dr Libel on higher military training and education in Israel and some of the debates about military education in that nation. For a more historical view, we have Dr. Klinkert's article on how the Netherland's armed forces evaluated the experience of World War I and modified its defence policy. From Dr. Eric Sibil we have another study of a small state at war, in this case the

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\* Dean of the Baltic Defence College, editor of the *Baltic Security and Defence Review*

Estonian Army and how it developed its logistics during the war of independence 1918-1920.

In this issue we have a special section on the experiences of the Baltic States gained in overseas deployments. From Majors Alasauskas and Majors Anglickis we have an account of the lessons the Lithuanian forces have learned from more than a decade of deployments. From Major Havi we have a short article on some lessons the Estonians have gained from the deployment of their forces in Afghanistan.

We have a tradition of publishing the top student papers every year in the *Baltic Security and Defence Review*. In this case, we have an interesting historical case study by Lt. Col. Taczanowski of the failure of the French Air Force to develop the right doctrine, organization and equipment to meet the threat it faced in 1940.

Finally, we have an in depth book review by Mr. Nielsen of the University of Tartu centred on the 2008 Georgia conflict—a conflict of especial interest to small states facing an uncertain security environment.

It should be noted that the views expressed by the authors of the *Baltic Security and Defence Review* articles are their personal views presented for academic discussion and do not represent the official positions of their respective national governments or of the governments of the Baltic States.

## Attacking the Enemy's Strategy: the Key to an Ideal Victory

Col. Ong Yu Lin\*

### Introduction

One of the key concepts in Sunzi's *The Art of War* is the attainment of an ideal victory by subduing the enemy without fighting.<sup>1</sup> This concept has often been interpreted literally and mistakenly understood to mean the absence of military actions and the need to do battles. Sunzi did not rule out the need for military actions and he wrote that the intention of military action is to render the enemy disheartened and powerless. This is done by restricting his ability to act, or nullifying his actions to produce a sense of "lost cause" when he realizes that he is deprived of the ability to react to changes in the situation. Such an approach convinces the enemy of the futility of further violence and bloodshed and that the best option is to surrender.<sup>2</sup> Victory, therefore, occurs only when the enemy accepts and concedes defeat.

The concept of subduing the enemy without fighting is both a strategic endstate and a process. Military actions and battles are shaping actions in the process to achieve a psychological endstate in the enemy mind so that his will can no longer fight or oppose. Clausewitz shared a similar perspective, but at a different level of war, when he wrote that although war serves a political purpose, there are a series of aims to be achieved through military actions that ultimately bring one to the political purpose. The first of these is the need "to compel our enemy to do our will," and "to secure that endstate, we must render the enemy powerless; and that in theory, is the true aim of warfare."<sup>3</sup> Thus, at the operational level, the endstate is to "overcome the enemy and disarm him." But at the tactical level disarming the enemy requires destroying his fighting forces.<sup>4</sup>

Sunzi advocated that the best option to achieve an ideal victory over the enemy is to '*attack his strategy.*' The second best option is to, '*disrupt his alliances through diplomatic means.*' The next best option is to '*attack his army in the field,*' and the least preferred option is to, '*attack his walled cities.*' This last action is a last resort when all other alternatives have failed.<sup>5</sup> Besides, being

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the best option, the ability to successfully attack the enemy's strategy is also the mark of a strategist because this approach promises an early capitulation of the enemy. Indeed, prolonged wars have never benefited a nation.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of attacking the enemy's strategy is also the central and guiding idea of two dominant and popular Western military theories; manoeuvre theory and effects-based operations (EBO). Both of these theories seek to defeat the enemy through means other than physical destruction (annihilation or attrition) of the enemy's forces. Both theories focus on the employment of military and non-military ways and means to shape the cognitive outcomes of an enemy. In particular, the enemy's understanding of the situation produces the desired psychological sense of defeat and the futility of continued violence.

The concept of attacking the enemy's strategy is conceptually simple, but it is a deceptively complex thing to execute as it may not be able to achieve the desired cognitive outcomes. It is dependent on whether the enemy sees the actions, interprets and understands them against the filters of his prior experience, mental models, culture, and institutional ties and translates these perceptions into a perceived reality of the situation.<sup>7</sup> This article will examine what strategy is and how the process of attacking the enemy's strategy works. In this article I will also present a case study of how Germany attacked France's strategy at the strategic and operational level in 1940 and how France's inability to maintain its strategy hastened its fall.

### **A definition of strategy**

To understand the concept of attacking the enemy's strategy, it is imperative to understand what strategy is. Yet, today there is no single agreed-upon definition of strategy. It is "synonymously used to mean a plan, concept, course of action, or idea of a direction in which to proceed."<sup>8</sup> The essence of strategy is that it is comprehensive, provides directions, facilitates control and is concerned with the application of power.<sup>9</sup>

The word 'strategy' is derived from its Greek word '*strategos*', meaning 'the art of the general.' Clausewitz defined 'strategy' as "the use of combat or the threat of combat, for the purpose of the war in which it takes place," but he also defined it as the "use of armed force to achieve military

objectives and by extension the political purpose of the war.”<sup>10</sup> Basil Liddell Hart provided further clarity by defining ‘strategy’ as two interlinked concepts of ‘grand strategy’ and ‘strategy’<sup>11</sup> with the intent to emphasize the subordination of war to the political objectives. Liddell Hart defined ‘grand strategy’ as “the coordination and direction of all resources of a nation or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war”, while ‘strategy’ is “the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy.”<sup>12</sup>

*The Chinese Military Encyclopaedia* provides a holistic definition of strategy as “the analytical judgement of such factors as international conditions, hostilities in bilateral politics, military economics, science and technology, and geography as they apply to the preparation and direction of the overall military/war plan. It is advantageous to study the occurrences and developments in war forecasting/predictions; to formulate strategic policy, strategic principles, and strategic plans; to make warfare preparation; and to put into place directives on the actual principles and methods of warfare.”<sup>13</sup> The *Science of Military Strategy* provides a similar definition.<sup>14</sup> But that work also offers a short definition of strategy as “a general plan to prepare and direct the preparation and implementation of war.”<sup>15</sup> The *Science of Military Strategy* also pointed out that national interest is the most important factor in shaping strategy as it is both the start and destination of strategy.<sup>16</sup> Since political objectives are derived from national interests, it can be concluded that strategy is therefore the employment of national resources to achieve political objectives. The US Defense Department has a similar definition of strategy and defines it as “a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theatre, national and/or multinational objectives.”<sup>17</sup>

## Ends, ways and means

However, it is probably Lykke’s definition of strategy as a coherent expression of a process that identifies the ends, ways and means to achieve a certain goal<sup>18</sup> that has gained acceptance both in the West as well as the East<sup>19</sup> because of its conciseness and applicability. Ends are the objectives, or desired outcomes, or the intent of a given strategy. The Ways are the actions, methods and processes executed to achieve the ends. The means are the resources required to execute the Way.<sup>20</sup> A generalized definition of strategy is therefore: *Strategy is the art (intuition/experience) and science (scientific*



*principles) of employing available resources (means) in a planned sequence of actions (way) that is most likely to achieve an objective or intent (end).*

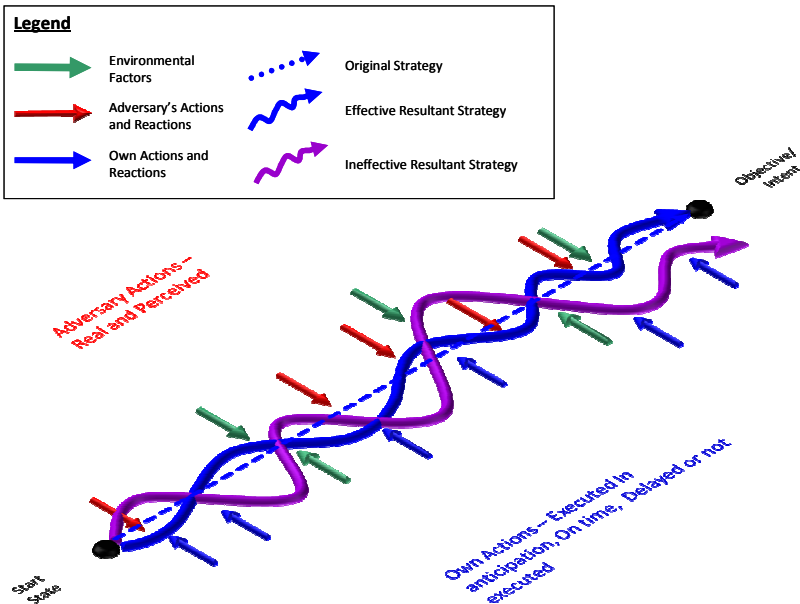
The proposed definition of strategy can be graphically represented by a line of actions to achieve an objective or intent (Figure 1). In an ideal situation where no friction is provided by the adversaries' actions and one's own interactions with the environmental factors, and no fog arises from uncertainty, the base strategy will unfold accordingly and the intent will be achieved easily without any interference. However, war is a contest of wills and wits, with both adversaries trying to achieve their respective intents. Both sides will simultaneously attempt to impose their will upon the other to achieve their intent while each side tries to prevent his enemy from achieving his intent. Battlespace activities viewed from opposing sides thus appear as a series of action-reaction pairs,<sup>21</sup> as one side seeks to disrupt the enemy's strategy to prevent the attainment of his objective, while the enemy attempts to restore his base strategy to attain his objective. This is the horizontal dimension of a strategy where the "adversaries seek to oppose, deflect and reverse each other's actions."<sup>22</sup>

These action-reaction pairs act like forces and in the interactions they may nullify, strengthen or weaken each other. These action-reaction pairs may be planned actions as part of the strategy, contingency responses to real actions, reactions and inactions as well perceived actions, reactions and inactions. Perceived actions, reactions and inactions are the result of anticipating the enemy's actions and/or incorrect understanding of the prevailing situation.

As the respective strategies unfold, action-reaction pairs will also interact with other action-reaction pairs. Even before the previous sets of action-reaction interactions are completed and their effects fully felt, it is possible that the next sets of action-reaction interactions begin to nullify, strengthen or weaken the previous effects. The effects of these actions and reactions are Clausewitzian friction and fog that result in either an effective resultant strategy that achieves the objective/intent or an ineffective resultant strategy that does not achieve the objective/intent.

The ends-ways-means construct can also be used to frame the "vertical dimension of strategy which is an interplay of the different levels of conflict"<sup>23</sup> at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This hierarchical

nature of strategy emphasizes Clausewitz’s idea that war is a series of aims to be achieved through military actions to arrive at the political purpose.

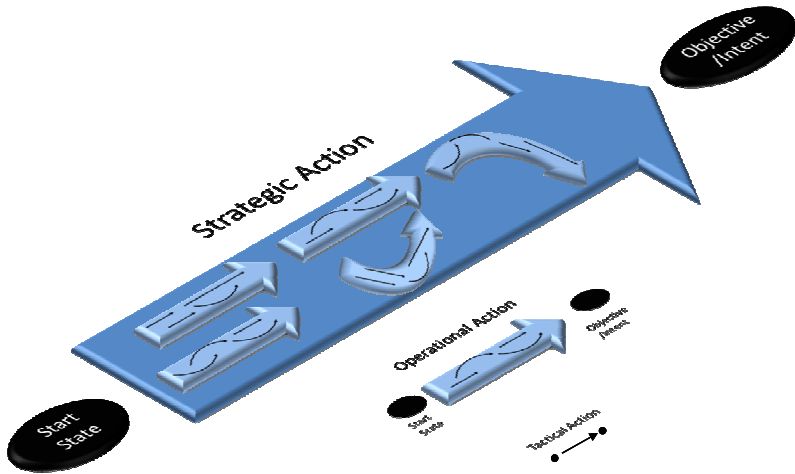


**Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Strategy and the Effects of Action-Reaction Pairs**

### Strategy, operations and tactics

Strategy, operational art and tactics are functionally, temporally, and spatially different. In functionality and temporality tactics is the art of battle, which is an engagement of short duration. Each battle is a tactical action, or a series of tactical actions, and serves to achieve a tactical objective. Operations is the art of the campaign, which is a sequence of battles stretch over a longer period of time. Strategy is the art of war that includes both armed and non-armed conflict among nation states.<sup>24</sup> Spatially, “tactics is narrowly defined, operational level is broader and more regional in orientation, and strategy is theatre-wide, intercontinental, or global.”<sup>25</sup> Tactics is about “parts or pieces, operational art with the combination of the pieces, and strategy with the combinations of combinations,”<sup>26</sup> and the endstate of a previous action can serve as a start

state for the next action creating a nested three-dimensional structure of inter-linked actions and objectives/intent (Figure 2). This nested and inter-linked structure also explains why the outcomes of a series of tactical actions can have strategic implications in a theatre of operations,<sup>27</sup> and the disruption of certain actions at the lower levels can cause the failure of the larger action and the overall strategy.



**Figure 2: Nested Structure of Inter-linked Strategic, Operational and Tactical Actions and Objectives**

A strategy is essentially one of the ways in which means are efficiently applied to achieve the objective. A strategy can be represented as a sequence of operational actions. When other contingency actions (branches and sequels<sup>28</sup>) are added for flexibility and responsiveness, the strategy becomes a lattice of actions and objectives (Figure 3). The most critical action or a node of actions becomes the center of gravity of the strategy as it is the critical connection of various parts of the strategy. It is potentially the single point of failure and prevention of this action or node of actions from taking place forecloses future responses. This renders continuation of the strategy difficult. Such a situation is also likely to produce a psychological impact of feeling powerless and disheartenment as one is deprived of the ability to respond.

The desire of any planner is to make the strategy more resilient,<sup>29</sup> where there are multiple nodes of actions and each with several branches to reach the endstate. The level of resiliency in a strategy is, however, constrained by the amount of resources as each node and branch requires the commitment of some resources. The enemy would also have to employ a significant amount of resources to detect and identify these multiple nodes and to attack these nodes almost simultaneously to render the strategy ineffective.

Figure 3a (page 13) shows two possible ways to achieve the objective. In the selected strategy ABC, node A is the centre of gravity of the strategy. As the neutralization of node A would render the strategy ineffective and force the adoption of an alternate strategy such as strategy XYZ. The neutralization of node B forces the enemy to adopt the AF branch as the adjusted strategy. It will require further neutralization of node F (a sibling of node B from parent node A) to render the strategy ineffective. Neutralization of either node B or F without neutralizing other sibling nodes does not render the strategy ineffective, but it reduces the resiliency of the strategy. Neutralization of the node prior to node A will also terminate the strategy. But as it is in an early and critical stage of the unfolding strategy, the enemy will ensure its attainment and is likely to - invest significant resources to protect it. Additionally, the battlespace activity may be beyond the range and capabilities of the available means to neutralize it. An example of such a node is the sailing of an invasion force enroute to its objective protected by air and naval escorts. However, it may be disadvantageous to attack an unfolding enemy's strategy prematurely because his resources would not be fully committed and it would be much easier to switch to an alternate strategy. Giving time for the enemy's strategy to unfold, tracking his actions to determine his intentions and then attacking it at later stages would produce greater psychological impacts. As each action is systematically defeated, and with fog and friction amplifying the uncertainty of the situation and difficulty of response, the enemy would have entered a vicious cycle of defeat that eventually culminates in a sense of lost cause.

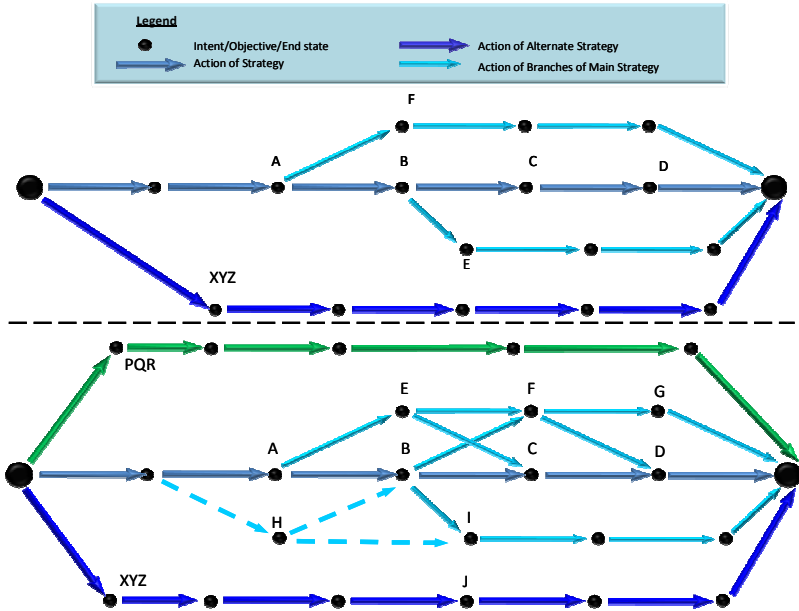


Figure 3a (Top) and 3b (Bottom): A graphical representation of a strategy ABC as a sequence of operational actions including contingency actions (Top); A More Resilient Strategy (Bottom). For simplicity, alternate strategies PQR and XYZ are shown without their branches.

Figure 3b shows a more resilient strategy (ABC) where the centre of gravity is more difficult to determine. Sibling nodes B and E need to be almost simultaneously attacked to render the strategy ineffective. In the event that node A is neutralized, the enemy can transit to an intermediate endstate, node H, if his resources have not been fully committed, allowing him to transit to other branches of the selected strategy. An intermediate objective such as node H would require the enemy to possess sufficient means, abilities, and the strong leadership to create this new node H, regardless of how inefficient it may be, as a response to the neutralization of node A. However, it does not imply that the side with the most means and better abilities will always triumph. Many historical examples have shown that the inferior can defeat the superior through a clever application of strategy.<sup>30</sup> The outcome of a strategy hinges upon the ability to employ critical means as part of the critical action, at the most opportune time,

while protecting and preventing exploitation of own critical vulnerabilities. These factors provide the keys to attacking the enemy's strategy.

### **Attacking the enemy's strategy**

The purpose of strategy is to achieve one's own intent or objectives with minimum resistance while denying the enemy the achievement of his intent or objectives. Its purpose is also to create conditions where the enemy accepts that he has been defeated. Attacking the enemy's strategy is to defeat him at key stages of his unfolding strategy to produce a sense of dislocation that occurs in both the physical and psychological domains.<sup>31</sup> The effect in the physical domain weakens the enemy's physical strength, while the effect in the psychological domain weakens his will to win, produces a sense of hopelessness, and convinces him of the futility of further contest.<sup>32</sup> To successfully attack the enemy's strategy requires a significant amount of good intelligence to accurately anticipate and map out his possible actions and reactions, to know the intentions behind these actions in order to anticipate his current and future actions, identify possible weaknesses in his strategy, and finally to devise a series of counter-actions (a counter-strategy) that use the least amount of resources. These counter-actions should "exploit the enemy's vulnerabilities, erode the enemy's capabilities, achieve relative superiority, and capitalize on the element of surprise and unpredictability"<sup>33</sup> to enhance success. Liddell Hart advocated that at the grand strategy level, the desire is to "discover and pierce the Achilles' heel of the opposing government's power to make war", while at the military strategy level, the desire is to seek to "penetrate a joint in the harness of the opposing force."<sup>34</sup>

The best target of these counter-actions is the centre of gravity of the strategy (or the Achilles' heel, or "joint in the harness" as described by Liddell Hart) and the next best are the sibling nodes to achieve decisive defeat of the enemy. The aim is to unhinge his strategy by preventing the critical means from coming into play, neutralizing the critical action, or nodes of actions, ahead of time to foreclose future options, and/or forcing the enemy to execute his actions at an irrelevant time and space. Doing so, deprives and reduces the enemy of further flexibility that renders the enemy unable to execute his planned sequence of actions. This effectively prevents any further contest and produces a decisive outcome.

The essence of attacking the enemy's strategy is to **pre-empt, dislocate** and **disrupt** the enemy rather than the destruction of his mass. These are also the precepts of manoeuvre theory. **Pre-emption** exploits the time dimension by seizing the opportunity to execute an action before the enemy does so in order to foreclose his options. An early neutralisation of sibling nodes or critical nodes would neutralize or disarm the enemy ahead of time and thereby effectively preventing him from taking part in the fight at all.<sup>35</sup> Pre-emption is characterized by rapid decisions and surprise rather than careful deliberation, and the action is usually an overwhelming and unequal response to the enemy actions or situation. On the other hand, **dislocation** is the art of rendering the enemy's strength irrelevant functionally, temporally, spatially, and morally.<sup>36</sup> Through a combination of creative asymmetrical applications of tactical actions and technology, the enemy's strength can be functionally neutralized or rendered inappropriate. Temporal dislocation is achieved by rendering the enemy's strength irrelevant through the manipulation of time by forcing mistimed application of this strength or completely missing the opportune time for application. Spatial dislocation is achieved by creating local superiority by luring or forcing the enemy out of position, or to be in the wrong space, in the wrong formation, facing the wrong direction, or moving towards the wrong objectives. Moral dislocation serves to offset the enemy's strength through the defeat of the enemy's will. The final precept, **disruption**, is the employment of friendly strength against the enemy's critical vulnerability, defined as that weakness that if exploited will paralyse the enemy or render him ineffective.<sup>37</sup> Rather than attacking the entire system of the enemy, disruption seeks to render the enemy's system inert by discerning and attacking its critical weakness.<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, finding ways to strike at an enemy's weaknesses and bypass his main strength, and thus avoiding a head-to-head confrontation, is the focus of every strategist.<sup>39</sup>

Good intelligence, the concept of 'attacking the enemy's strategy,' requires applying other inter-related military actions such as adequate preparations, intelligence gathering, employment of deception, direct and indirect manoeuvre, executing swift and decisive tactical engagements, and maintaining good situational awareness of the changing situation. The enemy's strategy can be attacked at the grand strategic, military strategic, operational, or tactical levels. As the sense of dislocation reverberates vertically across the various levels, this sense of dislocation is accentuated, particularly in the psychological domain. The overwhelming success of Germany over France in the Second World War provides an interesting

case study of how an insightful application of the concept of attacking the enemy's strategy at the strategic and the operational levels, producing strategic dislocation, operational paralysis, and a tactical dilemma—all of which combined to give Germany a swift and decisive victory.

### **A case study on the fall of France**

On 10 May 1940, a large concentration of German armour advanced into Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland at the start of the campaign in Western Europe. Three days later, the Germans broke the French main line of resistance by successfully crossing River Meuse near Sedan, and advanced their panzer columns towards the Channel, threatening to cut off the British, French and Belgian forces in Belgium. On 17 May 1940, the German completed the envelopment and successfully trapped the most powerful and mobile forces of the British and French military, putting the mighty French military on the verge of defeat. By 20 May 1940, the first German panzer units arrived at the Atlantic Coast, cutting Allied forces into two. With the destruction of key French military units and the entire British Expeditionary Force (BEF) beating a retreat off the continent, the German forces met little resistance in their subsequent advance towards Paris, easily breaking the French defence lines along rivers Aisne and Somme. Despite possessing a large and well equipped army, France suffered a humiliating military defeat as she fell in six weeks and gave Germany its greatest military victory in modern times.<sup>40</sup>

### **Attacking France's national strategy**

#### **France's intent and strategy**

In the event of a war with Germany, France's intent was to wage a two-front war assisted by an eastern ally. This role was played by Russia up to 1914. After the Russian revolution, France needed a new ally and signed a series of treaties with Poland (1921, 1925), Czechoslovakia (1924, 1925), Rumania (1926) and Yugoslavia (1927).<sup>41</sup> This assortment of treaties, however, did not constitute an alliance, even though they had a common interest to defend the Versailles Treaty. It was at best a loose alliance as many these eastern states had border disputes arising from post-World War I demarcation. France also signed a military alliance with Belgium in 1920 to protect its northern flank.<sup>42</sup>



## Germany's intent and strategy

Germany's or rather Hitler's intent was the conquest of the entire European continent including the Soviet Union, North Africa and the Middle East in order to gain Lebensraum or "living space" for a pure German race and the extermination of impure races occupying these territories.<sup>43</sup> Germany systematically isolated and absorbed Austria and Czechoslovakia through a clever application of diplomacy and military aggression. Germany temporarily made peace with stronger or larger states through non-aggression pacts while she undermined and won control over the weaker and vulnerable states. As Germany grew more powerful with each conquest, Germany would rescind the peace treaties with the larger or stronger states and turned on these former allies.

## Attacking France's strategy

The key node which Germany had to disrupt the formation of an alliance and hence a two-front war (Figure 4a). The German diplomatic efforts had to persuade potential French allies to switch allegiance, brought into the German fold or remain neutral. The opening moves came when Germany signed a non-aggression pact with Poland in 1934. At the same time, Germany commenced large scale rebuilding of its military power, introduced conscription in 1935 in violation of the Versailles treaty, reoccupied Rhineland in 1936, and renounced the Versailles Treaty in 1938. France's loose alliance system was dealt another blow when, Belgium cancelled its military alliance in 1936 and declared neutrality to avoid being drawn into an impending war with Germany. Emboldened by the lack of response from Britain and France, Germany seized Austria in 1938 and subsequently annexed Czechoslovakia through diplomatic means at the Munich Conference in late 1938.<sup>44</sup> With its eastern flank now secured, Germany strengthened its southern flank through peace and alliance treaty with Spain and Italy, effectively encircling France. In the final stages of its preparation for the conquest of Western Europe, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact which divided Eastern Europe between Germany and the Soviet Union. Assured of non-interference by the Soviets, Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Britain and France finally declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939.<sup>45</sup> At this stage, France was already in a diplomatically disadvantaged position as she was isolated with little prospects of support or concerted response from any continental

allies other than Britain. France’s alliance to contain Germany was disrupted by the clever German diplomatic and military overtures. The French and British inaction toward containing Germany’s aggressive advances in the inter-war period were driven by a desire to avert the suffering seen in World War I and hence an appeasement policy towards Germany was adopted.

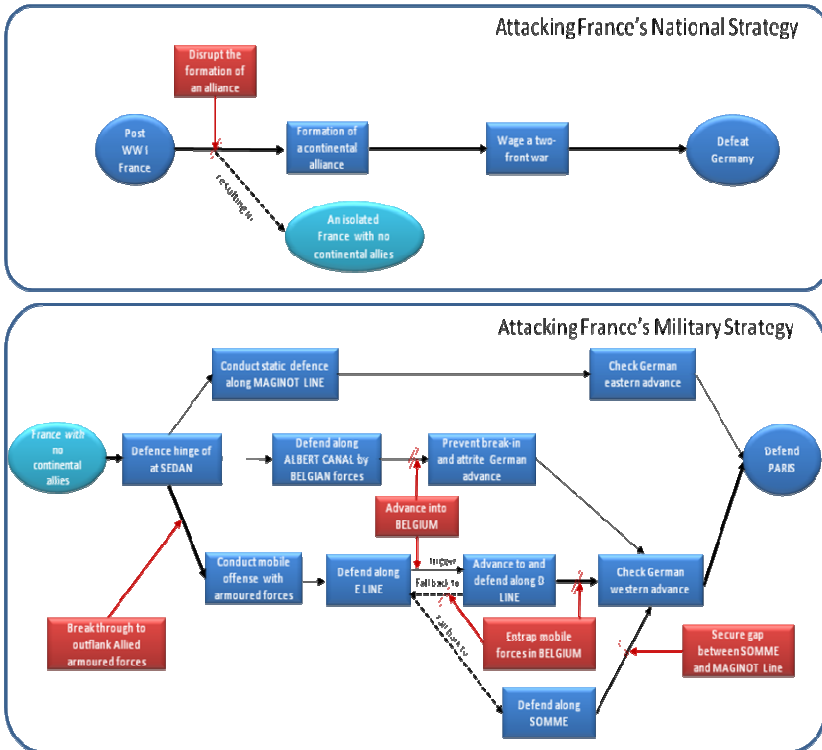


Figure 4a and 4b: Attacking France’s National and Military Strategy

### Attacking France’s military strategy

### France’s intent and military strategy

In the ensuing period after France and Britain declared war on Germany, the Allies intended to strangle the Germany war economy through a blockade while they rebuilt their own military strength for an offensive

against Germany in 1941 or 1942.<sup>46</sup> In the event that Germany attacked, the Allies would rely on the defensive fortification of the Maginot Line on their eastern flank along the German and French border, and upon their powerful and mobile forces to conduct offensive operations on the unprotected western flank. French strategy envisaged a forward defence in Belgium as France did not want to fight on French soil based on the assumption that the main German attack would come through Belgium as the German did in 1914 with the Schlieffen Plan.

There were three possible defence lines for the forward defence plan in Belgium. The first line was along Albert Canal near the Belgian border with Germany. This was the most forward defence and preserved most of Belgium from German attack. The line ran from Antwerp to Maastricht, Liege, Namur and Givet, a town just north of Sedan. Since the cancellation of the military alliance it was not possible to coordinate - defence plans in advance or prepare this defence line properly before a German attack. The second line was known as the E Line that stood further to the West and ran along the River Scheldt (or Escaut in French) and running from Ghent to Namur to Antwerp. The third line was known as the D Line along the French border at Givet along the River Meuse to Namur and then along the River Dyle to Antwerp.<sup>47</sup> The third line actually sacrificed all but Western Belgium to a German attack, but it made the most sense for the British and French forces. The French decided to adopt Plan D and to commit its powerful and mobile forces along D Line to meet the German advance while holding the Maginot Line with its reserve forces. The strategy had a serious vulnerability as the best and most powerful Allied units would be committed into Belgium against what could be a German feint. (For a general orientation see figure 5.)

### **Germany's intent and military strategy**

The German's intent and military strategy for the Western campaign underwent several iterations. The eventual plan adopted as devised by General Erich von Manstein aimed to achieve a conclusive outcome by land,<sup>48</sup> rather than the original intent to "defeat the largest possible elements of the French and Allied armies and simultaneously to gain as much territory as possible in Holland, Belgium and Northern France as a base for further air and seas operations against Britain and also to serve as a broad protective zone for the Ruhr."<sup>49</sup> The campaign plan was designed to exploit France's vulnerabilities to achieve decisive defeat of the French

military and the BEF. The plan employed three Army Groups and sought to reinforce the belief that the main attack would come through the Low Countries as in World War I per the old Schlieffen plan. The supporting effort to be executed by Army Group B into Belgium sought to draw in the BEF and France forces and to meet the Allied forces head-on.

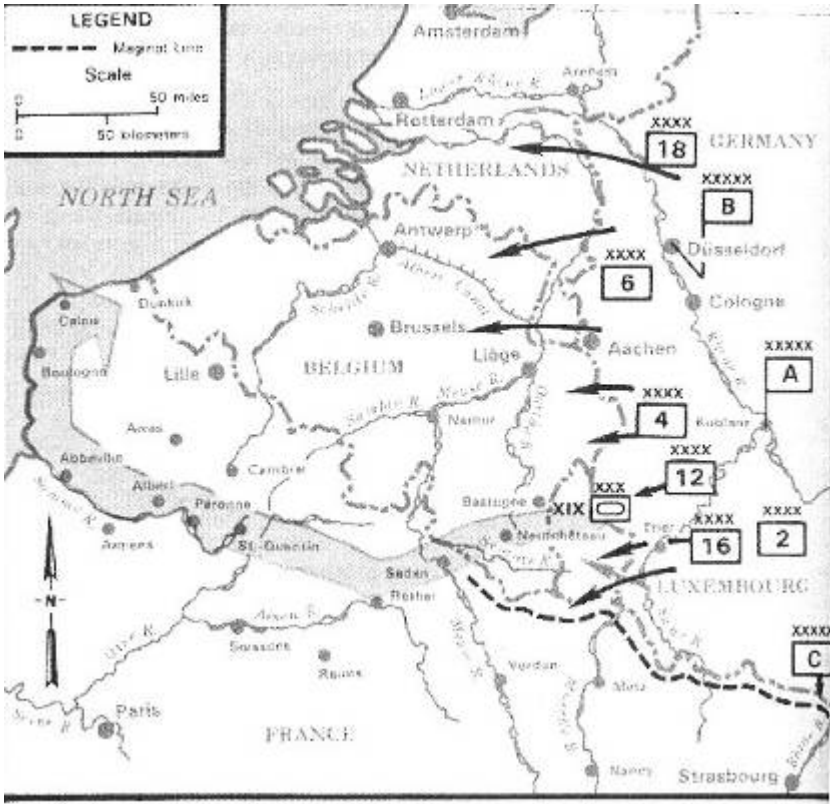


Figure 5: The Manstein Plan

Source: Map from Roger Spiller ed. *Combined Arms in Battle Since 1939* (Ft. Leavenworth: U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute, 1992)

The main effort by Army Group A was to launch a surprise attack through the Ardennes and break through at Sedan towards lower Somme to cut off Allied forces drawn into Belgium, and destroy any enemy concentration between the gap formed by the River Somme and the Maginot line. The

third Army Group C would execute a fixing attack on the Maginot Line in the east.<sup>50</sup> (Figure 5)

### **Attacking France's military strategy**

Manstein knew that it was not possible to achieve strategic surprise as Schlieffen did in 1914, and the Allies would advance strong forces to meet the German advance in Belgium and Holland. Even if the German attack in this sector succeeded, it would have been unlikely to advance beyond the Somme. The Allied forces in Belgium could attempt not to be decisively engaged and fall back to re-establish a formidable defence line along the Somme to the Maginot Line.<sup>51</sup> The German plan had to focus on (1) dislocating the French defence by attacking and breaking through the hinge at Sedan, (2) dislocating French armoured units by entrapping and destroying them, and (3) securing the gap between River Somme and the Maginot Line to prevent the reorganization of a last line of defence (Figure 4b).

The opening strokes by Army Group B in the Low Countries with a combination of indirect approach (airborne drops) and violent assault to the front were so effective that the Belgian front broke in two days and Holland fell in the five days. This triggered the dash of the bulk of Allied mobile forces into Belgium in accordance with Plan D to meet the German Army. This proved fatal as the deeper the Allied forces pushed, the more exposed their flank became and the easier it became for the Germans to cut these mobile forces off. Once cut-off, France would have been deprived of further strategic flexibility<sup>52</sup> and face imminent defeat. The securing of the Lower Somme by the Germans sealed the fate of France because this was the last formidable defence line. Deprived of strategic flexibility to change the situation, and denied of the opportunity to stage a final defence at the Lower Somme, the battle of France was over even before the first German panzers cross the Somme towards Paris.

### **Conclusion**

Liddell Hart described Sunzi's concept that the ideal victory was attained by subduing the enemy without fighting and served as the perfection of strategy. However, victory is attained by other means than destruction of the enemy forces through tactical actions or forcing the enemy armed forces to surrender. The strategic outcome must be about forcing a

decision on the enemy to abandon his purpose and to give up his political objectives or intent.<sup>53</sup> To achieve this, tactical actions or series of tactical actions must attack critical nodes. This will then unhinge the enemy's strategy by foreclosing options and checking his ability to respond to the evolving situation. Deprived of the ability to respond brings upon the physical dislocation, where his physical strength becomes irrelevant, as well as psychological dislocation, which is a weakened will to win. In turn, a sense of hopelessness sets in and the enemy has no choice but to accept and concede defeat.

The rapid success of Germany against France in the Second World War first began in the diplomatic arena, and then continued onto the battlefield. The manner in which the loose French alliance system came asunder and rendered France diplomatically isolated without continental allies was an application of Sunzi's concept of attacking the France's likely strategy to form an alliance against Germany. The German actions in the political/strategic sphere were supported by a German military strategy that took France's powerful mobile forces out of the war by drawing them into Belgium and then cutting them off in Belgium. This left France, leaving France without further options. The acceptance of defeat set in when on 15 May 1940, five days after the Germans had launched their offensive, when Paul Reynaud, the French Prime Minister woke up Winston Churchill with a telephone call, telling him that France has been defeated and they had lost the battle as the first German panzer units broke through at Sedan.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi – The Art of War, A Chinese-English Bilingual Reader* (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, 1993) p 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Chapter 3 – '*Attack by Stratagem*' pp. 14 – 20.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans. (Princeton University Press, 1976) p. 75

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi – The Art of War*, p 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Edward A., Jr. *Effects Based Operations: Applying Network-centric Warfare in Peace, Crisis, and War* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Command and Control Research Program, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Richard H Yarger, *Towards A Theory of Strategy: Arthur Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model, War, National Security Policy and Strategy* Volume II (Carlisle Barracks, US Army War College, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Paret, *The Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton University Press, 1986). p 3.

<sup>11</sup> This is now usually referred to as military strategy.

<sup>12</sup> Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: New American Library, 1974) pp. 322-336.

<sup>13</sup> *Chinese Military Encyclopedia* (Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, July 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, eds., *The Science of Military Strategy* (Military Science Publishing House, Academy of Military Science, 2005) pp. 53-55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (Washington, DC, 12 Apr 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Arthur F. Lykke Jr, ed, *Military Strategy: Theory and Application* (Carlisle: US War College, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> At the Peoples' Liberation Army National Defence University, strategy is taught to be a process to achieve **strategic goals** with **strategic guidelines** providing the main strategic principles, directions and deployments through the employment of **strategic means** shaped by **strategic thoughts** which are foundational principles and concepts of war-fighting and military struggle such as Mao's Active Defence and People's War.

<sup>20</sup> Dale Eikmeier, "A Logical Method for Center-of-Gravity Analysis," *Military Review*, Sep-Oct 2007, pp. 62-66.

<sup>21</sup> These action-reaction pairs need not necessarily be equal and in phase.

<sup>22</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press, 1987) p xxi.

<sup>23</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, p xxi.

<sup>24</sup> John English, "The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War," *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War*, ed. B. J. C. McKercher and Michael Hennessy (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996) p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Richard H Yarger.

*Chinese Military Encyclopedia* (Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, July 1997) p. 690. The PLA also shares a similar perspective but assigns a force level for each level of actions. According to the Academy of Military Science, a campaign is a series of operational activities carried out by a *juntuan* level element of the armed forces under unified command according to a unified plan to achieve the local or overall objectives of war (p. 748). Combat is organized operational activity carried out in a short period of time in a relatively small space by *bingtuan budui*, and *fendui* elements of the armed forces. Combat is normally part of a campaign, and can sometimes be carried out independently. A *juntuan* is defined to be an army or Front army, while *bingtuan* is a Corps, division or brigade, *budui* is a regiment, and *fendui* is a battalion and below (down to a squad). The PLA refers to the three

levels of war as war campaign and combat (II) and missions assigned to these levels of war are strategic, campaign/operational and tactical in nature.

<sup>26</sup> Richard H Yarger.

<sup>27</sup> V. K. Triandafilov, *The Nature of Operations of Modern Armies* (Portland: Frank Cass & Co, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> Contingency plans – branches or sequels allow the rapid execution of responses that are considered, coordinated, resourced and communicated. A Branch or adjustment to the base strategy addresses emerging requirement as the strategy unfolds but the overall intent of the strategy remains the same. Sequel or change in strategy focuses on the dealing with major changes beyond those envisaged in the base strategy and the overall intent is refined or modified.

<sup>29</sup> Resilient is defined as the ability to withstand, recover from and adjust to shock and changes and capable of returning to original position or course.

<sup>30</sup> See Ong Yu-Lin, “Understanding Why the Inferior Defeats the Superior,” *Pointer*, Volume 34 Number 4, March 2009, pp 14-25.

<sup>31</sup> Liddell Hart, p. 325.

<sup>32</sup> Ong Yu-Lin, “In Search of An Ideal Victory: Attacking the Enemy’s Strategy in the Malayan Campaign,” *The Bellona Quarterly*, 1/2008 (652), pp 66-72.

<sup>33</sup> Wee Chou-Hou, *Sunzi Art of the War, An Illustrated Translation with Asian Perspectives and Insights* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2003) p 35.

<sup>34</sup> Liddell Hart, p. 212.

<sup>35</sup> Leonhard, Robert R., *The Principles of War for the Information Age* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1998) p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. pp. 64 - 65

<sup>37</sup> Leonhard, Robert R. *The Art of Maneuver* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1991) p 73.

<sup>38</sup> Leonhard, Robert R. *The Art of Maneuver*, p 74.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Handel, *Masters of War: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini* (London; Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass 1992) p 39.

<sup>40</sup> Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France – The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. pp 62-69.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. pp 63-65.

<sup>43</sup> Bevin Alexander, *How Hitler Could Have Won World War II*, Three River Press, New York, 2000, p. ix.

<sup>44</sup> Liddell Hart, pp. 207 – 214.

<sup>45</sup> Bevin Alexander, pp. 5 – 8.

<sup>46</sup> Julian Jackson, p. 1

<sup>47</sup> Jackson, pp. 29-34.

<sup>48</sup> Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories* (Novato: Presidio Press reprint of 1955 original, 1982) p. 103

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p 97.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. pp 98 – 105.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. pp. 98 - 102



<sup>52</sup> Liddell Hart, p 228.

<sup>53</sup> Liddell Hart, p 224.

<sup>54</sup> Jackson, p 10.

## Solidarity and Sovereignty – The Two-Dimensional Game of Swedish Security Policy

By PhD, Magnus Christiansson\*

### Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyse and interpret the Swedish security policy discourse related to the Defence Bill of 2009 (*inriktningspropositionen*)<sup>1</sup>. The Defence Bill should be regarded as a key policy document for the development of the Swedish defence over the next decade. One of the most puzzling features of it is the emphasis of solidarity in the EU and Nordic region, also in military terms, while maintaining the policy of avoiding NATO membership. This has stirred a debate about the interpretation of the Swedish policy.<sup>2</sup> How could we understand this militarily non-aligned country that declares military solidarity to its neighbouring countries? The conclusion of this analysis is that the Swedish security policy discourse currently could be interpreted as a two-dimensional game of solidarity and sovereignty, and that this perspective challenges the notion that a change of identity is necessary for a lasting change in security policy.

The fundamental framework of this article is that every country has a strategic culture.<sup>3</sup> The interest in strategic culture is motivated, not least, by the fact that the end of the Soviet empire triggered quite different security policies among the countries in the Nordic-Baltic area. What might be considered to be a serious defence proposition in Helsinki is regarded as something of a joke in Copenhagen.<sup>4</sup> Thus, systemic change is not the only interesting approach.

However, the analytic components of a strategic culture are far from obvious. There are several challenges for the study of cultures in general as well as strategic cultures specifically.<sup>5</sup> This article takes the theoretical assumption that strategic culture is both structure and process. Individuals live in a strategic culture, as well, and using strategy culturally for different

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purposes.<sup>6</sup> Change in a strategic culture is not a spontaneous process since, in the hermeneutic words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, “the process of construal is itself already governed by an expectation of meaning that follows from the context of what has gone before.”<sup>7</sup> The methodological logic following this is that language with its symbols and codes is a reflection of meaning.<sup>8</sup> In this way, the study of the debate following the Defence Bill of 2009 or, indeed, in the words of philosopher Paul Ricoeur, “any discourse fixed by writing,”<sup>9</sup> is a method to trace meaning of strategic language in the Swedish strategic culture.

Thus, for the purpose of this article the term discourse is defined as “a system for the formation of statements”<sup>10</sup> about security issues. The key structure of this text is the Defence Bill of 2009, which together with the Defence Commissions (*Försvarsberedningen*), constitutes the focal point for the analysis. The Defence Bill is the official policy of the Swedish government, and the Defence Commission is a preparatory forum with representatives from the group of experts as well as political parties from the parliament. It must be noted that the security policy discourse features elements of both the defence policy as well as foreign policy.<sup>11</sup> However, I will not devote myself to discursive practices, which include capability development or policy implementation in the security policy field. In this sense, the findings of this article are related to the conditions for strategic action. In other words, to get the whole picture one must also study strategic practices.

The structure of the article is as follows. First, I will describe the theoretical elements of two-level or two-dimensional games. The hypothesis introduced in this part is that the Swedish government is involved in a two-dimensional game in order to protect its perceived interests internationally while avoiding the political controversies associated with alliance policies in the Swedish strategic culture. Secondly, I will analyse the discourse of the Defence Bill of 2009 related to the concept of solidarity. I show how the declaration of solidarity is a result of a conceptual stretching that is beneficial for flexible foreign policy action as well as satisfying the traditionalists in the Swedish strategic culture. Furthermore, this part displays how this conceptual stretch challenges the traditional understanding of solidarity and the policy implications for the Swedish strategic culture. Third, I will analyse the discourse of the Defence Bill of 2009 related to issues of sovereignty. We will see how the government engages in a game that tries to maintain the image of

sovereignty as a traditional national concern, while simultaneously widening the meaning of sovereignty to fit an international context. Lastly, I will summarise the main conclusions regarding the Swedish security policy discourse as a two-dimensional game. The findings of this article challenge the notion that a change in identity is necessary for a long term change in security approach.

## Two-dimensional games

One of the traditional features of Swedish security policy theory is the analytic differentiation of the Siamese twins of domestic and foreign policy. Admittedly, in the seminal study *Säkerhetspolitik (Security Policy)* maestro Nils Andréén notes that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two.<sup>12</sup> Not only can foreign policy initiatives undermine defence policy, but defence policy can have consequences on foreign policy as well. There are many cases where the domestic agenda and the foreign policy agenda challenge each other.

In 1988 political scientist Robert Putnam offered a theoretical approach to deal with the questions of *when* and *how* domestic policy influences diplomacy.<sup>13</sup> Following his study of the Bonn Summit in 1978 he noted the appearance of what he called a two-level game. He concluded with something rather obvious: international negotiations could involve *more* negotiation efforts domestically than internationally. This conclusion challenges the view of the state as a unitary international actor. However, among other things, this approach made for a better understanding of ratifications of international agreements. A state can be forced to make an involuntary defection from international agreements caused by a failure to convince domestic actors.

Arguably, since Putnam based his article on game theory, it was difficult to handle situations that were not clearly negotiations or bargaining. Thus, to him the metaphor “game” first related to the meaning of “match” or “gambling.” However, it is quite possible to imagine a perspective in which “game” has the simultaneous meaning of “drama” and “play” as well. The argument is that games could have a double meaning related to interests as well as identities. This latter perspective opens the possibilities for a study of how national strategy can be used to communicate with several purposes and motives.

The Danish scholars Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen have developed the metaphor of what they call sovereignty games.<sup>14</sup> Due to globalisation and, among other things, the use of military capabilities outside state territory, “what emerges is an expansion of the playing field relating to sovereignty.”<sup>15</sup> This, Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen argue, creates a situation where core functions of the state are outsourced while diplomats and statesmen enter a tricky political game, “to simultaneously allow international cooperation and communicate a sense of sovereignty to the domestic audience.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the games become “strategic manoeuvres”<sup>17</sup> motivated by both interest and identities. This framing invites a dual understanding of a discourse: one related to an international arena and one related to the domestic arena.<sup>18</sup>

The key characteristic of the international game is a set of policies that disconnect state power from sovereign territory. In the present context this process has often had the label “Europeanization”, and it has been related to everything from migration control to foreign policy. The key dynamic in this game is that “states engage in conceptual stretching”<sup>19</sup> since there are both domestic and international constraints for policies.

Thus Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen extend the meaning of “conceptual stretching.” The traditional use is closely associated with a methodological problem for comparative categories described by political scientist Giovanni Sartori.<sup>20</sup> Sartori takes categories like “constitution,” “pluralism,” “mobilization,” and “ideology” as examples. If they are not clearly defined they become difficult to use in scientific research. Scholars need to, “adapt their analytic categories to fit the new contexts.”<sup>21</sup> In this article, “conceptual stretching” refers to a process where the extension of meaning of a political concept in a discourse serves the function to accommodate distinctly different political interests.

The key characteristic of the domestic game is a set of policies to enhance autonomy in an international environment. In the Swedish context this is related to the core tasks of Swedish defence and security policy as well as the search for legitimacy for Swedish policies. The key dynamic of this game is that, “national executives are playing on the legal and symbolic arsenal provided by the conceptual framework of sovereignty.”<sup>22</sup>

In her case study comparing Danish and British opt-outs from the EU integration process, Adler-Nissen used these two dimensions as different

aspects of a sovereignty game.<sup>23</sup> Both countries have exceptions from the Maastricht treaty and these exceptions put pressure on state representatives to circumvent these opt-outs with reference to national interests while maintaining respect for public opinion. The driver of this double-edged process when state officials circumvent opt-outs is, “to reduce their exclusionary effects, so the figure of an autonomous state is preserved at home despite its entanglement in the European integration process.”<sup>24</sup>

The hypothesis is thus: that the traditional lack of an alliance policy in the Swedish strategic culture represents such an “opt-out” from the European integration process. According to the Lisbon Treaty, its mutual assistance clause: “shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.”<sup>25</sup> This opens similar opportunities for a two-dimensional game like the ones described by Adler-Nissen. The Swedish government tries to protect its perceived interest in the international process of security integration, while maintaining the domestic image of Sweden as a militarily non-aligned country with full freedom of action. The political rationale for this hypothesis is that the Swedish government wants to be a part of the continued security integration process, while avoiding the political controversies associated with alliance policies in the Swedish political context. Developing a study of the Swedish security policy from this perspective fits with earlier calls for research on the frequent conceptual stretching of neutrality and development of national identity as well as political language.<sup>26</sup>

This discursive operation certainly has elements of an Orwellian “doublespeak.” However, there is no necessary intention to create euphemisms or to mislead. The official policy can have one meaning in a domestic debate about defence, and a rather different connotation during international discussions in Brussels and Washington. The importance of this is that security doctrine does not necessarily need to be a trade-off between domestic and international dimensions. In other words: a two-dimensional game does not necessarily turn an actor into a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde character.

The two game dimensions could be identified in the Defence Bill of 2009. The tasks that the Swedish government sets for defence are expressed in it. From 2010 the tasks of the armed forces are, “to defend and promote security, alone and together with others, nationally and internationally.”<sup>27</sup>

Analytically this creates four strategic cases: to defend the country alone, to act alone abroad, to defend the country together with others, and to act abroad together with others. Since the Defence Bill of 2009 features tasks that demand singular defence as well as action with others, it displays the inherent duality for a militarily non-aligned country engaged in a process of security integration. The tasks relate clearly to the issue of sovereignty (the ability of a state to defend and control its territory) as well as the issue of solidarity (the musketeer principle of all for one and one for all).

In the two coming sections we will study these two game dimensions in the security discourse. In the first section we will look closely at the solidarity dimension. We will see how this game is influenced by a conceptual stretching that serve as circumventions as well as refuge for actors with an interest in maintaining military non-alignment. However, the changing meaning of solidarity also poses many challenges for policy. After that we will turn to the sovereignty dimension. Here we will note the recurring patterns of reassurances for a domestic audience.

### **The solidarity dimension: The conceptual stretching of solidarity**

One of the most striking features of the Swedish Defence Bill of 2009 is the declaration of solidarity. It states that, “Sweden’s security is built in solidarity and cooperation with other countries,”<sup>28</sup> and “The security of the country is not just protected on our own borders.”<sup>29</sup> Following the report of the Defence Commission of 2008 the government declared:

*“Sweden will not remain passive if a catastrophe or attack should hit another member country or Nordic country. We expect these countries to act similarly should Sweden be hit. Sweden should have the ability to give and receive military support.”<sup>30</sup>*

In 2004 the Defence Commission declared a solidarity that could include military support after a terror attack or catastrophe.<sup>31</sup> The Commission referred explicitly to the declaration made by the EU Council in March 2004 after the terror attack in Madrid. This solidarity is expressed in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as Article 222. Interestingly, in the Defence Bill of 2004 even if the same declaration of solidarity was made, there was no reference to military support.<sup>32</sup> Both documents concluded that there was no contradiction between solidarity in crisis management and military non-alignment.

However, even though the Defence Commission and the Defence Bills of 2004 introduced a declaration of solidarity, it is misleading to draw the conclusion that the concept of neutrality was absent from the discourse. The Left Party used neutrality as an argument against any further military developments in the EU.<sup>33</sup> It is also interesting that it was the representative from the Left Party that highlighted a lack of analysis of the constitutional EU clause on mutual assistance in the event of an armed attack. How could there be no contradiction between solidarity and military non-alignment if solidarity was to include *also* armed attacks?<sup>34</sup> This latter clause is expressed in Article 42(7) of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the European Union.

The Defence Commission of 2007 expanded the declaration of solidarity to the Nordic countries Iceland and Norway, but still had a reference to the events in Madrid 2004.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the text still connected solidarity to the growing threat of terrorism. The Defence Commission of 2008 used the same declaration of solidarity, but with no reference to the events in Madrid. The meaning of solidarity was expanded so that, “Sweden can contribute with military support in catastrophes’ and conflict situations.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, in the Defence Commission of 2008, there was no longer any explicit reference to solidarity in the meaning of Article 222. Instead, the meaning had changed so that it had a range from crisis management to conflicts involving the use of military forces and a scope that included also NATO countries.

The Defence Bill of 2009 referred to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty that was made by the parliament on 20 November 2008.<sup>37</sup> It concluded that the declaration of solidarity means that, “Sweden will receive and give military support in another way than previously.”<sup>38</sup> So even though the phrases of the declaration had been established, the use of them was announced as change. Thus, the discursive patterns challenged the established meaning of the declaration of solidarity. The connection between solidarity, military support, and Article 222 within the EU was expanded and supplemented by solidarity, military support, and Article 42(7) within the EU and Norway and Iceland.

The confusion that followed in the debate on the Defence Bill of 2009 shows how this continuing process of conceptual stretching between 2004 and 2009 served as both tool and refuge for different actors in the Swedish strategic culture. Defence analyst Stefan Ring has written an interesting



analysis that points to a general tendency to make two different interpretations.<sup>39</sup> The first interpretation is based on the notion that Sweden can keep full freedom of action in foreign policy. The meaning of the declaration of solidarity is that it refers strictly to terror attacks according to Article 222.<sup>40</sup> The second interpretation is based on reciprocity and that credibility for a declaration of solidarity lay in practical preparations also for armed attacks according to Article 42(7).<sup>41</sup>

This ambiguity of the declaration of solidarity in the Defence Bill of 2009 has the function to allow a flexible Swedish foreign policy rhetoric. In the parliament on 17 February 2010 the foreign minister presented the Swedish security policy doctrine that avoided the negative definition of military non-alignment:

*“The membership in the European Union means that Sweden is a part of a political alliance and takes a solidaric responsibility for the security of Europe. Sweden will not remain passive if a catastrophe or attack should hit another member country or Nordic country. We expect these countries to act similarly should Sweden be hit.”*<sup>42</sup>

It is notable that the wording on the ability to give and receive military support was absent. This statement is, among other things, an emphasis of the civilian aspects of the Swedish doctrine while avoiding disturbing those in the Swedish strategic culture believing in full freedom of action and solidarity according to Article 222. In Helsinki on 4 March 2010 the Swedish foreign minister presented his view on the ongoing process to form a future strategic concept of NATO:

*“First - let me just stress how important the Article V commitment that is at the core of the Alliance is for all of Europe. There is no doubt that it was of outmost importance during the most critical period of that dark phase of Europe's history that come to an end in 1989. Let us be clear: this was of fundamental importance also to Sweden during those decades when our aim was to make it possible for us to remain neutral in a new European- or world-wide conflict. And let us also be clear about how important this remains to all of Europe also today. The security it gives to the members of the Alliance contributes to stability of a much wider area - including the entire Nordic and Baltic area. Thus, when I hear that there will be a renewed emphasis also on the Article V commitments in the strategic review underway I can only welcome this.”*<sup>43</sup>

This is, among other things, an emphasis of the importance of military solidarity in the Euro-Atlantic area. Sweden's policy of neutrality was

always dependent on military alliance commitments across the Atlantic and the statement underlines the continued importance of the stability provided by military alliance commitments.

But the declaration of solidarity also provides a policy refuge for those that embrace security integration within the EU while stressing the continued freedom of action in a crisis response. Using the EU as a security cooperation platform does not restrain Sweden's foreign policy. According to this logic, participation in deeper military cooperation is important for the general influence it gives Sweden, while defence planning of other countries is categorically out of the question. The spokesperson for the Social Democrats argued in 2004 for the importance of military cooperation within the EU:

*“If there is a crisis and the EU has to provide troops, the question is passed around the table. Any nation that does not raise its hand will be regarded as lightweight – also in other political issues.”<sup>44</sup>*

In 2010 the same spokesperson made a passionate case for *not* participating in the defence planning of the Baltic States.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Sweden should continue to be an active player on the European security arena, while maintaining its military non-alignment. There have been many signals from the Social Democrats that the declaration of solidarity does not mean any commitments in military terms.<sup>46</sup> Solidarity in military terms is a choice, not an obligation.

### **The declaration of solidarity and the domestic arena**

As noted before, the use of solidarity in military terms has been in the official discourse since 2004. However, the public debate and controversy regarding the declaration of solidarity did not start until five years later, when the government put forward the Defence Bill of 2009. This sequence is curious: the introduction of solidarity in the discourse in 2004, and the conceptual stretching in 2007 and 2008 made the concept wider and deeper, the ratification from the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, and a public controversy about the declaration of solidarity in 2009 and 2010. Despite this controversy we can note that there was no involuntary defection of the Lisbon Treaty in Robert Putnam's terms. Logically this fit the interpretation that the conceptual stretching provided some leeway in

policy for different actors. But the *timing* of the debate is nevertheless interesting.

The declaration has an interesting genealogy.<sup>47</sup> It is a story of how solidarity replaced neutrality as the key concept in the Swedish security doctrine starting around 1992. The traditional policy was challenged mainly by the political Right and Liberals. The Cold War history and any adjustments to the traditional doctrine of “military non-alignment in peace, for the purpose of neutrality in war” became more of an issue for political confrontation during the 1990s. Around the turn of the century the Social Democrats became open to doctrinal change, and the concept of neutrality was abandoned in the official rhetoric.<sup>48</sup> After 2004 the conceptual stretching of solidarity, noted earlier, commenced.

One way of understanding the relative absence of early public debate could be Euroscepticism.<sup>49</sup> Entering the EU was a painful process for the mostly pro-EU political establishment. It could be argued that the political establishment did not want a disturbing debate about security integration because the population had been reluctant Europeans. However, this explanation could be misleading since the development after the membership in 1995 has normalised the EU and has made it more of an accepted dimension in policy.<sup>50</sup> Both Social Democrats and the non-socialist parties have made the EU a central tool in Swedish foreign policy.

A supplementary interpretation is that the relatively consistent negativity towards NATO<sup>51</sup> and solidarity in military terms made the EU the only forum for continued security integration. While many other European countries could handle military alliance commitments in NATO and a military crisis management concept in the EU, Sweden focused on the EU only. The Social Democrats could accept it and the non-socialist parties could buy it. According to this interpretation, the growing consensus on the EU as an indispensable part of Swedish policy hampered any questioning that moved the EU debate into forbidden policy territory. The EU was the main arena, but it could not be branded as an Alliance project in military terms. Nevertheless, in different ways the development of the doctrine challenges the understanding of solidarity in the Swedish discourse.

Before the conceptual stretching phase from 2004 on the term solidarity had not been used in a military meaning. To use the two terms “solidarity”

and “military” in the same context does not have any credence in the Social Democratic discourse. Solidarity is used in a civilian context and is, in the words of the poet Gunnar Ekelöf, about “seeing oneself in others.”<sup>52</sup> On the contrary, the traditional amalgamation of terms was always “international solidarity.” This concept guided the foreign- and aid policies during the Cold War. Through an international outlook an ideological connection could be made between the internal development of a welfare state and the struggle for decent conditions for people in foreign nations.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, a central aspect of international solidarity during the Cold War was justice (*rättvisa*). Justice referred not only to economic conditions, but it was also used to underline the right to self-determination for all people.<sup>54</sup> This latter interpretation came to amalgamate international solidarity with the defence for international law. The argument is plainly that Social Democracy is embedded in an ideological cosmology in which, “international solidarity,” “justice,” and “international law” are inter-linked concepts.<sup>55</sup> This is likely to be one of the most durable ideological inheritances from Olof Palme.

In contrast, the non-socialist political parties do not have any traditional attachment to solidarity. The term did not have the same meaning or even any place in the political language. When used in discourse today it is often closely associated with Europe and the EU.<sup>56</sup> From this perspective, solidarity is a natural consequence of the membership in the EU as well the political declarations about closer defence cooperation among the Nordic states. The declaration of solidarity, it has been said, has not created a new situation but has confirmed something already established.<sup>57</sup>

As has been noted, the current status of solidarity in the Swedish political discourse is that of a heterotopia.<sup>58</sup> Most actors like it-- but for very different reasons. This makes it apparent that the Swedish declaration of solidarity does not have any clear meaning in the discourse. The ideological caveats are indeed different: for left-wingers<sup>59</sup> solidarity is a civilian term with no strings attached, for the non-socialists it is a logical continuation of the EU membership. Thus, the established phrase “security is built in cooperation with others” has an ideological ambiguity. There is great difference in interpretation between a leading Social Democrat who claims that the declaration of solidarity does not mean anything new in military terms, versus the top bureaucrat at the Defence Ministry who claims that the declaration of solidarity represents a historical point of refraction, to the open activism represented by certain Liberal Conservatives.<sup>60</sup> This

central component of the doctrine could thus potentially become problematic in a situation when solidarity is to be realised in practise.

### **The sovereignty dimension:**

#### **The legal and symbolic arsenal of sovereignty**

This part of the article will largely on how the Swedish defence and security discourse deals with the tasks that relate to national defence. The traditional role for the armed forces in Sweden was always connected with these tasks. However, ever since the mid-1990s the armed forces have been undergoing a series of reforms with the explicit purpose of adapting them to a strategic environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In this respect Sweden is deeply integrated in a transformation process that is recognised in large parts of Europe. This process started during the 1990s and has been marketed with Anglo-Saxon slogans such as *go out of area, or out of business*, and *use it or lose it*.<sup>61</sup> The aim for the development of the armed forces is to become a flexible operations-defence (*flexibelt insatsförsvar*)<sup>62</sup>

Nevertheless, the tasks for the armed forces include the capacity to act without foreign support related to national security. Hence, we can note that the Defence Bill of 2009 states that:

*“Thus, the Government does not exclude that Sweden alone will need to handle threats to our security where the military defence is concerned. Accordingly, such capability must exist.”*<sup>63</sup>

The transformation of the armed forces with a focus on availability and flexibility is coupled with a parallel consideration of upholding capabilities that could also be used for singular military defence. The armed forces still have the task to defend Sweden without foreign assistance.<sup>64</sup>

Interestingly, this task is a key aspect of the very foundation of Swedish defence policy. The argument has two components: security and sovereignty. According to the government, security is defined as a *means* to achieve a number of ends. In the Defence Bill of 2009 it is claimed that: “The maintenance of our country’s sovereignty is a precondition for Sweden to achieve the aims of our security.”<sup>65</sup> Note the grammatical mixture in the sentence: there is a distinction between the sovereignty of the country, and the aims of security. However, the two concepts are linked as sovereignty is a *precondition* for security. Already the Defence

Commission of 2008 sets the focus to “Swedish sovereignty” and the maintenance of it serves as a means to the aims of security.<sup>66</sup>

The official doctrine regarding defence cooperation is that there are no limits as long as national sovereignty is guaranteed.<sup>67</sup> The government has sometimes argued for common capability development in the Nordic context, while maintaining separability of Swedish military units and capabilities.<sup>68</sup>

The interpretation of this discursive pattern is crucial. In the Defence Bill of 2009 sovereignty is defined as its “established meaning in international law”.<sup>69</sup> The combination of the key task to defend the country without foreign help, maintaining singular military capabilities, and sovereignty as precondition for security could be interpreted as a reassurance of a preserved national defence system. One could get the impression that the nation state will continue to keep up its guard against any future threats to the national territory. Thus, one interpretation of the sovereignty dimension is that the connections between defence, sovereignty, and security serve as a chain of inter-linked concepts that deal with the traditional function of military defence. A major function of this game is that the building of a domestic image of the centrality of national sovereignty is that the government can maintain an ideal of *independence* rather than *interdependence*.

However, the use of sovereignty is also marked with other connotations. The Swedish government’s use of sovereignty is far from uniform. The Defence Bill of 2009 elaborates on the subject in the following:

*“The strategic development in our immediate surroundings leads to a need for a military capability for proactive national action to promote the aims of our security, Swedish sovereignty, sovereign rights, and national interests.”*<sup>70</sup>

This notion of a “military capability for proactive national action” is not traditionally linked to sovereignty. The traditional territorial defence was rather a *reaction* than *proaction* to foreign aggression. Furthermore, the Defence Bill of 2009 clarifies that the precondition for security (sovereignty) is not enough to achieve the aims of security: “The aim of the military defence is not achieved only through the maintaining of the country’s borders and territorial integrity.”<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, during the confusing debate about the declaration of solidarity in the Autumn of

2009, the government made a clarification: “The defence of Sweden shall not only be conducted within our borders.”<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the precondition for security is also achieved through military proactive national actions. Nonetheless, this is not enough to attain the aims of military defence – defence of the country should also be conducted outside of the country. In an analogy, but actually with completely reversed direction, Sweden must also be prepared to develop its military capabilities in international cooperation:

*“Capabilities that firstly have a national direction and are considered to be demanded in a long term perspective should be evaluated from the possibility of finding solutions based on international cooperation which leads to maintenance with limited resources.”<sup>73</sup>*

In this interpretation sovereignty and defence are not linked exclusively to a national concern. Military proactive national actions necessary for security could be done in other countries as well as together with other countries. The capabilities to maintain the precondition for security are created together with other countries. Sovereignty and defence are linked via international cooperation. This is recognition of *interdependence* rather than *independence*.

### **Sovereignty as national or international concern**

The context for the different images of sovereignty used by the Swedish government must be taken into consideration. The development after the end of the Cold War has been marked mainly by two major changes in the official Swedish security policy discourse: how threats are constructed and how the role of the armed forces is regarded. These changes are notable in the sense that they represent the official discourse and other perspectives tend to be alternatives to the official system of statements on security policy.

The changing construction of threats is related to the growing tendency of “Europeanization” covered by many scholars.<sup>74</sup> As noted before, the European Union became central for Swedish security initiatives in the 1990s. Furthermore, the full meaning of Europeanization in the Swedish case is that the analytical category of power politics is very weak, marginalised, or absent in official documents. There is a clear tendency to emphasise a wider security concept.<sup>75</sup> The Swedish government hardly

elaborates on power politics in the Nordic-Baltic context.<sup>76</sup> This change is visible in the way the Swedish government analyses Russia. The policy during the decade after the Soviet collapse seems to have been dictated by the balance between democratic critique and encouragement, an act that did not change much from the Social Democrat or bourgeois governments. However, since Russia under Vladimir Putin has acted in ways that depart from the assumptions of Europeanization, the Swedish government has developed a differentiated view of its Eastern neighbour: one that on the one hand was flexible for the uncertainties in the development, while on the other hand provided policy space for a continued faith in Europeanization. After the crisis in Georgia in August 2008, this diversification became visible in a clear way. According to the government the Russia that acts militarily in the Caucasus is something else than the Russia that acts in the Baltic Sea region or the Arctic region.<sup>77</sup>

The defence implications related to the uncertainties in Russia provides a clear illustration of the second fundamental change: the role of the military instrument. During the Cold War the role of the military defence was that of insurance. This rhetoric is quite elegant: an insurance premium had to be paid to create safety if an accident should happen. The central element of this metaphor is that there is no point in itself to make a claim on the insurance. To pay for security was a routine that did not entail any active service in return. Military capabilities had an inherent value in themselves, because they could be one of the factors that stopped a military attack from occurring. The fundamental function of a military force was connected to deterrence towards foreign powers. According to this logic, the reaction to insecurity was to strengthen the credible capabilities for deterrence. The major change in the defence debate after the Cold War is that military forces are no longer considered to have a value in themselves. The development of a flexible operations-defence means creating more *available* military units. Thus, a consequence of this reasoning is that military systems that for some reason do not have high availability lose value and priority.<sup>78</sup>

However, these two discursive changes are far from uncontested. There are several influential critics that argue for the continued relevance of power politics as well as the deterrence role of military forces. The underlying point of departure for the analysis is: what happens if Russia becomes a major power that poses a military threat once again? The implicit and explicit military concern is: can Sweden defend itself?



According to the staunch critics Sweden hardly makes any efforts to take on a major confrontation single-handedly. There is a tension towards defence supporters of the old guard that tends to criticise the lack of capabilities for national defence.<sup>79</sup>

These somewhat overlooked consequences of the Europeanization (and its counterreaction) make it much easier to understand the different images of sovereignty used by the government in the Defence Bill of 2009. On the one hand, there is a need to assure a domestic audience that sovereignty is secured alone, which means that it essentially is a national concern. However, both the Social Democratic and the current non-socialist governments argue that Sweden should not focus exclusively on territorial defence, even if the capabilities should be maintained. Therefore, on the other hand, there is a need to introduce the domestic audience to the notion that sovereignty is secured in cooperation with others. This means that it also is an international concern.

Some critics have pointed out that this line of reasoning is built on the assumption that foreign powers will always assist Sweden and that this could result in wishful thinking in a crisis in the Baltic Sea region. Analysts that have pointed out that the capacity to receive foreign military aid have largely been neglected.<sup>80</sup>

The main point is that the use of sovereignty marks a fundamental national concern, while it also serves as an ambition for the international cooperation. It can be not only “established,” “Swedish,” and a point of departure but also “proactive,” and resting on international cooperation. There are two conflated consequences from this: the dual uses of sovereignty obscure its meaning in the security doctrine, and the domestic audience has a hard time figuring out how to act upon it.

An example of obscurity is the aim to maintain separability of Swedish military units. On the one hand it could be argued that national military capabilities are what give sovereignty its very meaning. There is no point in stressing sovereignty as a requirement in international cooperation if one does not have any units to command. On the other hand the ambitions of Swedish defence go beyond its borders and its sovereignty partly relies on the status of others.

These remarks are not just hypothetical considerations. Actors in the domestic audience find it difficult to act on these different signals. One illustration of this relates to the question of how to conduct military exercises of territorial defence. During the 1990s these exercises slowly faded away. Nevertheless, there has been a renewed interest in strengthening territorial control over the last years. Should the exercises on territorial defence be conducted in a similar way as during the Cold War, or should they rely on assumptions of a multilateral setting? For example, when the armed forces conducted a relatively small scale exercise for the local defence of the island of Gotland in September 2009, the commanding general gave explicit instructions that all orders should be given in Swedish.<sup>81</sup> Was this right or wrong? If Sweden should be able to handle military threats alone it might seem reasonable. However, if capabilities for national defence are to be developed in international cooperation, and if defence of Sweden takes place also across the Baltic Sea then it might be problematic. One could note that the general's decision suddenly jeopardise more than a decade of preparations for "interoperability."

### **The two-dimensional game of solidarity and sovereignty**

The purpose of this article is to examine how one can understand a militarily non-aligned country that declares military solidarity with its neighbouring countries. The perspective of two-dimensional games has showed us this "ambiguity at work" as the saying goes.<sup>82</sup> As noted, the conceptual stretching of solidarity has created a heterotopia in Swedish security policy. Different actors can use solidarity it for quite different purposes – both as a sign of Sweden's active involvement in the Euro-Atlantic integration and as fully compatible with *status quo* for military non-alliance. We have also studied the differentiated use of sovereignty by the government. It becomes understandable how sovereignty simultaneously can mean self-reliance and interdependence if put into context of the Swedish defence debate.

The use of a two-dimensional game approach challenges an established perspective of security integration as the process of socialisation in a EU context.<sup>83</sup> According to the theory of socialisation an integration process potentially moves a discourse of a country from instrumental adaptation to a change in security identity and learning. This idea is based on the assumption that a change of identity is necessary for a stable and long term

change in security approach.<sup>84</sup> Thus, international integration demands adjustments in identity.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, changes in a discourse becomes one-dimensional and Sweden has, compared to its Nordic neighbours, been described as having “undergone a more stable and enduring change in security policy.”<sup>86</sup>

However, this one-dimensional learning perspective makes it difficult to explain the peculiarities of the Swedish case. If there really is a change of identity and learning has happened, why is the idea of collective security in Europe so controversial? If the Lisbon Treaty was fully integrated in the security identity, why is the meaning of solidarity so multiplied and controversial? Furthermore, why does Swedish membership in NATO seem just as unlikely today as it was twenty years ago?

It seems fair to say that the theory of socialisation provides us with a narrow view of a strategic culture. Such a one-dimensional perspective fails to comprehend the full potential of the political terminology under study. It might be that the security policy discourse in Sweden has become more uniform. But as this study has shown, the process of conceptual stretching makes it possible to use the same discourse for audiences with potentially different preferences.

One of the major advantages with using the approach of two-dimensional games is that it becomes easier to understand the peculiarities of the Swedish case. Instead of having the idea that Swedish officials are socialised from neutrality to a euro-atlantic discourse, it becomes easier to follow the use of terms like solidarity and sovereignty if applied in a game framework. Rather than challenging public opinion in the security and defence area, a sophisticated discursive game has been developed to stretch the meaning of solidarity and sovereignty.

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<sup>1</sup> Regeringen, *Ett omvänderbart försvar* Prop 2008/09:140.

<sup>2</sup> Two examples include Bo Hugemark, “Sverige måste kunna försvara sina grannar” *Svenska Dagbladet* 29 January 2009, and Claes Arvidsson, “En värld – två alternativ” *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 February 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Strategic culture is introduced in Jeffrey S. Lantis & Darryl Howlett, “Strategic culture” in John Baylis, James J. Wirtz & Colin S. Gray (eds.), *Strategy* 3rd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 84-103. The relationship between strategic culture and more established research traditions is covered in John Glenn, Darryl

Howlett & Stuart Poore (eds.), *Neorealism versus Strategic Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Note that the assumption of strategic culture on a national level does not mean that strategic cultures are national per definition.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of Nordic strategic culture, see *Cooperation & Conflict* Vol. 40. No. 1, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> This is mirrored by the Gray-Johnston debate. On the one hand strategic culture is regarded as context that shapes and provides meaning to strategic actions, on the other hand strategic culture is regarded as one variable among several that explain strategic actions. For an introduction and comment on the Gray-Johnston debate, see Stuart Poore, "What is the context? A comment on the Gray-Johnston debate on strategic culture" in *Review of International Studies*, 2003, p. 279-284.

<sup>6</sup> This approach to culture is in line with the hermetic historians at Lund University, see Klas-Göran Karlsson & Ulf Zander (Eds.), *Echoes of the Holocaust – Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in, *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> The roots of this approach could be traced to Gadamer, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Karlsson & Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Iver B. Neumann & Henriikka Heikka, "Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice" in *Cooperation & Conflict* Vol. 40. No. 1, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> This heuristic divide is inspired by Kjell Engelbrekt & Jan Ångström (eds.), *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen* (Stockholm: Norstedts Juridik, forthcoming). Engelbrekt & Ångström argue that security policy is defined by the activities at the Defence Ministry and the Foreign Ministry.

<sup>12</sup> Nils Andréén, *Säkerhetspolitik – Analyser och tillämpningar* andra upplagan (Stockholm: Norstedt Juridik, 2002), p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games" *International Organization*, Vol. No. 3, (Summer 1988), p. 427-460.

<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, "An Introduction to Sovereignty Games" in Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (Eds.), *Sovereignty Games – Instrumentalizing State Sovereignty in Europe and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Note that these dimensions are not synonymous to "horizontal games" and "vertical games" used by Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen.

<sup>19</sup> Adler-Nissen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, "An Introduction to Sovereignty Games", p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Giovanni Sartori, "Comparing and Miscomparing" in Bernard E. Brown & Roy C. Macridis (Eds.), *Comparative Politics. Notes and Readings* Eight Edition (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1996), p. 24.

- <sup>21</sup> David Collier & James E. Mahon, Jr, "Conceptual 'stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis" in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (Dec. 1993), p. 845.
- <sup>22</sup> Adler-Nissen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, "An Introduction to Sovereignty Games", p. 12.
- <sup>23</sup> Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "Organized Duplicity? When States Opt Out of the European Union" in Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (Eds.), *Sovereignty Games – Instrumentalizing State Sovereignty in Europe and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 81-104.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>25</sup> Consolidated Treaty on the European Union, Article 42(7).
- <sup>26</sup> See Johan Eliasson, *Traditions, Identity and Security: The Legacy of Neutrality in Finnish and Swedish Security Policies in Light of European Integration* EIoP Vol. 8 Nr. 6 2004, p. 13.
- <sup>27</sup> Regeringen, *Ett avändbart försvar*, Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 33.
- <sup>28</sup> Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 9.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. Authors translation. Regarding giving and receiving military support the term "shall" is used on page 35. See also Regeringen, *Försvar i användning*, Ds 2008:48, p. 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Regeringen, *Försvar för en ny tid*, Ds 2004:30, p. 39-40.
- <sup>32</sup> Regeringen, *Vårt framtida försvar*, Ds 2004/05:5, p. 23.
- <sup>33</sup> Regeringen, *Säkerhet i samverkan*, Ds 2007:46, p. 51-52. Expressed by Left Party representative Gunilla Wahlén.
- <sup>34</sup> Ds 2004:30, p. 178-179. Expressed by Left Party representative Berit Jóhannesson.
- <sup>35</sup> Ds 2007:46 p. 11.
- <sup>36</sup> Ds 2008:48, p. 16.
- <sup>37</sup> Ds 2008/09:140, p. 9.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>39</sup> Stefan Ring, "Solidaritetsförklaringen", Speech at the AFF and People and Defence conference on the declaration of solidarity 3 March 2010, (<http://aff.a.se/20100303.pdf>)
- <sup>40</sup> See for example statements by Nils Daag on the topic "The Lisbon Treaty – What is Changing?" at *People and Defence annual National Conference 2010*.
- <sup>41</sup> See for example Bo Hugemark & Johan Tunberger, *Trovärdig solidaritet? Försvaret och solidaritetsförklaringen* (Stockholm: Stiftelsen Den Nya Valfärden, 2010).
- <sup>42</sup> Regeringen, *Regeringens deklaration vid 2010 års utrikespolitiska debatt i Riksdagen den 17 februari 2010*, UD 2010, p. 2.
- <sup>43</sup> Carl Bildt, "Common challenges ahead" Remarks at *Seminar on Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management within the Debate about NATO's New Strategic Concept*, Helsinki, 4 March 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Mikael Holmström, "Försvarets bantning ger stort manfall" in *Svenska Dagbladet* 28 November 2004.

<sup>45</sup> TT, "Het debatt om försvarspolitiken", 17 February 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Socialdemokraterna, Miljöpartiet & Vänsterpartiet, *En rättvis värld är möjlig – Rödgrön plattform för Sveriges säkerhets- och försvarspolitik* 18 January 2010, p. 14. Note the connection between the declaration of solidarity and the Madrid terrorist bombings 2004. The socialist-green platform was presented at People and Defence annual National Conference 2010. Spokesperson Urban Ahlin clarified that the declaration of solidarity did not challenge the Swedish doctrine.

<sup>47</sup> This story was covered in Magnus Christiansson, "Solidaritet och suveränitet" in *Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift* nr 1 januari/mars 2010, p. 96-106.

<sup>48</sup> One example leading up to the security policy of 2002 is Sverker Åström, "Dags att slopa neutraliteten" DN-debatt in *Dagens Nyheter* 8 February 2000.

<sup>49</sup> A reference could be Rutger Lindahl, "Den komplexa EU-opinionen", in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Mitt i nittioalet* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1996), p. 371-394. However, Lindahls conclusion is rather that the Swedish population more than anything else seems confused about the membership.

<sup>50</sup> See Sören Holmberg, "EU alltmer accepterat" in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Svensk höst* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2009), p. 299-314.

<sup>51</sup> Political scientist Ulf Bjereld has monitored the Swedish public opinion on NATO. One article that covers the trend during the 1990s is Ulf Bjereld, "Trendbrott i svensk Nato-opinion" in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Ljusnande framtid* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1999), p. 363-370. However, since the 1990s there has been a slight decrease in NATO scepticism, see Ulf Bjereld, "Nu minskar motståndet mot Nato-medlemskap" in *Dagens Nyheter* 4 April 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Gunnar Ekelöf, *Natt i Otočac* (Stockholm, Bonniers, 1961). The phrase is a point of departure also for Sven-Eric Liedman, see Sven-Eric Liedman, *Att se sig själv i andra: Om solidaritet* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1999).

<sup>53</sup> However, the idea that "solidarity between the small states would seem to be the only effective measure against the arrogance of the great powers" is arguably older than Social Democracy, see Arne Ruth, "The Second New Nation: The Mythology of Modern Sweden" *Dadalus* 113:2 (Spring 1984), p. 69. Ever since the inter war period "the policy of internationalism has indeed had the status of national ideology in Sweden. It has become an integral part of of the mythology of the Swedish model. Equality at home and justice abroad have come to be regarded as complementary and mutually supportive values", *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> In the words of Olof Palme: "We have condemned intervention and interference in the internal affairs of other states... As a small state we have as our goal a world in which the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention are fully

respected.”, see Olof Palme, “Sweden’s Role in the World”, in Bengt Rydén & Willy Bergström (Eds.) *Sweden: Choices for Economic and Social Policy in the 1980s* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 244-45.

<sup>55</sup> One clear example of the links in this cosmology is found in Olof Palme, *Speech at the Stockholm Workers Commune*, 12 January 1980.

<sup>56</sup> An early example includes Ann-Sofie Dahl, ”Nato är ett solidaritetsprojekt” in *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 September 2001. More recent examples include Marit Paulsen, Cecilia Malmström, and Carl Bildt, see <http://www.folkpartiet.se/Vara-politiker/Ledamoter-av-Europaparlamentet/Marit-Paulsen/Artiklar/Det-handlar-om-solidaritet/>, Cecilia Malmström, Tal om Global solidaritet, at the Congress of the Liberal Party, and <http://carlbildt.wordpress.com/2007/07/24/europeisk-solidaritet/>. As foreign minister Carl Bildt used solidarity as the key concept for dealing with the financial crisis in Greece 2010, see SVT Aktuellt 6 May 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Stated by defence analyst Robert Dalsjö at the launch of *Trovärdig solidaritet?*, Hotel Sheraton, Stockholm, January 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Heterotopia is a term elaborated by Michel Foucault in his work *The Order of Things*. In this context it could describe a political ideal with many meanings. Regarding the use of heterotopia in international relations, see James Der Derian, “Critical encounters in international relations” *International Social Science Journal* 191 March 2008, p. 71.

<sup>59</sup> A similar interpretation of the term is made by Claes Roxbergh, Åsa Domeij & Maria Wetterstrand, ”Solidariteten är vår grundpelare” *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 2002.

<sup>60</sup> The foreign policy spokesperson for the Social Democrats Urban Ahlin, Johan Raeder of the Defence Ministry and the parliamentarian for the Moderate Party Göran Lennmarker fit these descriptions. A central piece is Johan Raeder, *Solidaritetsförklaringen och dess betydelse* Promemoria Försvarsdepartementet 11 November 2009.

<sup>61</sup> In the Swedish context the term “adaptation” (*omställning*) is often chosen, see Sten Tolgfors, “Utgångspunkterna för den framtida inriktningen av försvaret” *Dagens Nyheter* 10 June 2008.

<sup>62</sup> The formal process for this could be traced in the following propositions, Regeringen, *Förändrad omvärld – omdanad försvar* Prop. 1998/99:74, Regeringen, *Det nya försvaret* Prop. 1999/2000:30, and Regeringen, *Fortsatt förnyelse av totalförsvaret* Prop. 2001/02:10.

<sup>63</sup> Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 34.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> Ds 2008:48, p. 26, p. 39 and p. 48.

<sup>67</sup> Stated, twice, by defence ministry official Peter Göte at the XIII Suomenlinna Seminar in June 2010. This has been the official position since defence minister Mikael Odenberg.

<sup>68</sup> Sten Tolgfors, "Gemensamma förband med Norge en lösning" *Dagens Nyheter* 10 juni 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 34.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>71</sup> Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> Raeder, *Solidaritetsförklaringen och dess betydelse*, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 54.

<sup>74</sup> In research the term "europeanisation" covers a condition "when something in the domestic political system is affected by something European", see Maarten Vink, "What is Europeanization? and Other Questions on a New Research Agenda" Paper for the *Second YEN Research Meeting on Europeanisation*, University of Bocconi, Milan, 22-23 November 2002. This argument is elaborated in a Swedish defence policy context by Arita Eriksson, *Europeanization and Governance in Defence Policy. The Example of Sweden* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> Explicitly in Regeringen, *Totalförsvaret i förnyelse – etapp 2* Prop. 1996/97:4, p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> Expressed by a senior official from the foreign ministry at a closed diplomatic conference at the Estonian Embassy, February 2010. This is a general tendency in the Nordic region, as emphasised in Olav F. Knudsen, "Looking to the Future: Security Strategies, Identity, and Power Disparity" in Olav F. Knudsen (ed.) *Security Strategies, Power Disparity and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 180.

<sup>77</sup> Before the Georgian crisis the Defence Commission declared that "the Russian actions towards countries that used to be a part of the Soviet Union will be a litmus test for the path Russia is taking." and "Russia's relationship and actions towards these countries will define our view of Russia. The solidarity between Nordic and EU states is important in this respect.", quoted in Ds 2008:48, p. 23. The Defence Bill was delayed because of the Georgian crisis, see Mikael Holmström, "Försvarsbeslut kommer först nästa år" in *Svenska Dagbladet* 9 September 2008. After the Georgian crisis the Government concluded that the Russian willingness to use force "varies with the political and strategic situation in each case" and that the "willingness to take political risks and the willingness and ability to act militarily is much higher towards CIS-countries than countries that are members of the EU and NATO.", quoted in Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 24.

<sup>78</sup> See for example Ds 2008:48, p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> For critical remarks regarding a national reserve, see Olof Santesson, "Försvara landet med ett kompani. Mellan nätverkets löften och krigets väsen" i *Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift* nr. 2 2007, p. 99-106. For critical remarks on lack of national defence capabilities, see Lars Bergquist, Carl Björemann & Karl Erik Lagerlöf, "Bildt driver en farlig utrikespolitik" in *Svenska Dagbladet* 3 February 2008, Bo Pellnäs, "Sveriges trovärdighet är i fara" in *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 January 2009.



<sup>80</sup> See for example Hugemark & Tunberger, *Trovärdig solidaritet?*, p. 26-27, Bo Ljung & Karlis Neretnieks, *Nordisk försvarspolitisk samverkan – fortsättningsstudie. Strategiska mål och operativ – nationella eller gemensamma?* FOI-R—2734—SE (Stockholm: FOI, 2009), and Wilhelm Agrell, *Fredens illusioner. Det svenska nationella försvarets nedgång och fall 1988-2009* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2010).

<sup>81</sup> This refers to “Exercise Dagny”.

<sup>82</sup> Hanna Ojanen, Gunilla Herolf & Rutger Lindahl, *Non-Alignment and European Security Policy: Ambiguity at Work*. (Helsinki and Bonn: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2000).

<sup>83</sup> This argument is applied to the Nordic context in Pernille Rieker, “Europeanization of Nordic Security” in *Cooperation & Conflict*, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 369-392

<sup>84</sup> Pernille Rieker, *From Nordic Balance to Europeanisation? The EU and the Changing Security Identities of the Nordic States* Paper prepared for ”Fagkonferanse for NFE”, 28-29 August 2003, p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> Regina Karp, ”The Conditionality of Security Integration: Identity and Alignment Choices in Finland and Sweden” in Olav F. Knudsen (Ed.), *Security strategies, Power Disparities and Identity*, p. 70.

<sup>86</sup> Rieker, “Europeanization of Nordic Security”, p. 385.

## David's Shield? The Decline and Partial Rise of the IDF Command and General Staff College<sup>1</sup>

By *Dr. Tamir Libel\**

### Introduction

The subject of this article is the reforms carried out in the IDF Command and General Staff College between 1980 and 2010, in an effort to promote the professionalism of the combat command and general staff officer corps. The article argues that the declared aim of these reforms was to change the IDF's model for educating combat officers from a militia to professional orientation. This claim will be examined by historically analyzing the basic assumptions of each reform, analyzing the reform itself in detail, and evaluating the extent of its implementation.

The importance of the IDF Command and General Staff College is greater than its counterparts in most Western countries. Although the National Security College is the senior institution for educating officers and senior officials in Israel, it concentrates almost solely on national security issues and not on military strategy or operational art. As a result, IDF officers arrive at the final stage of their military education somewhat early in their career – at the rank of Major and Lieutenant Colonel. For this reason the quality and content of the education CGSC students receive play a significant role in the success or failure of Israeli military force development and employment. The current research will focus on command and staff courses for combat officers, touching on other courses at the College, such as those of combat service support and combat support officers, only when they are relevant to the topic.

The article is divided into seven parts. The first reviews the security, social and economic changes that created a crisis in Israel's security doctrine, forcing the IDF to make substantial reforms. The second part analyses the reasons for the IDF's choice of military education as a central component

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in the reforms, and the changes in academic and military education that enabled this move. The following four parts analyze the reforms carried out at the IDF's CGSC by dividing them into 3 sub-periods: the First Lebanon War to the Oslo process (1985-1994); the years of the peace process with the Palestinians until the outbreak of the second Intifada (1994-2000); from the second Intifada to the Second Lebanon War (2000-2006); and from the Second Lebanon War to the present day (2000-2010). The seventh and final part analyzes the historical record of the reforms that were reviewed, focusing on the successes as well as the reasons for failures, and concludes by estimating the chances for full professionalization of the IDF Command and General Staff College.

### **A military at a crossroads: the changes in the nature of threats to Israel at the end of the Cold War and the crisis in Israel's security doctrine**

Since the founding of the IDF, the education of its officer corps has been used to prepare officers to face threats defined in Israeli security terminology as "Basic Security". The emphasis was on the deployment and operations of regular Arab forces against the State of Israel. Nevertheless, Israel's security doctrine recognized the existence of a wide range of threats and military activities outside the realm of high intensity conflict. These were classified under the category of "Current Security". The security doctrine lacked differentiation and a specific attitude to different types of low intensity conflict.<sup>2</sup> In the 1980s combat officer education continued to be directed towards high intensity conflict, both in terms of the structure and curriculum of the officer education system. Despite the centrality of high intensity conflict as the main threat scenario around which Israel's security doctrine and military force development were constructed, the IDF lacked a tradition of combined arms operations. At its simplest, inter-branch cooperation underlies the concept of combined arms operations. According to this approach, branches and different weaponry have to be operated in coordination, in order to maximize combat survival and individual and overall efficacy. The advantages of one system compensate for the weaknesses of others.<sup>3</sup> Combined arms operations confer many advantages such as mutual complementation and protection of the various kinds of units, continuity in warfare and coordination of goals in a manner that maximizes the advantages of a specific branch.<sup>4</sup> Although combined arms operations are a force multiplier vital to an army built and prepared for war on several fronts

simultaneously under conditions of numerical inferiority, the IDF has demonstrated a weakness in achieving combined arms operations in all of the Arab-Israeli wars. As will be seen in the article, a main reason for this was the failure of the central institution responsible for instilling CGS officers with first-hand knowledge of inter-service and inter-service doctrine. The Command and General Staff College did not do its job.

The importance of the Command and General Staff College as the central, and perhaps exclusive agent providing inter-service and inter-branch military education in the IDF, increased in the 1990s when the growth in asymmetric threats revealed the limitations of Israel's security doctrine and the need to update it and make a change in its military modus operandi. The 1980s saw a continuous rise in the influence and frequency of "Current Security" threats.<sup>5</sup> This increase received recognition in the report published by "The Commission Investigating Events in the Lebanon Campaign of 2006" (Winograd Commission). The Commission indicated that Israel had faced a considerable change in the pattern of war during recent years. In the past, the military aspects of Israel's security doctrine were built to confront threats that the committee defined as "symmetrical" – regular Arab armies – and to thwart them. According to the Commission: "The main idea was to concentrate a large land force, aided from the air, swiftly transfer the war to enemy territory and clinch a speedy victory by occupying territory and defeating the enemy army in terms of combat capability and will. To this was added the basic tenet of "Blue Skies", the superiority of the Israel Air Force (IAF) and non-exposure of the home front to real attacks."<sup>6</sup>

According to the Commission, in 2006 the IDF published a new operational concept (which can be defined as a parallel to U.S. National Military Strategy) in reaction to new security changes. The new operational doctrine developed in the IDF identified six main changes:

1. Transition from the concept of symmetric wars between regular armies and consolidated sovereign states to asymmetric challenges of limited or high intensity against armed elements, supported by an enthusiastic local population aiding and abetting Non-State Actors.<sup>7</sup>
2. Revolution in Military Affairs – RMA.
3. Religious radicalization in the Moslem world and its implications for international relations.

4. Significant changes in Israeli society and their repercussions on civil-military relations in Israel.
5. Public perceptions in Israel and the West of the non-existential nature of threats by terrorist and para-military organizations on the one hand, and on the other, the imposition of extensive legal restrictions on applying force against them, restricted Israeli operational leeway.<sup>8</sup>
6. The use of suicide bombers by terror organizations and the need to develop unique solutions to this problem.<sup>9</sup> It must be mentioned that the Commission relied on an official IDF document, despite its being classified, that focused on the strategic-military level. The very existence of an official document outlining strategy was an innovation since traditionally Israel lacked an official document defining its national security doctrine.

Added to the changed operational challenges in the external environment were social and economic changes in the domestic environment that increased the pressures facing the IDF at the end of the 1980s. Throughout the 1990s, Israeli society underwent extensive changes. Some of these social changes intensified critical trends in relation to security topics and the IDF. For the first time in the history of the State of Israel, considerable sectors of Jewish society, including the judiciary and the media, took a critical, even hostile stance towards the armed forces and military service. In addition, through the 1990s, a decrease began in the real value of the IDF budget in terms of percentage of GNP relative to the peak recorded after the Yom Kippur War (1973).<sup>10</sup> At the same time that this decrease began the prices of weapons systems and extra equipment necessary to reinforce the IDF were rising constantly, and during this period the IDF also had to compete with the civilian market for high quality personnel. Thus it was expected that the IDF officer corps would be equipped with the administrative skills and knowledge needed to maximize the resources allocated to the IDF. However, a committee appointed in November 2006 by the Israeli government to examine the security budget (it submitted its final report in May 2007), found that the IDF strategy based on its current organizational structure, procedures and organizational culture prevented optimal utilization of the resources allotted to the IDF.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the committee found that in financial matters, the behaviour of senior officers tended towards concealing facts, lack of transparency, limited discussion and reliance on improvisation. As a result the IDF adopted ineffective, wasteful solutions.<sup>12</sup> One of the main

reasons for this behaviour, in the Committee's opinion, was the lack of sufficient economic awareness among permanent army staff about the basic parameters underlying the operation of the private market.<sup>13</sup>

These operational, social and economic pressures combined to create significant restrictions on the IDF's ability to take a "business as usual" approach. The IDF General Staff gradually understood that it had to improve not only the qualifications of its Command and General Staff officers but also the officers' administrative skills and understanding of civil-military relations.

### **Military education as a solution**

The only military system that could provide officers with the new skills demanded from them was the military education system. The changes made in the military education system by the IDF derived largely from an intrinsic change in its view of the officer. According to Reuma Sapir, a military psychologist who investigated this issue: "The development of the doctrine of greater professionalism as the main way to influence the officer corps in the IDF began at the end of the 1980s. This trend was part of an extensive process taking place in the IDF, a process that was reflected in the adoption of the concept of a professional military, by reducing or destroying concepts of a militia. The organizational efforts made in this context affected the development of an officer corps that perceived command as a profession requiring methodical in-depth study, and a mastery of the other aspects of a profession, such as knowledge, ethics, aspiration to perfection and so on."<sup>14</sup>

Sapir believes that the IDF's early successes as well as a fear of the possible repercussions of a professional military created a dual reality. On the one hand the military profession is prestigious. On the other hand an officer is not required to undergo a period of education before being recognized as a professional. In her view the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the conclusions of the subsequent Agranat Commission that criticized the dearth of military thinking in the IDF constituted a turning point "in the protest against the anti-academic attitude and established an understanding of the price of an unprofessional army."<sup>15</sup>

Another factor mentioned by Sapir is the increased demand for higher education in Israel during recent decades. Due to the increasing number of

graduates with academic degrees in civilian life and the academization of many professions, combat officers have also begun to apply for academic studies. Education has become for many officers an incentive to enlist in the standing (career) military (studying at the IDF's expense at a civilian university) as part of their military course of development (academic studies in the fields of military and security as part of military college studies).<sup>16</sup>

This approach reflects an essential change from the old norm in the perception of the officer corps, and indirectly of the military organization. In Sapir's view, the new perception focuses more on the system and less on the individual, identifying quality as something developable and linked to designated mechanisms. Education for command entails a combination of academic professional education and placement in command and staff positions. The education both constructs a professional identity and provides exclusive knowledge.<sup>17</sup> The success of the new approach was dependent to a large degree upon the Command and General Staff College, the central institution designated to provide military education and develop Israeli officers as the transition was made from the prevailing tactical-single branch stage to service in command and staff positions in multi-branch and even joint headquarters. The evaluation of preparedness of this College for the unique challenge facing it will be done by dividing the period under examination into four time periods: from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the Oslo process, which marked a watershed in Israeli history; from the 1990s until the eve of the second Intifada, a period in which the IDF coped with changes in the doctrine of peace and war, resulting in changes in the definition of its duties and identity; the second Intifada, the longest of all Arab-Israeli wars, up to the Second Lebanon War with the serious flaws and shortcomings in the education of IDF officers that were revealed; and from the Second Lebanon War to the present, a period in which the IDF has tried to rehabilitate its military force, with an emphasis on the education of its commanders.

### **Late professionalization: 'Barak' Command and Staff course and the rehabilitation of military education in the IDF, 1989-1994**

Moshe Shamir argues that from the founding of the IDF through to the 1980s, the army experienced a series of wars and continuous fighting in which commanders coped with fighting of great intensity. Accordingly, they underwent a process of learning from personal experience, of drawing

conclusions, which they assimilated and applied in each following war. The unspoken agreement in those days was that a year of studies at the Command and General Staff College, and studies in general, were not necessary; they delayed the placement of good commanders in their posts. It could be that the underlying explanation for this opinion was the perception that combat experience in battle was the greatest teacher. Commanders with extensive battle experience became role models for their subordinates, who also advanced to senior positions. Theoretical studies were largely dismissed because of the difficulty of re-examining military doctrine in light of the changing security reality. The change began when, in the wake of the 1982 Lebanon War, it was decided that a team would be formed in the IDF General Staff's Instruction Department to investigate the lessons learned from the recent war and from the Yom Kippur War. Towards the end of the 1980s the team's conclusions and recommendations were presented to the most senior forum in the IDF, headed by the Chief of Staff, and decisions were made. The thrust of these decisions was to address those matters that would contribute to the efficiency of Command and Control on land.<sup>18</sup>

One of the main recommendations pertained to structural and content-based changes in education at the CGSC, which in the early 1980s included several courses. The main ones were nicknamed Long Command and Staff, each of which was given separately, once a year for 10-12 months, for combat majors and lieutenant colonels from the Air Force, Navy and Army.<sup>19</sup>

Combat officers from the Army were educated in "Long CGSC-Army", which also included some academic study. According to Professor Zvi Yavetz, a world renowned historian of the Roman Empire, the first link between Tel Aviv University (and the academic world) and the Command and General Staff College (and indirectly the Israeli military educational system) was personal. He says: "Yitzhak Rabin invited me to lunch in a restaurant on the Tel Aviv seafront and said it was time to introduce academic studies into the Command and General Staff College. Then they moved the College to Tel Aviv...and I planned the first program and began to teach there. This was not another link with Tel Aviv University. It was all a personal connection, with me. Later it was linked to Tel Aviv."<sup>20</sup>

The Faculty of Humanities at Tel Aviv University provided the Command and General Staff College with an inter-disciplinary curriculum in 1969.<sup>21</sup>



Nevertheless, exactly when the curriculum was inaugurated is a matter of controversy and according to at least one internal document, studies only began in 1971.<sup>22</sup> Whichever is true, an agreement was indeed signed in 1969 between Tel Aviv University and the IDF.<sup>23</sup> Lecturers were appointed from the Tel Aviv University faculty staff and in certain cases were recruited from other universities.<sup>24</sup> The curriculum was begun in coordination with the CGSC but met criteria laid down by the faculty, and graduates of the program received accreditation that enabled them to continue towards a B.A. degree at the university.<sup>25</sup> According to the agreement between the university and the Command and General Staff College, CGSC graduates had up to eight years to complete their graduate studies after concluding the Command and General Staff course. For every officer registering for this program, the university tailored a curriculum that took into account academic courses studied at the College. B.A. studies were sometimes financed by the individuals and at others by the IDF.<sup>26</sup>

Six goals were set for the curriculum: "To grant students access to books and to try to satisfy the intellectual curiosity accumulated during years of ceaseless intensive service activity; to expose them to the most educational, eye-opening tapestry possible about the history of the Jewish people, pioneering settlement and Zionism in theory and in practice; to provide them with vital information on a wide variety of Jewish issues; to teach them a vital chapter in the history of Islam and the Middle East with special emphasis on recent developments; to raise their awareness of important developments in the history of nations in this century: the main regimes, wars, international agreements and means of arbitration; to enrich their knowledge of sociology (simultaneously analyzing Israeli society in sociological terms): logic, management, culture and so on".<sup>27</sup>

The curriculum included lessons on topics such as geography, Judaism, sociology, business administration, Jewish and general history, military history and so forth.<sup>28</sup> Between 1969 or 1971 and 1973 academic classes were held each academic year and each department was responsible for the lessons given at the Command and General Staff College.<sup>29</sup>

Based on conclusions drawn in 1973, studies were concentrated into one semester from January to April.<sup>30</sup> In terms of content, compulsory courses were given during this semester together with several optional ones. Administratively, departmental responsibility was cancelled during the

studies. The history department was nominated as the university representative.<sup>31</sup> College commanders saw the academic curriculum as also teaching learning habits and research skills to students and directing staff alike.

During this period, relations between the sides were not always smooth.<sup>32</sup> Some of the tension was ascribable to the different work habits and organizational cultures of academic life and the IDF.<sup>33</sup> However, from the outset the main source of tension was most likely each party's different perception of the purpose of academic studies. According to Yavetz, "The big argument was between me and them and this is why everything fell apart afterwards. They wanted mainly courses on decision-making, and I told them...with us you can get education, nothing else"<sup>34</sup>.

Although as mentioned, the College was the last chance for officers to acquire an education in their profession (except for studies at foreign military institutions), the data in Table 1 show that most officers, especially senior ones, did not consider the course to be important.

**Table 1: Percentage of Command and General Staff College graduates in 1984 among officers with rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and Colonel<sup>35</sup>**

	Major	Lieut.Colonel	Colonel
Command and General Staff College	10%	34%	50% were graduates of one of the two institutions
National Security Institute			50% were graduates of one of the two institutions

In addition, in 1984 only about 27 of the officers promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel were graduates of the Command and General Staff College, and among those promoted to colonel only about 47% were graduates of the CGSC.<sup>36</sup> The implications of this situation were mentioned in a document issued by the Instruction Department in October 1984, to the effect that junior and senior officers filled vital staff

positions without completing a course at the Staff College and without appropriate education. The document indicated that the results of this lack of qualifications were evident in the insufficient level of HQ work especially in the operational commands and the General Staff.<sup>37</sup>

To resolve these problems an unprecedented military education program was gradually formulated at the CGSC code-named "Barak" [lightning in Hebrew].<sup>38</sup>

The beginnings of the Barak program lay in the lessons learned from the 1982 war.<sup>39</sup> In 1983 the General Staff made an effort to make a basic change in the ways their officers thought. The then Chief of Staff, Moshe Levy, ordered the establishment of a Command and Control Unit in the Instruction Department, whose job was to examine a possible four-track change in the IDF. The first was theoretical (doctrinal), which examined and updated all aspects of IDF command and control. The second track was reorganization of the IDF Headquarters during the war. The third was the organization and development of computerized aids for command and control, and the fourth was the assimilation of all these theories and lessons through a new program for educating company commanders. This was Barak.<sup>40</sup>

Four years of preparation preceded inauguration of the program in 1989 that included long, stormy General Staff discussions about the changes proposed in the program. Apparently it was difficult for some of the officers to accept the fact that their education might have been lacking in some respects and that new war fighting methods made it essential to change the program and ways in which the IDF educated its officers. At the end of 1985, then deputy Chief of Staff, General (and later Major General) Dan Shomron presented the Instruction Department's proposal to the CGSC. Its main points emphasized the following: a practical conception of educating commanders and the underlying theoretical conceptual foundation of command: expanding the theoretical foundation provided in the course while enhancing its intellectual-professional stimulus; focusing on educating students for command and control while waging battle and providing them with the practical skills required by commanders in combat; replacing general academic studies with direct military academic studies.<sup>41</sup>

Barak program began as an experiment in 1989 and brought with it intrinsic changes concerning the course at the College that preceded it as can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Comparison of the Traditional 'Long Army' Command and Staff Course and the First Class of Barak**

	Traditional Command and Staff Program	New Program – <i>Barak</i>
Military Theory	285 hours (11.4%), emphasis on combat doctrine, staff work and analysis of historic campaigns	512 hours (26.1%), emphasis on combat, organizational, command and staff and control doctrine, analysis of historical campaigns
Exercises (practicing theoretical studies)	630 hours (27.2%), situation estimates for all possible theaters of operations	280 hours (14.3%), situation estimates for all possible theaters of operations
Academic studies (such as Political Science)	450 hours (19/4%)	208 hours (10.6%), emphasis on military history and geography, public administration and Zionism
Complementary Military Studies	578 hours (24.9%), emphasis on English language and computer skills, military management, national security, IDF history, physical fitness	539 hours (27.5%), emphasis on English language and computer skills, physical fitness, research and development, technology, IDF history, national security, communications
Independent research, miscellaneous and vacations	391 hours (19.4%)	418 hours (21.3%)
Course duration	2315 hours: 1 week introduction, 3 weeks leave of absence, 48 weeks study	1957 hours: 2 weeks introduction, 5 weeks leave of absence, 45 weeks study

Experienced combat officers instructors	Taught military theory and complementary military studies; served as instructors and controllers in war-games and tactical exercises without troops	The position was cancelled
Academic Studies	In one year a student studies 75% of B.A degree courses in general history, political science or General Studies <sup>42</sup>	The military program was given academic accreditation. Barak course work was recognized as 50% of degree requirements. <sup>43</sup>
Nature of exercises	Command and control or logistics themes were allotted equal time and taught in a technical manner not based on a thorough understanding of doctrine	First semester - instruction of elementary themes. Second semester - case-study analysis and command post exercises. Third semester - division and corps battle management exercises. <sup>44</sup>

In 1994, the sixth and last class 6 of the Barak program in its original format comprised about 50 officers at the rank of captain and major. Most were from combat branches – infantry, artillery, engineering and armored corps. The program was intended to qualify them for battalion size command posts. Some of the officers came from combat support and combat service support branches: maintenance, ordnance, adjutancy, communications and intelligence. They were studying preparatory to being posted in senior HQ posts and battalion size units.

Acceptance for the course entailed meeting university acceptance criteria. Before the course began, the students underwent preparation that lasted seven weeks including English lessons. Studies lasted three semesters and included purely military studies, auxiliary military studies, and supplementary non-military studies.<sup>45</sup>

Emphasis was placed on three main spheres. The first was military, dealing with the operational level of war: command and control principles of

conducting a battle – the correct division of fire power, planning and management. Thus, in this framework students studied courses on IDF military doctrine, military thought, Arab and other foreign armies. During the second and third semesters the students also directed staff and command exercises at a special exercise facility within the college's campus. It should be noted that only in Class 7, in a new format (see below) did Barak course begin to study low intensity conflict as a separate subject, although only theoretically and with no real connection to what was happening on the battlefield - despite Israel's painful experiences in such combat.<sup>46</sup> The second focus of the curriculum dealt with enrichment and theoretical issues. The auxiliary military studies included military courses in geography and history, computer studies and military psychology. Likewise, the students completed a course on communications and administration. The third sphere, complementary studies, included courses in Hebrew composition, Zionism and Judaism, advanced courses in English and extensive physical exercise.<sup>47</sup>

As previously mentioned, the Barak program aroused bitter controversy in its early planning stages, due to its content, and the spirit of professionalism that had disappeared returned to the IDF, as did the cocksure style that the program heads adopted towards their opponents. To settle the dispute, the late General Nehemiah Tamari was nominated investigating officer. He wrote in his summary to the General Staff: "In my opinion, if the Barak program did not exist, it would have to be invented".<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, then Chief of Staff Ehud Barak decided to dismantle it in its original version. In many respects the Command and General Staff Course returned the army officers to the 'long-army' version; but the name Barak was retained.

Testimony indicating the opportunities that were missed due to cancellation of the program can be seen in internal IDF research that tried to chart the views of the program's graduates (234 officers completed the first six classes of the Barak program between 1989 and 1994).<sup>49</sup> The surveyor noted that most of the graduates thought that the course contributed to their functioning. Its findings indicated a strong feeling of participants having received a professional identity and having developed capabilities and specializations. However, respondents also noted a gap between what was learned in the course and what was done in the field. Most of them said that the course created a strong desire to continue their studies.<sup>50</sup>

It can be said that the graduates' views were correct regarding the original Barak program as the icing on the cake in systematic education for tactical command in the Command and General Staff College. It applied professional principles so that officers acquired 'military Science', i.e., military history, technology and doctrines etc., as well as the 'military arts', i.e., exercising and applying the knowledge for solving tactical problems by analyzing case studies, preparatory exercises etc. However, Barak lacked certain essential academic components for military education at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the social, economic and ethical aspects of peace and war.

In many respects the program's high level was testimony to the wretchedness and weakness of the previous education system for Israeli officers. In the early 1990s the IDF for the first time produced an inter-branch program at the tactical level while in the West joint programs were long established at the operational level of war. Even though the IDF lagged behind its allies by a decade it preferred to cancel the crowning achievement of its military education system because of personal disputes, instead of buoying itself through the program's achievements.

### **Barak without lightning: the education of Command and General Staff officers, 1994-2001**

The development of the Command and General Staff College after Barak was cancelled in its original format can be characterized as interrupted progress. As far as making military education more professional, one can mention the extension and intensification of topics of study. In the mid-1990s topics were added to the curriculum pertaining to operational level of war and operational art. In addition, for the first time a College semester was dedicated to low intensity conflict, including a historical review, a study of concepts and doctrines and an examination of means of reacting.

The curriculum also integrated themes such as jurisprudence, communications, planning and execution of exercises and training, for example, in low intensity combat studies.<sup>51</sup> During the rest of the decade optional courses in military history, thought and decision-making were introduced into the Barak curriculum, and the foundations were laid for studying tactical aspects of low intensity conflict. Thus each student could develop his personal professional interests. Towards the close of the decade study of planning and execution of exercise and training were

expanded into a complete area of studies dedicated to force development.<sup>52</sup> During the period of Chen Yitzhaki as Commandant of the Command and General Staff College, 1993-1996, more fields of study were added, attesting to an understanding of the College students' changing needs on their return to their units in terms of exercises and training (an important part of force development), communications, military law, technology and instilling values. Yitzhaki argued that these subjects did not stand by themselves but were integrated into the study of core subjects and thus provided a realistic understanding of the nature of modern warfare.<sup>53</sup> In addition, he tried to promote the integration of management topics in College studies. In his view this sphere complemented command, although the subject faded in importance when his tenure ended.<sup>54</sup> He also perceived technology as a key element in command and study and tried to enhance students' awareness by integrating information technologies in the course. His successors continued to include information systems in management studies, and ensuring that students had to rely on them, for example through the use of computerized learning aids. Nevertheless, progress in this sphere was slow, and science and technology were underrepresented in the curriculum.<sup>55</sup>

Even after cancellation of the original Barak format, the curriculum retained academic studies. In 1994, the long-standing arrangement between Tel Aviv University and the Command and General Staff College was terminated. The latter signed an alternative agreement with the Hebrew University. Prof. Dan Amir, then Rector of Tel Aviv University, claims it was he who decided to cut ties with the College. In his words: "There was a disagreement about the academic level and we decided not to lower our standards".<sup>56</sup> The College for its part initially regarded the agreement with the Hebrew University as better than the one with Tel Aviv University. As part of the academic studies, each year about 45 officers attending the Barak course were granted a two-year leave of absence for studies, including two summer semesters, so that they would return to the service with a B.A. which also earned them a considerable raise in salary. In their first year they studied military topics at the Command and Staff College. Tel Aviv University, and afterwards the Hebrew University, recognized the military studies for half of the requirements for an academic degree. In the second year the officers joined the university campus, in a department of their choice from a limited range offered them in the social sciences or the humanities.<sup>57</sup>



A prominent weak point in the 1990s was in military ethics and military law. The overwhelming majority of IDF officers did not receive any formal instruction in the rules of war until 1997. The Military Advocate General at that time, Uri Shoham, said that awareness of international law in the IDF was unsatisfactory. In response the IDF announced that 1998 would be "the year of international law" and initiated an ambitious project intended to increase instruction in these issues.<sup>58</sup> The same was true regarding military ethics. Asa Kasher, who has been teaching in IDF military colleges since the late 1970s, and who spearheaded the process of consolidating the code of ethics – "the spirit of the IDF" – believes that interest in values and norms at the colleges is determined by the whim of the commanders in charge.<sup>59</sup>

This analysis shows that the development of the Command and General Staff College in the 1990s constituted an interregnum between specialization in high intensity conflict of the original Barak program and specialization in low intensity conflict that will be described below. The main motive for change in the curriculum was the world view held by the various College commandants who advanced different fields of study according to their priorities. The common denominator linking the various changes was the commandants' feeling that the curriculum had to suit developing challenges. These changes were cumulative and not coordinated, as each commandant 'reinvented the wheel'. Nevertheless, common spheres of interest can be discerned – dealing with low intensity conflict and complementary areas related to this type of combat – military law, ethics and military- media relations.

The preference for an agreement with the Hebrew University rather than with Tel Aviv University, because of less strict requirements, reflected the ambivalent attitude in the Staff College towards academic education. On the one hand, it showed an increasing understanding that army officers expect to earn academic degrees, like their counterparts in civilian life, and that academic education constituted an essential component in modern professional development. On the other hand, the use of the IDF's economic bargaining power to obtain preferred conditions hinted at a view of academic education as a commodity and not a standard.

The most outstanding commandant during this period was Chen Yitzhaki who integrated these themes into a coherent world view for reform, which had as its foundation the belief that technology intrinsically changes war.

His attempt to integrate information technologies into the learning of skills constituted a watershed in the College's approach to technology. The commandants succeeding him tried to promote this topic but without any great success. An analysis of Yitzhaki's reform shows that the main component holding back the College was a lack of strategy or formal doctrine for creating a consolidated curriculum around a central idea.

### **Educating officers during a 'Long War': The CGSC in the Second Intifada (2001-2006)**

The outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000 drew the IDF into intensive fighting. Although it sapped resources and attention from education, since the senior command was almost totally preoccupied with the Intifada, Brigadier General Yaakov Zigdon, College Commandant from 2001-2004, saw it as an opportunity to leverage the College's status. During his tenure, 2001-2004, low intensity conflict metamorphosed from a regular topic in the curriculum into the core of the program. This change was carried out as part of the effort to upgrade the status of the CGSC among the IDF Senior Command by illustrating the benefit and relevancy of military education. This was done by teaching the concept of "limited conflict". This concept, developed by the late Colonel (Ret.) Shmuel Nir, became the official IDF doctrine during the second Intifada.<sup>60</sup>

The doctrine of 'limited conflict' sprang from a theoretical vacuum traditionally characteristic of the IDF. One of the problems in developing professional military knowledge in the IDF was the almost total lack of forums for theoretical debate, apart from the official journal, "*Ma'arechet* (Campaigns)". An attempt to change this situation was made in 1999 with the launching of a new doctrinal journal in the IDF called "*Zarkur* (Spotlight)". This publication unexpectedly became the first version of the doctrine that would later shape the IDF modus operandi in the second Intifada. Not surprisingly perhaps, the first issue reflected a debate about the lack of professional knowledge in the only active IDF arena of combat at that time – Israel's Self Declared 'Security Zone' in South- Lebanon. The first "*Zarkur*" article by Shmuel Nir, who had previously served as intelligence officer in the liaison unit for Lebanon, was meant to develop a common system of ideas and combat doctrine.<sup>61</sup> Nir's writing, which afterwards developed into the 'Limited Conflict' doctrine attested to military professionals' lack of familiarity with counterinsurgency. Nir's official doctrinal document, 'Limited Conflict', published in 2001, and

never revealed in public, suffers from similar lapses. Its definition of the term 'limited conflict' was discussed in a book written by Israeli scholar Yoram Peri and published by the Israeli Defence Ministry. Nir defined 'limited conflict' as:<sup>62</sup> "violent conflict short of actual war, in which the opposing sides utilize armed forces as a means to attain political ends to at least the same degree that they use political means. This stands in contrast with war, or even limited war, in which the dominant consideration is military – operational, and political considerations are secondary or indirect".<sup>63</sup>

Nir argued that the notion of 'war' relates today only to "conventional war" as a primary category of "conflict". "Conflict" to him was a generic term "like an expression presenting and defining all the phenomena and situations of armed violence". "Limited Conflict" was in his words the alternative primary category of "conflict".<sup>64</sup> He argued that in high intensity conflict there is a great similarity between the sides, with low levels of asymmetry between them. On the other hand, in conflicts he defined as "limited conflict" the side with less power resorted to actions that would decrease its rival's power advantage. Nor did he limit himself to the battlefield. He also included elements such as geo-strategic data, national values and the use of international instruments of law. The final goal according to Nir was to dictate the nature of the conflict.<sup>65</sup>

He argued that power consisted of three components; all the resources, including security, materiel, human and state elements; the ability to use the resources; and the determination to use the resources to attain the goals of the conflict. He perceived the third component, which he called 'the power of the importance of the target', to be most important. Thus, each side's ability to endure became the pivotal focus of the conflict. In Nir's opinion the side with what he called "a concrete idea", meaning belief in the importance of the goal, could defeat an opponent with greater material resources and capabilities.<sup>66</sup>

Nir's definition of a society's ability to endure as the deciding factor of conflict led him to see the outcome of conflict as occurring in a society's consciousness. He believed that the inferior side in terms of power would recognize its inability to defeat its enemy militarily and would focus its efforts on grinding down the rival society. The long duration of 'a limited conflict' increased the importance of adaptability to changes in conflict. In his opinion, developing effective organizational learning mechanisms

constituted one of the most decisive factors in coping.<sup>67</sup> He saw military strength as a key factor in the general national effort and in achieving political objectives. The army had to adapt to operating in a limited conflict and its measure of success would determine "...the length of the conflict, its price and of course its political outcome."<sup>68</sup>

"The limited conflict" doctrine affected the CGSC in two ways. First, it provided a paradigm for explaining the prolonged fighting in the second Intifada and for analyzing the changes needed in the curriculum. Second, by making it the cornerstone of the students' education, the CGSC was able to prove to the top IDF echelons and commanders in the field the importance and benefit of the College to the army, which was sinking under the onus of unending combat.<sup>69</sup> One of the ways employed in the middle of the decade was to send Barak students to experience preparations for war as part of a visit to a regional division on the Lebanese border (for a week the students studied war plans, exercised the stages of operational planning, and even criticized and made recommendations to improve the current divisional operations).<sup>70</sup>

While low intensity conflict was receiving attention, military ethics was also boosted as a subject of study in two ways in the late 1990s. First, during the tenure of Moshe Zin as commandant of CGSC, 1999-2001, a CGSC's ethical code was developed for the first time. The code was based upon the official IDF ethical code, "the spirit of the IDF", but delved deeper into the context of learning and educational values, and formulated valid rules of conduct for all College personnel (including mutual relations with academics). Military ethics were also emphasized in faculty development, teaching modules, and in the notion of "command responsibility" that was adapted to the CGSC environment.<sup>71</sup> Second, ethical issues, including military ethics, were given more attention in Barak classes. The topic was taught in part by discussing the rich combat experience students gained in the second Intifada, and the dilemmas they had faced.<sup>72</sup>

Zigdon, who replaced Zin, pointed out that military ethics were important for dealing with growing "moral dilemmas created in fighting the Palestinians over recent years in limited conflict... Just placing the topic on the agenda in education was an achievement in itself. Special attention was paid to educating the Directing staff members..."<sup>73</sup>

Similar significant progress was made in inter-service cooperation and in the promotion of joint military education in CGSC. As mentioned, CGSC traditionally offered separate courses— long and short – for land and air force officers. In fact, the first course attended by air force officers was in April 1953. At that time the course was given within the framework of the Air Force School for Officers. From 1970-1989 the course was called CGSC Air Force and lasted about three months, with 2-3 classes each year. From 1990-1999 CGSC gave 'long air force' courses and 2-3 CGSC 'short-air' courses that lasted about 3 months. Later a 'short-sky' course was integrated for commanders of operational squadrons and units<sup>74</sup> in the IAF.<sup>75</sup> Over the years the IAF fought for an independent CGSC course.<sup>76</sup> Gradually the Air Force Chief of Staff recognized the need to improve the education of the service's squadron and operational unit commanders. The solution was found in a CGSC "Sky" course and "Sky A", the first nine-month class, graduated in 2003. <sup>77</sup> The "Sky" course was established with the understanding that there was a significant gap in the administrative and organizational preparation of air squadron commanders. The course began in early September and finished at the end of June. The study week was comprised of four study days (during which students studied from 9:00 – 17:00) and one day of duty to maintain their flying skills. It included study and discussion in the "Sky" plenum, trips and visits in Israel and overseas, workshops, meetings with senior commanders, debriefings and personal research work.<sup>78</sup> Eliezer Shkedi, IAF Air Force Chief of Staff at the time, decided that promotion to the post of squadron commander was conditional on passing the "Sky" course, and that no change would be made in course content without his authorization. While IAF awareness of the need for education to enter this post is to be commended, it also indicates that the IAF wanted a course that served its own interests, since CGSC had little right to interfere in it.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, after "Sky" was established some progress was made in cooperation between the air course and Barak. Pinchas ('Pinky') Zoaretz, commander of Barak course at 2006, linked this with a broader change in the IDF towards inter-service cooperation. In his words: "The whole notion of the inherent nature of the operational level of war is studied at CGSC Barak. But I have to say that we are at this moment in a process of modification. The whole army is in a process of change, in an attempt to define when one teaches what. However, the understanding is that CGSC is the place to start this instruction in an orderly manner. ...Regarding the integration with "Sky", it is minor. Nevertheless, since I was in the US

Marine Corps [as a foreign student- T.I.), and I attended the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College CGSC course, I know the importance of working jointly, the full meaning of the word, and we are still a long way off course".<sup>80</sup>

Many members of the IDF top echelons thought that progress was less than it appeared. One of the most prominent figures holding this view was General (Ret.) Yaakov Amidror, Commandant of the IDF Military Colleges Unit.<sup>81</sup> At the end of his first year in the post, during which he met with Air Force personnel who had participated in various courses at the College, he wrote: "I have understood for a long time that without a better connection between IAF and army capabilities we will find it hard to win in battle. This is indeed a clear conclusion throughout the world, but it still has not yet been internalized enough in the IDF". An essential condition for joint activities among the services, according to Amidror, was shared knowledge about the strong points and limitations of the other services.<sup>82</sup> He thought that both the army and the air force did not understand each other. Amidror argued that "cooperation through joint education... contributes to knowledge, understanding and personal acquaintance".<sup>83</sup>

During these years an attempt was made to broaden the general education of officers in a way that would integrate and complement their military studies. In addition, the College commanders hoped that academic skills would improve officers' professional research and analytical capability. In 2001 students in CGSC Barak began to study for a master's degree in Military and Security Studies, in the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup> The academic program of CGSC Barak was coordinated by an academic adviser from the Hebrew University,<sup>85</sup> and was cancelled after several years because of differences of opinion between the University and CGSC regarding study requirements, study topics, the attitude of academic faculty and university administrators towards CGSC personnel and the extremely heavy work load imposed upon the students.<sup>86</sup>

To supplement the academic curriculum a military research centre was established – the Institute for Research of the Tactical Environment.<sup>87</sup> This institute was intended to promote applied research relevant to regular IDF activity. Research papers written by Barak students were published in the journal "Wisdom of Doing" ("*Tvonat Hama'aseh*"), which was established as a classified professional journal at that time, and presented at

the institute's annual conference.<sup>88</sup> Summaries of the conference presentations, which were classified, became a source of unique knowledge in their fields.

It is possible that Zigdon's success in demonstrating to the IDF Senior Command that the College could enhance the knowledge and tactical skills of IDF officers helped him to influence the Chief of Staff to make the CGSC course a prerequisite for promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel.<sup>89</sup> This written order realized the College founders' vision of education of Command and General Staff as a mandatory stage in the professional development of high-ranking Israeli officers. Although this order was not implemented in practice, it was another milestone in the continuous effort of CGSC personnel to convince the IDF of the necessity and benefits of military education. Nevertheless, it seems that the actions of Zigdon, the most outstanding commander of CGSC during the second Intifada, and in retrospect, perhaps one of the most important in the history of the College (as will be explained below), actually harmed the IDF in the long run. Zigdon's decision to focus the College curriculum on a mandatory doctrinal document – 'limited conflict' – provided the College with an essential paradigm for building a coherent curriculum. It even helped to exemplify to the students the benefit of writing research papers about tactics since it provided criteria for analyzing the complicated fighting that took place. Similarly, one could easily justify the establishment of the first military research centre at the CGSC. This was one of the few times that IDF officers were exposed to the benefits of a doctrine that helped to interpret the changes in the nature of military operations and its close affinity to military education.

However, Zigdon's decision did not help promote, and may even have restricted, the development of the College as a source of independent critical military thinking. Unlike foreign military colleges where faculty and students together may provide intellectual opposition that reveals flaws in formal doctrines, the CGSC people, with some exceptions<sup>90</sup>, did not provide 'a loyal opposition' and did not promote theoretical discussion on the 'limited conflict' doctrine. Instead, to a great extent the College gave up teaching high intensity conflict and focused on bequeathing a flawed doctrine of low intensity conflict to a generation of officers that had not been exposed to other forms of conflict.

## From victory (on the West Bank) to defeat (in Lebanon): CGSC and rehabilitation of the army after the Second Lebanon War (2006-2010)<sup>91</sup>

The Second Lebanon War demonstrated significant failures in the function of the divisional and operational commands echelons of the IDF in combat, not to a small degree because of poor command and staff capabilities of the officers. This point is stressed both in the report issued by the governmental commission of enquiry (the Winograd Commission) and the commission of enquiry set up by the Israel Parliament's Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defence.<sup>92</sup> Public criticism and the findings of investigations, together with the findings of internal debriefings, led to a comprehensive reform in the education of IDF officers.

Based on lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War and on the example of the British Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC), the IDF opened its first inter-service Command and Staff Course in September 2007. Even before the war then CSGC Commandant, Brigadier General Avi Ashkenazi headed a delegation that visited the British JSCSC in order to learn from the British experience. Like the IDF, in the late 1990s the British armed forces made reforms which included closing service command and staff colleges and establishing an inter-service college.<sup>93</sup> The Israeli staff recommended opening a similar course and partially as a result of the lessons learned from the recent war, the IDF top echelons urged adoption of the proposal.<sup>94</sup> The then deputy Chief-of-Staff, General (Res.) Moshe Kaplinski authorized the program in January 2007 in order to strengthen inter service cooperation. The students in the new course belonged to the 'professional core' of the IDF and were slated to fill brigade command and staff posts on land, flying commands in the IAF, missile boat commands in the navy and operational formations in intelligence after completing the course. The curriculum was divided into the joint core for all students, comprising 35% of the total study hours, and service studies focusing on issues unique to their service.<sup>95</sup> A significant innovation in the course was the recruitment of academic lecturers as an integral part of the College Directing staff as opposed to hiring them from academic institutions or as external lecturers. The lecturers were called academic tutors and gave their lessons together with a military directing staff member. Their main role was to add academic content and to expand the content presented in lectures by the military



directing staff members. The faculty that was recruited in 2007 for Class A included five lecturers, among them a doctoral candidate in military history from Bar Ilan University under the tutelage of Prof. Martin Van-Krefeld; a Ph.D. who had just completed his doctorate at the Hebrew University on combat leadership in the IDF in the 1950s; a veteran Ph.D. in military history who had previously been a long time member of the military directing staff; and a fresh Ph.D. from the Department of War Studies at King's College.<sup>96</sup> This move was meant to imitate the custom at JSCSC of having a military directing staff member and a lecturer from the Defence Studies Department co-instruct courses. However, their limited number, their junior academic status and the close link of some of them with the IDF considerably limited their potential contribution.

Based on lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War, the new course placed greater emphasis on force development, planning and execution of training and exercises, logistics etc., traditional weak points in the IDF. For example, in logistics, as part of an extensive effort that encompassed all courses for officers, work was done on logistical force development and employment. A student learned the concept of multi-branch logistics and in light of the lessons of the war emphasis was placed on supply chain management in the field, medical evacuation by helicopter and the transfer of reports from the field to the operational commands and General Staff.<sup>97</sup> Apparently the new course corrected several main failings that were typical of previous programs in CGSC such as the lack of jointness in terms of student composition, directing staff and curricula, the absence of directing staff members with relevant advanced degrees, and over-focusing on force employment at the expense of force development. However, its brief existence and the limited information available to the public have made it difficult to ascertain whether the hopes pinned on the reform have been realized.

## Conclusions

CGSC has traditionally faced the tension between commitment to the IDF's present needs and the need to develop long-term officer abilities. Investment in the present is frequently encouraged by the senior command, which regards education as a means to improve the skills needed by officers in their next post. It could be that in the IDF, an armed forces with a strong sense of mission, officers in instructional posts have a "natural" tendency to be committed to the development of skills needed

immediately by their students. Lacking intellectual independence, the College committed itself energetically to improving the professional abilities and skills of its students in aspects of the war they were preparing for and which they had been facing – "the limited conflict". However, this focus came at the expense of preparation for war fighting in different circumstances, as exemplified by the Second Lebanon War. The main factor contributing to improvement at the College was the unconditional commitment of some of its commandants.

A unique characteristic of the College is the sense of mission, rather than a professional ethos, exhibited by military and affiliated academic (university) instructors. The main figures that created ties between academics and the IDF, like Yavetz, worked for the most part out of a sense of mission to help the IDF and less from 'an academic world view'. This kind of relationship had both negative and positive effects. Sometimes it enabled the parties to create relations of trust and readiness that facilitated the resolution of disagreements. At other times relations reached a state of crisis because other figures in the academic world, without this sense of mission, objected to this relationship. It was in fact the economic crisis in higher education in Israel that laid the 'healthier' foundation for the relationship between the IDF and Israeli academe. Instead of relying on personal links between professors with a personal interest in the defence fields and a sense of mission, the IDF developed a sophisticated market concept and awarded it academic programs to the highest bidder. As a result, a pattern of contractual agreements began to develop, similar to the practice in the United Kingdom and Australia.

As is shown in this analysis, considerable progress was made in terms of the content taught at the College, developing students' learning and research skills, the information and research infrastructure and awareness of the need to develop a conceptual framework for the program. However, the College continued to lag behind Western colleges in terms of the level of information and qualifications required of military directing staff, the lack of an academic curriculum to complement the military one, a focus on grand-tactics instead of the operational level of war and operational art, a lack of official doctrinal literature to guide the development of a united core curriculum, a separation between CGSC courses for combat officers and for combat support and combat service support officers, and a lack of significant backing from the General Staff.

Several main achievements can be listed during the period under review that promoted the College and laid a normative foundation for future professionalization of the IDF: the order mandating the CGSC course as a prerequisite for reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel; establishment of an internal research centre (the Institute for Research of the Tactical Environment); deployment of an information systems infrastructure as an integral part of pedagogic activity, administration and research, making the course into a joint one; and the recruitment of academics to the teaching faculty.

The bottom line is that the CGC's record during the last 30 years or so has been ambivalent. After every military confrontation the General Staff turned to the military colleges, and in particular to CGSC, to resolve and overcome shortcomings revealed in command and staff skills. Nevertheless, deficiencies continued and backing for most of the reforms evaporated over time. Thus, without wider IDF reform that will develop a military doctrine encompassing a comprehensive paradigm for force development and employment, no breakthrough can be expected in military education in the IDF.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is partially based upon a PhD dissertation carried out under the supervision of Prof. Stuart A. Cohen in the Department of Political Studies at Bar Ilan University.

<sup>2</sup> Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counter- Insurgency and the Intifada: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Joannathan M. House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Tactics, Doctrine and Organization* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S Army, Command and General Staff College, 1984), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Moshe Bar Kochbam "Structure, Organization and Quality of Operational Units", in *Quality and Quantity: Dilemmas of Military Force Generation*, Zvi Offer and Avi Kober, eds., (Tel- Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1985), 484.[Hebrew]

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of Israel's "Current Security" concept and its development see: Zaki Shalom, *Policy in the Shadow of Controversy, the Routine Security Policy of Israel 1949-1956* (Tel- Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1996). [Hebrew]

<sup>6</sup> *The Commission of Inquiry into the Events of Military Engagement in Lebanon 2006* (Jerusalem: Government Printing House, 2008), Second and Final Report, 269.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 269- 270.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 270.

- <sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the influence of changes in international law on IDF activity by an IDF legal counselor see: Noam Noyman, "Legal Counseling during War and Fighting", *Ma'arachot*, 411, 2007, 36- 41. [Hebrew]
- <sup>10</sup> David Brodet and Ilan Biran, eds., *Reforming the Defense Budget* (Tel Aviv: The Israel Institute for Democracy, the 15<sup>th</sup> Caesarea Conference, 2007). [Hebrew]
- <sup>11</sup> *Report of the Committee for Review of the Defense Budget* (Jerusalem: Government Printing House, May 2007), 86. [Hebrew]
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 88.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 93.
- <sup>14</sup> Reuma Sapir, "Three Ways of Viewing the Construction of Officership in the IDF", *Between the Arenas*, 5, 2006, 38. [Hebrew]
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 32.
- <sup>16</sup> Aviva Luri, "An Academic Degree with a Wink", *Haaretz* (March 28 1997). [Hebrew]
- <sup>17</sup> Sapir, 39.
- <sup>18</sup> Moshe Shamir, "Who Needs Doctrine: Is the Traditionalist Better than the Inquisitor?", *Wisdom of Doing*, 3, 2004, 230- 232. [Hebrew]
- <sup>19</sup> "The Inter-Service Command and Staff College", in *Staff Comptroller number 36* (Government Printing House: Jerusalem, December 1984), part B, 1188. [Hebrew]
- <sup>20</sup> An interview with Professor Zvi Yavetz in Ramat-Poleg, 2007.
- <sup>21</sup> A letter from Zvi Yavetz, Head of the Department of History, to professor Saul Abarbanel, Rector of the Faculty of Humanities, December 6, 1979, Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2- 7, August 16 1960-July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>22</sup> Dr. Shlomo Ben-Ami, Academic Studies Coordinator at CGSC, to Lt. Gen. Dov Tamari, Commander of CGSC, July 7 1978, Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2- 7, August 16 1960-July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>23</sup> A letter from Itzhak Bar-On, General Manager of Tel Aviv University, to Maj. Gen. Herzl Shafir, Head of Human Resources Division at General Staff, September 10 1973, , Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2-7, August 16 1960-July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>24</sup> A letter from Dr. Shlomo Ben Ami, Academic Studies Coordinator at CGSC, to Professor Haim Shaked, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, July 12 1978, on the issue of "Academic Studies at the CGSC". Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2-7, August 16 1960- July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>25</sup> Prof. Zvi Yavetz to Prof. Saul Abarbanel, December 6 1979.
- <sup>26</sup> Dr. Shlomo Ben Ami to Prof. Haim Shaked, July 12 1978.
- <sup>27</sup> A letter from Dr. Shlomo Ben Ami, Academic Studies Coordinator at CGSC, to Maj. Gen. Dov Tamari, Commander of CGSC, July 7 1978. , Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2-7, August 16 1960-July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

- <sup>30</sup> Ibid and Prof. Zvi Yavetz to Prof. Saul Abarbanel, December 6 1979.
- <sup>31</sup> Dr. Shlomo Ben Ami to Maj. Gen. Dov Tamari, July 7 1978.
- <sup>32</sup> Dr. Shlomo Ben Ami to Prof. Haim Shaked, July 12 1978.
- <sup>33</sup> See for example: A letter from Professor Haim Shaked, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, to Dov Tamari, Commander of CGSC, March 15 1978. Tel Aviv University Archive, file- IDF and the Faculty of Humanities, 2- 7, August 16 1960- July 20 1971. [Hebrew]
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Yavetz.
- <sup>35</sup> *Staff Comptroller number 36*, 1188.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid, 1188.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, 1190.
- <sup>38</sup> Haggai Golan, ed., *50 Years of CGSC: 50 Years of the Inter-Service Command and General Staff College* (Tel- Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 2004), 26- 28. See also: R. (Colonel), "Road of Officership: Acquiring a Profession- Head of Instruction Department on the Barak Project- An Interview with Major General Doron Rubin", *Chamanit*, 16, 1990, 26- 28. Rubin is quoted as saying: "The main message of "Lightning" [Barak] is learning the profession: Deepening theoretical knowledge in regard to military doctrines, staff work and work procedures in a very thoughtful way... One of CGSC's problems was reflected in the past and also today (the students themselves admit it), in that we do not know... that the major change, required at the CGSC, is: a deepening of professional knowledge in terms of learning the doctrine", *ibid*, 26 (emphasis in original).
- <sup>39</sup> Dr. Hanan Shai, who was head of the project, sees later reforms in military education as also connected to the IDF failings in fighting Hezbollah in Israel's unilaterally declared Security Zone in South Lebanon. Interview with Hanan Shai in the Department of Political Studies at Bar Ilan University, July 14<sup>th</sup> 2005. For an analysis of Israel- Hezbollah fighting in the Security Zone between 1985- 2000 see: Sergio Cantigani and Clive Jones. *Israel and Lebanon 1976- 2006: An Interstate and Asymmetric Conflict in Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2009), *passim*.
- <sup>40</sup> Gal Horenstein, "The Green University", *Bamahane*, 31, 1994, 25.
- <sup>41</sup> Moshe Shamir, "On Changes in Inter-Service Command and Staff Training: From "Lightning 1" to "Lightning 17", *Ma'arachot*, 396, 2004, 21. Colonel (Ret.) Shamir was a military staff member at the time of writing.
- <sup>42</sup> Uzi Lev-Tzur, 'Operational Exercises and Instructor Experience are the Central Tools in Command and Staff College Officer Training', *Chamanit* 16, 1990, p. 25. [Hebrew]. LTC Lev-Tzur was commandant of the college when *Barak* was introduced. In the article he criticizes *Barak's* reliance on an academic staff, a prevalent contemporary argument against the program. Having General Rubin's support was instrumental in this regard for he was recognized as an experienced combat commander.
- <sup>43</sup> Interview with Shai. Yoav Gelber, email correspondence with the author September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The academic characteristics included experienced academic instructors, syllabi and bibliography, and a fixed schedule.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Shai 2007. *Barak* had reintroduced the study of the principles of war which then continued even after the program was terminated.

<sup>45</sup> Golan, 25- 27.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Horenstein, 25.

<sup>49</sup> Rivka Diner- Zisk, "'Lightning" Command and Staff Graduates' attitudes toward the Program: A Research and Evaluation Report Surveying Classes 1- 6" in *Career Personnel Collection* (General Staff/ Human Resources Division, Behavioral Sciences Center, Research Section: December 2003),

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>51</sup> Golan, 189.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 194- 195.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 189.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 188.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, *ibid* and 195, 200, 212 and interview with Azriel Lurber in Kiryat Uno, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Luri.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>58</sup> Arieh O'Sullivan, "IDF to Start Teaching the "Laws of War", *The Jerusalem Post* (December 22 1995), 5.

<sup>59</sup> Asa Kasher, testimony to the Winograd Commission, 2- 3.

<sup>60</sup> Golan, 207, 212.

<sup>61</sup> Shmuel Nir, "The fighting in the Lebanese arena as a conflict between unequal forces: simple truths", *Zarkor*, 1 ,1999, introduction. [Hebrew]

<sup>62</sup> Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006), 124.

<sup>63</sup> Peri, p.124.

<sup>64</sup> Shmuel Nir, "The Limited Conflict", in Haggai Golan and Shaul Shay, eds., *Low Intensity Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot: 2004), 40- 41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 19- 20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 20- 25.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 34- 35.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Colonel Pinchas Zuaetz, Commander of "Barak" Command and Staff Course at the CGSC, in his office at March 2 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Gal Hirsch, *Love Story War Story* (Yediot Achronot and Hemed Books: 2009), 376.

<sup>71</sup> Golan, 200.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 211. For a further discussion on the place of military ethics within the IDF military colleges, see: Amira Raviv, "The Perception of Military Ethics Study in Colleges", *Ma'arachot*, 396, 2004, 53- 55.

<sup>73</sup> Golan, 211.

<sup>74</sup> These units included among others the service special operations units.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 42

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Itzhak Brik, at his office in Ben Shemen, at 2008.

<sup>77</sup> Golan, 42.

<sup>78</sup> Professor Yoav Gelber, email correspondence with Dr. Tamir Libel, October 10 2007 and

<sup>79</sup> Elazar Ben Lulu, "Going to the Sky", *LAF Journal*, 164, 2006. Available at: <http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Journal/Journal.IN.aspx?lang=HE&lobbyID=50&folderID=1698&subfolderID=1699&docfolderID=1703&docID=25972> .

Accessed: April 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, and Amir Rappaport, "Take the Debriefings Out of the IDF", *Maariv* (September 10<sup>th</sup> 2004), Weekend Supplement, 19

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Colonel Pinchas Zoaretz, commander of the Barak Course, done by the author at the former office at the CGSC on March 2 2006.

<sup>81</sup> This unit hosts both the National Security College and the CGSC. It includes also several supporting and research facilities and units.

<sup>82</sup> Yaacov Amidror, "Inter-Service Cooperation Begins with Training", *Reflections on Military and Security* (Tel Aviv: Private Printing), 2002, 122- 123.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 124- 125.

<sup>84</sup> "IDF Senior Officer Education", in *State Comptroller 57A* (Government Printing House: Jerusalem, December 2006), 72.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, *ibid*.

<sup>86</sup> An interview with an IDF Military College official, conducted on terms of anonymity, 2006.

<sup>87</sup> Golan, 208.

<sup>88</sup> Yaacov Zigdon, "In Praise of Tactical Analysis", *Wisdom of Doing*, 3, 2004, 5.

<sup>89</sup> "The Team for Evaluation of Senior Officership" a special investigation team of the Knesset's (Israel Parliament) Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, 2007, 6.

<sup>90</sup> The main exception was Col. (Ret.) Yehuda Wagman, a military doctrines instructor at CGSC, who continuously criticized the "limited conflict" doctrine in classified and public forums alike. However, Wagman called for a return to the "good old doctrines" and not for developing alternative and updated ones. He focused mainly on tactics while ignoring the new complex strategic context of the 1990s. See, for example, Yehuda Wagman, "The 'Limited Conflict' Trap", *Ma'arachot*, 385, 2003, 68- 77.

<sup>91</sup> For an analysis of the Second Lebanon War see: Andrew Exum, "Hezbollah at War: A Military Assessment", *Policy Focus*, 63, 2006.

<sup>92</sup> The Winograd Commission report and The Team for Evaluation of Senior Officership.

<sup>93</sup> For a detailed study of the background to the establishment of the JSCSC and analysis of its first years see: Tamir Libel, "The Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC)- The First Ten Years", *National Defense University "Carol 1" Bulletin* 2, 2010, 45- 56.

<sup>94</sup> Yaakov Katz, "IDF Opens First Cross-Branch Senior Command Course", *The Jerusalem Post* (September 25<sup>th</sup> 2007), 4.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid and Lilach Shuval, "CGSC: Service Courses to be Eliminated", *Bamahane* 2 (2875), 2006, 9.

<sup>96</sup> An interview with an IDF military college official, conducted on terms of anonymity, 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Ido Elazar, "Following the Second Lebanon War: Division Commander will Learn to Manage Logistics in Times of Crisis", *Bamahane* 18 (2891), 2007, 10.



## Lessons from the Great War for a Small Country. The military debate in the Netherlands 1918-1923

By *Wim Klinkert*\*

### Introduction

When the Great War ended in November 1918 the Dutch breathed a sigh of relief. The country had been spared the horrors of war, its armed neutrality having withstood the test of a major European conflict. However, during the years 1914-1918 the Dutch politicians and military leaders had constantly been preparing for war. The army had gone through a constant process of innovation – although any mass production of modern weaponry had been impossible – and it had remained on full strength constantly. The Dutch were the only small European neutral that did not demobilise during the war. The country was so close to the western front that political and military leadership deemed it to dangerous to decrease its military strength. The belligerent powers, with their attachés in The Hague constantly monitoring any Dutch military move, had to be constantly reminded of the Dutch will and capability to fight should the worst come to the worst. But in November 1918 a peaceful future seemed at last to be near.<sup>1</sup> For the military the central question was how to analyse the lessons of four years of war just across the borders. What were the implications of the Great War for a small neutral country? How did the ‘war experience’ influence future military planning both operationally and tactically? What public debates developed in which the military participated and how was the future of a small state perceived?

The period between 1918-1923 can be seen as a distinct one because the strong pacifism of the 1920’s and 1930’s had not manifested itself yet. Certainly, the defence budget had been reduced considerably and the Social Democrats demanded disarmament, but uncertainty about the near future was still such that a very strong broadly supported pacifism and anti-militarism had not surfaced yet. From 1924 onwards that would change considerably.

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Strategically, things seemed to change for the worse after the Armistice of November 1918. First, the Belgians demanded the annexation of parts of Dutch territory for both economic and military reasons. Skilful Dutch diplomacy in Versailles reduced that threat in 1919, but the relations with the small southern neighbour remained strained. Instead of a small neutral, like Holland itself, but with internationally guaranteed neutrality, the Belgians changed into an ally of France (1920) and took part in the occupation of the Rhineland. The unusual situation developed in which the Belgian army surrounded the southern Dutch province of Limburg on all sides, also in the east, the former German side. This situation seemed to escalate in January 1923 when Belgian and French troops occupied the Ruhr area. This was the tensest month for the Dutch General Staff since 1919.

Another major change was the disappearance of German military power. Since 1870 Germany had been the most dangerous potential enemy for the Netherlands, although the German army was highly admired by many Dutch officers. From 1918 onwards Germany seemed to have fallen prey to internal chaos, separatism and political extremism. The League of Nations, which the Netherlands joined in March 1920, did not seem to offer any solutions for the Dutch strategic position. For the Dutch General Staff this new institution had no relevancy for the time being, and it will be seen that it hardly played any part in its war planning.<sup>2</sup>

Internally, the Dutch General Staff had to cope with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, it knew radical budget cuts were unavoidable, while on the other, it realized that if the Dutch army wanted to implement the technical and tactical lessons of the war, it would have to invest heavily in expensive modern weaponry. But how to innovate when the financial means were scarce? The army had never been able to boast much sympathy from the Dutch society as a whole and after four years of mobilisation, it had even worn thinner. What choices were made in those first five years after the war? What ideas surfaced?

### **Internal changes: technical and tactical innovation**

During the war the Dutch General Staff followed the tactical and technical innovations to the best of its ability. For this it had several means at its disposal. Dutch officers were regularly invited by the belligerents to visit

the front line or coastal defences. Many of them not only inspected the western but also the Alpine fronts. Secondly, the Dutch government appointed military attachés in Paris, Berlin and London, who from 1916 onwards sent information on many military matters and also paid regular visits to the front lines in West and East. Thirdly, all international belligerent publications were closely scrutinised in The Hague, and they were often even discussed with the military representatives of the belligerent powers residing in the Netherlands. Contacts between Dutch Staff officers and foreign military attachés were frequent and close during the war years. Fourthly, the Dutch army constantly experimented with the production of new weapons. Dutch factories tried to produce machine guns, chemical weapons, airplanes, radio equipment, hand grenades, flame throwers, concrete pill boxes, mortars, steel helmets, etc. In some they succeeded in others they did not. Success depended on the availability of raw materials and specialised knowledge and equipment. The army also trained its units in trench warfare and in modern mobile warfare. Field service regulations were constantly adapted. What was the result in 1918? Tactically, perhaps, the Dutch army had grasped the basic principles of modern warfare, but technically it lacked the equipment to fight a war for more than a very short period. To solve this gap in secret the Dutch army had made contact with the British for the supply of large quantities of modern (heavy) armament in case of a German attack.<sup>3</sup>

After the war the Dutch hunger for military information did not diminish in any way. All publications from the former warring states were analysed meticulously, and Dutch army officers kept on travelling, with France being the preferred destination. Not only were visits paid to the former battlefields, but officers were also sent to participate in French military courses on artillery, tank warfare and anti aircraft artillery. Specialised knowledge gathered in that way was used for updating the Dutch military manuals. The most important missions to France were those to the prestigious *Ecole supérieure de guerre* in Paris, to which one of the leading Dutch experts on trench warfare was dispatched for a year. The other countries with which the Dutch Staff had regular contact were the Scandinavian states. This was a follow-up of ties established during the war, when the Dutch army had bought machine guns in Denmark and airplanes and howitzers in Sweden. For financial reasons the military attachés abroad were abolished after the war, a move that only increased the value of foreign study trips. In the most prominent Dutch military journal, the *Militaire Spectator*<sup>4</sup>, many officers published their ideas, which

were partially based on foreign visits. This venerable periodical and several other military journals abounded with, mostly tactical and technical, articles on war-time developments and post-war foreign analysis. They testify to a theoretical military discussion on a high level, and as such they are in line with the Dutch tradition of high quality, internationally oriented military publication. Needless to say, realising all these ideas in practice was a totally different matter.

### **Who is the enemy?**

Dutch military preparations had always been based on the fundamental idea of safeguarding neutrality, with the army having to deter potential enemies from crossing the Dutch border. Should that deterrence fail, the army had to be capable of putting up a resistance for a long enough period of time to enter into a coalition war with an opponent of the violator of Dutch territory. So, a mobile field army was to deter potential violators at the border and a Fortress system (Fortress Holland) was to defend the western part of the country where the main cities and ports were located. The fortress system intended to buy the country time to enter into a coalition and prevent a quick occupation of the entire territory. The exercises of the General Staff, both in the field and on maps, were more or less all based on these premises. The idea behind this operational concept was that Dutch territory was positioned in such a strategically important location in Western Europe that none of the Great Powers would acquiesce in the occupation of the Netherlands by any of their rival Great Powers. How relevant were these ideas after 1918?

The General Staff started with map exercises and staff exercise trips again in 1920, with field exercises on a larger scale in 1923 and resumed the traditional biannual divisional manoeuvres in 1924. The Staff focussed on possible attacks from the south and east. It considered German weakness a temporary situation and saw the Belgian army - much larger than the Dutch and with war experience, French backing and deployed in the Rhineland - as a potential opponent. Belgian animosity surely was a new phenomenon.

The winter map exercise of 1920-1921 started with an analysis of the main developments of the war years, conducted by expert Staff officers. This was followed by the scenario. It involved France and Germany that had freed itself from the limitations imposed by the Versailles Treaty. Great

Britain remained neutral, while the League of Nations played no part. Russia took the side of Germany and Belgium that of France. Germany concentrated its army at its western border and asked the Dutch permission to cross their territory to attack France. The Dutch refusal meant war. The Dutch field army was concentrated in the south of the country to prevent any large-scale penetration of German troops into the Netherlands. It fought the Germans and was even helped by the Belgians, with Dutch and Belgian army headquarters cooperating.

The next winter map exercise in 1921-1922 involved a major German attack against the Netherlands and a coalition against this attack by several, unnamed, armies, of which the Dutch field army was one. In central Holland the Dutch field army attacked the German army. This exercise had a major logistical component and seemed to have as its main objective the analysis of all logistical aspects of the field army at full strength. The Dutch Staff used French and German statistical information on supply, transport, munitions, casualties etc.

The summer staff ride of 1920 involved the League of Nations insofar that the Dutch and Belgian army worked together as a League contingent against a German attack on the Netherlands. This exercise involved a thorough analysis of a trench war close to Amsterdam. The German army penetrated the Netherlands up to the Fortress Line that defended the capital. Using detailed data from France and Germany the Dutch officers simulated a trench war involving all the modern weapons: heavy and light mortars, flame throwers, hand grenades, complex trench systems, chemical weapons, aerial reconnaissance and the tactics of attack and defence. The following year they simulated a Belgian attack on the south of the Netherlands. The British and American armies had left Germany and the Rhine and Ruhr areas were occupied solely by France and Belgium. The Belgian attack on the Netherlands succeeded in pushing the Dutch army back, north of the great rivers that divide the country. Belgian-French attacks led to a major battle in central Holland, which formed the core of the exercise. The French even made use of tanks.

The summer staff ride of 1922 featured a Belgian attack directly targeted at western Holland, so the officers focused on the defence along the great rivers (Rhine, Meuse) to protect cities like Rotterdam. Again, much of the French data on casualties, transport capacity, munitions and even

specification on the types of wounds resulting from the different weapons were used.<sup>5</sup>

When these paper exercises were compared with the ones held in the period before 1914, the offensive role of the Dutch is striking. In almost all exercises the Dutch army was given the order to attack, instead of slowly retreating towards the Fortress Holland. Also, coalition warfare was given more attention and, of course, the trench warfare plans were completely new. What is also remarkable is the idea of German rearmament and aggression within a relatively short period of time and the Belgian hostility. The reason why so much emphasis was placed on the role of the Dutch field army will be discussed later.<sup>6</sup>

Belgium and the Netherlands showed a great interest in each other's armies after 1918. During the war the Dutch army, of course, had focused on a possible German attack. But it also considered the threat of coastal landings, especially in the south-western province of Zeeland, which controlled the entrance to the Belgian port of Antwerp and which lay close to the German U-boat harbours of Zeebrugge and Ostend. In this area the Dutch army seemed to have lost all interest. The real war danger came from the southern border. In October 1919 rumours of a possible Belgian raid on the Dutch city of Maastricht were rife. But war seemed even more imminent in January 1923 as a result of the Ruhr occupation by France and Belgium. The Dutch General Staff was informed by the French that war was a possibility and that Dutch neutrality would not be appreciated. The Dutch Staff prepared a war plan in case of a Belgian attack on the southern provinces. The plan envisaged that in case of a major attack, these provinces had to be abandoned. The fear was expressed that the Belgians might even be greeted as liberators in parts of the southern-most province of Limburg, so a quick retreat by the Dutch army had to be avoided. The General Staff officers also toyed with the idea of a blockade of Belgian ports. For a short while tension rose, but a real war threat did not materialize.<sup>7</sup>

How sensitive the relation with the Belgians was, from a military perspective, again became apparent in the fall of 1923 when the Minister of Defence made it clear he rejected exercise scenarios in which Belgium was portrayed as an aggressor. If such exercise ever fell in the wrong hands they could have undesirable political consequences.

In September 1923 the Dutch army held its first large field exercise. The so-called Light Brigade (the motorised reconnaissance unit of the field army) fought against an infantry regiment. Prior to the manoeuvres an impressive military parade was held in presence of the Queen, many dignitaries, and the foreign military attachés. A fly-past of the Netherlands army air service completed the show. It was the first time the Netherlands had shown all its military equipment in such a way since the war and in the presence of foreign military officials. It coincided with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reign of the Queen.

The Belgian attaché commented on the field exercise. He was not impressed by the weapons he saw, or by the military fitness of the soldiers. He also warned that socialism and pacifism had found an easy breeding ground in the Dutch army. On the other hand, he praised the way the staffs operated, the aerial reconnaissance, the uniforms and the physique of the men. But as a military exercise he found these little of interest in these manoeuvres.

His French colleague thought the whole manoeuvre “*franchement médiocre*”. He was only positively impressed by the morale and, again, the aerial reconnaissance. The way the staffs worked and the cooperation between artillery and cavalry were, in his eyes, disappointing.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1924 the first traditional divisional manoeuvres took place again. They were the first since September 1916, when the only large field exercise of the mobilisation years had taken place.

### **New field service regulations**

During the war the Dutch General Staff tried to keep up with the tactical development to the best of its abilities. In general, the pace and the depth of the changes struck the officers. War would, they believed, become much more technological and carried out at a faster pace. It was not the trenches that they saw as the most important legacy, but the speed of operations through airplanes and motorised units. These were frightening developments for a small country like the Netherlands, which lacked strategic depth. The answer had to be found in a modern field army, as was already seen in the exercises.

One perceived danger was that an aerial operation would strike so fast and so hard, that resistance would be futile. The answer was not only creation of an effective air defence, but also a field army that could be fielded quickly and would be modern and strong enough to be a partner in a coalition war with a great power. Many officers argued that the mobilisation period had proven their point: thanks to the field army the Germans had not attacked the Netherlands. When budgets were cut, it was all the more necessary to underline the need for such an expensive military organisation.

The most important tactical questions that needed to be answered involved the more complex role of the artillery, the introduction of modern weapons such as the machine gun and the airplane, and the coordination between the different branches of the army.

### **The artillery**

The Dutch army had traditionally had field and fortress artillery. These were two completely separate branches, one mobile, and the other static. The war had changed that system completely. Even before the end of the World War the Dutch army wanted to integrate the artillery and add a new branch: anti-aircraft artillery. Also, the number of different types of guns increased dramatically. During the wartime mobilisation the artillery had experimented with mortars of different calibres, with machine guns – also against aerial targets – and with heavy howitzers. These needed to be fitted into a new organisation and choices had to be made as to the kinds of guns that would stay in the artillery and those that would be transferred to the infantry. From the end of the mobilisation onwards study groups were established to look into this matter. Information was also gathered from France, where Dutch artillery officers took courses.

In 1921 the first decisions were made. A separate branch was to be established for the anti-aircraft artillery, while the fortress artillery was almost completely abolished. The field army was to be fitted out with heavy artillery both at divisional and corps level. The guns were to be used both in mobile operations and static warfare.

The problem was that the officers wanted many more guns than the politicians were prepared to pay for. The mortar production – small it was – was completely stopped. The mortars would have gone to the infantry,



but they were no longer produced. Anti-tank artillery (also called infantry guns) were also to go to the infantry. But again, this proposal was axed. The only additions to the artillery were howitzers that had been bought in Great Britain and, in 1918, in Germany. Modernisation of the field guns had to wait until 1925, when it was done in the Netherlands itself. The number and diversity of pieces wished for by the artillery officers was not reached, but compared to the field army of 1914, the army of 1922 was considerably stronger in artillery.

There remained the problem of chemical artillery. During the war, the Dutch army had developed and produced gas masks and offensive chemical weapons. At first, in 1918-1919, all production of chemical weaponry was ended. But not long afterwards the General Staff and the Defence Minister agreed that Holland should also have the capacity to use chemical weapons in an offensive way to retaliate in case an invader should use them. Besides conducting research on gas masks and producing them, the army prepared, albeit on a very small scale, for the possible offensive use of chemical weapons.<sup>9</sup>

## **Infantry**

Discussions on the future of the infantry centred on anti-tank combat, the introduction of the machine gun as the infantry's primary weapon, and trench warfare. The Netherlands never seriously thought of buying or producing tanks themselves, so all studies on tank warfare emphasised the strength of anti tank weapons and the unsuitability of the Dutch polder terrain for tank warfare. And, of course, tanks were much too expensive.

Trench warfare was taught in so-called storm schools. These schools had begun in 1916 with the establishment of a hand grenade school. In 1918 the Dutch army introduced a force of storm troops based on the German model, to be trained in storm schools. There would be one storm unit for each of the four divisions. These schools were closed after the Armistice, but reopened soon after, although of the original four only two schools remained. In theory, all conscript infantry soldiers had to be taught the basics of trench warfare and the best among them received extra training to become storm troopers. All infantry men had to handle digging equipment, saws, axes, hand grenades and had to be able to dig in during night time and handle sandbags and armoured shields. The main weapon of the infantry soldier was the machine gun, not the light Lewis machine

gun that many infantry officers preferred, but the older, heavier Austrian Schwarzlose machine gun, built under licence in the Artillery Works near Amsterdam. The production numbers were small, some one hundred per year, whereas the main advocates for a strong modern infantry thought the Dutch army needed at least 10,000 machine guns. The Staff abolished the flamethrower, but it did invest in new types of hand grenades.<sup>10</sup>

## Engineers

Trench warfare was not only a job for the infantry, but also for the engineers. The engineers concentrated after the war on the preparation of field fortifications. Until the war, the engineers had mostly been concerned with the fortresses that protected the western part of the country. But the time of huge fortresses was past. Engineers now focused on small field works such as pill boxes. In 1921 a study group for the future of the engineers was established. It produced new regulations for field fortifications that emphasized small concrete pillboxes and temporary earthen field works. An extensive set of regulations was finished in 1926 that was based on building small fortifications and using reinforced concrete. The fortifications patterns were based on the German bunkers the Dutch engineers had visited in France and Flanders.

Military journals paid extensive attention to field works and fortified trenches, and many articles were written about them both during and after the war. Perhaps it was the fact that static warfare was not so unfamiliar to the Dutch, who had always relied in the last resort on their inundated fortified lines surrounding the western provinces. The war experience kindled interest in the topic of fortified lines. The fundamental change was that the forts no longer played a central role, but fortifying terrain related to the operations of the field army had become the order of the day. The traditional exercises in fortress warfare were abolished.<sup>11</sup>

## Cavalry

Traditionally the cavalry force in the Dutch army was small. The First World War accelerated the transformation of cavalry units into cyclist and motor units. Machine guns were also introduced. The field army retained its cavalry reconnaissance brigade but, as a whole, the cavalry was substantially reduced in size after 1918.

## Science cooperates

More than ever before the changes in weaponry and tactics were attained through cooperation with university professors. During the mobilisation in 1915 the Minister of War established the Munitions Bureau. This bureau was assigned the task of coordinating and promoting weapons production and innovation, and it was relatively successful. The bureau brought military, entrepreneurs and scientists together and stimulated airplane and chemical weapons innovation and production and tried to tempt civilian industries into changing over to military production. This bureau was dissolved at the end of the mobilisation, but some of the military-scientific-entrepreneurial contacts remained intact. Its chairman, a former artillery officer, now professor of mechanics at the Technical University in Delft, remained a figure of importance in this field.

The work of coordination between the military and scientists was especially notable in the artillery, which had a long history of scientific research and relied more and more on civilian professors. The development of the anti aircraft artillery would not been possible without the strong support from the Leyden and Delft Universities. A big step ahead was made in 1924 with the establishment of the Commission for Physical Weaponry, which conducted fundamental research in the field of physics.

The development of chemical warfare and military aviation would have been impossible without help from the universities of Utrecht and Delft, respectively. The Signal Corps of the Dutch army also had strong ties with famous German firms such as Zeiss and Telefunken.<sup>12</sup>

## New field service regulations

To bring cohesion to all the new ideas and changes the General Staff formed a committee in 1920 under the chairmanship of the director of the Staff College tasked to prepare new comprehensive field service regulations. The committee was to take into account all the developments in the fields of aviation, motorisation, chemical warfare, tanks, signals, trench warfare, etc. Its task was to redefine all general principles of warfare and apply them to the Dutch circumstances. It was important, for instance, that fortress warfare and mobile warfare were no longer seen as two separate kinds of warfare. Modern warfare had two, closely related,

dimensions: manoeuvre warfare in the field and static warfare in trenches. Both were different aspects of the same comprehensive concept. A first draft was already completed by 1921 so that the committees that were developing artillery and engineer doctrine knew the general principles on which they were to base their work.

In the committee's first findings the infantry remained the principle arm and offensive manoeuvre warfare demanded the most attention. The key words were high morale, quick action, and persistent action. That was what it took to prevent a static phase in the war. Should a trench war become inevitable, it had to be fought in a very active way, using all modern equipment and weaponry available.

These aspects were again laid down in the final version of the regulations, published in 1924. Exemplary leadership, faith in one's own strength, a just treatment of soldiers, and cooperation between the arms and services were essential. These behaviours were, in fact, considered timeless ingredients of warfare. The World War had shown how destructive modern weapons were and how their fire power could affect morale; how the emergence of aircraft speeded up the pace of operations, and how soldiers could become dispersed on the battlefield. Again, morale was the key to overcome these problems. Duty, and the will to fight, had to be stressed because the demands modern warfare posed on every individual were more exacting than ever before. Camouflage, preparation, and training had increased in significance. It was the role of the commanding officer to lead by example, to show courage, knowledge and will power, but also humanity and insight into character.

The emphasis on morale was not completely new, but it was stronger than before. Tactical manuals that were published in this period also show that morale was deemed more essential than weapons; that the psychological effect of fire, be it from the infantry or the artillery, always surpassed the physical effect. So it was moral fibre-- based both on the example of the commanding officer and the internalised strength and resilience received during training—that would make soldiers survive modern war.<sup>13</sup>

Not all officers agreed. In a critique on the new regulations published in the *Militaire Spectator* one officer stated that the Dutch were much too level-headed to make morale so important. He also pointed out that the Dutch army hardly had the weapons to fight such an all out modern war. Finally,

he pointed out that the Dutch army was based on conscripts and that most of the junior officers were also conscripts – so demands on that army could not be so high as set by the new regulations.

These critical notes were not unjustified. The Dutch Staff had placed all its bets on a modern field army, a more or less a small-scale copy of the large continental field armies. Why was that? Since the turn on the century the Dutch General Staff had striven for an army organisation based on the German model, and a field army in continental style was an essential part of this. The theory was that such a mobile force would deter an aggressor and safeguard neutrality. Yet, it was impossible for such an army to fight a major power on such terms without its certain defeat and destruction. Nevertheless, the Dutch professional officers had more and more identified themselves with ‘German model’, which was, in their eyes, the most fulfilling in a military sense. It made the Dutch army a fighting force that would be taken seriously by other European states, even though it was small. All alternatives for a different army organisation, no longer a copy of the German model but more like a defensive militia, were dismissed. In fact, the same attitude reappeared happened again after 1918. Alternatives based on a police army (related to the League of Nations) or on a militia system were never discussed seriously. Political support for alternative army organisations always found only minority support and most of the time the organizations were hopelessly divided on these issues.

In the early 1920s the General Staff again had its way. Even though money was lacking to properly arm the field army, and even though conscription was changed to make it difficult to field a properly trained field army quickly, the Staff and the Ministry of Defence held onto a field army organised in four corps, each consisting of two divisions.

### **Public debate**

Defence issues, as long as they were related to the budget and the burden of conscription, were very much at the centre of attention during the years 1918-1922. In this period Parliament discussed ministerial proposals three times for a new defence organisation. Apart from these parliamentary discussions many politicians, commentators, and officers made their ideas on the ideal defence organisation public. These discussions ended in 1922 when a Defence Bill was passed, reducing the cost by lowering the yearly contingent of conscripts and the time those conscripts had to serve.

Moreover, budget cuts were implemented on army exercises, weapons procurement, and officer education. At the same time, Parliament rejected an expensive proposal to expand the Navy after vehement protests for many different sides of Dutch society. In 1924 the left-wing liberal party followed the Social Democrats in their advocacy of a one-sided national disarmament.

These debates on the new defence bills, on the Navy bill, and the political struggle for disarmament have been extensively discussed in Dutch historiography.<sup>14</sup> Less attention has been paid, however, to the issues raised by officers in the uncertain years directly following the Armistice. Four themes can be distinguished: the army as guardian of neutrality, the social role of the officer, national strength, and national economic independence.

### **The army as a guardian of neutrality**

The main argument put forward by officers and right-wing politicians against structural budget cuts on defence was the fact that the field army not only had saved Holland from a German invasion in 1914, but that it had also ensured Dutch independence during the war years. One only had to point to the sorry fate of Belgium to understand the important role of the Dutch army. The army as a deterrent against a potential aggressor was a theme already mentioned during the mobilisation. Only the Social Democrats rejected this view and they argued that the character of modern war and its enormous dimensions and industrial might involved rendered any efforts of a small country like the Netherlands totally meaningless. Warfare had outgrown the scope of small states, it was way beyond their means. The only thing the socialists were prepared to pay for was a police force within the framework of the League of Nations. The most extreme members of the Social Democratic party even called national defence a criminal illusion.<sup>15</sup>

The Protestants and right-wing liberals embraced the army most wholeheartedly. Their newspapers and the many officers from these circles, including the Ministers of Defence, constantly repeated that the army was a valuable asset for Dutch independence-- it had been so in the past and it would be so in the future.<sup>16</sup> The most prominent was the former Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch Navy and Army, General C.J. Snijders (1852-1939). He regularly pleaded in newspapers and military

journals for a powerful army, based on a strong economy and a physically fit population convinced of the army's necessity. He did not show much faith in the League of Nations, as was probably the case for most officers.<sup>17</sup>

The year 1920 saw the publication of the first book on the Dutch war experience that based on expert opinion. Its editor was an historian – Hajo Brugmans (1868-1939) – a regular commentator on current affairs. Two staff officers wrote the military chapters. Even more controversial was the chapter written by historian Herman Colenbrander (1871-1945), who analysed the Dutch international position. He argued that the Germans had refrained from violating Dutch territory in 1914 because the Reich did not want an extra 200,000 enemy soldiers that would distract its armed forces from their main effort against France. What is more, neutral Holland could be a useful asset for German international trade.

The next publication dated from 1921. It was a well-researched history of the Dutch position during the Great War, written by historian Nicolas Japikse (1872-1944). Surprisingly, it did not touch much on military matters. In contrast, it was the military matters that formed the central theme of a war history published the same year by the inspector of the artillery, concurring completely with Colenbrander's arguments put forward the year before.

In 1922 a more thorough military analysis was published. Lieutenant-General W.G.F. Snijders (1847-1930), the former Commander-in-Chief's brother, published a book on the military history of the Western Front. His analysis was based on many international sources and memoirs and intended for a wider audience. Snijders concluded there was now no doubt: Helmut von Moltke had changed the German war plans, originally drawn up by Schlieffen, and banned the advance through the Dutch province of Limburg. Von Moltke's argument had been an economic one; he wanted to be able to use the port of Rotterdam for trade. But Snijders also concluded from his studies that Von Moltke had feared the military consequences had he attacked the Dutch army. A hostile Dutch army in the German flank formed a risk Von Moltke was not prepared to take.

The next year it was the other brother's turn to publish his views on Dutch neutrality. He used Von Moltke's memoirs, published in Germany in 1922. They confirmed Von Moltke's decision taken around 1906 not to cross

into Dutch territory. But did this have anything to do with the supposed strength of the Dutch army? Snijders thought it did because it was the gradual increase in strength of the Dutch army since 1900 that had inspired Von Moltke's decision. Both the Snijders brothers emphasised, moreover, that the timely Dutch reaction in 1914, a call for a general mobilisation on 31 July 1914, had settled the matter for the Germans.<sup>18</sup>

The Snijders' brothers both used a study written in 1919 by a Dutch officer that had been translated and was well known in international military circles. This officer had made a very detailed analysis of the German advance into Belgium in August 1914 and had concluded that the advance south of the Dutch province of Limburg had been extremely disadvantageous for the German army. The reason the Germans accepted the operational problems of a difficult advance via Liege had been the fear of a British attack via the Netherlands, in combination with an attack by the Dutch army itself. Had the province of Limburg been in Belgian hands – as annexationists demanded in 1919 – the defence of the Meuse River would have been very weak because the Belgians would never have been able to defend the Meuse in its entire length. So, from a military point of view, the Belgians were better off by a Dutch possession of Limburg.<sup>19</sup>

This study on the German advance was re-printed in 1923 when more sources were available. It made the case for the Dutch army relevance even stronger. Von Moltke was cited, saying, "*Ich war und bin noch heute der Überzeugung, dass der Feldzug im westen scheitern müsste, wenn wir Holland nicht geschont hätten.*" (Today I am more and more convinced that the campaign in the West would have been successful if we had not respected Dutch neutrality.) It was the Dutch Army that had tipped the German scale, and that is why the Germans offered to respect Dutch neutrality on 2 August 1914. The Dutch army had quickly mobilized, and their flank was secure.<sup>20</sup>

Again, the Social Democrats dissented. They refused to believe the Dutch had played such an important role in German military planning. They also undermined the other set of 'evidence' for the crucial role of the Dutch field army. This evidence was based on the fact that Field Marshal Ludendorff had postponed the unrestricted U-boat war in 1916 out of fear for the Dutch and Danish armies. The Dutch minister of Defence mentioned this fact in 1919 for the first time. Only in 1921 did the relevant section from Ludendorff's *Kriegserinnerungen* appear in Dutch publications and Parliamentary debates. It read:



“Nur mit tiefsten Bedauern könnten wir uns nicht für die uneingeschränkte Führung des U-Bootkrieges aussprechen, da er nach Urteil des Reichskanzlers den Krieg mit Holland und Dänemark möglicherweise zur Folge haben würde; wir hatten zum Schutz gegen beide Staaten nicht einen Mann zur Verfügung. Sie waren in der Lage (...) in Deutschland einzurücken und uns den Todesstoß zu geben...”<sup>21</sup> (It was very regrettable that we could not speak up for unrestricted U-Boat war because it was the view of Reich's chancellor that a war with the Netherlands and Denmark might follow. We had not a single man to defend Germany from an attack from those quarters and they were in the position to be the base for an invasion against Germany... that would have been our death blow.)

What Dutch politicians and officers did not mention was what Ludendorff had written a few pages later: “Nach unseren Siegen in Rumänien erwartete die Oberste Heeresleitung ein Eingreifen Hollands und Dänemarks in den Krieg zu unseren Ungunsten nicht mehr.” (After our victories in Romania the High Command no longer saw an attack from the Netherlands or Denmark as any real danger to our position.) And, of course, the U-boat war had been declared.

The discussion on the role of the Dutch field army during the war was relevant in the political and public debate because of the plans to cut back the defence budget. Protestants and right wing liberals were convinced that a continental-style field army was a vital security for Dutch independence, for Dutch international military relevance, and for a possible Dutch role in a future European war.<sup>22</sup>

### **The social calling of the officer**

In October 1918 a shockwave was felt throughout the Dutch army and society: mutiny! Barracks were burned down and officers had fled. Although peace and quiet was restored quickly, the shock was intense. Was the army still a reliable instrument? Who was to blame? Had the officers been too authoritarian and had soldiers been mistreated? All these questions still begged for an answer when in November 1918 the Social Democratic party attempted a revolution. Riots followed and law-abiding troops, conscripts and volunteers alike, restored law and order and organised a huge manifestation to show the country's loyalty to the Queen and the Orange dynasty.

Not only did these incidents influence the public debate on the role of the officer, the war had also changed the character of the army. Choosing conscripts by drawing lots had been abolished in 1915 as a measure to increase recruitment further. In 1918 the Netherlands had half a million trained military men in a population of 6 ½ million. Moreover, the officer corps consisted mostly of conscript reserve officers. This meant the army had become more 'civil' and in a future war this would be the case again. Professional officers and NCOs made up only a very small portion of the army. This, together with the call for a more humane treatment of soldiers and more democratic relations within the army, formed ingredients for a public debate that reached a peak in 1919.

As early as 1900 Dutch officers had published books and brochures pleading for a more respectful and humane treatment of conscript soldiers. In doing so they followed the famous French colonial officer Hubert Lyautey (1854-1934) and at the same time contributed to the Dutch discussion on the introduction of personal conscription, which meant that the sons of well-to-do citizens had to serve in the army as well. Reformers wanted a healthier and more open relationship between army and society and the recognition of the army as a socially desirable institution that played a constructive role in society. The reformers also realised that the average Dutch male citizen did not like military discipline and did not respect authority easily. He was individualistic and loved his individual liberty and independence. But the right attitude by his commander could turn him into a good soldier and make him more valuable for society when his period of service was over.

The World War had caused these ideas to re-emerge. In November 1918 the Minister of Defence decided that the army had to reform towards more democratic ways. He had lectures held on this theme all over the country and had changes made in the curriculum of the military academy. Apart from these ministerial attempts to address the situation, many officers wrote pamphlets on this issue and it was discussed in Parliament. In fact, this discussion even became part of a much broader and older debate on juvenile education. The idea was that the young had become rebellious and somehow needed to be better understood and perhaps needed to be educated in a different way. Officers participated in this civilian debate and in conferences on the theme of juvenile education, stressing the need for more knowledge on army matters among schoolteachers and parents and an education with more emphasis on

physical aspects. They argued the army could be an important ally in comprehensive measures to 'discipline' young men. In this way the army could make a positive contribution towards reducing a social problem.

The effects of the heated discussions of 1919 are hard to measure. Within the military, the discussion seemed die down rather quickly. Certainly, from the 1920's officer cadets were instructed in sociological and psychological issues and were made aware of the need to treat soldiers with interest and respect. But what really happened? Were there any fundamental changes inside the barracks? These issues have not yet been thoroughly researched, but in all likelihood the changes in the Dutch army culture may have been slight.<sup>23</sup>

### **National strength**

In many publications Dutch officers observed that modern war was a national effort. Waging war meant involving the entire population, the industry and all the 'moral powers' a country could muster. Terms used most frequently in this debate were 'national strength' or 'national power', meaning the collective power a population could bring to bear. In this power military, economic, mental and physical elements were combined.

Two officers stand out in this debate: W.E. van Dam van Isselt (1870-1951) en P.W. Scharroo (1883-1963). Both were prominent officers, Van Dam van Isselt was a General Staff officer and director of the Staff College and Scharroo was a prominent engineer and one of the Dutch experts on concrete field fortifications. But both men had a 'second life' in the public domain and that makes them interesting examples of how military themes related to the war period were intertwined with the public debate.

Van Dam had published articles and books since 1895. He was a prominent member of the Society for National Strength (*Volksweerbaarheid*), established at the time of the second Boer War in South Africa, a war that had stirred Dutch society considerably. Not only did the Dutch population sympathise with the 'Dutch' Boers; that war also became the symbol of a major power crushing a small one simply for imperial and economic gains. It was a case of might over right. Basing themselves on these themes and on a growing Dutch nationalism and self-confidence, a number of politicians, entrepreneurs, and officers pleaded for a strengthening of the Dutch population in the light of a future war in

Europe. This was war generally seen in Social Darwinist terms. The society flourished for a short period, then declined. But it never disappeared. During the war its ideas regained a certain popularity. Van Dam remained an active member throughout this period. He regularly wrote articles in the Society's newspaper and published many leaflets and brochures. His themes were first to argue for an alternative organisation for the Dutch defence, less a copy of the German army and more a reflection of what he called "Dutch national characteristics." This meant, according to Van Dam, a 'people's army', a close merger between people and army based on general conscription and a conscripted officer corps. This army would find its strength in the fact it was rooted deeply within Dutch society. In a military sense its stance would be defensive, geared towards protecting the entire national territory, inch by inch as it were. It was, in fact, a combination of a Swiss-like militia system and a more traditional, professional army. According to Van Dam, the effect such an army organisation would have on society as a whole was that civilian values would permeate the army and military virtues would permeate society.

His second theme was the strengthening of the population, both physically and mentally. He predicted that the future of the state depended on the strength of its population and the willingness of the population to show enthusiasm for upholding and reinforcing that state. National unity of effort was important. How was this to be brought about? One of Van Dam's hobbyhorses was gymnastics. Dutch youths had to be physically trained from the time they first went to school until, in their adult life, they could be called upon to defend the fatherland. Physical training made young men more vigorous and energetic also in their civilian life, so strengthening both army and civil society. A Social Darwinist, Van Dam was a persistent advocate of physical training all through curriculum of every school.

Van Dam's opinions dated from the turn of the century. The World War had proven, in his eyes, the correctness of his opinion. The Belgians had shown, through their heroic fight at the Yser inundations in western Flanders, that a determined people could resist the best army in the world by using specific field conditions. Low-lying wet polder landscape was also a dominant feature of the Dutch terrain, so Van Dam argued the Dutch should have more faith in their own strength. Also, the years 1914-1918 had proven that waging modern war took a national effort, the very thing Van Dam had always propagated. His message for the future was that

army and people, still strangers to each other, should really merge, that they should show mutual interest and appreciation, both of which were completely lacking. A strong development of national unity and strengthening of the populace were the only remedies for the future. The Dutch would not survive a next war if this did not happen, and in this respect Van Dam remained very suspicious about Germany, which he still considered to be the major potential enemy.

Van Dam's views enjoyed a measure of popularity among liberals, but they were a small group. The Dutch society was anything but unified, and the war had made social divisions even greater. Van Dam's 'solutions' seem more in place in 1900 than in 1920. In the political debate on the future of the army they carried no weight.

Engineer Scharroo published regularly on trench warfare and field fortifications. He can be considered as one of the army's eminent experts in these fields. But from 1915 Scharroo showed an additional interest. Like van Dam, in sports. As the chairman of the National Athletics Union and a member of the National Olympic Committee, he became a prominent member among Dutch sports officials. The mobilisation had convinced Scharroo that the physical condition of the male population left much to be desired. He started to organise national sports meetings and tried to popularise sports among the conscripts, using the infrastructure of the National Olympic Committee. Both the Committee and Scharroo used military and Social Darwinist terminology to justify a more prominent place for sport. For Scharroo it went even further. Like Van Dam he was convinced of the need to strengthen the population and the economy on a national basis in order to be prepared for future war. He thought the Dutch population weak, undisciplined, and lacking a sense of community. 'National strength' had to be built up. Sports and physical training of the young in general were important first steps.<sup>24</sup>

Van Dam and Scharroo were not the only ones who believed that the Dutch were missing the true lesson of the war. In the years 1918-1923, when uncertainty about the future was rife, there were more initiatives related to the theme of national strength. A good example is the national conferences on 'strengthening the Dutch nation' held in 1919, 1920 and 1921. Officers, politicians, women's rights activists (but only the more conservative ones), and scientists discussed many aspects of the central question of how to strengthen the Dutch nation to be prepared for the

future. The topics for discussion ranged from a stronger army, economic war preparations, sports and education, to the role of the colonies and the press. At first, the conferences attracted considerable attention, perhaps because the former Commander-in-Chief was involved and the Royal Family showed interest and approval. But interest dwindled rapidly. A fourth conference was never planned.<sup>25</sup>

### National economic independence

The last theme frequently discussed during the post-war years was economic independence. During the mobilisation the Dutch realized they lacked the means to produce weapons for modern war themselves, and huge quantities of weapons and other war equipment would be necessary should the country be involved in war. Scharroo also addressed this subject. He thought that only an economically stronger Holland could fight a modern war in the future. He joined the editorial board of the new *Militair Technisch Tijdschrift* that propagated, among others, national industrial war preparations.

It was the Social Democrats who opposed this policy most vehemently. Their conclusion was that modern war was impossible to conduct for a country the size of Holland. The left-wing liberals also rejected the option that the Netherlands should strive for an industrial base that could sustain war production. They preferred a different kind of defence organisation instead. A police army in case of international problems, and a kind of military police to suppress internal unrest could be acceptable options in their eyes.

The officers, politicians and entrepreneurs who had been involved in military production during the mobilisation were the primary supporters for national economic war preparations. These groups had experienced the grave difficulties in this area first hand. Former Munitions Bureau director Van Roijen is a good example, as well as the director of the Artillery Works, the Netherlands' main weapons factory. Some entrepreneurs working in the chemical, metal, and airplane industries also saw the advantages. But the economic reality was not helpful to their cause and the capabilities of the state to force this matter were limited. What remained was a network of military officials and entrepreneurs and a small Bureau within the General Staff to organise some very limited economic war preparations. In fact, this bureau could do no more than make an

inventory of factories that could contribute to the military side of the war effort should a crisis occur.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

The Dutch General Staff was well informed on most technical and tactical innovations that had taken place during the war. It tried to implement as many of them as possible, as long as they fitted the Dutch circumstances. Mass production of modern weapons formed a bottleneck and during the war the Netherlands had to deal with serious problems related to acquiring raw materials, detailed technological knowledge, and procurement of arms in substantial quantities. On the other hand, to protect the neutral territory in a convincing way and to be a credible potential ally, the Dutch military leadership had to do its utmost to give the impression of a certain level of military strength. This 'war experience' affected military thinking after the war.

From 1918 onwards the military leadership tried to secure a modern field army for the Netherlands. It did not really consider any alternative form of defence organisation. The Dutch professional officers were, for the most part, deeply influenced by the idea that only a continental-style army could protect the Netherlands sufficiently, could lend the Netherlands international credibility and meet the cultural needs of a military elite, deeply influenced by the German military example. Exercises and new regulations were certainly influenced by thorough analysis of recent experiences of the warring great powers, but the widening gap between modern war and financial and economic capabilities was not truly addressed. The General Staff preferred a modern field army, allowing it to manoeuvre in the southern Dutch provinces, which were deemed to be of great importance in an inevitable next German-French conflict.

The public debate centred on different aspects of national unity. Its main theme was that war making in the future was a national effort on economic, industrial, personal, and moral levels. The people on the left wing of the political spectrum concluded that modern war was beyond the scope of a small nation. They propagated other forms of defence. But this was no new phenomenon. The left had for decades refused to support the classic German-style defence organisation. In fact, the arguments brought forward by officers as the primary lessons of the war were also nothing new. It was, in many respects, a debate that had already been held around

1900. The fear that ideologies would split the country apart, that the future of the country depended on vague, Social Darwinist- inspired notions of national strength, and that the army could be the national vehicle for unity and strength, were indeed rather conservative notions that dated from the late nineteenth century. It is remarkable to see those notions return after 1918 when both the European future and internal cohesion were rife with uncertainties.

But the fundamental questions raised by Van Dam and Scharroo, amongst others, were too comprehensive for the General Staff to solve. The only aspect raised in the public debate that was tackled by the military leadership was that of the treatment of soldiers. That subject was directly related to the reliability of the army and its standing within society. In other fields, like physical education and economic war preparations, efforts of the Staff were minimal.

Although publications and conferences were abundant, it cannot be said that Dutch society as a whole was very interested in military ideas on 'national power.' The political discussion on defence centred on costs and conscription, not on fundamental changes. The public debate touched military decision making only marginally. The Netherlands lacked veterans as an influential pressure group and had not been physically damaged by the war. When a kind of national consensus emerged it was on pacifism, anti militarism, and disgust of the horrors of modern industrial war. Ideas on economic and industrial war preparation were not realized until the late 1930's and physical education of the youth did expand. But these developments were not directly related to future war planning or Social Darwinist notions of national survival. In that sense, Van Dam and Scharroo were voices of the past. The public as whole never showed any interest in the field army as something prestigious or of national importance. In this sense many critics were right: the army and the people were strangers to each other and the mobilisation of 1914-1918 had not changed that.

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<sup>1</sup> Maartje Abbenhuis, *The Art of Staying Neutral* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006) and James John Porter *Dutch neutrality in two world wars* (Boston: Boston University Graduate School, 1980). Forthcoming: Herman Amersfoort



and Wim Klinkert (eds.) *Small states in the age of total war 1900-1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Rolf Schuurmsma, *Jaren van opgang. Nederland 1900-1930* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2000) and Cornelis B. Wels, *Aloofness and neutrality: studies on Dutch foreign relations and policy making institutions* (Utrecht: H&S, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Wim Klinkert, “Om den oorlogstoestand zooveel mogelijk na te bootsen...”. De grote legermanoeuvres van 1916 in Noord-Brabant,” in *Wankel evenwicht. Neutraal Nederland en de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, ed. Martin Kraaijestein and Paul Schulten (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2007), 85-116.

<sup>4</sup> This very important journal can be consulted on: <http://www.kvbk-cultureelerfgoed.nl/kvbk.html>.

<sup>5</sup> National Archives at The Hague (NA), archive General Staff (2.13.70) (GS), nrs.: 1511, 1512, 1513.

<sup>6</sup> The Dutch army exercises before 1914 are dealt with in Wim Klinkert, *Het vaderland verdedigd. Plannen en opvattingen over de verdediging van Nederland 1874-1914* (Den Haag: SMG, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> NA, GS, nr. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Belgian Army Museum Brussels, Moscow archives, attaché reports from the Netherlands, box 12, nr. 185-2-58 and Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes, archive military attaché The Hague, nr. 7 N 2960.

<sup>9</sup> J.C.C. Tonnet, “Artillerie in den bewegings- en in den stellingoorlog,” *Militaire Spectator* (1921) 15-19.

NA, archive Ministry of War (2.13.01) (MW), nrs. 4959, 4966, 4979, 4988 and 4999.

<sup>10</sup> P.C. Dekker, “Stormscholen,” *Militaire Spectator* (1920) 336-345.

Ger de Vries and Bas Martens, *Nederlandse vuurwapens* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1993).

NA, MW, nrs. 4983, 4988 and 4998.

NA, archive headquarters field army (2.13.16) (HF), nrs. 889 and 947.

<sup>11</sup> NA, MW, nr. 4979.

A great number of technical and tactical aspects of field fortifications and trench warfare were dealt with in a number of lectures published in the *Orgaan van de vereniging ter beoefening van de krijgswetenschap 1922-1924*.

<sup>12</sup> NA, MW, nr. 4963, 4992 and 4994; NA, HF, nr. 960 and NA, GS, nr. 26 and 494.

<sup>13</sup> NA, HF, nr. 25; NA, GS, nr. 25 and NA, MW, nr. 4980 and 4981.

J.N. Bruyn, *Beknopt handboek bij de studie der tactiek volgens de ervaringen uit den wereldoorlog 1914-1918* (Eibergen: Mavors, 1922). The Dutch field service regulations can be compared to the British *Field Service Regulations II, Operations* (1920) and the French *Instruction sur l'emploi tactique des grandes unités* (1921).

<sup>14</sup> Henri Beunders, *Weg met de vlootwet* (Bergen: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1984), and Rein Bijkerk, “Nederlands defensiebeleid in de jaren '20,” *Militaire Spectator* 164 (1995) 90-96.

<sup>15</sup> Handelingen Tweede Kamer (proceedings of Parliament, Second Chamber) 18 February 1919, 15 and 16 December 1919, 10 December 1920 and 8 June 1921.

The proceedings are published on the Internet: [www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl](http://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl).

<sup>16</sup> Handelingen Tweede Kamer 27 February, 14 November and 17 December 1919.

<sup>17</sup> Pauline Onderwater, *Vaderland, vorstenhuis en weerbaarheid* (MA thesis: university of Amsterdam, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Hajo Brugmans, *Nederland in den oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1920), Nicolas Japikse, *Die Stellung Hollands im Weltkrieg* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1921), J.C.C. Tonnet, *Overzicht over het verloop van den Wereldoorlog 1914-1918* (Breda: KMA, 1921), W.F.G. Sniijders, *De wereldoorlog op het Duitse westfront* (Amsterdam: Mij. voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1923) en C.J. Sniijders “Nederlands militaire positie gedurende den wereldoorlog,” *Militaire Spectator* (1923) 536-560.

<sup>19</sup> Piet Blaas, “Nederlandse historici en de Eerste Wereldoorlog,” in *Wankel evenwicht. Neutraal Nederland en de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, ed. Martin Kraaijestein and Paul Schulten (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2007), 14-31.

<sup>20</sup> J.J.G. van Voorst tot Voorst, *Over Roermond! Een strategische studie* (Den Haag: Swart, 1923).

<sup>21</sup> Handelingen Eerste Kamer 10 March 1921.

<sup>22</sup> Herman Amersfoort, *Een harmonisch leger voor Nederland* (Breda: NLDA, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Wim Klinkert, “The salutary yoke of discipline,” in *Images of the Nation. Different meanings of Dutchness 1870-1940* ed. A. Galema and B. Henkes (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993) 17-38; Ben Schoenmaker, *Burgerzin en soldatengeest* (Den Haag: Boom, 2009) 292 and 338-341; Lenny Hazelbag, “De invloed van de Harskamp-rellen op de positie van de officier”, in *De Grote Oorlog. Kronieks 1914-1918* vol. 7, ed. Hans Andriessen and Martin Ros (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2005), 227-265; Petra Groen and Wim Klinkert, *Studeren in uniform* (Den Haag: SDU, 2003) 213-216; Gijsbertus van Everdingen, *De opleiding der officieren* (Amsterdam: Holkema & Warendorf, 1916); Gerardus Fabius, *De verhouding tusschen volk en weermacht* (Amsterdam: Holkema & Warendorf, 1916); Ron Blom and Teunis Stelling, *Niet voor God en niet voor het vaderland* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2004) 862-863 and J.B. de Jongh, *De meerdere* (Den Haag: Van Cleef, 1919).

<sup>24</sup> Willem van Dam van Isselt, “De betekenis en de verdere ontwikkeling van onze weermacht na demobilisatie” *Onze Eeuw* 1918 and *Orgaan ter beoefening van de krijgswetenschap* 29 April 1919; Pieter Scharroo, *De betekenis van de lichamelijke opvoeding voor de economische weerkracht*, (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1919). On the relationship between sports, the World War and the defence organisation in Great Britain see E. Riedi and T. Mason, “Leather and the fighting spirit: sport in the British army in World War I,” *Canadian Journal of History* 41 (2006) 485-516.

<sup>25</sup> The conferences, each year in September, were covered extensively in the daily press.

<sup>26</sup> Louis Anne van Roijen, “De mobilisatie en de economische hulpbronnen van het land,” *Orgaan van de vereeniging ter beoefening van de krijgswetenschap* (1920-1921)

214-242; Wim Klinkert, “‘Het is een ingenieursoorlog’,” in *De Grote Oorlog. Kroniek 1914-1918* vol. 14, ed. Hans Andriessen and Perry Pierik (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2007), 250-290.

*Handelingen Tweede Kamer*, 20 and 23 November 1917, 31 January 1918, 28 November 1918, 18 and 20 February 1919 and 8 and 9 June 1921.

## Logistical Aspects of the Estonian War of Independence, 1918-1920

*By Dr. Eric A. Sibul*

The Estonian War of Independence is a remarkable, though often overlooked chapter in military history. In this conflict the Estonians fought both Russian Bolshevik and German forces. Despite the lack of all types of supplies and equipment, Estonia's small and newly created armed forces were able to defeat their numerically superior enemies. An effective military and civil leadership and superior motivation among its military and civilian population, were the keys to Estonian success. Effective leadership allowed the Estonian armed forces to have superior logistics as compared to powers they fought. To make best use of their scant logistics means, the Estonians improvised and made good use of locally available resources combined with the meager foreign assistance. Some of the logistics lessons of the Estonian War of Independence are still relevant in contemporary times.

### **The Estonian situation**

Estonia was part of the Russian empire from 1721 to 1918. The Estonian territory in 1918 was about of the same size as American states of New Hampshire and Vermont combined. Its terrain consisted of marshes and lowlands in the north and gentle hills in the south. Tallinn, the capital city and nearby Paldiski in Western Estonia were good natural harbours, although not ice free in the winter. The economy was largely agricultural with the majority of Estonia's 1.5 million people living on largely self-sufficient farms in 1918. The Estonians, like the other non Russian peoples on the Russian Empire's western borders, were swept up in a rising tide of vernacular and cultural nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As the Russian Empire fell into chaos after the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd on 7 November 1917, Estonian political leaders saw the both opportunity and necessity of national independence. On 24 February 1918, the Estonia declared independence and a provisional government they proclaimed their authority although

the German army occupied all the country and held actual power after 11 November 1918. The Estonians started organizing national military forces in 1917 from men who infiltrated back to their homeland from ranks of the Russian army. There were an estimated 100,000 Estonians who served in former Imperial Russian Army in First World War. Thus at the beginning of 1918, the Estonians had enough returning troops for a division. The Estonian Division consisted of four infantry regiments, one cavalry regiment, an artillery brigade and an engineer company.

On 25 February 1918, German forces occupied the Estonian capital. Some members of the Estonian provisional government were arrested while most went into hiding. The Estonian Division was not yet strong enough to resist the German landings on the Estonian coast. However, Estonian troops did prevent widespread pillaging by remnant Russian forces as they retreated eastward out of Estonia. German authorities disarmed the Estonian division and ordered all weapons and supplies held by Estonians turned in to the occupation authorities.<sup>1</sup>

### **War of Independence**

With the armistice of 11 November 1918, the Estonian Provisional government again resumed its activities. The German forces agreed to withdraw, but were openly hostile to the new Estonian government. The Estonians were in a very difficult situation. They need to organize government institutions and armed forces at the same time that Russian Bolshevik troops were massing at Estonia's borders. Russian and German requisitions had depleted agricultural stores and the lack of raw material left industry idle. Imperial Germany assisted the Bolshevik leaders to seize power in Petrograd and actively cooperated with the Bolshevik government after the Brest-Litovsk agreement in February 1918. Despite the collapse of the German imperial government and the armistice with the Allies, the defeated Germans continued their cooperation with Bolshevik forces.

As German forces withdrew from Estonia and neighboring Latvia, they turned over arms and supplies over to the Russian Bolsheviks to the east. In addition to assisting the Bolsheviks in this manner, the Germans hindered the organization and execution of defense

measures by the newly-formed Estonian government. The Germans destroyed stocks of arms and confiscated supplies of food and clothing. After the German Army evacuated Estonia the only arms left behind in local depots consisted of various types of rifles, many of which were without bolts or otherwise damaged; a small number of machine guns and only four field guns in good working order. Thus, the Estonians were in no way adequately prepared for a Bolshevik invasion. For the Bolsheviks, the time seemed opportune to launch an invasion.

On 28 November 1918, the 7<sup>th</sup> Red Army of Soviet Russia invaded Estonia in the north at Narva and in the south from the Russian city of Pskov moving towards the Estonian towns of Võru and Tartu. The invading Bolshevik forces had a total strength of 12,000 men. The situation for the Estonians was desperate, as they could send only 2,000 men to front without artillery. This hastily organized force consisted largely of army officers and high school students who despite lack of military training had volunteered for service. The Estonians lacked weapons, ammunition, uniforms, footwear and foodstuffs. Estonian forces withdrew into a perimeter in western Estonia which contained the ports of Pärnu, Paldiski and the capital of Tallinn which contained the most of the country's industry and the largest port facilities. Narva, Rakvere, Võru and the important railway junctions of Tapa and Valga fell to invading Bolshevik forces. Within the defensive perimeter the Estonian government began quickly to organize and mobilize all available men and material for the defence of the country.<sup>2</sup>

While the situation seemed desperate for the Estonians, help was on the way. The British Foreign Office informed the Estonian government that a British naval squadron was on the way to the Baltic to assist the Estonians.<sup>3</sup> On 12 December 1918 the first ships of a thirty ship squadron arrived in Tallinn and on the next day the first British transport began to off load Lewis light machine guns, two naval guns, rifles, and stocks of spare clothing. Instructors from the Royal Marines landed to acquaint Estonian troops with the Lewis machine guns. The Estonians were fortunate to receive the Lewis as it was considered the best and most reliable light machine available at the time and it gave the Estonian army a great deal of highly mobile firepower. The Estonians later received

limited numbers of the Danish Madsen light machine gun from the British. The Madsen had similar characteristics to the Lewis.<sup>4</sup>

The Estonians also received assistance from Finland. The Finns had linguistic and strong cultural bonds with the Estonians and Finland had declared its independence from the Russian Empire on 6 December 1917. The Finnish government loaned ten million marks to the Estonian government in December 1918 with which the Estonian purchased from the Finns twenty obsolescent light artillery pieces, 2,000 rifles with ammunition and several machine guns. Various social organizations in Finland recruited a force of volunteers to assist the Estonians. There were enough experienced volunteers to form an infantry battalion and an infantry regiment supported by ten artillery pieces. The arrival of the Finns greatly boosted Estonian morale and the Finnish infantry battalion went into action in the beginning of January 1919 and the regiment at the end of the month.<sup>5</sup>

As foreign assistance started coming in, the Estonians expanded their forces and reorganized their combat units and support organization. On 29 November 1918 the Estonian government decreed a general mobilization. In early December 1918, the first recruits were inducted to the armed forces. The Estonian resolve stiffened as the population being increasingly aware of Bolshevik aims and methods. At least five hundred people perished in the 'red terror' in occupied towns.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to new conscripts in the Estonian Army, volunteer units formed from various social organizations. The leadership of the armed forces was reorganized, initially leaders of each tactical unit acted according to their own discretion. The Estonian government created the Office of Commander in Chief on 23 December 1918 and Colonel Johan Laidoner was appointed to the post with Colonel Jaan Soots as Chief of Staff. The role of the centralized command grew gradually as the fighting continued in 1919. Specialized staff departments were soon established and expanded under the Office of Commander in Chief. Colonel (soon to be General) Laidoner was an excellent choice to be the commander. He was thirty-four years old in 1918, having served in the Imperial Russian Army from 1901 to 1917. During the First

World War, Colonel Laidoner served in numerous staff posts gaining valuable experience in various aspects of military operations. Like all other ethnic Estonians who rose to officer rank in the Tsarist army, he had to do so solely on competence being of common background and having no aristocratic connections to help advance his career. During the First World War, Colonel Laidoner served in numerous posts gaining valuable experience in various aspects of military operations. He served as second in command of intelligence on the Russian Western Front, the head of military railway construction on the Caucasian front and was appointed chief-of-staff of the Caucasian Grenadier Division in March 1917. On 5 January 1918 he took command of the Estonian Division.

The Estonian Navy which formed in December 1918 was commanded by Captain Johan Pitka, a man with a very different background than Colonel Laidoner. Captain Pitka had received a merchant ship captain's license in 1895 and served a short compulsory of tour duty aboard Imperial Russian Navy armoured cruiser *Admiral Udaikov*. Between 1907 and 1917, Captain Pitka operated a shipping company headquartered in Tallinn. His seamanship and management experience served Estonia well.<sup>7</sup> Initially, the Estonian navy consisted of one former Russian gunboat, the *Lembit* and number of smaller auxiliary vessels. On 26 December 1918, the Bolshevik fleet sent two modern cruisers to raid Tallinn. One ran aground in shallows near the harbour entrance and surrendered to British warships and the other cruiser tried to escape but was surrounded by British vessels and quickly surrendered. The British gave the cruisers to the Estonians, who sent them to Tallinn's best equipped shipyard for reconditioning. In January 1919, they were manned and absorbed to the Estonian Navy under the names *Lennuk* and *Vambola*.<sup>8</sup>

## Improvisation

The Shipyards and engineering works in Tallinn were put good use to refurbish and improvise weapons and equipment for the Estonian armed forces from all available materials. Capturing railway lines and holding them was critical importance since as railways were the principal means of overland transportation and usually the avenue of approach in combat operations. The



importance of the railway gave rise to the armoured train. During World War I, Russia, Austria - Hungary, Germany, and France all had purpose built armoured trains, however they were of little use during the largely static fighting from 1914 to 1918.<sup>9</sup> The Estonians quickly improvised armoured trains from civilian railway equipment. Since it was unlikely that the Estonian Navy's cruisers would become involved in ship to ship duels with the British presence on the Baltic, armour plating and guns were stripped to bare minimum and the plating and guns used to outfit armoured trains. There were no inter-service jealousies in the matter since Captain Pitka had commanded the first armoured train sent to the front in December 1918 and Estonian sailors helped man its guns.

The British squadron also provided guns for use on the armoured trains. The Estonian Navy's role was to provide artillery support for land forces and conduct amphibious landing, Tallinn's shipyards converted various civilian vessels for naval support purposes.<sup>10</sup> The Estonians also improvised armoured cars very much the same way as the armoured trains. Civilian trucks were requisitioned from various local businesses and had a body of steel plating built over their motor and their chassis and the vehicles were fitted with guns.<sup>11</sup> The armoured cars greatly frightened Bolshevik troops since their forces lacked similar weapons on the Estonian front. However, the Estonian armoured cars were of limited utility as they were too underpowered to carry their heavy bodies. They had the tendency to become stuck in mud and could not cope with the hills in southern Estonia.<sup>12</sup>

As fighting continued in May 1919, the British Military Mission to Estonia urgently requested that the British government provide the Estonian Army with 'armoured cars of modern type.'<sup>13</sup> Estonia's armoured cars were placed under the command of the Estonian Army's Armoured Train Division. It was a rather innovative organization; the Estonian Army was perhaps the first army in world to have an 'armoured' division. The biggest Estonian innovation in using armoured trains was to combine their mobile firepower with a company- sized infantry assault group. The assault groups were equipped with light machine guns. The task of an armoured train was to break through enemy lines and hold the area until regular infantry forces could reinforce. Owing to a general

scarcity of troops, the Estonian army was unable keep strong reserves. The armoured trains were thus used as a mobile reserve to strike where and when circumstances required.

The standard make up of an armoured train consisted of two armoured railway cars equipped with four light guns and sixteen heavy machine guns, an armoured locomotive usually in the middle of the train, and a number of armoured personnel cars for assault troops. Long-range railway guns and additional railway cars to carry repair material were added to the trains when needed. Logistics support for the Armoured Train Division was entirely rail mobile as well, again consisting civilian railway equipment modified for military use or put directly into service. Engineers had repair and construction trains equipped rebuild damaged track and bridges.<sup>14</sup> The Armoured Train Division also had a number of specially constructed sauna trains allowing front line troops to bathe. This equipment was quite important to maintain morale and hygiene. On the Bolshevik side poor hygiene conditions led to an outbreak of typhoid fever among red troops affecting morale and overall combat power of Bolshevik forces.<sup>15</sup>

The Estonians also established a medical evacuation system using railway passenger coaches modified into hospital cars. Hospital trains took casualties from the front back to Tallinn where most of the country's medical facilities were located. The advance of Estonian forces eastward meant a longer journey for patients to Tallinn's hospitals. The long evacuation route continued until hospitals closer to the front could be put into operation. By May 1919, the Estonian Army Medical Service had the capacity of handling 5,000 patients requiring full hospitalization.<sup>16</sup>

In early January 1919, the Estonian Army grew to 13,000 men with numbers continuing to grow. By 23 February 1919, the Estonians were able to field two more infantry divisions in addition to original 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division and the Armoured Train Division. The Estonians also established an air force using aircraft taken from the Russians and Germans or supplied by Great Britain. There were a number of Estonian officers and NCOs who had served in the imperial Russian aviation units during World War I, who readily applied their expertise. The Estonian air force began as

the aviation company attached to the Engineering Battalion in 1918 and by the end of the 1919 was an independent organization. The greatest limitation on Estonian air operations was a great shortage of gasoline. At one point aviation officers went door to door in the town of Narva asking residents if they had any gasoline. As motor cars were relatively rare in Estonia at the time, their efforts were not very successful. The supply situation continued to plague the Estonian Air Force, throughout 1919, there were shortages of all types supplies necessary to support air operations, the aircraft, including those supplied by Great Britain. However, the supply and organizational situation for Bolshevik air forces was worse and hence were never able to contest the Estonians for control of skies over the front.<sup>17</sup>

While gasoline was not readily available from civilian stocks, Estonian forces were successful in getting other supplies from the civilian population. They received donations of horses, sleighs and food. Some items were requisitioned however civil authorities took great care not to inflict unnecessary hardship on population who were suffering due to food shortages. Grain stores were quickly depleting, the civil bread ration was reduced to 140 grams daily per person. The situation improved as grain shipments began arriving from Britain and the United States in March. Finland granted Estonia another loan and several nations opened credit lines with the Estonian government that allowed it to purchase additional quantities of food.<sup>18</sup> Competent civilian administration and management of available resources behind the lines allowed Estonian forces to go on the offensive and liberate the entire country.

## **Offensive**

On 6 January 1919, the Estonian forces went the offensive, making maximum use of manoeuvre and mobility. The Estonian Navy made amphibious landings behind Bolshevik lines and the armoured trains made use of their mobile firepower to smash through the enemy lines. On 14 January 1919, armoured train troopers stormed Tartu, arriving just in time to stop a planned Bolshevik massacre of the town's residents. The Estonian and Finnish troops liberated Narva in north-eastern Estonia on 19

January 1919. Võru and Valka in southern Estonia were cleared of Bolshevik forces on 1 February 1919. The offensive actually did much to improve the Estonian supply situation. The Estonians captured thirty - five field artillery pieces, seven naval guns, 118 machine guns, 2,000 rifles, two airplanes, nine locomotives, 180 railway cars, four coastal vessels, 13,000 shells and a large quantity of rifle ammunition.

Like the storming of Tartu, the speed of the Estonian assault on Narva very much took the Bolsheviks by surprise and resulted in the capture of Red Army divisional and regimental staffs and nearly captured the Bolshevik government's the Minister of War and Marine, Leon Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Bronstein) who was personally directing operations at Narva and fled at the last moment narrowly avoiding capture by the Estonians.<sup>19</sup> In February 1919, the Bolsheviks massed 75,000 to 80,000 troops at Pskov for a counter offensive. Estonian forces were greatly outnumbered and the Estonian Army could field only a third of that number on their south-eastern front. It was not until December 1919 that the Estonian Army could field 75,000 men in their four divisions.

The Bolsheviks brought up a large number to modern artillery pieces that well outnumbered the Estonian artillery, most of which was old and varied in type. Only material advantage the Estonians had was better organized support services notably, comparably good medical care, efficient railway transportation and a well organized supply system with an increasing amount subsistence supplies. For the Bolsheviks, medical care for almost ceased to function, railway operations were chaotic and for the supply of food and horses the Red army relied on seizure from peasants.<sup>20</sup>

The Bolshevik offensive faltered and Estonian lines held. The Estonian launched a series of local counteroffensives and the fighting raged back and forth through March and April. The Bolsheviks could not take advantage of their superiority in artillery because their guns were poorly handled. This most likely due to lack of trained officers and poor motivation.<sup>21</sup> The Estonians were to able to counter effectively with their few older guns that were better handled and directed. Furthermore, the Bolshevik troops were often without food, suffering from disease and lacked medical

care. Despite their greater numbers, Bolshevik troops had very low morale thus were poorly motivated. Furthermore, Red Army ranks consisted of Russian peasants mixed with various nationalities, including Hungarians and Chinese who did not understand or care about the aims of the war.

For military leadership the Bolshevik Army relied on former-Imperial Russian Army officers even through they were mistrusted as class enemies. Since these officers were considered politically unreliable, Bolshevik officials, political commissars, were assigned to each unit to watch over the officers and carry out political propaganda among the ranks. The political commissars had the power to override military decisions often with disastrous effects.

On the other hand the Estonian officers were largely competent and trusted by the enlisted ranks and their government. For Estonian soldiers the war aims were easy to understand, they were fighting in defence of their homes and their own representative government. However, as the fighting in continued into April and May, morale in the ranks did began to sag, as most Estonian soldiers were farmers and desperately wanted to return to their farms for spring planting. Indeed, one subsistence item very much in shortage in Estonia was tobacco and all available tobacco available was supplied to front line troops. When the head of the British Military Mission to Estonia visited the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Headquarters, he asked what supplies the Estonians need the most. The answer from both staffs was armoured cars, medical supplies and tobacco.<sup>22</sup>

By mid May 1919, the initiative passed again to the Estonian army and the Estonians launched operations east into Russia and south into Latvia to help clear out Bolshevik forces and secure Estonian borders. On 23-24 May 1919 the Estonian 2<sup>nd</sup> Division launched a night attack to capture Pskov. The attack was successful and the important railway junction came into Estonian control on 26 May 1919.<sup>23</sup>

## The Landeswehr War

The situation in Latvia was complicated by the presence of German troops. These troops, numbering roughly 30,000 men consisted of the Landeswehr which was formed in Riga from Baltic Germans in December 1918 and the Iron Division which consisted of volunteers from Germany. The Allied powers had not insisted that these forces in the Baltic countries under the command of General Rüdiger von der Goltz be demobilized like other German forces in Eastern Europe because the Germans promised to use them to fight the Bolsheviks. However, the provisional government of Latvia under the leadership of Karlis Ulmanis was pro-Allied and anti - German. So General von der Goltz operating with this own political agenda did his best to hinder the formation of a Latvian national army.<sup>24</sup>

On 16 April 1919, General von der Goltz staged a putsch against the Latvian provisional government, replacing the Ulmanis government with a pro – German government led by Latvian pastor Andrievs Niedra. The German general had a far reaching political aim, the control of Estonia and Latvia in which he planned to establish pro-German vassal states under control of the Baltic German aristocracy. On 23 May 1919, the Landeswehr and the Iron Division entered Riga, the Latvian capital, after driving the Bolshevik forces out. Instead of moving eastward to pursue the retreating Bolsheviks, the German forces moved north and north-eastward endangering the rear area of the Estonian 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. General Laidoner demanded that the Germans stop their advance. However this demand was ignored.

On 5 June 1919, the Germans fired on Estonian armoured train N2 south of the Latvian town of Cesis which was railway line between Riga and the Estonian city of Tartu. The Germans advanced on Cesis attacking the Estonian forces holding the town. The fighting raged for three days after which the Estonians were driven out. The heads of Allied military missions in the Baltic pressured the Estonians and Germans to sign an armistice on 10 June 1919 and to enter negotiations.<sup>25</sup> Within the next nine days, both the Germans and Estonians concentrated forces in the area while a fruitless series of series of talks took place. The Estonian 3<sup>rd</sup>

Division moved southward to occupy a ninety-nine kilometre front. Meanwhile, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division consisted of 5,000 men, including 1400 Latvian troops. They were supported by twenty-eight guns and two armoured trains. German forces concentrated in the vicinity of Cesis numbered 5,300 men supported by fifty guns, one armoured train and a number of airplanes. On 19 June 1919, the Germans attacked again and fighting raged for three days in the vicinity of Cesis. On 23 June 1919, the Estonians were able to go on the counter-offensive. All units of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division went simultaneously went on the offensive, Cesis was recaptured and doggedly pursued German forces southward denying them the opportunity to regroup. The retreat of the Germans was so hasty that they neglected to destroy vital parts of the railway to Riga. Most bridges were left intact except for the notable exception of the bridge over the Amata River which was 20 meters long and 15 meters high. This was a great obstacle for the advance of the armoured trains. Engineers worked quickly to restore the bridge and by the evening of 29 June trains could roll again across the bridge.<sup>26</sup>

The Estonian infantry continued their successful advance without the support of the armoured trains. This was possible due to high morale of the Estonian troops and because the advance was too rapid to allow the Germans to regroup. The morale of the Estonian forces was high due to strong social and national grievances against the Germans. In General, German forces were better supplied than the Estonians as high morale was quite high, all ranks there quite cooperative in improvising and making do what they had. During the Landeswehr campaign, the Estonian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division had what was, the division's chief of staff, lieutenant – colonel Nikolai Reek, described as a “mish – mash” of supplies.<sup>27</sup> There was a shortage of shoes and uniforms consisted of British, Russian and domestically produced clothing. Soldiers lacked ammunition pouches and carried rounds in their tunic and trouser pockets. Troops lacked gas masks, entrenching tools and belts and the harnesses to carry them as well as rucksacks. Hence personal equipment had to be carried by wagon convoy slowing movement of infantry forces. There was a shortage of caissons and artillery ammunition had to be carted in regular wagons. This made it difficult for the batteries to manoeuvre away roads and to receive resupply of ammunition. Furthermore, optical instruments to assist in directing artillery fire were few, some batteries having none. Signal equipment was also a problem, field telephones and field cables were in short supply.

Signal equipment had to be improvised using civilian telephones collected from businesses and homes in town and from manor houses in the countryside, often non insulated wire had to be used. It was a difficult chore to lay improvised communication lines and difficult to maintain them due to their vulnerability to moisture during wet weather. Communications equipment was carried in regular wagons making their movement cumbersome. To carry the communications equipment, ammunition and personal gear, one battalion had a supply column of more than a hundred wagons. Medical care was problematic as well; there was shortage of supplies, instruments and trained medical personnel. Evacuation of the wounded was sometimes difficult and disorderly due to the rapid advance, on one occasion, General Pödder the division commander, had to organize oversee the evacuation himself. In general, the logistics problems had to overcome with improvisation and a cooperative spirit.<sup>28</sup>

By 27 June Estonian infantry the German defensive lines were outside Riga behind the Jägeli and Kiši Lakes. The lakes were separated by only a narrow ribbon of land that made the German position easy to defend even by a small force. This allowed the Germans to place the Landeswehr units on the battle line and to pull the Iron Division out of contact to regroup.<sup>29</sup> There was a lull in the fighting as the Estonian infantry waited for the armoured trains to arrive and as their forces were reorganized. The Estonian used the lull to reorganize their logistics and obtain food and ammunition. The rapid advance southward and preparations for the assault on Riga greatly strained the supply system. When asked by General Laidoner when the attack on Riga would begin, General Ernest Pödder, commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division replied, "We can only go on to Riga when the soldier's stomachs are full."<sup>30</sup> General Pödder had the reputation of being a practical combat officer who could see practical operational problems not seen from a headquarters perspective. Soon foodstuffs began arriving for the Estonian troops. However, the logistics situation still remained difficult due to shortage of horses. The shortage of supplies was somewhat alleviated by the friendly of the local population that provided what they could. However, close to Riga, food was scarce because the area had been badly devastated during the World War. The armoured trains, Kaptan Irv, and N2, N3 arrived at Ropaži station just north of Jägeli and Kiši Lakes on 29 June. The arrival of the armoured trains increased the Estonian fire power dramatically.<sup>31</sup>



As with the armoured trains, the Estonian navy was to provide fire power for the assault on Riga. On 26 June naval force consisted of the destroyers *Lennuk*, the gunboat *Lembit*, the minesweepers *Olev* and *Kalev* and the icebreaker *Tasuja* got underway from Tallinn for the Gulf of Riga.<sup>32</sup> The destroyer *Vambola* had arrived on 23 June in the Gulf of Riga to support the advance of the 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment along the coast with naval gun fire. To operate in the relatively distant Gulf of Riga was a difficult logistical task. The 1100 - ton *Tasuja*, which was armed with a 130 mm long range gun and two 75 mm guns, towed a large barge loaded with ammunition and fuel to support the naval force. The naval force arrived at the mouth of the Pärnu River and dropped anchor. On June 28 they were met by the destroyer *Vambola* which was refuelled from the barge.<sup>33</sup> The naval force got underway moving southward towards the mouth Gauja River (Koiva, Aa) staying close to the shore. In order that the squadron move quickly the trawlers were towed by *Vambola* and *Lennuk*. At the mouth of the Gauja the ships anchored were replenished barge towed by the *Tasuja*.

When infantry attacks continued in the early morning of 2 July to take the suburbs of Riga, the naval force began operations to take the German held fortifications of Daugavgriva (Dünamünde) that guarded the entrance to the harbour at Riga. While successfully silencing the German batteries with naval gun fire launches from the *Lembit* and *Lennuk* were sent ashore with landing parties. These forces were able to capture some armed German light steamers and barges.<sup>34</sup> These vessels were immediately incorporated into the Estonian squadron and put into action. As fuel and ammunition on *Vambola* and *Lennuk* were running low, Captain Pitka decided that only one destroyer could remain stay on station in the Gulf of Riga. Therefore, on the morning of 3 July *Vambola's* spare fuel and ammunition were transferred to the *Lennuk* and the *Vambola* started back to Tallinn.<sup>35</sup> The naval force planned another landing at Torenberg where the Germans were reported to have a large amount of supplies and transport equipment. However, these operations ceased when naval vessels received a radio message that the Allied military missions imposed an armistice between the Estonians and Germans to prevent an all out battle for Riga. German troops were forced to withdraw to western Latvia and the government of Karlis Ulmanis was restored to power.<sup>36</sup>

General von der Goltz's campaign against the Estonians was a tactical gambit that failed. His forces were adequately supplied at

the time and generally better equipped than the Estonians however the German forces depended on the goodwill of the Allied powers to receive supplies. The port of Liepaja being the main supply point for the Germans, General von der Goltz's forces did not control a railway connection to Germany. The British and French navies controlled the sea lanes in the western Baltic and could readily enact a blockade on Latvian ports. Furthermore, the Latvian transportation infrastructure and industrial base was greatly damaged in recent and earlier fighting and the local population was for the most part, hostile, this made it difficult for the Germans procure local supplies.<sup>37</sup>

### **Eastern front**

In the summer 1919, military activity continued on Estonia's eastern frontier, though entirely Estonian territory. A force of anti-Bolshevik Russians, the Northwest Army under the command General Nikolai Yudenitch, formed in the area of Pskov and began offensive operations towards Petrograd. Estonian forces supported Northwest Army mainly because of pressure from the Allies powers who wanted to see the Bolsheviks defeated at all costs. The Estonians had less than enthusiasm for cooperation with the Northwest Army, whose leadership refused to recognize Estonian independence and strove for a fully restored Russian empire. However, cooperation with General Yudenitch's force ensured the goodwill of the Allied powers and helped keep the military supplies flowing to Estonia.

The supply situation improved greatly during the summer. Large quantities of clothing items arrived in Estonia that nearly covered the requirements for the entire army. Winter clothing, though remained in inadequate supply. Estonian artillery units received modern guns from Great Britain. By early autumn the Estonians had 142 field guns, including fifty - six heavy artillery pieces. The number of machine guns increased as well. Small arms ammunition was adequate, but artillery ammunition remained in short supply. The Estonian army was able to augment its stocks of engineering, transportation, and communication materials as well. However, field cable for communications and petroleum products remained in acute shortage.<sup>38</sup> The petroleum shortage affected mainly the

navy, which needed lubricating oil, grease, gasoline and benzene and the air unit, which required aviation gasoline. This shortage was alleviated somewhat as petroleum, oil and lubricants arrived from Great Britain in August.<sup>39</sup>

Great Britain also augmented the supplies of the Northwest Army during the summer. The matter of supplies was an issue of contention between the Estonian command and that of the Northwest Army. The Russians felt that the British favoured Estonians more than Russians, while Estonians mistrusted the intentions of General Yudenitch and the ability of his staff to effectively organize an offensive campaign. The Northwest Army was extremely short of supplies, food, clothing and arms at the beginning of summer. To help solve the Northwest Army's supply problems, the British, with the concurrence of the French government sent a large consignment of materiel originally bound for Finland to Estonia for use by Northwest Army. From this consignment the Northwest Army received 450 machine guns, 4,200 rifles, 10,000 automatic pistols, thirty tanks, thirty-two airplanes, small arms ammunition, swords, field kitchens, saddling, and helmets. By early autumn 1919, the Northwest Army had a strength of 18,500 men with fifty-six artillery pieces.<sup>40</sup> They were opposed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Red Army which had 26,000 men and 148 artillery pieces. However, the 7<sup>th</sup> Red Army was considered to have low fighting ability, being poorly led and with poor morale.

On 10 October 1919 the Northwest Army launched a major offensive from Jamburg due east of Narva towards Petrograd. The initial advance of the Northwest Army was highly successful by 20 October 1919 General Yudenitch's forces reached the suburbs of Petrograd. On 21 October Bolsheviks reinforced the 7<sup>th</sup> Red Army with 28,000 to 29,000 troops and went on the counteroffensive. The 15<sup>th</sup> Red Army, consisting of 23,000 troops was also brought in to join counteroffensive. The Northwest Army was unable to make an effective stand and retreated towards Jamburg. Any hope of stabilizing the situation faded on 14 November 1919 when the Northwest Army, abandoned the town of Jamburg withdrew towards the Narva River. The disintegration of the Northwest Army created a dangerous situation. General Yudenitch intended to have his remaining 40,000 - 50,000 men retire behind Estonian

lines along the Narva River and reorganize. They were also accompanied by a large number of civilian refugees. Having a demoralized army whose leadership was hostile to Estonian independence on national soil was a grave threat to Estonia's internal security. For this reason the Estonian government decided to disarm the Northwest Army as it crossed the Narva River into Estonia. The Northwest Army was successfully disarmed, with the exception of 2,500 men who volunteered to serve with Estonian forces.<sup>41</sup>

### **Military mismanagement**

The failure of General Yudenitch's offensive was ascribed to a great part due to his inadequate planning for logistics. His forces advanced quickly against numerically superior forces but failed to sustain their offensive action or hold in defence. According to a *New York Times* war correspondent in Estonia in November 1919, the offensive was a 'brilliant instance of military mismanagement.'<sup>42</sup> Despite the British supply of arms and ammunition, necessities of all kinds to sustain troops were lacking. Planning for medical services was inadequate before the campaign resulting in dreadful conditions for the sick and wounded. The Northwest Army staff did not plan adequately to provide billeting to shelter their personnel from the intense cold that was setting in. The troops could no longer sleep in open air as they did in previous months. Disarming the Northwest Army proved trouble free for the Estonians as the hungry and weary soldiers were more than happy to give up their weapons.<sup>43</sup>

### **Final phase**

The failure of the Northwest Army dashed Allied hopes of overthrowing the Bolshevik government. The Allied governments now accepted the Estonian desire to enter peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks were also anxious to end the war as well, though on their own terms. The Estonian and Bolshevik governments agreed to open peace talks at Tartu on 5 December 1919. Despite the peace talks beginning, the fighting continued unabated and the Bolshevik political leadership commanded their army to occupy the town of Narva at any cost. This action would

greatly improve the Bolshevik military position and provide their peace negotiators at Tartu with a powerful bargaining chip. Thus the Bolsheviks amassed 160,000 troops and more than 200 artillery pieces along the Estonian defensive line on the Narva River.

In response to the Bolshevik threat, the Estonians built a strong network of defensive positions along the Narva River and mobilized all available reserves to defend the line. On 7 December the Bolsheviks began a series of infantry assaults and on 16 December they broke through the Estonian line south of Narva and crossed the frozen Narva River. The Estonians counterattacked successfully on 17 December restoring the defensive line albeit with a high price in casualties. Bolshevik offensive action ceased for a time.

However, on 24 December 1919 their negotiators put new demands forward at the peace conference which they said would be enforced with military action. For the Estonians, it was clear that a series of new attacks were coming.

General Laidoner ordered the transfer of fresh troops to reinforce the north from the quieter front south of Lake Peipsi. On 28 December the Bolsheviks launched a series of massive infantry attacks on Estonian lines. The attacks were repeatedly repulsed with heavy losses to the attackers. These attacks took their toll, on 30 December 1919, the commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Red Army reported to the Bolshevik High Command that his units could no longer continue offensive action. On the next day the Bolshevik peace delegation agreed to an armistice ending the fighting. The armistice came into effect on 3 January 1920 and final peace treaty was signed between Estonia and Bolshevik Russia on 2 February 1920.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

The Estonian War of Independence, lasted 402 days and cost the Estonians, 3,588 dead and 13,775 wounded. While Great Britain, France, the United States and Finland provided military and economic assistance, it was on a credit basis and the accrued debts had to be repaid after the war. The war ended as a clear victory for

Estonia, its borders were secured, and the peace treaty gave favourable terms to Estonia.<sup>45</sup> Superior logistics was a key element in Estonia's victory. The Estonians made best use of their scant logistics means through improvisation and the effective use of locally available resources and foreign assistance. The shipyards and engineer works of Tallinn improvised equipment such as armoured cars and trains from available resources. Foreign military assistance was put to effective use. This level of effectiveness was not the case of Estonia's nominal allies, the Northwest Army, who received foreign assistance as well, but failed to undertake effective planning and mismanaged the resources they had.

In managing resources and planning and coordinating operations the Estonians were fortunate to have General Johan Laidoner, an experienced staff officer, as their Commander-in-Chief. General Laidoner was trusted by the civilian leadership of the Estonian government. For their part the civilian leaders did not interfere in command decisions and cooperated closely with the armed forces. The Estonians also brought in experienced civilian specialists to assist with logistics matters where necessary.

The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, distrusted their experienced military officers and their planning and coordination were haphazard at best. Leon Trotsky, who often personally directed Bolshevik military operations, had little practical military experience being a professional political agitator. The same lack of experience was true of the other Bolshevik leaders who oversaw military supply, transportation, and medical services. Many of the experienced civilian specialists who could have assisted in these matters were considered class enemies and had fled, had been imprisoned or were simply distrusted and not given positions. Bolshevik logistics were often chaotic. As a result their troops often were hungry, ill clothed and lacked rudimentary medical care and sanitation. Most certainly these deficiencies played a paramount part in the poor morale and lack of efficiency of Bolshevik troops. No amount of political haranguing about world revolution by political commissars could rectify poor morale.

Because the Bolshevik army seized their food and horses, the Russian civilian population behind the front was often hostile or

indifferent to the Bolshevik cause as well. The Estonian soldiers had a better understanding of their country's war aims - the national independence and the safety of their homes. Thus their morale was far higher. It helped greatly that they were better fed and clothed and received better medical care.

In essence, the Estonian Republic was founded on democratic principles, Bolshevik Russia was not. The Estonians quickly forged an effective civil - military relationship the Bolsheviks did not. The Estonian armed forces act as the servant of the people providing national defence, they remained mindful of the welfare of its personnel and the civilian population.

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<sup>1</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.* (Eesti Vabadusvõitlejate Litt.: New York, 1968), 11 – 13, Evald Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People.* (London: Boreas Publishing Company. Ltd. 1952), 155 – 161

<sup>2</sup> United Kingdom National Archives Admiralty hereafter cited as ADM 116 1864 “Memorandum giving a narrative of events in the Baltic States for the time of the Armistice, November 1918 up to August 1919,” *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 15 -16, Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People.*, 163- 166

<sup>3</sup> Edgar Anderson. “British Policy Towards the Baltic States 1918 – 1920,” *Journal of Central European Affairs.* (October 1959), 278

<sup>4</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 267 Jan 25 1919 “Supply of Madsen Machine Guns to Estonians,” The Lewis guns came from British war stocks, while the Madsen guns, which were of Danish manufacture were purchased in Copenhagen and transported to Estonia by the British Navy. *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.* , 21, Paravane, [pseudonym] “With the Baltic Squadron, 1918- 1920,” *Fortnightly Review.* (2 May 1920), 707

<sup>5</sup> United Kingdom National Archives ADM 116 1864 “Memorandum giving a narrative of events in the Baltic States for the time of the Armistice, November 1918 up to August 1919.”

<sup>6</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 23, *New York Times.* (27 February 1919)

<sup>7</sup> William A. Fletcher. “The British-Soviet Naval Conflict in the Baltic, 1918-1919.” (Unpublished Master Thesis, San Jose State University. 1972), 90, "Le vice-Admiral Pitka," *Bulletin de l'Esthonie.* Number 7 (November 1919), Fred Limberg. *Isamaa Eest: Vabariigi Sõjajõudude*

*Organisatsioon ja Juttkond*. [For the Fatherland Estonian Republic Military Structure: Organization and Administration] (Cardiff: Boreas Publishing House. 1980.), 38, Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People*, 168

<sup>8</sup> David D. Mercer, "The Baltic Sea Campaign 1918 – 29," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*. (May 1962), 66, Paravane, "With the Baltic Squadron, 1918- 1920,"<sup>707</sup>, O. Toomara "British Squadron at Tallinn: Its Gallant Record in the War of Liberation," *The Baltic Times*. Number 25 (1938), 1

<sup>9</sup> C.R. Kutz. *War on Wheels: The Evolution of an Idea*. (Harrisburg PA: The Military Service Publishing Company. 1940), 196

<sup>10</sup> "Formation of Armoured Trains and their Importance in the Estonian War of Liberation," *The Baltic Times*. No. 24 (1938), 1, Eduard Laaman *Soomusrongide diviisi vabadussõjas. Volume I* [The Armoured Train Division in the War of Independence] (Tallinn: Uhiselu.1923), 7 -10 O. Toomara "British Squadron at Tallinn: Its Gallant Record in the War of Liberation," *The Baltic Times*. Number 25 (1938), 1

<sup>11</sup> Johan Pitka, "My Reminiscences of the Assistance of the British Navy in Our Fight for Independence," *The Baltic Times*. Number 3 (1939), 1 -2

<sup>12</sup> Nikolai Reek, "Lemsalu – Roopa – Võnnu – Ronneburgi lahing 19 – 23 VI 1919 a." [Lemsalu – Roopa – Võnnu – Rooneburg Battle 19 – 23 June 1919] *Sõdur* 6/7/8, 158

<sup>13</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, Foreign Office hereafter cited as FO 608 22652 "Goode to Bosanque 19 May 1919"

<sup>14</sup> *Eesti Vabadussõda, 1918 -1920*. Vol. II [The Estonian War of Independence] (Tallinn Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee, 1939.), 50, "Formation of Armoured Trains and their Importance in the Estonian War of Liberation," 1

<sup>15</sup> *New York Times*. (6 April 1919), *New York Times*. (20 March 1919) According to western press accounts typhoid fever was raging worst than ever in Petrograd in March – April 1919. It was known that 200 a day were dying in Petrograd hospitals. The Bolsheviks were not carrying out disinfection as they considered it a bourgeois medical practice.

<sup>16</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, FO 608 22652 "Goode to Bosanque 19 May 1919," *Eesti Vabadussõda, 1918 -1920*. Vol. II ., 71- 74, Arthur Lossmann. *Rubutus Maailmas: Sõdades, revolutsioonides ja vaba Eesti Õnnistuses*. [In a Turbulent World: Wars, Revolutions and the blessing of a free Estonia] (Stockholm: Eesti Kirjastus. 1959), 124

<sup>17</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 185 May 20 1919 "Bosanque - Telegram no. 57" - On 20 May 1919 the British representative in Tallinn made the urgent request to his government to supply the Estonian aviation section with 25,000 gallons (95,000 liters) of petrol, , 12,500 gallons (47,500 liters) of Caster oil, 3,500 gallons (13,300 liters) of Gargoyle "A", 3,500 gallons (13,300 liters) of Gargoyle "B." Grgoyle "A" and "B" were manufactured by the Vacuum Oil Company Ltd and considered satisfactory lubricants for every aircraft engine available with the exception of valve in piston rotary type. F. Gerdessen, "Estonian Air Power 1918 – 1945," *Air Enthusiast*. (No 18 April - July 1982.), 63 –



65, William Tomingas. *Mälestused*. [Memoirs] (Toronto: Kirjastus Kultuur. 1970), 99 – 100

<sup>18</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 230 “April 7 1919 Food for Esthonia”

<sup>19</sup> *New York Times* (22 January 1919), *Times of London*. (24 January 1919)

<sup>20</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, Foreign Office 608 22652 "Goode to Bosanque 19 May 1919," *Facts on Communism: The Soviet Union from Lenin to Khrushchev, Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, 86th Congress, Second Session*. (Washington DC Government Printing Office. 1960), 165

<sup>21</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, FO 608 22652 "Goode to Bosanque 19 May 1919"

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>23</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608/191 “Military activity on the front of the Esthonian Republic for the Period of 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> June 1919, Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People*, 171

<sup>24</sup> United Kingdom National Archives ADM 116 1864 “Memorandum giving a narrative of events in the Baltic States for the time of the Armistice, November 1918 up to August 1919,” *The Macon Daily Telegraph*. (14 May 1919)

<sup>25</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608/191 “Military activity on the front of the Esthonian Republic for the Period of 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> June 1919. *Laiaroopaline Soomusrong N2 Eesti Vabadussõjas* [Broad-gauge Armored Train N2 in the Estonian Independence War]. (Stockholm: LR Soomusrong N2 Soprusuning Rootsis, 1959.), 13, *Times of London*. (26 June 1919), *The Miami Herald Record* (10 June 1919)

<sup>26</sup> *Eesti Vabadussõda, 1918 -1920*. Vol. II, 174, *Laiaroopaline Soomusrong N2 Eesti Vabadussõjas*. , 14

<sup>27</sup> Reek, “Lemsalu – Roopa – Võnnu – Ronneburgi lahing 19 – 23 VI 1919 a.,” 158

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>29</sup> *Eesti Vabadussõda, 1918 -1920*. Vol. II, 176

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>31</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, ADM 116 1864 “Caledon at Libau 30<sup>th</sup> June 1919 Report on the Situation in Latvia.” *Eesti Vabadussõda, 1918 -1920*. Vol. II, 178 - 187

<sup>32</sup> Anderson, “An Undeclared Naval War: the British – Soviet Naval Struggle in the Baltic, 1918 – 1920,” *Journal of Central European Affairs*. (April 1962), 63

<sup>33</sup> Johan Pitka, *Rajusõlmed: Mälestusi Aastatest 1914-1919* Second Edition, (Stockholm: Free Europe Press, 1972), 197 [The First Edition was published in 1922 under the title *Minu Mälästused Suure Ilmasõja Algusest Eesti Vabadussõja Lõpuni* [My Remembrances From the Beginning of the World War to the End of the Estonian Independence War]

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Supplies for the Estonian Navy would run urgently low by the end of July 1919. On 20 July the chief of the British military mission in Estonia urgently requested

that his government send the Estonian Navy quick fire 3 inch 20 cwt anti-aircraft shell (amount not specified), 1,000 shrapnel shells, 2,000 high explosive shells, coal 15,000 tons; naphtha 10,000 tons; petroleum 200 tons; benzine 200 tons; turbine oil 50 tons; motor oil 50 tons; engine oil 60 tons; cylinder oil 8 tons; value oil 5 tons and glycerine 20 tons United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 267 July 20 1919 "General Gough to Mr. Balfour - Material Urgently Required for the Esthonian Navy."

<sup>36</sup> United Kingdom National Archives, ADM 116 1864 "Caledon at Libau 30<sup>th</sup> June 1919 Report on the Situation in Latvia." Pitka, *Rajusõlmed: Mälestusi Aastatest 1914-1919*, 172

<sup>37</sup> United Kingdom National Archives ADM 116 1864 "Admiralty Paris to Admiralty London 23 4 1919 Coal" – The Germans in Latvia were very much dependent on the good will of the Allies to keep even very essential supplies flowing. After the putsch by General von der Goltz, the Allied representative threatened blockade all supplies, including coal basic which was to power generation, industry, and transport. Supplies, including civilian were only allowed to flow only if the Allies were satisfied that they would be used either to fight the Bolsheviks or by the Latvian population.

<sup>38</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 38

<sup>39</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 267 August 1 1919 "Urgent needs of Esthonian Navy"

<sup>40</sup> United Kingdom National Archives FO 608 267 "July 26 1919 General Gough Supplies for Russian Northwest Army"

<sup>41</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 42, Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People.*, 87 - 88

<sup>42</sup> *New York Times* (29 November 1919)

<sup>43</sup> Hilja Kukk, "The Failure of Iudenich's Northwest Army: A dissenting White Russian View," *The Journal of Baltic Studies*. Number 4 (1981), 374, *New York Times* (29 November 1919), Paravane, "With the Baltic Squadron, 1918- 1920,"711

<sup>44</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 42, Uustalu. *The History of the Estonian People.*, 191 - 193

<sup>45</sup> *Estonian War of Independence, 1918 – 1920 Reprint of a Summary of prepared in 1938 – 1939.*, 44 - 45

**APPENDIX 1.**



**Aammunition off load a British truck received by the Estonian latter half of 1919 – improved tactical mobility.**

Source: Estonian National Defence College Collection

**APPENDIX 2.**



**Estonian Hospital Train Interior during Landeswehr War**

Source: Latvian War Museum Collection

**APPENDIX 3.**



**Captured Bolshevik Artillery (3 in) on Flatcar Tartu Railway Yard.**  
Source: Estonian National Defence College Collection.

**APPENDIX 4.**



**Estonian Armoured Train on Bridge over Raunas River between Lode Station and Cesis during the Landeswehr War.**  
Source: Latvian War Museum Collection.

**APPENDIX 5.**



**Typical Field Kitchen.**

Source: Estonian National Defence College Collection

## On Baltic Deployment Experiences

### Lithuanian Lessons Learned From International Operations From 1994 to 2010

*By Maj. Aurelijus Alasauskas and Maj Giedrius Anglickis*

#### Introduction

In 2010 the Lithuanian Republic will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of national independence. The will of the Lithuanian people and their desire to restore the nation after fifty years of occupation finally became a reality. It was a surprising event for many Eastern European countries. U.S. President Barack Obama noted that Lithuania had “became a beacon of hope to those throughout the world seeking freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.”<sup>1</sup> This illustrates how Lithuanians view their past twenty years as an independent country.

The Lithuanian Armed Forces were one of the elements that helped to strengthen the young state and later to bring full recognition from other countries. The armed forces were indeed an important partner in the process. In 1990, when the independent Lithuanian State was restored, the Lithuanian Armed Forces started to increase in size and capability. The first stage for the creation of the Lithuanian Armed Forces was the period 1990 to 1994. At this time the first national military units, the command and control institutions, were established. The Military School was introduced as the first educational institution for officers. This was later developed into the Lithuanian Military Academy. This period is very important because it established the foundation for the further development of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The first contacts with foreign Western military representatives and the establishment of formal relationships with Western armed forces helped the young Lithuanian Armed Forces in their development process and progress. Lithuanians needed the experience of the Western forces. Any kind of military assistance was valuable and counted for a great deal in this development stage. However, one important consideration was that Soviet military occupation forces were still stationed on the soil of the Lithuanian Republic. Because the last units of the Soviet Union Armed Forces left

Lithuania in 1993, developing and maintaining the Western military contacts and support had strategic importance for Lithuania.<sup>2</sup>

One notable fact at this time was that the Lithuanian Armed Forces were not very capable in technique, weaponry and equipment. The Lithuanian Forces were at the beginning of their foundation stage. However, it was essential that Lithuanians should create a solid foundation for the development of effective operational armed forces. In order to achieve proficiency, it was necessary to gain experience and to adopt standards and procedures from Western partners. For that reason, participation in international operations, which started in 1994, was seen as essential tool to achieve those goals more rapidly. Sharing the security burdens with partners was also an important strategic factor.

Today, while looking at this period, it is possible to evaluate what Lithuanian Armed Forces achieved and to conduct an analysis from the time that Lithuania gained its independence until the present. This twenty year period was a time of the Lithuanian armed forces learning, changing, and developing. The discussion of the international deployments rightly belongs to a lessons learned analysis with the first question being: what helped to strengthen the military system? By analyzing this issue one can help to understand the lessons learned to date and to create a good basis for further conceptual thinking. In order to analyze this period from 1994 to 2010 we can divide it into three stages of the armed forces development. These will be covered in depth in this article.

## **1. Initial stage of deployments 1994 – 2002**

Lithuania started to participate in international operations in 1994: first with a platoon size unit, LITPLA -1, which was deployed to Croatia under the UNPROFOR II mission.<sup>3</sup> What is important to note is that this unit was formed from officers and non-commission officers (NCOs) and the pre-mission training was conducted in Denmark, under whose national command the platoon would participate in later international operation. The method of personnel selection was given a great deal of attention by the high command of the Lithuanian forces. In addition, attention was also paid to how the Lithuanian Republic would be represented in its contribution to international peace and security. The tasks would be conducted along the lines of the “best practices” of the Western forces. At the same time, some attention was paid in terms of gaining experience from the deployments for

the use of the Lithuanian forces in the future. The first deployed Lithuanian unit was prepared to conduct such tasks as: “patrols at observation posts and checkpoints; carrying out control of movement of weapons, control transport and local residents in the fire-cessation area, and the collection of information.”<sup>4</sup> Taking into account the complexity of these tasks in this period of international peace keeping operations, this experience had great value for the Lithuanian forces. Many of those officers and NCOs who participated became an instructors and commanders of the future units that were NATO interoperable. Still, it was difficult at this point for a young state to sustain units abroad. Therefore partner support was necessary. “The first Lithuanian platoon what left for their mission in Croatia was equipped by the Danish Armed Forces, including uniforms, weapons” and other equipment.<sup>5</sup>

This initial experience was very useful for Lithuania, and was later exploited, when the units that Lithuania deployed became larger. The pre - mission training was improved and the sustainment of units was ensured. For example, Lithuania started to participate in international operations with platoon size units. After that, Lithuania increased its contribution to company- sized and fully sustainable units. In addition, Lithuania has deployed the following: staff officers in various headquarters, international observers, medics, national support elements, aircraft and troops for Humanitarian Assistance. In assessing the period from 1994 – 2002, it is necessary to mention that Lithuania, without mentioning the UNPROFOR II mission in Croatia, took part in international operations in Albania (Operation Allied Harbour), Georgia (ESBO Border monitoring mission), Kosovo (ESBO verification mission, KFOR operation Joint Guardian), Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR operation Joint Endeavour, SFOR operations Joint Guard and Joint Forge).<sup>6</sup>

Further attention should be given to the wide level of experience gained in the fields of military assistance and training. All the main contributors of assistance need to be mentioned: the United States, United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Norway and Poland. These countries did, and still do, contribute to the Lithuanian Armed Forces development, training, and doctrinal publications. Currently, programs have been initiated by the Lithuanian forces for projects involving various Western countries. For example: the Lithuanian Polish Battalion (LITPOLBAT), “is designed for international operations aimed at supporting and restoring peace and security as well as international humanitarian and rescue operations.”<sup>7</sup>



Furthermore, it is necessary to stress that in the period of Lithuanian participation in international operations from 1994 to 2002 several aspects of the deployments were found to be especially important: Those aspects are: operational experience, training, logistical issues, deployment and redeployment of units, coordination and monitoring.<sup>8</sup>

As noted earlier, the Lithuanian army had no operational experience of participation in international operations together with foreign partners before 1994 and no experience in pre-deployment preparation and sustainment of deployment operations. This lack of experience was noted and it drove the Lithuanian military cooperation policy. Close cooperation with foreign partners was established and expanded. Lithuanians had much to learn from NATO countries in order to operate with them. Yet, lessons learned from earlier participation in international operations was also sometime absent in the Western doctrinal understanding. So gaps in military education system were identified. Lithuania concentrated on sending officers and NCOs to Western countries in order to get experience and education. This experience was later put to use in Lithuania's own long term operations and planning.

In this era (1994-2002) the rotation of officers who had been on international missions began. Usually, officers who came back from missions were assigned to higher positions. The idea of this rotation policy was to ensure better preparation and conduct for the future Lithuanian deployments. Rotations were conducted not only for officers, but also for NCOs and enlisted soldiers. This system led to a broader mutual understanding of the international mission and enabled the sharing of experience between personnel. Officers, NCOs, and the soldiers who were not selected to continue with the deployed forces were assigned positions as instructors in different subunits such as the Military Academy, training centers, the Basic Training Regiment, the NCO school, and other units. By this means the Lithuanian Armed Forces ensured the dissemination of recent experience directly from the area of operations to units in the homeland. But the disadvantages could have been foreseen. The deployed unit, after completion of the international operation, was sometimes disbanded as a unit. By this policy the Lithuanian Armed Forces missed developing a highly prepared and experienced single unit. Yet, on the other hand, it was good for the units that had supplied soldiers to the operation to get those, now experienced, soldiers back.

In examining this period it is worth noting that additional challenges were noted in the field. Different experiences were gained from different nations and at different levels of command (senior officers, junior officers and NCOs). The result was that there were some slightly different interpretations and lessons concerning the tactical and doctrinal issues in the Lithuanian Forces. Even when there was some general agreement on the content of the lessons learned, it required some time to implement changes. Despite the fact that standardization and adapting to new procedures took a long time, this process was still the best way to accomplish the mission in the long run. The long process enabled Lithuania to make its own practical adaptations of doctrinal procedures to meet its own requirements. In terms of training issues one must underline the fact that the Lithuanian contribution to international operations was limited to company size formations. Of course, this was a problem for the proper training of staff officers. There was very little experience from the area of operations at the staff officer level in the Lithuanian headquarters and what experience existed was very limited. Only a few officers participated in deployment mission areas at the staff level because the Lithuanian contribution to the staff depended on the unit size within the mission area. So Lithuania continued to have very limited possibilities to gain staff officer experience in the field. The problem was obvious and solving it required external support from partner nations.

To fix these doctrine and training gaps staff officers were usually sent to attend the pre-deployment training together with the unit they were going to be deployed with right before the operational deployment. The problem was solved only partially, because staff officer competence requires not only individual skills for acting in the field, but also knowledge of the procedures of military decision making process used by the staff. The major lesson learned from the early deployment experiences was that Lithuania needed to be deployed with an international unit that could provide this kind of experience and be used in operational area. In the autumn of 1994 the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT)<sup>9</sup> project was created. This unit was formed from units from three Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The battalion training was supervised by Baltic Battalion Training Team (BTT) composed of personnel from various partner countries. It was one of the tools that helped Lithuania to prepare its staff officers. At the same time, it was great opportunity to gain experience from other NATO countries and to catch up with them in operational techniques. Meeting these training and doctrine problems on the way, Lithuania understood the importance of dealing with

the gaps in junior officer training. Meanwhile, a Captains' Career (or Junior Staff) Officers' Course was introduced in order to properly train future senior officers.<sup>10</sup> This course ensured that effective training was carried out for junior rank officers up to battalion level.

Another area that was important for Lithuania was unit (collective) level training. Unit training was not an easy task because it requires resources, finances, and additional logistics. The main shortfalls that were faced by the Lithuanian Armed Forces at this time were the limited opportunities to organize training, the lack of skilled instructors, and the difficult conditions in the training infrastructure. In order to fix such things Lithuania invited foreign Western instructors to come to Lithuania and to support Lithuania in organizing the training for its units especially for those who were assigned to be deployed in international operations.

The lesson learned in this case was that Lithuania fully understood the central importance of collective training and interoperability with foreign units. For this reason, joint multinational exercises such as "Amber Hope" have been conducted every two years in Lithuania. This exercise has the primary aim of, "sharing experience from the former missions and were getting ready to participate in possible NATO-led peacekeeping operations composed of multinational units."<sup>11</sup> That exercise was the main source of experience, not only for planners but for the executors as well. The exercise grew from a battalion size crises response FTX (field training exercise) to a brigade-sized exercise. At the same, the exercise developed skills not only for enlisted soldiers but also for the higher officers.

Another important issue to be dealt with was logistics. During the beginning of Lithuania's participation in international operations, the small sized units (platoons) that were sent from Lithuania did not require much logistical support. From the national side Lithuania provided its soldiers with uniforms, personal equipment, and rifles. In that stage of participation in international operations all other things, including sustainment, were provided by partner nations. Lithuanian soldiers were embedded into partner units and were thus sustained logistically. There was no necessity to have a host nation support element in the mission area because of the small size of the formation, and there were no proper deployable CSS (combat service support) units available.

In this period of Lithuania's foreign deployments newly introduced equipment had been tested in units. But some Lithuanian equipment had not been proven in field tests so the decision was made to buy some pieces of equipment from partners. Many pieces of equipment were also donated by partners. Such donated equipment mainly consisted of weaponry and vehicles. The best example of this was the Swedish donation of the full tables of equipment for three motorized infantry and two air defence battalions.<sup>12</sup> In this period it was the right solution to ensure the proper training of our troops. The lesson learned, one that came later on in the field, was that Lithuania lacked the extra equipment for training troops and there was lack of spare parts for the units. This policy of equipment donation also required a program of additional training of instructors in how to use this new equipment and how to manage, maintain, and sustain it in a proper way. Because there were several donating partner nations, Lithuanian equipment was varied. This meant that it was also difficult to properly maintain. The lesson learned was that it was necessary to carefully plan how this equipment would be used in future-- even if it is donated. The Lithuanians needed to make an agreement with the equipment donating country concerning spare parts, training issues, and so on. Lithuania took this seriously into account and started to build up a CSS system in the armed forces with the goal to sustain units in the motherland and those deployed abroad. A Logistical Command was created in 2001, and in 2003 the General and Direct CSS battalions were introduced.<sup>13</sup>

In talking about the deployment and redeployment issues it is necessary to mention three aspects. The first was that Lithuanian Air Force had some tactical air lift capability. Sometimes it was used to deploy units to mission area to Europe. It was suitable for a platoon level unit, but for a company it was not enough. Due to this experience the Lithuanians came to another lesson: previous deployments had been conducted using the partner nations' strategic airlift capabilities. Both methods of airlift support, national and partner, were very difficult to manage in terms of coordination and effected time line. There was, in the early phases of Lithuanian deployments, no system and concept of deployment. This became another issue to consider. Each time Lithuania participated it had a different concept of how to organize a unit rotation. The lesson learned from this was clear: good coordination and a concept of deployment were necessary before the decision to participate in an operation is taken and the unit deployment begins. In the Logistical Command structure a Movement Control Centre

was introduced and took responsibility for planning and developing the deployment concept.<sup>14</sup>

The next issue was the necessity to have a monitoring and coordination body for international operations within Lithuanian Armed Forces structure. The Defence Staff was responsible for this coordination in earliest stages. It found that the spectrum and scale of international operations, and Lithuania's contribution, was growing. So the logistical and other issues required continued monitoring and coordination to support the missions. The Land Forces Command was established at an operational level, as well as the Operational Control and Monitoring Centre. This centre became responsible for the planning, execution and sustainment of operations.<sup>15</sup> In the beginning the Operational Control and Monitoring Centre capabilities were limited. From further lessons learned a section for this was created within the Land Forces headquarters. This improved the planning, preparation, and quality of deployed units' performance.

In addition, further lessons learned were identified. One lesson was the importance of a proper knowledge of the English language. Also, Lithuania found that an additional medical check was necessary prior to the mission. The English language was taught in the Military Academy and later, in 1998, the English language centres were introduced and began operating in the Armed Forces.<sup>16</sup> The English language level was defined for the soldiers prior to deployment as part of their job description. The medical check system consisted of two parts: first, for joining and continuing service in the homeland and, second, for deployment. The experience that came later showed that there was no requirement to have two separate medical checks. Today soldiers are checked one time and the deployment criteria are included in the medical exam.

In summarizing this first period that lasted eight years (1994-2002) it became clear that the Lithuanian Armed Forces had made major steps forward. These steps allowed Lithuania to stand in a line with partner nation soldiers in international deployments. Reports from mission areas and partner nations showed a favourable evaluation of Lithuanian soldiers and created the conditions so that the Lithuanian Forces could become a self-confident Western army and, at the same time, be ready to take on bigger challenges in the future. It proved for the Lithuanian society, politicians, and the international community that the investments in the newly established Armed Forces were justified and had value. At the same time, a proper

appreciation was noted for the support that the Lithuanians' partners provided in advising, training, monitoring, and logistical assistance.

### **Growth of confidence 2003 – 2005**

The successful development of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the good results gained in international deployments created the conditions for gradual progress in taking additional responsibilities within the international community. By this means Lithuania not only carried on with missions it had previously committed to, but it also took on new challenges. In the period from 2003 to 2005 Lithuania widened its military contributions by participating in these operations: the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (operation Concordia), Afghanistan (operation Enduring Freedom, International Security Assistance Force), Iraq (operation Iraqi Freedom, NATO training mission), Bosnia and Herzegovina (EU operation ALTHEA).<sup>17</sup> Participation in these new deployments engendered new experiences that needed to be collected and consolidated. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan soon became a main focus for Lithuania. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were of a much higher intensity than anything that had been faced by the Lithuanian troops in Europe in the period of 1994 - 2002. It was a new stage of participation in international operations and it included new challenges and experiences.

The main difference from previous deployments was that forces sent to international operations were not only from Land Forces. Personnel and units also began to be sent from other service components. In missions abroad the Special Operation Forces element, medics from Medical Service, and Air Force specialists began to participate. Generally, senior officers started to participate as part of various headquarters in mission areas. Obviously, the operational intensity and Lithuania's operational expertise in deployment gradually increased. Other components of the Armed Forces started to gain experience from deployments. The international recognition of this expertise ensured continuation and further development.

One of the lessons learned concerned the language issue—and not only the English language. It was noted that prior to deployment it was very important to define what nations would be located in the same operational area. When selecting personnel to embed with a foreign contingent it might be useful to find one with a certain language background. This experience would help make it easier to communicate with, and build closer

relationships with, the other nations. This was especially the case in talking about special expertise such as medics, air specialists. In one practical example, doctors were embedded with a German hospital. In that case the pre-mission training becomes an issue prior to deploying specialists with international contingents, especially when it concerned working with foreign equipment. To ensure full interoperability, pre-deployment training with the foreign unit was found to be necessary. Military doctors have identified this quickly, because their job specific work requires more training in many areas.

The next lesson that was identified was that when equipping soldiers with equipment and uniforms the gear must fit well to the environment. The Lithuanian troops now encountered new operational environments with conditions ranging from severe heat to extreme cold. Simple things such as uniforms (material, heat signature), body armour (better protection), load carrying equipment (additional pouches), rucksacks (capability to adjust to smaller) and footwear all had to be adapted to different environments. These obvious and small things can make major difficulties when soldiers are deployed and have to operate in the field for long period of time. One lesson was that Lithuania had to create a desert uniform version and kit, and it also had to adjust the regular national uniforms and kit.

Situational and cultural awareness issues provided another lesson. A sufficient amount of attention and resources must be allocated to support the cultural and situational awareness of the troops operating in a foreign environment. It is necessary not only to describe for the troops the general situation in an area, but to focus the situational background on the point of contact. Precise information on the operational area and the environment must be presented to the new team. In many cases the information provided to the deploying forces was too general and described the entire battle space. The best result came from using fresh experience. The most suitable cadres for this were soldiers that had just come back from operational area. They successfully conducted the mission orientation training phase for the incoming personnel. Situational and cultural awareness was one of the essential lessons during the early deployments to the Balkans, and then in Iraq and Afghanistan. Beginning from the early deployments in the Balkans, it was clear that cultural differences between countries were obvious and were important for the soldiers to understand. Conducting regular tasks, such as monitoring the situation around mosques, visiting villages in mountainous areas, and monitoring daily life, gave an opportunity for

soldiers to see importance of this. Training in the situational and cultural environment allowed the soldiers to learn the way of thinking of the local inhabitants and to understand their habits. An attitude of cultural awareness of the locals allowed the Lithuanian peacekeepers to gain a good relationship with them. This also allowed Lithuanian forces to gather information and to achieve constructive cooperation between locals and peacekeepers. Such experience inspired Lithuania to revise its pre-mission training programs. The Lithuanian Armed Forces initiated constructive contacts with national higher educational institutions. Universities provided the forces with experts for cultural training. It was also clear that it was necessary to train all levels of personnel in cultural awareness issues, because this understanding is vital when forces take over the responsibilities and contacts in an area of operation.

Every single soldier must understand his role and his input into the success of the mission. In the initial period of Lithuanian deployments, soldiers often lacked a proper understanding of the national objectives and the goals within the mission. Of course, this influenced the way that some soldiers communicated with unfriendly locals. The first deployments had already shown the necessity to understand the mission and to be able to explain it to people. So training in national objectives and mission goals was also included into the training program, because mistakes made in this field can cause a loss of confidence in the locals, not only towards the deployed national forces, but also toward the Allied mission in long term.

The next aspect to be considered was the soldiers' welfare issues. These included: communication with the soldier's family back home, rest and recreation (R&R), and rehabilitation after the mission. Those issues become more complicated and restricted in comparison with peacekeeping missions in Europe and immediately become the discussion subject amongst soldiers. The operational intensity in Iraq and Afghanistan only proved this. The situation needed to be fixed, because political pressure was felt not only from soldiers' side, but also from their relatives. Information was circulated in the media that immediately raised questions and calls from the soldiers' relatives to the Land Forces Operational Control Centre, or to the unit from which the soldier was deployed. It was decided to create a method for troops to communicate with relatives not only by phone, but also via internet. Meetings by the sending unit with relatives were introduced back home. Here relatives were given the latest information from the mission area. Video teleconferences with the capability to communicate with each



single soldier were organized. The ability to deliver the post and other personal things helped to maintain soldier's morale and motivation at a proper level in the mission area.

Other aspects that affected all participants in a mission, especially the participants from small countries, were noted. These issues included: embedding people and the rotation of various formations and in-theatre movement. Several issues arose in soldiers' assignments into various positions in the field and the rotation of the assignments. There were cases when a soldier was assigned to one position and when he came to mission area his assigned slot was already filled. Or, due to various reasons, a soldier was assigned to another position that he was not trained for. The lesson learned here is that good coordination among responsible headquarters before the mission is vital. A detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and a good knowledge of job description, is essential.

The in-theatre movement of a contingent is another important issue for a troop sending nation. A small country is sometimes "invisible" at the tactical level in the area of operations. Sometimes it is even ignored. There were some cases when the deployed unit had to wait for weeks to get lifted or moved somewhere according to its assigned task. It is understandable when one looks at the problem from a major nation perspective because of a large nation's needs and national and operational priorities. However, the in-theatre movement issues had a big impact for the small nations, first of all on the soldier morale and also on the operational rhythm. A national transport airplane in the operational area would solve the problem in terms of transportation of troops, equipment and supplies within the theatre. Yet, Lithuania can not afford to have an aircraft in the theatre on a permanent basis. But the answer is to deploy an aircraft during the period of major rotations or operations.

While revising the program of international operations from 2003 to 2005 it was necessary to mention that Lithuania needed to take into consideration the soldiers' psychological and internal relations between each other in reintegrating the unit performance. The increased operational intensity in these years created additional stress and this, in turn, required a new psychological understanding in order to maintain a good atmosphere in the unit. An understanding of the psychological issues helped Lithuanian forces avoid conflicts and contributed to overall mission success. Ensuring these issues were dealt with required good leadership as well to being able to face

and solve internal unit misunderstandings in rapid matter. Additional attention was paid to the soldiers' pre-mission training and professional psychologists were invited to conduct such training. Deployable psychologist teams were established from the Medical Service. This action created the conditions to prevent complex psychological conflicts within the unit, and it also allowed to soldiers and commanders to know each other better. These measures contributed to improved soldier's morale in a complex operational environment.

The period from 2003 to 2005 was a big challenge for the military logisticians as well because deployments required more of a national effort when compared to earlier periods. Lithuania started to become more independent from its allies' logistics systems and a wider spectrum of services could be provided by Lithuania. A unified transport and fuel concept, camp force protection materials, and sustaining these things, become new challenges for the Lithuanian Forces. The improvements covered a wide spectrum of logistic services and contributed to overall force protection and mission success. Night vision capability and extended range for communications required additional resources and investments. This was another focus for logisticians.

While talking about other combat services it is necessary to note lessons learned in areas concerning the rehabilitation of soldiers after the mission, in strengthening operational coordination between the homeland and mission area, and the duration of the rotation itself. Involvement of medical personnel in the operation, and a soldier medical examination prior to and after the deployment, identified the need to have additional rehabilitation time in addition to a soldier's regular annual leave time. It was necessary to look into this issue in complex way, and measures were taken not only to provide physical recreation, but also psychological relief. This attitude created conditions for soldiers to be rehabilitated in specialized Lithuanian Health Resort centres. Soldiers are also able to take family members together with them. Rehabilitation takes up to two weeks, and it was assessed that it has a great value not only from the doctor's perspective, but also from the view of Armed Forces personnel.

The next aspect that was taken into consideration by military leadership was the deployment time. Deployment experience showed that certain specialties needed to have shorter rotation period. In taking this decision several issues were assessed including mission specifics, the job description and activities

and tasks. This resulted in personnel deployment time being reduced from six months to three-four months.

In conclusion, a summary of the period from 2003 to 2005 makes it clear that new challenges could be addressed by a new set of the lessons learned. The learning process allowed improvement in all combat functions. The high intensity operations required more complex attitude in planning, training and executing the operations. This period demonstrated that Lithuania had the ability to implement operational changes more quickly and develop units up to the required standards. Many details that had not been considered in the first stages had been dealt with and, in the long term, these made for long term improvements in coordinating the field operations and the logistic system. The changes in this stage strengthened the Lithuanian Armed Forces at all levels and made them more reliable and durable and noticeably increased the soldiers' level of competence and professionalism. Lithuania was ready for new challenges and a bigger commitment to international peace and security.

In 2004 Lithuania became a NATO member, and this illustrated a major effort to improve homeland and international security. Meanwhile with this action came not only international recognition, but also new challenges and responsibilities. The period from 2003 to 2005 can be described as growth of confidence, because many things were already conducted independently and the state was ready for another important step forward. Lithuania's successful participation and contribution had laid concrete fundamentals for strategic objectives. The forces needed to maintain the Lithuanian citizens' confidence in the armed forces and also the confidence of the Alliance. As evidence of this, Lithuania took on more responsibilities in Afghanistan and deployed a Special Operations Squadron and Province Reconstruction Team.

### **Share of burden with NATO allied forces 2006 – 2010 and recent PRT experience**

In the period from 2006 to 2010 Lithuania not only continued with its previous deployments, but also enlarged its contribution to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), increased its contribution in Afghanistan in Helmand province, and took part in the United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).<sup>18</sup> It is necessary to mention that the main focus, and the main operational area,

was Afghanistan. The mission in Afghanistan has become more complex and has included all spectrums of operations. The Lithuanian Armed Forces have continually progressed and gradually changed their structure in compliance with the tasks, one of which is participation in international operations.

After the transformation of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, a Joint Headquarters as an operational level headquarters was established and introduced into the national force structure in order to improve the relations between strategic, operational, and tactical levels. After the Joint Headquarters reached its full operational capability (FOC) it took over the planning, execution, and sustainment of operations with the following mission: to plan, execute and sustain all military operations. The strategic level (the Defence Staff of the Ministry of National defense) generates the relevant forces and makes decisions concerning international commitments. The tactical level (Component Commands) act mainly as force providers and trainers.

In 2008 the newly established Joint Headquarters revised and improved the procedures for its units' participation in operations. This cycle in general comprises of the following: preparation of replacements (issuing of orders for preparation, setting the Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) of the unit, preparing personnel's job descriptions), Training of units and staff officers / instructors (issuing the combat training requirements for the units), Monitoring of logistic support, Planning of rotations (including coordination with foreign partners), Organization of transportation (for deployment or redeployment), Monitoring of execution and redeployment. Validation, systematization and synchronization of those procedures ensured better preparation of unit to participate in international operations.

When describing the Lithuanian contribution to the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, it is necessary to mention that it was, are, and will be a challenge for the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Two important aspects were needed to be mentioned. Lithuanian units in period from 1994 to 2005 have gained considerable tactical level experience. Meanwhile the deployed Province Reconstruction Team (PRT) brought to the Lithuanians a slightly different experience from the logistical, operational and strategic perspectives.

When it comes to logistics it is necessary to mention some of aspects of logistics that were important before the PRT commitment of 2005. Some lessons identified were observed later in two main logistic fields: Host Nation Support (HNS) and Combat Service Support (CSS). Important aspects concerning both these fields were identified. They were: economy of resources, the necessity to shorten the lines of communications, and providing a positive impact to Afghanistan economy. The Host Nation Support (HNS) is very important in the deployed country. In the case of HNS in Afghanistan it is very limited and this fact had a direct influence on the establishment and sustainment of the PRT base. The Lithuanian experience in this field included lessons in: procurement, infrastructure building and sustainment, use of the banking system, leasing issues, and use of local interpreters. While assessing all these elements it is necessary to understand and logically assess all available possibilities for providing support. Logistical lessons learned show that in the procurement area a different approach to market research should be used. The application of EU procurement standards does not always work.

It was noticeable that during the development of the Lithuanian “Camp Whiskey”<sup>19</sup> there were many lessons learned concerning infrastructure building and sustainment. Those lessons included: reading the infrastructure project schemes and technical specifications, applying EU standards for material, and the different interpretations of language and noting attempts at cheating. Poor contract management (in terms of control of subcontractors) forced Lithuanian logisticians to be stricter and more practical than in the early periods of Lithuanian deployments. The lessons learned were clear: thorough planning from the beginning to the end must foresee all circumstances if satisfactory results are to be achieved. This experience came from solving a wide spectrum of logistical issues that included dealing with various banking operations. Some of the primary lessons in the banking field were identified as issues concerning the transfer of funds from Lithuania, cash withdrawal operations, paying for goods and services, and also avoiding cash operations. According to Lithuanian law, it is necessary to have financial documents approving all operations. In Afghanistan, especially in the remote rural areas (as Chagcharan), a banking system is absent. The local conditions and environment limit any financial transactions. In order to take measures against fraud it is very important that few accounts (cash only) should be kept in the reliable banks (cash only) due to the possibility of bankrupt. The problems with the financial

system can directly influence the ability to achieve the stated operational objectives.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of quality management it is necessary to mention that the deployed unit requires a good quality of services. A different understanding of quality and reliability by the different parties requires that the deployed force maintain constant supervision during the process and not at the end of it. Several examples can be noted: In one case a provider of fuel delivered JP1 class fuel instead of JP8 to PRT base camp. This example only proves a requirement of supervision in all steps of the procurement process. A constant quantity check is also needed because of theft attempts. Another area of concern is human resources – the local interpreters and workers. Interpreters, of course, are one of the primary and essential tools for communication with the local community. The main issues regarding local interpreters are their loyalty and danger of espionage. Interpreters provided by local companies with NATO clearances are extremely expensive to hire. Additionally, it is often the case that after a period of time there will be pressure to raise workers' salaries. There are related issues concerning working with the local workforce. It is necessary to understand and foresee how and where to employ local workers. One of the ways to use them is in unqualified service areas. Locals are not usually familiar with reading technical specifications and a simple solution for that is to assign them an appropriate and simple task. Knowing all those nuances helps to solve problems in a future properly planning.

Summarizing the Host Nation Support (HNS) issues one needs to say that there are some great capabilities in local support, but at the same time one must note that there exist many limitations that requires very careful evaluation of where to employ HNS assets. A special cultural approach and understanding is needed, and one must adjust thinking about expectations.

When analyzing the Lithuanian Combat Service Support (CSS) experience of deployments some lessons learned can be illustrated. Real CSS demands appeared when PRT was deployed to Afghanistan. In 2005 Lithuanian National Support Element (NSE) was introduced. The NSE gradually grew up, and since 2008 has become responsible for sustainment of all units deployed in the Afghanistan. The logisticians' involvement in operational planning from the early stages showed that all decisions must be coordinated in time. For example, in establishing first PRT from NATO proposal until the initial deployment five months passed. In deploying to

the theatre of operations full operational capability (FOC) required an additional four months. It proved that necessary to evaluate all issues in short period of time. Due to time constraints on planning, logisticians must be involved in planning and reconnaissance parties and always deploy logisticians first, and it must be done far in advance and with enabling parties.

Experience showed that dealing with logistical issues depended not only on planning time constraints, but also on understanding the future duration of the mission. In initial stage of deployment in Afghanistan the PRT base required far less land than it has now. Today (2010) the PRT “Whiskey” base has expanded to more than 100 000 m<sup>2</sup> and still needs to be expanded due to additional capabilities, safety regulation requirements and so on. It has to be considered that it is only a company plus size element with some additional capabilities. This factor is very important when planning future operations and deployments. Also, it is important to revise all requirements in having supplies deployed on the ground. Recommendations should outline the choice between “nice to have” and operational needs. Every extra capability requires extra m<sup>2</sup>.

Managing the camp for a long period of time required additional attention towards field services such as waste management, laundry, showers and salvage. Field services are not given by nature. They have to be developed, and it should be noted that they are among most expensive cost drivers for all operations. Services must be maintained and quality kept to reasonable standards because, otherwise troop morale will shatter.

The Lithuanian logistics experience in developing, sustainment and maintaining a base shows that one of the ways to receive necessary needs in that case is request via Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). As an example of this the Meal Ready to Eat (MRE) can be used. Lithuanian-produced MREs were widely used in the Lithuanian (European) environment, but they were not suitable for operational environment in the Afghanistan. The problem was that the temperature varied much—from very high to very low. The United States- produced MREs were most suitable in this case, and they were ordered through ACSA. Another lesson was learned about MRE consumption time. It was discovered that it is not recommended to use MREs for the troops for *more* than for 14 days due to the possible health problems and morale issues.

Additional lessons were learned about material readiness and equipment. The bottom line is that in the operational environment the equipment and armament must be reliable and durable. The problems that occurred the most with the support equipment were:

- Air conditioning systems for Communication and Information Systems (CIS) and for infrastructure are critical;
- Impact of temperate ranges especially on the Water Purification Unit (WPU) equipment and power generators;
- Due to JP8 fuel class use twice as much intensive routine maintenance is needed for the equipment piece;
- Non-military vehicles such as Toyotas proved a very reliable means of transportation and ensured a “soft footprint” posture in the area of operation.

In summarizing the Lithuanian CSS experience we can underline some primary lessons that were learned. Use logisticians from the very beginning of the planning phase and include them into the early reconnaissance teams, and deploy them within advance party. Bilateral agreements to ensure supply, movement and transportation (M&T) are critical throughout the operation. Field services are not granted by nature. Additional expenses must be planned for in advance. In addition to knowing the operational environment, and with acting various agencies, can contribute a lot to solving critical logistical problems that could not be solved by our own means. As an example we can use the ACSA. The ability to use all these capabilities strengthens and ensures a more reliable and sustainable logistical system.

The situational complexity requires the involvement of all combat functions and brings the requirement to look into the lessons learned from the Command and Control (C2) perspective on the operational and strategic levels. Certain aspects should be taken into account while analyzing Lithuania involvement in development of the Ghowr province from 2005 on. The perspective of five years brings us new lessons. These lessons were analyzed in Baltic Defence College, Joint Command and General Staff Course Individual Study Paper<sup>21</sup> and findings will be presented below.

The coordination of the military and the civilian elements in a PRT is vital for success in the area of operations (AOO) and in the capital. Monthly joint meetings between Ministry of Defence Joint Headquarters, the Ministry of



Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior have been introduced in order to better synchronize activities and to speed up decision-making. This level of coordination also helps the forces to achieve jointness and comprehensiveness in order to reach the best possible result. It is the best possible way what one can synchronize all the best possible efforts in the PRT AOO, especially in this environment where we have deferent actors that belong to different agencies in terms of command and control. Since the PRT directly reports to Regional Command “West” and ISAF HQ, sometimes it was helpful to stress some things from the capital’s perspective by high level politicians, or officers. It is vital to coordinate all institutional work not only in Lithuania, but also with other troop-contributing countries and with the Afghanistan authorities as well. All have to be on the “same agenda” in order to reach the best possible results.

An illustration of good interagency coordination in the field can be seen in the 3 September 2009 *“Description of Regulations for interaction between the Military and Civilian Element participating in the activities of the Lithuanian-Led Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Ghowr Province of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.”* The regulations are between two main actors: the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).<sup>22</sup> It is a perfect example of better interagency coordination between the two main actors operating on ground. Lithuania now has representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives from the Ministry of Interior actively working in the PRT. This is the national contribution to the operation and also a challenge. In addition, the higher level foreign institutions can be engaged in terms of attracting funds for the Reconstruction and Development efforts in Ghowr province, and also in terms of bringing the Afghan National Security Forces to PRT AOO.

Due to those reasons and to the current situation in Afghanistan, the Lithuanian National Strategy towards Afghanistan was issued. It clearly states that “Lithuania contributes to the international efforts in Afghanistan in an endeavour to enhance national and international security and strengthen NATO <...> The Strategy defines Lithuania’s engagement in Afghanistan.”<sup>23</sup>

This document shows importance of interagency coordination in the field. In recent document PRT lessons learned were shared with Canada, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the UK and the US. Lithuania had the opportunity to share this experience. “The Lithuanians have taken seriously the ability to have a continuous presence in Ghowr with little disruption to deployment rotations. Both the Foreign Ministry officials and the military share the same

six month tour. The soldiers and the civilians chosen to go to Afghanistan have constant interaction prior to their deployment. They attend lectures, country briefs, and updates on ongoing PRT projects. For example, members of the current PRT who are in Vilnius for a vacation will visit the training PRT team to talk about the current environment in Chaghcharan. Multinational partners forming part of the military security team will also come to Vilnius for two to three weeks of training at some point during the six-month training cycle prior to deployment. Both the civilians and military members participate in team-building exercises to ensure everyone knows one another prior to arrival in Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> The integration of civilians into the PRT training in the early stages of the deployment is important in order to avoid future misunderstandings during operations.<sup>25</sup> Soldiers are introduced to what civilian counterparts are doing in the AOO, and visa versa. In addition, allies and future participants in PRT operations are involved in pre-mission training as well. It proved helpful during the operation for reaching the best possible on ground in a timely manner.

The selection of personnel for the PRT is vital. Especially important is selection of those persons who coordinate and build relationship with their Afghan counterparts. It is very easy to lose respect and mutual understanding. Intelligence, high dedication, patience is required. Officers with previous mission experience (preferably in this region) best suited for those tasks. Friendship and trust must be respected. A person from the Western world must clearly understand that being illiterate in this poor environment does not mean unintelligent.<sup>26</sup> Selection of officers is ongoing according to certain standards and experience. Nevertheless in the individual training period various NATO courses are planned for officers in order to have latest experience available --not only from future PRT AOO, but also from all ISAF AOR. COIN courses are planned in the NATO school. In those courses they have a period in which there is a current update on the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in ISAF AOO. Pre-mission training is constantly updated and conducted by experienced officers. Some of the officers from the latest PRT rotations are used in the training in order to share the best practices with newcomers. The regular after action report from the last PRT command group is also important for the new group before or during pre-mission training. Future PRT (upcoming) command group reconnaissance trips are planned in order to ensure the best possible situational awareness for the new group. The commander is also to be included in weekly update joint interagency meetings in Lithuanian Armed Forces Joint Headquarters.<sup>27</sup>

Command Post Exercises (CPX) are followed by Field Training Exercises (FTX). These give exercises present accurate conditions and save resources and assure the best training results. In the CPX a computer simulator is being used and the staff and key subunit commanders are involved. Since the staff core element is being augmented by personnel from other units, early integration is important. The future PRT commanding officer can focus himself on HQ training. This is purely an exercise without troops on ground, so tactical pauses and time jumps are possible. These exercises with thorough After Action Reviews (AAR) allow the deployed forces to achieve the best possible results in training. The Field Training Exercises (FTX) concentrate more on the subordinate unit live training that involves role players. This is where the PRT commander can focus on manoeuvre element training. In pre-mission training heavy stress is put on dealing with the Afghan National Security Forces elements and their involvement in the operation. They are even part of the role play in the Field Training Exercises (FTX). Even though the Afghan National Security Forces are not present in the Area of Operations (AOO) --they are included in training as well.<sup>28</sup>

A second major theme is ensuring flexibility in adapting the unit structure according to the operational environment requirements. Due to the climate conditions in Afghanistan, fighting in winter time is minimal to low level. The fight is ongoing only in the Southern regions (RC S AOO). Insurgents from the mountains return to the valleys to spend the winter, to regroup and to prepare for another fighting season. Those conditions proved that a minimal manoeuvre element is enough to provide security in the mostly urban areas. Reservists from National Defence Volunteer forces can perform those tasks. It was sound decision by Land Forces Command in terms of economic use of the resources taken from the regular force. The National Defence Volunteer Forces received a chance to enhance their training in being deployed abroad. It also helped Lithuania to start building capable reserve force.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the regular forces were found more suitable to deal with some given tasks. They are even strengthened with additional manoeuvre element due to recent security threats.

When taking into account combat functions it is necessary to underline the importance of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and the coordination with Information Operations (INFOOPS). These issues were clearly understood by the Lithuanian military by their experience gained from peacekeeping deployments beginning in the 1990s. Active PSYOPS operations started to be better coordinated in the national capital level as

coordination with the ISAF HQ also improved. In 2008 additional Tactical PSYOPS Teams (TPTs) were introduced into the structure. Even more TPTs are planned. A broad INFO OPS campaign was begun and planned for half year periods. This attained very good results as Afghani public support towards PRT mission, and towards the ISAF mission, was raised from 30% up to 70%. The incidents of throwing stones at patrols, which was popular before, was reduced almost to zero. Propaganda against the PRT and local contractors and workers has not been seen almost for half of year. This was all achieved due to active and effective Presence, Posture and Profile (PPP) and a PSYOPS campaign. In order to achieve those effects the selection of the PSYOPS personnel is another important issue. These slots must be filled with professionals and not randomly selected personnel. Another important factor is that regular PRT soldiers must receive at least basic PSYOPS training, because many times soldiers on spot have to deal with this as the experts are absent.<sup>30</sup>

Another important functional area for lessons learned is combat engineering. The Counter Improvised Explosive Ordnance Disposal (C-IED) capability needs to be introduced into PRT structure as well. Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) threats have to be neutralized immediately because of threat to PRT personnel and also show to the locals that the force is capable of reacting in time. IEDs especially affect the Afghan National Police (ANP) activities, because they are most vulnerable to such threats as they are a soft target. Their possible fear has a negative impact on morale.

Lithuania has learned many lessons since it took this challenge to serve in Ghowr Province as its area of operations (AOO). It took time to reach a comprehensive understanding of what was required to succeed in this area-- not only at the tactical level, but also at the strategic level as well. The main message is that Lithuania managed to integrate a variety of different expertise and bring various actors to the table in order to effectively solve some highly complex issues in a modern conflict.

## Conclusions

This article analyzed a time period divided into three stages and reviewed the ongoing Lithuanian deployment experience since the re-establishment of independence and the creation of the armed forces. These development stages of the armed forces were in line with the deployment experience. International commitments and deployments also helped the Lithuanian

forces to gain valuable deployment experience and this, in turn, furthered Lithuania's acceptance into the NATO Alliance.

It is clear that the ability to find, analyze and understand one's nation's own lessons and methods, and to adapt them for future use, offers some major possibilities for finding a way ahead in the future development of the armed forces. These lessons learned from deployments not only contribute to Lithuania's capability to conduct the homeland defence, but they also provide useful information for the international security community. The Lithuanian Armed Forces became stronger, became more self confident and created improved systems and procedures because of the lessons learned in deployments. These lessons ensuring a steady approach along the path to meet the defined defence and foreign policy goals. Participation in international operations had a major impact on the development of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. With the growing Lithuanian contribution to international operations, the operational experience and understanding of the operational environment grew as well.

Finally, the development of the armed forces and the international acceptance of these forces directly contributed to the prestige of the armed forces and in the eyes in the Lithuanian society. Current statistics clearly show that the Lithuanian society supports their armed forces with a more than 60% support rate.<sup>31</sup> It is very important to have strong public support in today's society.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.president.lt/en/press\\_center/press\\_releases/u.\\_s.\\_president\\_obama\\_the\\_strength\\_and\\_unity\\_of\\_lithuanian\\_people\\_demonstrated\\_20\\_years\\_ago\\_continues\\_to\\_inspire\\_us\\_today.html](http://www.president.lt/en/press_center/press_releases/u._s._president_obama_the_strength_and_unity_of_lithuanian_people_demonstrated_20_years_ago_continues_to_inspire_us_today.html). White House, Washington, US, 8 March, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Gintautas Surgailis, *Rusijos kariuomenės išvedimas* (Vilnius, Lietuvos karo akademija, 2005) p. 200

<sup>3</sup> Krašto apsaugos ministerijos Tarptautinių ryšių departamento informacija (May 2008), p. 12

<sup>4</sup> <http://senas.kam.lt/index.php/en/73964/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://senas.kam.lt/index.php/en/73964/>

<sup>6</sup> Krašto apsaugos ministerijos Tarptautinių ryšių departamento informacija (May 2008), p. 12

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nato.int/invitees2004/lithuania/defence.htm>

<sup>8</sup> „Baltic deployment“, seminar conducted in BDCOL, presented by maj. A. Purlys, LTU Joint HQ J5 Land Ops officer

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bdc.col.ee/fileadmin/docs/bdreview/04bdr100.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.lka.lt/index.php/lt/114750/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://senas.kam.lt/index.php/en/134748/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://senas.kam.lt/index.php/lt/71046/>

<sup>13</sup> [http://kariuomene.kam.lt/en/structure\\_1469/logistics/history\\_1421.html](http://kariuomene.kam.lt/en/structure_1469/logistics/history_1421.html)

<sup>14</sup> [http://kariuomene.kam.lt/en/structure\\_1469/logistics/structure\\_of\\_the\\_logistics\\_command/movement\\_control\\_centre.html](http://kariuomene.kam.lt/en/structure_1469/logistics/structure_of_the_logistics_command/movement_control_centre.html)

<sup>15</sup> „Baltic Deployment“—A Seminar conducted in BDCOL. Presentation by Maj. A. Purlys, LTU Joint HQ J5 Land Ops officer

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.ebiblioteka.lt/resursai/Mokslai/LKA/KAM\\_15%20metu\\_lt-08.pdf](http://www.ebiblioteka.lt/resursai/Mokslai/LKA/KAM_15%20metu_lt-08.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Krašto apsaugos ministerijos Tarptautinių ryšių departamento informacija (May 2008), p. 12

<sup>18</sup> Krašto apsaugos ministerijos Tarptautinių ryšių departamento informacija (May 2008), p. 12

<sup>19</sup>

[http://www.kam.lt/en/news\\_1098/news\\_archives/news\\_archive\\_2007/news\\_archive\\_2007\\_-\\_09/nato\\_high-](http://www.kam.lt/en/news_1098/news_archives/news_archive_2007/news_archive_2007_-_09/nato_high-ranking_official_devote_attention_to_ghowr_development.html)

[ranking\\_official\\_devote\\_attention\\_to\\_ghowr\\_development.html](http://www.kam.lt/en/news_1098/news_archives/news_archive_2007/news_archive_2007_-_09/nato_high-ranking_official_devote_attention_to_ghowr_development.html)

<sup>20</sup> „Baltic Deployment“—A Seminar conducted in BDCOL. Presentation by LTC. S. Mundris, LTU MOD Defence staff, transformation officer.

<sup>21</sup> Anglickis Giedrius *Counterinsurgency theory. Development and employment of Local National Security Forces importance in modern COIN warfare*, (2010, BDCOL, Tartu)

<sup>22</sup> Order, „Description of Regulations for interaction between The Military and Civilian Element participating in The Activities of The Lithuanian-Led Provincial Reconstruction Team in The Ghowr Province of The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan“ (Lithuanian Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009)

<sup>23</sup> Resolution „Strategy for Engagement of The Republic of Lithuania in The International Community's Activities in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2009-2013“ (Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2009) p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Perito Robert, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations* (USA, Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School, 2008), pp. 44-45

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Col. Almantas Leika, former PRT commander, 14 Jan 2010

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Col. Almantas Leika, former PRT commander, 14 Jan 2010

<sup>27</sup> „Lithuanian PRT experience and lessons learned“, LTC A. Siuparis Tartu, Estonia, BDCOL 9 Mar 2010

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Col. Almantas Leika, former PRT commander, 14 Jan 2010

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Col. Almantas Leika, former PRT commander, 14 Jan 2010

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Maj. Darius Antanaitis, former PRT PSYOPS officer, 07 Jan 2010

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.kam.lt/lt/naujienos\\_874/pasitikejimas\\_krasto\\_apsauga\\_890.html](http://www.kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/pasitikejimas_krasto_apsauga_890.html)

## The Afghanistan Mission's Benefits for Estonia

*By Maj. Gunnar Havi*

### Introduction

After the period of the “First Independence” Estonia was under the Soviet Union’s occupation for fifty years. All state defence systems the an independent that Estonia had possessed, including the Armed Forces, the Defence League, the Border Guard and Police, were destroyed by the Soviet Union. A large number of people were murdered or deported to the region of Siberia. The existing model of civil society was destroyed. Yet the peoples’ will to restore independence was strong, and at the beginning of 1990s the Estonians’ attempt to restore their independence finally became a reality. Estonia started to build up all necessary institutions of a state. Next year Estonia will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of national independence.

The Armed Forces become an important and equal partner in the process of building up an independent nation. The Estonian Armed Forces began to build its own units when independence came. The first stage for the creation of the Estonian Armed Forces was the period 1991 -1994. On 31 October of 1991 the main Headquarters was established and the first military units in early 1992.<sup>1</sup> To ensure a properly trained military an officer’s course system was created. Finland provided a great deal of help in this regard. Finland created special courses for Estonian officers and NCOs, and many Finnish officers were sent to Estonia to teach and train military personnel. These were the first contacts with foreign Western military representatives, the building of normal relationships helped development process and progress. Any kind of military assistance was valuable and counted for much in this development stage.

After the Soviet units left Estonia in 1994 the Western military support has had considerable strategic importance. Estonia already was cooperating with many countries to get equipment needed for the armed forces. The Estonian forces started to look into the possibility of creating military alliances with neighbouring countries and create a means to join with NATO. Through this process Estonia could also gain the experience and

training and education to create an effective defence system and armed forces. One potential approach to build up the Estonian forces was to participate in international operations. In the first part of this article I will look at the international military operations where Estonia has participated because these experiences were vital to obtain the needed experience for the Armed Forces and also to train them and to obtain the right equipment. In the second part of the article I will consider the Afghanistan mission and look at what the Estonian Armed Forces can get from the Afghanistan mission. This will consider primarily the experience in fighting insurgency and the counterinsurgency perspective.

### **The importance of international military operations for Estonia**

Since 1995 the Estonian defence forces have participated in NATO, EU, UN and coalition-led operations. Estonian soldiers have served in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan. The first international operation started in 1995 and a platoon-sized unit--ESTPLA – 1 --was deployed to Croatia and served with the UNPROFOR mission.<sup>2</sup> Pre-mission training was conducted in Denmark. The main tasks during the operation were to collect information, conduct observation and man checkpoints, conduct patrols, and conduct movement control to include weapons movement control. In April 1996 Estonia began its international mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From December 1996 to June 1997 there was an Estonian Company from the Baltic Battalion under the UNIFIL forces in the UN mission in Southern Lebanon. For the first time Estonia deployed in international operations with a company-sized unit. The unit's tasks in Lebanon were to protect civilians and to secure a weapons-free zone.

The Estonian Defence Forces have been participating in different operations in Kosovo since 1999, when the ESTPATROL-1 (as a MSU unit of KFOR) began there. The last unit (ESTPATROL-14) finished its service period on Kosovo in December 2006. The Baltic Reconnaissance Squadron BALTSQN, manned in rotation by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, also served as a part of the Danish Battalion. The rotation of the units was begun in Kosovo on March 2003. Since then, Estonia has contributed a company three times. The goal of the NATO-led KFOR operation was to establish and maintain a secure environment in Kosovo, including peace, public safety and civil order, while supporting the activities of the UN UNMIK mission.



Since the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2003 Estonia has participated in the US-led Operation “Iraqi Freedom” as a member of the Multi-National Force-Iraq. Estonia, like many other countries that participated in the alliance, made a contribution to assure the security of Iraq at the request of the legally elected and internationally recognized Iraqi Government.

Currently Estonia contributes to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. The task of NTM-I is to contribute to the training the Iraqi Security Forces to a level that will allow the Iraqi Government to ability to ensure stability and security in the country. NTM-I is involved in training the medium and higher-level personnel of the Iraqi Security Forces by providing training and advice. The NATO training mission in Iraq focuses mainly on training, equipment and technical assistance; they are avoiding direct involvement in combat operations.

Since November 2006, Estonian soldiers have been participating in Afghanistan. The majority of the Estonian units are stationed in the Helmand province, Southern Afghanistan, as a part of the UK Helmand Task Force. The Estonian infantry company in Helmand represents a manoeuvre unit with considerable capabilities, participating in combat operations against anti-government armed groups, in particular the Taliban, alongside the UK and Afghan units. The national support element of the Estonian contingent, providing logistic services and taking care of repair of technical equipment, is also based in Helmand. The service of the Estonian Explosive Ordnance Disposal team (EOD), located in Helmand, has been successful in the disposal of unexploded mines and explosives in Afghanistan that remain in abundance as a result of successive wars. Estonian staff officers participate in both headquarters: in the HQ Regional Command South which is located in Kandahar and the HQ ISAF in Kabul. The KAIA Cross Service Team in Kabul international airport is also present in the capital of Afghanistan. The main task of the ground team is to provide ground service to aircraft.<sup>3</sup>

All this mission experience had been important to the development of the Estonian forces and many of those officers and NCOs who had been deployed became training instructors. In addition, Estonia has deployed staff officers to different headquarters, and medics, engineers, reconnaissance teams, international observers, and members of the National Support Element have served in a variety of places. Through these

personnel deployments Estonia had been able to learn a great deal from the NATO partners and how to operate with them. It was seen that lessons learned from earlier opportunities to participate in international operations allowed the Estonians and allied forces to identify gaps in doctrine and in the military education system. As the Estonian commitments to the overseas missions progressed, the rotation of officers and NCOs started. Usually officers who came back from missions were assigned to higher positions or to one of the various training centres to ensure that the Estonian forces would become better prepared through the sharing of the experience of the soldiers who had been deployed.

In training it was noted that the English language skills were an important issue. One is not able to do the job today, especially at the commanding level or staff level, if one does not have adequate language skills. Today Estonia has two language centres in armed forces, one in the National Military Academy and one in the Peacekeeping Operation Centre. Another lesson learned from the peacekeeping deployments was about the equipment requirements for modern operations. The Estonian forces have improved their weapons, communication systems and vehicles. For example, the APC that the army currently has is much more capable, with additional armour to protect soldiers and strengthened axles because of the difficult ground in Afghanistan, and a counter IED chumming system, the “IRIS,” made in Estonia. Also the Estonian forces mine finders have been developed in Estonia and are now much effective.

Another important issue is logistics. In the beginning of participation in international operations the small size units, such as platoons, that were sent out did not require much logistical support. At that time Estonia was mostly supported by Coalition forces. In 1997 the logistical Battalion was created, but it was soon was clear that the Estonians needed something more to effectively supply equipment, manage it and maintain and sustain it. In 2002 the Logistical Centre was created.

The Estonian army had previously no operational experience of participation in international operations together with foreign partners, and no experience in pre-deployment, preparation and sustainment. Now we can say that Estonian Armed Forces have learned much and changed, progressed and grown. These experiences and the knowledge that Estonia has gained from international operations has been extensive and very beneficial.

## The Afghanistan mission

There is always the question as to why hundreds of Estonian soldiers bear arms in foreign lands—is this really needed? This was especially the case when our soldiers started to go Afghanistan once again, because many of us do remember the 1979-1989 Afghanistan War when young men, many of them from Estonia, fought a war in an alien land wearing alien colors. Today, once again, Estonian soldiers are present in Afghanistan. Has history been repeated? There is no fear of this. Instead of coming as occupiers, the members of the Defence Forces of today are supporters of the local population in operation areas. This is the political answer. At another level we can note that our soldiers today are also much more protected, better equipped and trained. I can say that, because I was in Afghanistan in 2007, but I remember when during my conscript time in Soviet army when we were waiting for two weeks to go Afghanistan in 1989. All personnel, equipment and transport were ready, even the train was waiting us in rail station (I can compare what kind of equipment we had during the Soviet time and what kind we had in 2007—the differences are huge). But then we received new orders and continued with our normal conscript service. But I have some friends who had been served during the Soviet time in Afghanistan and we have discussed the Afghanistan issue quite a lot. There are big differences, but parents are always nervous when their sons or even daughters should to such dangerous places as Afghanistan. Yet, to be honest, the Afghanistan international mission gives the Estonian Armed Forces a lot of experience.

Estonia is a small state, only 45 227 sq km, with a population of approximately 1.3 million. According to Estonian Defence Strategy, Estonia has a total defence concept<sup>4</sup>. What does it mean? It means that Estonia will defend own country with all means. This is also reason why Estonia still has a conscription system although most of other countries, including neighbouring Latvia and Lithuania, have professional armies. Estonia has a mobilization system and for this reason Estonia needs a conscript system. Today Estonia is a member of European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This is important, but sometimes it feels that Estonians expect too much from those organizations. In my opinion, Estonia should not forget about its own effort and the different means to hold sovereignty and freedom. Estonia has regular forces, but is they enough to protect Estonian independence? This is the reason why Estonia needs to think also about different options to wage guerrilla tactics or to

conduct an underground resistance where the civilian population can participate. Of course, this is not the first priority of national defence, but it is an important component. The biggest problem here is that Estonia is not able to react if such preparations have not been established already in peace time. In discussing armed fighters organized into guerrilla units, I can say that in 1990's the Estonian armed forces trained soldiers how to fight as guerrillas, and then the Estonian Border Guard took over this training. The system worked very well, but once Estonia became a NATO member in 2004 the Ministry of Defence stopped financing guerrilla training in the Border Guard. Without money there was no chance to continue and the Border Guard Education Centre stopped training.<sup>5</sup> Currently, Estonia has different military and non-military organizations, but no one does training for the guerrilla warfare and there is no support system to develop guerrilla tactics. Yet Estonian soldiers are currently in Afghanistan and they get training and experience from a real world guerrilla war.

As already noted, currently Estonia has in Afghanistan a company size infantry unit and an addition mortar platoon, engineers, and an EOD team, HUMINT, a national support element and medical personnel (at the company level and also in the hospital with a surgical team). On one hand, different units and teams have had good opportunities to cooperate and support each other in real situations. For example, the mortar platoon can support manoeuvre unit when they participate in combat operations against anti-government armed groups, or it can support manoeuvre units during the escort operation. When Estonia had operations for longer than ten days the Estonian logistics unit from the NSE, together with manoeuvre unit, provided logistic services and took care of repairs of technical equipment. Of course, medics and the EOD team were in place to support manoeuvre units.

On other hand, Estonian Forces have gained an understanding of insurgency and counter insurgency tactics and experience. For example, the EOD team has gained experience with IEDs. First of all, the Estonian Forces can find out what kind of tactics their adversaries, such as where the enemy might place the IED and what kinds of IEDs are likely to be used and under what circumstances they might be employed. When I was in Afghanistan we found mostly metallic pressure plate IEDs where the explosive was composed of old mortar mines. Later the plastic pressure plates became common. Currently, it seems that adversary lacks old mines and for that reason they are using agricultural fertilizer as an explosive

component. Here we can see how the adversary develops his own knowledge and constantly tried to develop new means against us. The important point is that the adversary is also flexible. Not only are they proficient with IEDs, but they are flexible in other ways. There is much to learn from the adversaries about insurgency and counterinsurgency, and our forces are doing just that. .

## Conclusion

The experiences of hundreds of soldiers who have participated in operations have been successfully used for the ongoing development of the Defence Forces. People serving in the army represent the most valuable resource of the Estonian Defence Forces. Therefore, it is important to involve as many soldiers with real operational experience as possible. Estonia benefits from people with operational experience, whether they are active members of the Defence Forces or reservists.

Estonia's security is closely linked to developments taking place in the international security environment. Participation in international military operations will directly contribute to strengthening our own security – by helping other countries we can be sure that once needed, the allies will help Estonia. The political reliability and military experiences that have been acquired during the operations are invaluable for the purpose of defending the state of Estonia. No small state like Estonia, even though it is a member of world strongest military organization, should ever take its security for granted. Estonia must learn from its own history how to be prepared for guerrilla warfare and, by this means, improve its own security posture.

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<sup>1</sup> Rahvusväeosade sünd (Creating National Units), at <http://www.mil.ee/?menu=kaitsevagi&sisu=kvaja1>, accessed on 12 June 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Rahvusvahelised operatsioonid (International operations), at <http://www.mil.ee/?menu=operatsioonid&sisu=operatsioonid6>, accessed on 12 June 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Rahvusvahelised operatsioonid (International operations), at <http://operatsioonid.kmin.ee/index.php?page=2&>, accessed on 12 June 2010.

<sup>4</sup> "Eesti Sõjalise Kaitse Strateegia" (Estonian Defence Strategy), at <http://www.mod.gov.ee/?op=body&id=330>, accessed on 12 June 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Kohv, (2005), p.1.

## Baltic Defence College High Command Studies Course 2009 Prize Paper

### An Ideal, Resistance to the Ideal, and Disappointment: The Thwarted Birth of the *Armée de l'air* in the 1930s

By *Lieutenant Colonel Christophe Taczanowski*

Describing the slow emergence of a modern autonomous air force from the beginning is a challenge for a short essay. In order to make this a coherent study I will identify the effects of external factors on force and doctrine development through the exploration of three themes set out in the Government directive of March 27, 1933, marking the establishment of the *armée de l'air*<sup>\*</sup>, an act endorsed by the National Military Committee.

This study will first explore the roots of this new military force, the foundations of its doctrine, identify some of the main lessons from the Great War, and outline the process of developing airmen before an independent air ministry was founded.

This study will then analyze the thinking of the main actors who built the French Air force and the resistance they faced from the government, senior military officers, major industrial interests and even the French society up to the period of the "Phony War" that began in September 1939.

Finally, this work will discuss the role of the airmen themselves and their inability to promote a credible air doctrine and service identity. This work will try to identify some lesson learned from the conflict of the airpower supporters with their opponents and the effect of a dream of independent airpower delayed. There are lessons from the past that are relevant for the present.

The thwarted birth of French Air Force led to a force that was largely unprepared to fight in the skies over France in 1940. The poor state of the force was the result of an indecisive air policy, the lack of a long-term

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\* This study will use equally the French designation "*armée de l'air*" or its English translation: "French Air Force."

strategy, a doctrine that swing between an emphasis on autonomous missions and cooperation between the ground and naval forces.

Doctrinal uncertainty and incessant-- and very Gallic-- frictions between the civilian policy makers and the industrial or military actors' users are still rightly considered to be the primary causes of the inability of French airmen to deal effectively with the Nazi invaders in 1940. The lesson that comes from these eternal factors that prevailed in the interwar period is that the airmen of French had been able to build a military force, but without any clear political guidance.

Ultimately, the airmen themselves bear much of the responsibility for their performance in 1940 because of their inability to create effective operational structures and doctrines. These were core reasons why the French Air Force failed to become an effective third force component and play an effective role the role in national defence and grand strategy. The enthusiasm of the airmen and readiness to make the supreme sacrifice could not make up for such shortcomings.



Figure 1. Advertising poster for *Aéropostale* Company.

Source: <http://www.boutique.aero/>

## 1. The quest for identity and the time of dreams

In March 1933, the dream of the first generation of French airmen finally seemed to be realized. A true air force had emerged. It had been driven by technological advances that had, over several decades, allowed airplanes to fly ever higher, faster and farther.

## 1.1 A force born too late

What factors explain the late birth of the Air force as the third component of the French armed forces component at a time that the influence of airpower force had been far greater in other nations?

### *The indolence of victory*

At the beginning of the interwar period, the French people wanted peace and, for a long time, enjoyed the torpor of victory. The post-war hope of reconciliation with Germany dismissed any priority for armament plans. The largest air force in the world started degenerating into a fatal lethargy, its attention wandering to popular meetings and development of intercontinental airlines around the colonies. It was a time of the *Aéropostale* legend and its modern flying aces, whose exploits captivated the public. Top government leaders such as Raoul Dautry reflected the thinking of the 1930's: "France shows enough buds full of promises that we have reasons to be proud and hopeful"<sup>1</sup>.

The High Command was finally ready to renew the aerial fleet, but without taking into account technical innovations or doctrinal considerations. The High command's approach to military aeronautics was often characterized by passivity and blindness, and an absence of progress. In comparison to the dynamic developments in neighbouring states, the French situation marks a real setback.

### *The fear of airpower*

The first spectacular air missions over Germany had impressed the people. But they had also instilled a sense of terror. Under the widespread feeling of post war pacifism the doctrine of future air war inspired by Italian General Giulio Douhet were highly controversial issues for the airmen and the public. The strategic bombing of cities to carried out to demoralize the population, the wartime raids against Karlsruhe, and the German reprisals had been so devastating in the mind of the public that the French government had rejected this mode of action before seriously considering it. Thus the military high command was denied any flexibility in this matter. Once Douhet's theories were applied to more modern equipment, which included the spectre of air to ground chemical bombardment, such a great



fear was aroused in the public that the advocates of the air power found themselves systematically muzzled.

### *The dream of the League of Nations*

Air Minister Pierre Cot's first major problem to solve was the question of how to modernize the military air tool when that he had defended as beneficial for collective defence in the Geneva disarmament talks in November 1932. Dramatic developments in aeronautics gave encouraged some to think that there might be an air force that was permanently organized under the auspices of the League of Nations and that force would not deny nations their sovereignty in territorial and air defence. This humanist trend wanted to banish the spectre of aerial bombing by entrusting modern instruments of the Apocalypse to a collective defence scheme.

Cot has fought in the Great War as an artillery officer and ardently desired, along with many millions of Europeans, to never again know such slaughter again. However, he was also aware of the warning signs of the rise of fascism. In 1933, the dream of a peaceful future died when the faltering Weimar Germany entrusted its destiny to Adolf Hitler.

### **1.2 A quest for identity**

Still considered as the fifth arm of the Army, military aviation in 1928 was nothing more than a collection of components which were not clearly or consistently defined. The first air units assigned to the air staff's command prefigured the emancipation of airmen from the Army ground soldiers, but at that date the airmen still had to contend with a system that included land forces cooperation aviation, carrier aviation, naval cooperation aviation (at sea and land based) and autonomous naval aviation!

### *Air power as a cooperation force*

During the Great War, aviation had gradually shifted from a passive role (observation and adjustment of artillery) to an active one (air combat and bombing). By striking in depth in the rear of the enemy or in key nodes of the enemy communications, the airplane could overturn the notion of a continuous front and could free itself from other players in the field of battle.

In the sky over Verdun, the concept of air dominance was developed by combining and concentrating resources that had previously been scattered and assigned to close support of ground troops. By creating an air division separate from the traditional closely bound army cooperation units, General Duval gives the air force its first identity.

However, the squadrons also tended to stick closely to the troops moving along at the pace of their artillery support. Still, technological advances had increased range of the aircraft and then the introduction of radio allowed the airmen to remain in contact with their brothers in arms on the ground while operating from bases well to the rear of the battle area. Such developments allowed the airmen the chance to develop their own culture.



**Fig. 2. Drawing published in *L'Humanité* (September 25,1928) illustrating the opposition of sea & landforces commanders to the creation of an independent military air command.**

Source: Jérôme de Lespinois (2003), *Entre Terre et Mer in Colonel Pierre le Goyet* (January 1969), *Evolution de la doctrine d'emploi de l'aviation française 1919 – 1939*, in *Revue d'Histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, n.79

### *Thwarted emancipation attempts*

Appointed the first French Air Minister in October 1928, Victor Laurent-Eynac immediately advocated an autonomous military aviation force. But

he had to contend with the reluctance of the land and sea commanders to allow such a thing. Creating a careful compromise, he allowed the army and navy the operational control of their ancillary aviation, but placed<sup>2</sup> all the other air forces under his organic authority, and that included research and technical support.

Laurent-Eynac had already explored a path to develop strategic forces, grouped in a general aviation reserve and operating parallel to the cooperation forces. He defended the capability of the military aviation force to operate in depth, while other force components stayed in direct contact with the enemy. Without referring to it, the minister had explicitly adopted one of the axioms of Douhet “resist on the ground to mass in the sky”<sup>3</sup>.

The lack of clear direction in the allocation of resources for the air reserve tended to reinforce the opposition of the army. This remained although the project in 1928 involved only a third of the air units and left 66% of the air flights available to land and sea commanders.



**Fig. 3. Officers wearing the first uniforms from the French air force at the beginning of the 1930s.**

Source: *Précis d'Histoire de l'aéronautique française* – CESA Paris. Photo credit: *Ministère de la Défense – armée de l'air*.

### *Uncertain operational structures*

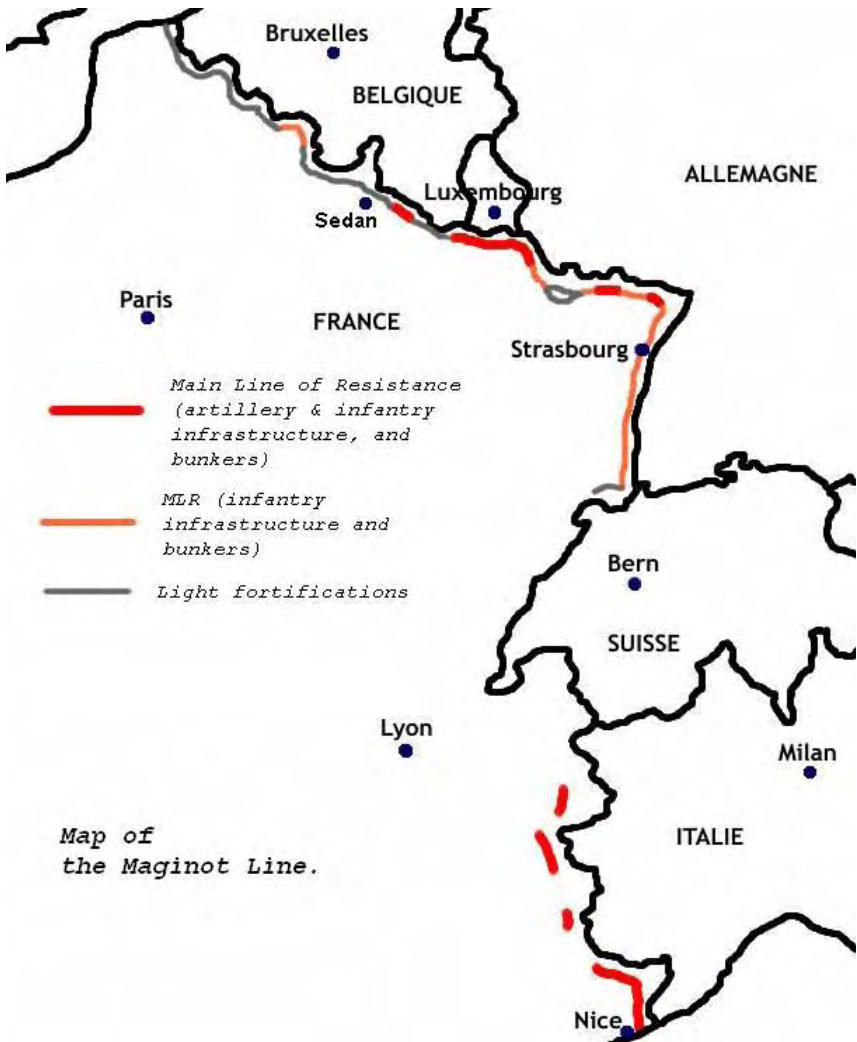
The years 1928-1933 mark the first attempt to streamline the operational organizational structures. In 1929, Laurent-Eynac restructured the major units of military aviation. The French aviation force was organized into three divisions (Metz, Paris and Tours) consisting of specialized units – air combat or bombing, or mixed units- fighter, observation and reconnaissance-- and also three mixed brigades (Dijon, Mayence, Lyon). On October 1, 1930 Laurent-Eynac gathered all the bomber regiments in the vicinity of Paris into one force as a means to provide identity and autonomy.

Nevertheless, the ambiguity persisted between the development of the air reserve force and the obligation to quickly respond to and conduct effective cooperation with the army and navy commanders. Paul Painlevé, Laurent-Eynac's successor, partially solved<sup>4</sup> the subordination between tactical units and organic chains of command. In terms of these command issues Pierre Cot's first success was to obtain a consensus on the founding decree of 1933 in which Article 1 stated that the *armée de l'air* will conduct independent air operations, would conduct air operations as part of combined operations with both the *armée de terre* and the *Marine*, and would also contribute to homeland defence. Meeting these three objectives was the fundamental concept behind the creation of the French Air Force.

In the early 1930s no one still imagined a clean war between gentlemen competing in the sky in chivalrous tournaments. But, although the abomination of air strikes against civilian people seemed unacceptable, France adopted a particular form of defensive Douhetism that allowed for retaliation<sup>5</sup> carried out under the direct control of government. This retaliation would be allowed if the German strategic bombers flew over the Maginot line to attack large cities with no other aim than to demoralize the population.

The traditional concept of defence at the borders, the double illusion of the Maginot Line and the League of Nations, will work against the initial goals of the French aviators. The word "independent" was considered pejorative, while the principle of the unity of command stood immutable<sup>6</sup>. This thinking was promoted by army officers who even refused to allow their airmen to use the common terms of "air combat" and "bombing" to describe their missions. These terms were replaced in the official military

literature by the peaceful-sounding and notably defeatist terms of "defence aviation" and "defence light aviation"<sup>7</sup>.



**Fig. 4. Map of the Maginot Line**

Source: <http://maginotmoselle.free.fr/construc/cartelignemaginot.htm>

## 2. From ideal to reality

The decline of French aviation in the years 1933-1939 was an aberration<sup>8</sup>. In fact, France possessed enthusiastic aviators and a couple of capable aircraft manufacturers. But the Third Republic was also bogged down and incapable of harnessing the national energies and capabilities. Political instability and governance without internal or external sustainable strategies left aeronautics to be abandoned and sacrificed on the altar of the only priority against fascist expansionism: defence at the borders.

In 1939, panicked by the imminence of a new conflict, policymakers and the military leaders sacrificed the immature Air Force by returning it to its original status, annihilated all of its independent command structures and relegating the French Air Force to their original army and navy cooperation missions. The historical drama of the "Forgotten Air Force"<sup>9</sup> resulted from multiple factors to include an inadequate national mobilization and too little effort towards rearmament. These actions, in turn, led to a series of unrealistic plans. The aviators themselves were unable to impose a credible air doctrine on the government that might have modernized the national war strategy.

### 2.1 Slow ministerial and industrial mobilization

#### *The late creation of the Air Ministry*

The French aeronautical scene was particularly divided. This was the logical consequence of the era of the aviation pioneers and of the competitions in which numerous entrepreneurs tried their luck in an economic sector in rapid development. A trend in favour of creating a Ministry of "integral air" existed in the late 1920s. But this favourable development met opposition from Maurice Bokanovsky, Minister of Trade and Industry. However, his death in a plane crash allowed the creation of an air ministry October 1928. Laurent-Eynac took charge immediately. He followed the logic of qualitative progress, a policy for developing prototypes designed to streamline the fleets of the five categories of users that were mostly civilians. So far, aeronautics was split between the Ministries of War (its 12th division commanded military aviation), of Sea, of Colonies, and of Public Works and Trade.

Intercontinental air routes to the colonies received the full support of state subsidies. The period of 1932 to 1933 saw the credits made available to

civilian aviation credits increased by 300% while the state funding devoted to aeronautical research was raised by only 25%. Cot would fail to reverse this investment strategy that, until 1937, was focused on commercial or prestige aviation.

### ***Restructuring and internal quarrels***

Pierre Cot wanted the military to take the lead on technical projects, but he had to contend with a poor organization and lack of understanding between military and civilian administrators. He first eliminated duplication that existed due to their being two air force departments dedicated to ground and sea commands. Then he promoted a functional joint approach by introducing the *Direction du Matériel Aérien Militaire* (DMAM), the *Direction du Personnel Militaire*, and finally the *Service Central des Travaux et Installations*<sup>10</sup>. These reforms boosted the Ministry, but tensions persisted, between the DMAM that was responsible for managing of industrial production, and the *Direction Générale Technique*<sup>11</sup> that was responsible for designing and evaluating prototypes.

On March 5, 1934, Cot replaced the DGT with a Department of aerial construction that was in charge of overseeing mass production. Reinforced by responsibility for equipment plans<sup>12</sup> the DMAM became a place of synergy between Air Ministry and the Air Force and was expected to orchestrate the renovation of the military air fleet.

### ***Industrial control***

The production strategy based on prototype development led to a fragmentation of research. The failure of *Aéropostale* on March 28, 1931 pushed Cot to reorganize the civilian aviation. Step by step, he aimed to build a handful of strong companies<sup>13</sup> grouped around *Air France*<sup>14</sup>. In the mid-1930s the industrial landscape was still too confused and the production rate too low to absorb the needs of entire aerial fleets. Some manufacturers impose exaggerated tariffs for their benefit, something described as “personal treatment worthy of millionaires”<sup>15</sup>. Cot denounced the “envelopes” circulating through the Commission for Aeronautics that was intended to obtain handsomely financed programs<sup>16</sup>. Cot ousted Blériot, Breguet and Renault from the system while he welcomed Marcel Bloch and Henry Potez, on whom he would base his industrial policy. An advocate of

state intervention, Cot would lead the nationalization efforts<sup>17</sup>. These were accepted by some manufacturers, such as Bloch, Potez and Dewoitine, who were allowed to administer the new national companies.

The nationalizations carried out all through the French armaments industry by the Popular Front had a decisive impact on the future and led to a revival of the industry and the development of modern infrastructure. But such a large enterprise would require more time than Germany would allow its neighbours.

## 2.2 Failure of rearmament initiatives

In 1933 the French air fleet in 1933 was outdated.<sup>18</sup> France had 4,300 aircraft, 300 less than the Soviets and a few less than Italians. In contrast, Germany, which officially had no military aviation, could already mobilize 600 aircraft<sup>19</sup>.



Fig. 5. Air France dans tous les ciels (Air France in all skies) Advertising poster.

Source: *Air France musée* website, at address <http://eshopping.airfrance.fr/>



### *The myth of the multi-purpose aircraft*

Preferring quality to numbers, Cot intended to renovate the French aircraft fleet with aircraft that could operate according to Douhet's strategic air war theories of Douhet and also still to conduct support operations per the national doctrine. Halving the budget for the research encouraged a manufacturing and design approach based upon open competition among guided by the technical specifications defined by DMAM.

The BCR<sup>20</sup> was part of the double logic of cost reduction and quality production. The multi-purpose aircraft concept fulfilled the wishes of those who demanded an aircraft to support joint operations as well as those who advocated independent air operations. This concept, however, demonstrated a lack of operational realism. The BCR aircraft was extremely vulnerable to modern fighters that could attack with 20mm gun at almost 400 km/h. The Amiot 140, Farman 420, Breguet 413 and others aircraft of the 6-7 tons class which lacked manoeuvrable defensive turrets would be replaced by the Potez 540 -- which shared all the weaknesses of the aircraft it replaced. The approximately 75 aircraft sent from Paris to participate in the war in Spain were blown away by flak and enemy fighters. The crews summarized the operational capabilities of BCR in one comment: "a flying coffin"<sup>21</sup> that was unable to survive in a modern aerial combat.

### *The government's slowness*

*La rue de Rivoli* (The Finance Ministry)<sup>22</sup> was also a traditional opponent of the Air Ministry. The government denounced the Air Ministry on June 30, 1933, criticizing it for "too many and poorly organized directives, nonexistent accounting, and amateurism."<sup>23</sup> Should we see in this assessment simply a lack of support, or was this a fair assessment by the government? Probably not the latter. The government's criticism seems to be a continuation of the army's fierce opposition to the emancipation of air power fought out in the carpeted corridors of power as Daladier acted simultaneously as the head of government and as minister of war.

Yet the German rearmament would push the government to vote the first credits to launch Plan I in July 1934 while the Doumergue government was also conducting a policy of deflation. The indecision of Parliament<sup>24</sup> was a second indirect barrier to equipment projects, as some of the aviation laws

considered in the Finance and Aeronautical Committees failed to find a consensus or even a place on the parliamentary agenda.



**Fig. 6. Picture of Potez 540**



**Fig. 7. Colour scheme of Potez 540**

Source: <http://www.avionslegendaires.net/>

The Third Republic's instability and government indecision were exogenous factors in setting French aviation on a course of stagnation despite some appropriate reforms initiated by Cotand Denain.

### ***The failure of air rearmament plans***

The BCR project was part of the first ambitious rearmament plan. But Plan I remained unfinished. The ordered aircraft<sup>25</sup> were never the right ones' for their time. The SPAD 510, Lioré-et-Olivier 46, Dewoitine 501 and other Bloch and Farman 221 bombers were designed according to updated

technical specifications, but the industry could deliver them only much later than scheduled or not at all. Denain's main error was his acquisition policy based on improved existing prototypes. But the aircraft produced were technically obsolete by the time they entered into active service. The new funding rules did not encourage more manufacturers to innovate and led the French industry to ignore some of the decisive technical advances.

**Table 1. Political instability in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic**

<b>Presidents of the Republic &amp; governments</b>	<b>Air Ministers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>13 June 1924 - 3 June 1931:</b> <b>Gaston Doumergue.</b> 15 governments, successively ruled by Édouard Herriot, Paul Painlevé (2 mandates), Aristide Briand (3 mandates), Edouard Herriot, Raymond Poincaré (2 mandates), Aristide Briand, André Tardieu, Camille Chautemps, André Tardieu, Théodore Steeg, Pierre Laval.</li> <li>• <b>13 June 1931 - 7 May 1932</b> (killed by a Russian immigrant): <b>Paul Doumer.</b> 3 governments, successively ruled by Pierre Laval (2 mandates) and André Tardieu.</li> <li>• <b>10 May 1932 - 10 July 1940</b> (establishment of the Vichy Regime): <b>Albert Lebrun.</b> 20 governments, successively ruled by Édouard Herriot, Joseph Paul-Boncour, Édouard Daladier, Albert Sarraut, Camille Chautemps, Édouard Daladier, Gaston Doumergue, Pierre-Étienne Flandin, Fernand Bouisson, Pierre Laval, Albert Sarraut, Léon Blum, Camille Chautemps (2 mandates), Léon Blum, Edouard Daladier (3 mandates), Paul Reynaud, Philippe Pétain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 September 1928 - 13 December 1930 : Victor André Laurent Eynac (usually named <b>Laurent-Eynac</b>)</li> <li>• 13 December 1930 - 27 January 1931 : <b>Paul Painlevé</b></li> <li>• 27 January 1931 - 20 February 1932 : <b>Jacques-Louis Dumesnil</b></li> <li>• 3 June 1932 - 29 January 1933 : <b>Paul Painlevé</b></li> <li>• 31 January 1933 - 9 February 1934 : <b>Pierre Cot</b></li> <li>• 9 February 1934 - 24 January 1936: <b>Victor Denain</b></li> <li>• 24 January 1936 - 4 June 1936 : <b>Marcel Déat</b></li> <li>• 4 June 1936 - 18 January 1938 : <b>Pierre Cot</b></li> <li>• 18 January 1938 - 21 March 1940 : <b>Guy La Chambre</b></li> <li>• 21 March 1940 - 16 June 1940 : <b>Laurent-Eynac</b></li> </ul>

Plan Q, adopted by Parliament on August 25, 1936, was to provide 250 new planes on a five-year basis and was supposed to enable industrialists to make long term investments and acquire machinery and tools. But the plan was completely inadequate for the need. Cot would not defend other intermediate plans because he was convinced that the industrial capacity could not support the equipment orders.

The German *Anschluss* of Austria accelerated political decision making of the Third Republic. A very ambitious Plan V for aviation was then funded.<sup>26</sup> Guy La Chambre chooses carefully to order 1060 aircraft already tested (Morane 405, 406 and Potez 63) while hoping to launch later new prototypes. History did not let time.

### 2.3 An inconsistent foreign policy

In the midst of the shifting political alliances of the Third Republic the Air Ministry sought to develop technical partnerships, first with the East and then, after the dangers of this option became clear, across the Atlantic Ocean. This hesitant approach was caused mainly by the desire to postpone for as long as possible negotiations with Germany<sup>27</sup>. Still, the delays ruined any coherent support from the Allies for France's rearmament plans.

#### *Opening up to the East*

The first visits of Cot were made to the USSR<sup>28</sup> in September 1933, then to Czechoslovakia. These visits did not help him win the acceptance of the supporters of the restored national armed forces. But, under the threat of fascism, the prospect of bilateral agreements to the East is no longer out of the question. While Moscow remained geographically distant, the dialogue with Prague supported the idea of a strategic air force with an international vocation, under the auspices of the League of Nations. This attests the awareness of the power of the air force that was capable to provide significant assistance to the heart of Europe, in the event of an attack from Germany.

Air power had become a tool of diplomacy and a pillar of the doctrinal developments expected by France's allies. But, paradoxically, the development of French airpower was slowed by the inertia of France's decision-makers. Cot's strategic vision embraced an alliance that included France<sup>29</sup>, the USSR, Poland, the countries of the Little Entente<sup>30</sup> and even Turkey. Meanwhile, the USSR proposed a defence agreement involving France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania<sup>31</sup>.

*To a transatlantic alternative*

By February 1935 British Prime Minister MacDonald offered an air pact between the Western powers to ensure mutual solidarity in case of aggression from Moscow or Berlin. England in particular feared a strong *Luftwaffe* with bombers that could threaten them directly. MacDonald's speech confused the dialogue that France was developing with Eastern Europe.

After Marcel Déat's<sup>32</sup> rather timid period in office, the Popular Front replaced Pierre Cot in his ministerial chair. Cot would have to start again from scratch in his search for foreign support. Germany, having remilitarized the Rhineland, was now able to counter any assistance by land from France to its allies in the East and this justified an emphasis on airpower as a counter. Although aware that the RAF would bring immediate assistance in the case of aggression, Cot argued that only the Russian industry could, in the long term, overcome a massive German attack. Cot's proposals would be rejected only after the purges of 1937 and the ousting of Marshal Tukhachevsky. This event shows just how impractical the Soviet option would have been.<sup>33</sup>



**Fig. 8. Curtiss Hawk 75A-2 from the GC II/5 Lafayette May 1940. Original drawing: Bertrand Brown alias Gaëtan Marie.**

Source: Copyright Aviation Profiles <http://www.gaetanmarie.com> – Authorization from the Author received by email on November 10, 2009.

After the painful experience of the Spanish war Cot doubted the ability of the national industries to quickly produce requested aircraft. So Cot initiated contacts overseas. These contacts were continued by La Chambre<sup>34</sup>. Due to various constraints on manufacturers in the USA and

regulations against the export of war materials, as well as the late date of the aircraft orders, the delivery of the was greatly hampered. The result of the hesitations to deal with both East and West combined with the delays in building up indigenous industrial capacities, and the failure of the successive rearmament plans amounted to an appalling situation. On September 3, 1939, when France and Great Britain declared war on Germany, the *armée de l'air* has only 1650 planes, of which only 350 fighters and 210 of the bombers faced the enemy to the east. This force would be reinforced by 400 British aircraft<sup>35</sup> and the first 200 American Curtiss P-36s to arrive in France and which contributed significantly to the actions of the French Air Force in the 1940 campaign before the power of the *Luftwaffe* prevailed.

### 3. Internal weaknesses and lessons learned

French airmen certainly have to accept a large part of the responsibility for the mess created when they won their emancipation from the Army despite the fact that the army-ruled Ministry of War intentionally counteracted every initiative of the Air Ministers to develop autonomous aviation. There were many chances missed by the Air Force due to the internal weaknesses of a too young service. One can draw some useful lessons for any state that has inherited obsolete military equipment or that face a major revision of their armed forces' structures while facing the high cost of current maintenance. In this sense, some analysis from the past, even if the geopolitical situation has changed, remain valid.

#### 3.1 Without clear doctrine, no air force is viable

The air force focused on development of standardized air operational procedures that were taught in a single air academy instead of several independent air schools. But the *armée de l'air* could not manage to develop and defend an innovative doctrine to overcome the traditional Army-led strategies. This inability to challenge the prevalent army thinking owes much to an Air Force high command that was mainly composed of officers who had been educated by the Army. But even air General Vuillemin massively revised the Air Force organization for the worse when he reorganized the force on July 2, 1934 and swept away all efforts made since 1928 to develop an identity for military aviation.

In short, there is no definitive air culture. This must be taught to the airmen, then explained to national partners and finally shared with allies. Without a strong doctrinal effort, the technical choices or the flying ability of the airmen cannot overcome the multiple factors that today, much as in the 1930s, can destroy a military force.

### *Coherence of doctrine and command structures*

The first French air doctrine<sup>36</sup> was based on Douhet's thought.<sup>37</sup> Paradoxically this was applied to a national defensive strategy. The systematic opposition of the Ministry of War is understandable, because their concepts of war failed to take into account the technological progress of the ground forces, especially in the case of armoured forces. Like the Germans, General Maxime Weygand believed that the power of tanks would break the paradigm of the continuous front. But when the nation is placed in a defensive posture priorities were different. Weygand could sacrifice neither the reconnaissance and air support assets, nor the air defence systems.

The Air Force initially lacked a solid structure. The law of organization adopted July 2, 1934, gave to the Air force's chief of staff in peacetime the command of air units and territorial responsibility. However, when war arrived, the air force would be split between the air strategic reserve and the cooperation forces that were assigned to the land or sea commands as defined by government. How could the Air force then build a rational doctrine, organize the units, train them for coordinated action when the degree and type of the coordination would be decided in a completely ad-hoc manner?

In 1935, the Air Force was better structured,<sup>38</sup> but it lacked coherence and education: "the heroic myth of the air knights became the only airmen's dominant identity, and constrained in turn the path to making of the air force"<sup>39</sup>. That persuaded Denain to restructure flight schools around a single air academy, which was established at Versailles November 4, 1935 until the completion of the building of the *École de l'air* in Salon-de-Provence, where all officers of the French air force are still educated today.



**Fig. 9. Historical picture of the main building of the *Ecole de l'air*.**

Source BA701 website. Photo credit: *Ministère de la Défense – armée de l'air*.  
<http://www.ba701.air.defense.gouv.fr/>

The original doctrinal inconsistency of non-continuity of command structures between peacetime and wartime would be corrected by Cot<sup>40</sup> during his term as minister. In addition to the existing territorial command of the Air force, Cot introduced an operational command. The mixed units disappeared and the forces were now divided between a “heavy” air corps dedicated to the bombing and reconnaissance missions and a “light” air corps dedicated to other tasks.

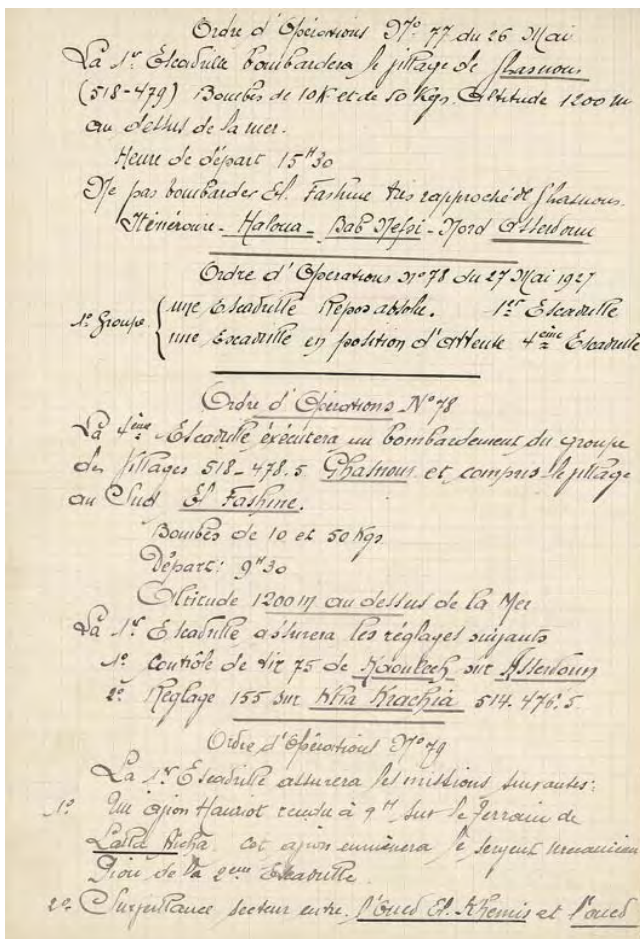
Cot established the principle of “air armies” that were activated in case of mobilization to control operations at a strategic level from a dedicated air headquarters. Thus, the air units, to be well trained and qualified, would immediately be integrated into the national operations without any break in the chain of command.

### ***Alternative doctrines ignored***

In the 1930s the Italians favoured bombers while Germans developed an innovative concept of combined air-land offensive. The *Stuka* is the precursor of modern air support, combining against their targets surprise, the precision of a near vertical dive, the panic induced by sirens screaming, and the devastating fire of bombs and machine guns. It is significant that sixty year later, generations who have not experienced war remember these



pioneers of the *Blitzkrieg*, even though few French people can even name some of the national aircraft operating at that time.



**Fig. 10.** 37th Aviation Regiment operation orders of May 26&27, 1927 including air bombing, artillery support, liaison and quick reaction alert.

Source Source: Internet website of the *Service historique de la Défense*. <http://www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.fr/Colloques-et-journes-d-tudes.html> Photo referenced as 2 C 36 ; credit: *Service historique de la Défense – armée de l'air*; use authorised according to licence CC Creative Commons Paternite.

In 1935, the French doctrine was “to be able to intervene in support of land and naval operations in a wider context than that of previous cooperation concept.”<sup>41</sup> At the same time the French doctrine wanted to promote a general reserve fleet that was capable of operating against military targets or some vital points<sup>42</sup> such as electrical systems whose loss could affect the railways and the urban and industrial centres. From Douhet’s concept of striking a knockout blow to the objective to Colonel John Warden’s theory of precision targeting, technology needed to make some major advances. Only then could the public opinion finally accept airpower thanks to the surgical precision of modern air strikes. A clean war is always more acceptable. But it is still remarkable that the airmen in the 1930s locked themselves into a strategy that met with strong opposition when other effective doctrines had emerged.

Colonel Armengaud was aviation commander during the campaigns in the Rif and Africa from 1924 to 1927, and then from 1930 to 1931.<sup>43</sup> He stressed the idea that airpower could replace barrage weapons, “one bomb replaced many shells (...) the bomb’s trajectory was an extension of the running axis of the plane; it was the first time when we conducted a dive bombing strike, despite an order forbidding this from the Ministry that was motivated by the fear of insufficient resistance of the machine.”<sup>44</sup> Armengaud concluded, “The aviation force has saved Fez, and to save Fez means to save Morocco.” Other innovations were carried out. And show a spirit of imagination and creative thinking in some quarters of the French Air Force. On April 1, 1937 Minister Pierre Cot created the first two French Air Infantry groups; parachute forces trained and equipped to drop soldiers into the heart of battle.

But such thoughts and developments remained embryonic and even controversial: “Never has the official *Revue des forces aériennes* thought it should expose the air doctrine, and even less discuss it seriously.”<sup>45</sup> Until 1940 French military strategists stuck firmly to the lessons based on the successes of 1918 and an overwhelming intellectual inertia at the top opposed modern theorists.<sup>46</sup> Even Charles de Gaulle, who was fascinated by technology and did not ignore bombers and strategic attack, denied the many kinds of distinctive air missions and the need for the professional autonomy of the Air Force.<sup>47</sup>

### *The death blow*

In January 1938 war seemed inevitable. The state administration then swung back into its past errors. Although he was a highly qualified pilot, the air force commander General Vuillemin denounced the doctrinal and organizational decisions of October 1936, rejecting the theory of an integral air force to restore the doctrine that the air force's primary role is that of full cooperation with other services.<sup>48</sup> Apparently, nothing was rational in pre-war France. The old divides persisted, as is shown by the state of the territorial air defence that was split between the Ministries of the Air (fighter aircraft), War (DCA-antiaircraft defence), Interior (passive defence), and PTT (signals).<sup>49</sup>

The decree of September 2, 1938 condemned the air force out of hand, putting air units under ad-hoc commands during wartime and dispersing them across the front to serve the Army. The air armies were dissolved, depriving the pilots of any autonomy to carry out mass actions. According to Guy La Chambre, who was strongly influenced by the culture of the Army, this approach supported the concept of defence at the borders. The air units subordinated to the land forces had to lock down the sky just as the Maginot Line locked the territory. In terms of structures and doctrine, the air force was disorganized and had regressed to the July 1934 model of organization. The principle of personal leadership was emphasized in aerial war, "the chief's place is at the head of the unit he commands."<sup>50</sup> All this doctrine did was to expose the French wings to lose their best leaders in combat missions.

### **3.2 What should we learn from past failures?**

Besides the absolute necessity of strong doctrine that is supported by an operational and cultural identity that should be developed as early as the basic training schools, modern aviation leaders should keep in mind the setback their predecessors experienced in the technical, organizational and strategic fields. The lessons of the 1930s can provide guidance for the airman's choices for the 21st century.

### *Defining requirements and means*

The choice of the BCR was not irrational. Its lack of effectiveness was mainly due to the extremely rapid rhythm of technological research that the

French industry could not follow. As a result, such an aircraft designed to be « good at everything » had a high probability « of doing nothing well»<sup>51</sup>.

The conception of any new aircraft is always a question of a compromise between weight, power, manoeuvrability, and payload. This is especially true when one is working at the limits of current technology. Technological progress has allowed the design of numerous families<sup>52</sup> of aircraft and even powerful multirole<sup>53</sup> fighters that give full satisfaction. But the assessment of the means requires more than this technical approach. As Cot sought in the mid 1930s for industrial support from Moscow or for a comfortable refuge with transnational strategic aviation under the auspices of the League of Nations, any decision-maker in today's world must open his reasoning and prepared to challenge the paradigm of a national air force.



**Fig. 11. Rafale – Combat mission in Afghanistan.**

Source:[http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/phototheque/phototheque\\_de\\_l\\_armee\\_de\\_l\\_air](http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/phototheque/phototheque_de_l_armee_de_l_air). (Multimedia library on-line SIRPAA)

Photo credit: *Ministère de la Défense – armée de l'air*

This question is of a critical interest in the current geostrategic reconfigurations for many small or medium sized states-- even in Europe. The states that appeared from the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc are not yet all able to adjust their political and strategic ambitions to reality and to their budget capacity. Slovenia or the Baltic States now rely on NATO for

their air defence as well as Iceland but Iceland intentionally chose not to develop a military air fleet for its national defence. To a certain extent, the three Baltic States seem much closer to the blindness of the French pioneers, each of them aiming to operate on its territory one (or even two!) NATO standard airbases, while their actual airspace is only a few minutes of flight for a modern military aircraft. An alternative model could be a collective, transnational approach: to build a transport air force around existing vectors to reduce costs, to expand the air defence monitoring network adopted by Estonia and its Nordic partners, to and develop an air interdiction capability based on a rational choice between proven aircraft and/or current generation air defence missiles.



**Fig. 12. September 2007 - Siaulai air base (Lithuania). French *M2000* crews scrambled for a NATO air policing patrol in the sky of Baltic states.**

Source:[http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/focus/2007/3eme\\_trimestre\\_2007/14\\_09\\_07\\_1\\_assistance\\_aux\\_pays\\_baltes](http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/focus/2007/3eme_trimestre_2007/14_09_07_1_assistance_aux_pays_baltes) (SIRPAA website).

Photo credit: *Ministère de la Défense – armée de l’air.*

### *Levels of ambition and cooperation*

In the context of the armed forces the air branch was born from the Army and then emancipated as technical progress gave the airmen the ability to act in depth and far beyond the scope of the heaviest artillery systems. In modern combat, the specialization of air units (fighter, reconnaissance, combat support, air mobility) and their use in support of ground troops is precisely defined by many operative standard procedures.



**Fig. 13. EC725 Caracal**

Source:[http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/phototheque/phototheque\\_de\\_l\\_armee\\_de\\_lair](http://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/base/phototheque/phototheque_de_l_armee_de_lair) (Multimedia library on-line SIRPAA)

Photo credit: *Ministère de la Défense – armée de l’air*

However modern countries still maintain air components that are directly attached to the army or navy. Or they have autonomous air corps like the USMC has. Some technical factors, such as landing on an aircraft carrier in the case of naval aviation, serve to explain these duplications—at least for some more years. Indeed, France has decided to train its pilots for the air force and naval version of the *Rafale* in the same air schools. Other modern equipment, including helicopters, are operated the same way by all users. This pushed the “*interarmisation* process” forward, which is the French

assertion to have designated joint integration of general airpower capability in the three conventional military branches: Army, Navy and Air Force. This trend raises some of the traditional cultural friction between the soldiers, airmen and sailors, but it can not be ignored. Therefore budget decisions have already led to a centralized technical maintenance of equipment conducted by the SIMMAD.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1930s, the Air Ministry aimed to increase its strength, coherence and the efficiency of the military industrial aviation community. Today this trend is desired by many nations, but it is still hampered by some manufacturers and also by political considerations. The European model of cooperation, which supports the development of multinational companies such as *Airbus* and *Eurocopter*, opens a new period of collective thinking. In the military field, the European Defence Agency should encourage this process. But this concept still lacks the votes. In the matter of cooperation, the solidarities are obvious. But even in an era of globalization the natural barriers persist – a national priority to obtain a return on its investments and the preference to make choices based on political, rather than practical, grounds. National ambitions are rarely developed in the light of past experience. Even if external factors have evolved, almost all states must reconsider their available choices and capabilities in crafting their overall military strategy. The old nations have to adjust their existing military forces, and the younger states must seek to manage services and equipment that are either missing or obsolete.

## Conclusion

The *armée de l'air* did not have the time to be properly born and develop. The defeat of 1940 was portrayed as the airman's failure during the Riom trials held by the Vichy government in 1940-1942. Their portrayal of the airmen is historical non-sense created to satisfy the egos of the politicians<sup>55</sup>. On July 20, 1939, Marshal Petain declared that, "the inferiority of our equipment was still greater than our inferiority of numbers. Aviation is fighting at a one to six ratio." General Maurice Gamelin - the former chief of General Staff of National Defence and therefore primarily responsible for France's failed strategy, was protected by the prosecutor who stated on October 15, 1941, that in the 1940 campaign under a sky filled with German planes the, "discouragement of combatants on the ground reached such a level that, despite all efforts of their commanders, defeat was inevitable."

The truth lies elsewhere. In the absence of foresight in the national governance, in the poorly organized aviation industry, in that industry's inability to modernize and deliver the ordered aircraft and, finally, in the total disruption of the military command system. All this led up to badly equipped airmen receiving incoherent orders.

The military aviators, attempting to escape from a precarious status and attempting to develop a doctrinal and service identity were sacrificed to the blindness common to France of the late 1930s and to a badly constructed set of national priorities. Political instability, constant changes of government, over centralized direction, a consensus of institutional filters, the reticence of lobbies that included industrialists, serve as the key external factors that led to a "Forgotten Air Force" in the 1940 campaign. France had generally been blinkered by the inertia of her strategists who were deeply stuck in a military culture centred on ground warfare. This mindset promoted a doctrine of the static defence, a traditional form of doctrine and one already doomed to failure against an adversary determined to wage a mechanized and brutal war of manoeuvre. The *Stukas* remain an indelible memory of the campaign-- but who remembers the Maginot Line?

There is no other lesson here than to focus on making strategic choices that a nation can sustain. In modern warfare bravery on the battlefield, or in the sky, or at sea, leads only to the supreme sacrifice, but not to victory. However, the thwarted birth of the French Air force must remain a signal to today's military leaders. They should learn how to establish consistent but acceptable and realistic doctrines<sup>56</sup> that support national strategy. They need to promote those doctrines in a domestic or international environment that is usually resistant to highly innovative initiatives. There is no universal formula for success in this regard. Every sovereign state, international organization or ad-hoc coalition sets its strategic choices according to current capabilities.

The French Air Force has learned lessons from its past disappointments to become one of the most credible air forces in the world, a force capable of carrying out the mission independently if as part of a coalition. The *armée de l'air* can successfully carry out all its missions: nuclear deterrence, homeland defence, projection of force or power, and air mobility.



<sup>1</sup> Raoul Dautry will become Minister of Armament in 1937, quote from Thierry Vivier, (1997), *La politique aéronautique militaire de la France. Janvier 1933 - Septembre 1939*, (L'Harmattan - Paris, Montréal), Prologue.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of October 20, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Pierre le Goyet (January 1969), *Evolution de la doctrine d'emploi de l'aviation française 1919 – 1939*, in *Revue d'Histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, n.79.

<sup>4</sup> Agreement signed on November 27, 1932 between Paul Painlevé and the Minister of Marine Georges Leygues, returning to the French navy its carrier aviation and naval cooperation aviation.

<sup>5</sup> Robert J. Young (January 1974), "The strategic dream: French air doctrine in the interwar period, 1919-1939," in the *Journal of contemporary history*. Page 63.

<sup>6</sup> Pascal Vennesson, *Institution and airpower: the making of the French air force*, in John Gooch ed., *Airpower: theory and practice*, (Frank Cass – London, New York, 1995), pp.4-43.

<sup>7</sup> Thierry Vivier, op. cit. Page 62.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Vaisse, director of the Defence Historical Studies Centre, in Thierry Vivier, op. cit. Prologue.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Christopher Cain (2002). *The forgotten Air Force: French air doctrine in the 1930s*, (Smithsonian Institution Press - Washington, London).

<sup>10</sup> Air Military Equipment Branch, Military Human Resource Branch, Central Service of Works and Facilities.

<sup>11</sup> General Technical Directorate

<sup>12</sup> Decree of March 30, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> Of the six announced industrial mergers, only that of Potez, Bloch, Cams and the Société Aérienne Bordelaise succeeded and became a full integrated company.

<sup>14</sup> The French National Air Company, created August 1, 1933 and whose statutes are consolidated August 30, 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Thierry Vivier, op. cit. Page 47.

<sup>16</sup> Fifty-three contracts had been initiated, which led to some 82 prototypes funded by the French state, to finally only 10 that had been selected.

<sup>17</sup> Law of August 11, 1936.

<sup>18</sup> Dominique Broussard (1983), *Un problème de défense nationale. L'aéronautique militaire au Parlement (1928-1940), A question of national defence. The military aircraft in Parliament (1928-1940)* (Vincennes, SHAA).

<sup>19</sup> The creation of the *Luftwaffe* has been officially announced by Goering on March 9, 1935.

<sup>20</sup> Acronym for «Bombardment, Combat, Reconnaissance» aircraft.

<sup>21</sup> Reported by Patrick Facon (2005) in a lecture given to the airmen of French Joint Staff College (CID). Patrick Facon is a French historian who specializes in the history of aviation and air strategy, chair at the Center for Aeronautic & Space Strategic Studies in Paris - École Militaire.

<sup>22</sup> *La rue de Rivoli* (the Rivoli street) designated in the 30s the location of the French Ministry of Finance in Paris.

<sup>23</sup> Emmanuel Chadeau (1986), *L'industrie aéronautique en France (1900-1950)*, The aeronautical industry in France (1900-1950), (Paris, Fayard), in Thierry Vivier op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Plan I had been outlined in 1933, adopted by the government on January 7, 1934, and approved by Parliament only on July 6, 1934... that is a long time compared to the rhythm of technological evolution on the middle of the 30s.

<sup>25</sup> Initially the Plan I aimed for 1010 units. Then, by the end of 1934, 1023 (360 bombers, 355 fighters and 308 reconnaissance aircraft) plus a reserve of 342 units (120/119/103), to equip 18 fighter groups, 17 groups of heavy bombers, 24 groups of heavy reconnaissance aircraft and 10 overseas squadrons.

<sup>26</sup> The Plan V was initiated by Cot, then adopted by the Popular Front in March 38 and finally promulgated by Daladier on May 2, 1938. It planned for 1086 fighters, 876 bombers, 636 reconnaissance aircraft and 24 airplanes for the air infantry. With a reserve of 2122, the Plan aimed a total of 4739 aircraft, which objective would then be almost doubled ("reinforced Plan V").

<sup>27</sup> Antony Christopher Cain, op. cit. Page 3.

<sup>28</sup> Following the Franco-Soviet Pact of Nonaggression signed in Paris by Édouard Herriot and the Soviet Ambassador Dovgalevski on November 29, 1932.

<sup>29</sup> Signature on July 1, 1935 of a technical agreement between French and Czechoslovakian air forces.

<sup>30</sup> Alliance created by France in the 1920s, integrating Poland (1921), Czechoslovakia (1924), Romania (1926) and Yugoslavia (1927) (cf. Pascal Vennesson op. cit. Page 49).

<sup>31</sup> Proposal expressed in Paris by the Soviet ambassador Dovgalevski on February 22, 1934, when the USSR wanted to join the League of Nations (SDN).

<sup>32</sup> Ephemeral Air Minister from January 24, 1936 to June 4 of that year. He is remembered as a missed rendezvous, denouncing the myth of the BCR and Douhet's theories for the Air Force, but having had neither the time nor the desire to build another model.

<sup>33</sup> Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, op. cit. Page 5.

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Cot initially contacted some industrial and engine manufacturers such as Pratt-and-Whitney, Glenn Martin and Wright. Guy La Chambre signed in March 1938 a first purchase for 1600 Curtiss and 100 million francs. Jean Monnet obtained the personal approval of President Roosevelt to deliver by July 1939 some 700 fighters and as many bombers.

<sup>35</sup> 160 aircraft from 10 squadrons of Fairey Battle light bombers, then 6 RAF fighter squadrons

<sup>36</sup> Decree of April 1, 1933

<sup>37</sup> Robert J. Young, op. cit. Page 62 agrees with that thesis, but underlines that, to a certain extent, "the attention paid by French air commanders to bombing units (...) antedated the works of Douhet".

<sup>38</sup> In 1935, the organization of the Air Force is based on four metropolitan air regions established in Metz, Paris, Tours, Lyon and a fifth including Algeria, Tunisia

and Morocco. The Air Force is ruled by a classical hierarchy, in brigades, half-brigades, wings. Each wing is connected to an air base, which supports several air groups themselves divided into squadrons.

<sup>39</sup> Pascal Vennesson, op. cit. Page 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> Decree of Octobre 3, 1936.

<sup>41</sup> Article published by Général Denain (August 15, 1935), *La doctrine d'emploi de l'armée de l'air*, *The operational air doctrine*, in the Revue du ministère de l'air.

<sup>42</sup> The *Deuxième bureau* (military intelligence service) elaborated before 1939 specific target dossiers for 15 aluminum industry facilities, 66 aviation industry building and 51 energy supply centers, identified on a 300-km combat radius from French airfields near the German border. Read more in Antony Christopher Cain, op. cit. Pages 116-120.

<sup>43</sup> Missions of the 37th Aviation Regiment in Africa: „discover and track the enemy, develop bombardment objectives, attack targets, resupply and protect surrounded outposts, assure the safety of mobile columns, participate in combat“. Antony Christopher Cain, op. cit. Page 22.

<sup>44</sup> General Armengaud, *Batailles politiques et militaires sur l'Europe – Témoignages (1932-1940)*, Paris, 1948.

<sup>45</sup> Editorial, *Les Ailes*, January 14, 1932 in Pascal Vennesson, op. cit. Page 55.

<sup>46</sup> Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, op. cit. Page 25.

<sup>47</sup> Pascal Vennesson, op. cit. Page 46.

<sup>48</sup> Général Joseph Vuillemin was an experienced airman and fighter pilot with 5000 flight hours, 10 victories and 17 citations. He was placed at the head of the French Air Force by Guy La Chambre when he endorsed the responsibility of the Air Minister in January 1938.

<sup>49</sup> Thierry Vivier, op. cit. Page 426.

<sup>50</sup> John Keegan (1987), *The Mask of Command*, in Antony Christopher Cain, op. cit. Page 53.

<sup>51</sup> Antony Christopher Cain, op. cit. Page 28.

<sup>52</sup> 53 The *A-6 Intruder* was certainly the first modern aircraft to appear in so many versions, including air assault, air-to air refueling and even suppression of enemy air defence (SEAD) and electronic combat support. Other aircraft initially design as air defence assets has been modified to endorse close air support capability, such as *F-16* that is still one of the most advanced combat aircraft. Other countries have developed families of aircraft based on a single prototype, as French manufacturer Marcel Dassault with its famous *Mirage III* and then *Mirage 2000* series.

<sup>53</sup> Mainly air superiority aircraft such as *F-18*, and more recently the *Eurofighter* and *Rafale*.

<sup>54</sup> The SIMMAD (*Structure Intégrée de maintien en condition opérationnelle des Matériels Aéronautiques de la Défense - Integrated Structure for maintenance in operational condition of Defence Aeronautical Materials*) was created by Decree No. 2000-1180 of December 4, 2000. Its mission is to ensure greater availability of aircraft from the Ministry of Defence and to control costs.

<sup>55</sup> Général d'Astier de la Vigerie (1952), *Le ciel n'était pas vide* (in French) *The sky was not empty*, (Paris, Julliard).

<sup>56</sup> Pascal Vennesson, op. cit. Page 40 refers to historian Dr. James Corum who explains that „doctrine is a common military term“ which has different meaning in several countries and concludes „the importance and role of military doctrine is an issue to be studied, not a given to be assumed“.

## Book Review Essay

**Ronald D. Asmus: A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West. Palgrave MacMillan. 2010. (272 pages)**

*By Kristian L. Nielsen<sup>2</sup>*

After the war itself the war of memories, of interpretation and competing narratives surely follows-- and not least the assignment of blame. Already before the dust had settled and the gun smoke cleared after the brief war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, accusations began flying between the two sides and various interested outsiders as to who started the war, *when* it really started, *what* the war was actually about, and not least, *what* its significance was. The present book by Ronald Asmus is one of the first full-length treatments of the conflict. It reviews the background, the events themselves, and its longer-term implications of the conflict. As the title indicates, Asmus thinks the war shook the international system. In his view, the naked aggression shown by Russia was an onslaught against the post-Cold War security order in Europe. In turn, the West's meek response in the face of such aggression calls its ability to sustain that security order into serious question.

Certainly, the war provided the first instance in decades of an established, recognised European state invading another. For a continent lulled into the belief that between its constituent states war as an institution has been abolished, the events of August 2008 provided a rude awakening. The security order built up around the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter, the integration through the EU--all guaranteed by the NATO and the US--suddenly looked less certain. Interstate war was back, even if for only five days, showing that the old-fashioned ways of politics are not as extinct as we would perhaps like them to be. What the war also made painfully clearly was the West's utter powerlessness in preventing it, and its flat-footedness when it occurred

Although he does not use the term himself, Asmus seems sympathetic to those such as *The Economist's* Edward Lucas who argue that in recent years a

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'New Cold War' has been joined, pitting Russia against the West<sup>1</sup>. But the real leitmotif in Asmus' book is not really the nature of the New Cold War, but about how Georgia got caught in it. Even more, a recurrent theme is how this violent flare-up might have been averted altogether had the Western decision makers only had the wherewithal to act in a timely manner. Such a view is by no means wisdom with the benefit of hindsight. It is, in fact, startling how many warning signs were overlooked by Western decision makers as the South Caucasus was hurtling towards war. It was coming from a mile away.

### **An insider's account**

Ron Asmus' work is impressive in its breadth, scope and wealth of detail. No wonder. Asmus is not just another interested observer, but a real insider. When he writes about Mikheil Saakashvili, Carl Bildt, Condoleezza Rice, Stephen Hadley, Bernard Kouchner and others, he's not just writing about some august, distant figures. He knows them all personally, has dined and talked with them for years, in and out of government. Having served on Bill Clinton's National Security Council, and then as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State - where he was especially involved in negotiating NATO's enlargements - he knows all the ins and outs of the diplomatic game. Now attached to the German Marshall Foundation Asmus doubles as a freelance advisor in Eastern Europe, and since the Rose Revolution in 2003 has been close to the Georgian leadership. Such a background has secured him extensive access to the movers and shakers on the Georgian side, in the US and in Western Europe - but not in Russia.

As Asmus readily acknowledges, such a disparity necessarily results in a certain bias, however much the author tries to be even-handed. That is probably the biggest weakness of the book. To some extent, the Russian position under Putin is taken for granted, reduced to "nationalist posturing" and "old imperialist and colonialist habits," while the Yeltsin era is unambiguously referred to as having been pro-European. That is too unsubtle, Russia's muted reaction to the 2004 NATO enlargement was more indicative of a sullen resignation to the inevitable, following the more fiercely fought 1999 enlargement round. And through the 1990's, periodic Russian statements about a Russian 'European choice' were consistently matched with ominous mutterings about the dangers of a 'new Cold War'<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, it is a little too glib to argue that "The great tragedy was that Moscow was unable to see that this kind of transformation [Georgia joining

NATO, KLN] could produce a new kind of stability that could also be in its own interest. Instead Russia viewed it in zero-sum terms...” (p. 70). That is very much a NATO view. Rightly or wrongly, Russia considers NATO as being directed against it. As Richard Sakwa has pointed out, Russia’s anger that its concerns have routinely been dismissed as illegitimate by the West should not be underestimated<sup>3</sup>. Asmus tries not to fall into this trap, but the book remains a little short on empathy with the Russian perspective.

That can not be said of his treatment of the Georgian side. Asmus gives just praise for the way the Saakashvili governments turned Georgia from being a near-failed state into a strongly developing economy, worked tirelessly to reform the country’s institutions, and restored order to the country. Asmus is also quite keen to dispel the widespread Western view of Saakashvili himself being an irrational hothead. Although acknowledging an occasional authoritarian streak in Saakashvili, Asmus calls him a “flamboyant”, “swashbuckling figure,” part Atatürk, part Mannerheim, part King David the Builder, “determined to paint on a larger historical canvas” (p. 56-57). One may suspect that Saakashvili’s ambitions may have seemed intimidating to the more plodding leaders of Western Europe, who are all more at ease talking about welfare provisions than regional transformation, and this may have partly accounted for the negative press he received in many Western countries. But Asmus does nonetheless, perhaps inadvertently, drop plenty of little hints – “impatient as always,” “combustible,” “overbearing,” shifting between conciliation and pressure, meandering through late night strategic discussions -- as to why so many considered him a not altogether steady fellow. What’s more, some of his reforms are rightly criticised for concentrating power in his own hands, while the declaration of a state of emergency, followed by a heavy-handed crackdown on anti-government demonstrators in late 2007, left many outsiders wondering if the Georgian president was only talking economics when he stated that “Georgia doesn’t need a European model, we want a Singapore or Dubai model here”<sup>4</sup>.

### **The long lead up**

It was into Saakashvili’s hands that the task of restoring Georgia’s territorial integrity fell. He set about the task with typical vigour, achieving an early triumph when the region of Adjara was brought under Tbilisi’s control in mid-2004. The frozen conflicts of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were much harder to come to grips with, and Asmus makes clear that they both had very deep roots. Long-standing grievances existed on both sides, but the

ethno-chauvinist policies of Georgia's first post-Soviet president, Zvia Gamsakhurdia in particular carried a great deal of the blame for the bloody wars of the early 1990's, in which thousands died, and hundreds of thousands were ethnically cleansed (p. 60-65).

But if the original conflicts were real, their continuation fifteen years later had something phoney to it, as did the presence of thousands of Russian 'peacekeepers.' South Ossetia could never be a viable state, surviving on little other than smuggling, while Abkhazia's prospects, although slightly better, would probably also have been bleak. That no movement had appeared in the intervening years, especially after the Rose Revolution, Asmus largely puts down to Russian meddling. In doing so, he makes a convincing case that the Saakashvili government truly understood the need for reconciliation and compromise, and was willing to go very far indeed to bring the two breakaway regions back into the country. However, all proposals for negotiations on autonomy were effectively undercut by Moscow. Even so, Georgian soft power, through the appeal of living in a democratic state with a fast-growing economy, seemed to be having an effect in South Ossetia by 2008, slowly raising Georgian hopes that a peaceful solution to that conflict was, against all odds, moving closer little by little.

By 2008, though, relations between Tbilisi and Moscow were in an awful state. The Saakashvili government's plans did not stop with territorial integrity, but extended all the way to full-fledged integration into the major Western structures, NATO and the EU. Nothing could have been more certain to provoke Russia's ire. The insistence on a westward orientation rubbed up against Russian notions of a 'Near Abroad' or sphere of influence. Equally, Saakashvili's energetic promotion of the Nabucco gas pipeline was a direct challenge to Russian energy interests. In this context, the frozen conflicts gained even more importance as pawns for Moscow, as a way of preventing Georgian accession to these organisations, and to cut Saakashvili down to size.

In this, Asmus is clear that the Western failure to seriously engage in solving these conflicts allowed them to fester, while Western timidity allowed Russia to continue undermining a small, democratising neighbour. Perhaps not surprisingly, Asmus tends to focus most on NATO, but really, the EU's role is even less flattering than he makes it out. Thus in 2005, a Georgian request for a mere 150 unarmed observers was denied<sup>5</sup> while Javier Solana, as late as



June 2008, spoke of Russia as being an integral part of any solution. On the release of the EU experts' report on the causes of the war, in 2009, Nicu Popescu, a knowledgeable observer of the region, commented that the EU's failure to send 150 observers in 2005 now necessitated the sending of 300 such observers, simply to *re-freeze* the conflict, while the financial cost of *re*-building would run into billions. That was the cost of not having gotten involved in time, for fear of annoying Russia<sup>6</sup>.

### The short countdown

Naturally, it was not the frozen conflicts themselves that led to the war in August 2008. Vladimir Putin's former economics advisor-turned fierce critic, Andrei Illarionov, has argued that one could see war preparations in Russia's activities in Georgia going all the way back to 1999<sup>7</sup>. To this reviewer that seems a lot of preparation for a war that would ultimately last only five days. Asmus starts the countdown to the tragic climax with a series of events during the early months of that year. In his analysis, it was above all Kosovo's declaration of independence, subsequently recognised by most Western countries, which drove Moscow over the edge and towards war. Russia had always been vexed by the 1999 Kosovo War, which had been conducted over its strenuous objections. To be ignored a second time in 2008, argues Asmus, made Moscow determined to retaliate, with Georgia being high on the Kremlin's hit list.<sup>8</sup> The whole Kosovo issue was clearly problematic in international law, and if handled wrongly might set an unfortunate precedent. But the West's problem, argues Asmus, was not so much the recognition itself, which he concedes had to happen. It was the failure to ensure that Kosovo would not be used as a precedent and to appreciate that Russia, if left in the cold, might retaliate somewhere else, and to take some measures to guard against the eventuality. Again, this is not hindsight speaking. In *The New Cold War*, published in early 2008, *The Economist's* Edward Lucas argued with eerie prescience that Russia might well retaliate in the Caucasus for the West's recognition of Kosovo. The evidence of Russia thinking in just terms is compelling.

Less persuasive, though, is the major emphasis Asmus puts on NATO's infamous Bucharest Summit in April 2008. Although his blow-by-blow account of the summit negotiations is enthralling, his conclusion that it amounted to a green light for Russian aggression does not convince. The alliance was deeply divided before the meeting, with leading European states being openly sceptical of Georgia's place in European structures. That was

all known in advance. What was perhaps unusual was to have the disagreement so openly aired. This seems, by Asmus' evidence, to be the result of a miscalculation in Washington of the America's ability to have its way. "Leave Angela [Merkel] to me", George Bush confidently told Mihkeil Saakashvili few weeks before the summit. And so MAP status for Georgia (and Ukraine) was put on the table.

In the event, the sceptical faction numbered about half the members (and it is even questionable how committed those in the 'pro' camp really were), and that faction held firm. That could not have been much of a surprise to anybody. Asmus makes much of the statement to the effect that the two countries would one day be members. But was that really as significant considering that the path to such membership was effectively being denied?<sup>9</sup> In any case, the general media interpretation at the time was that NATO had not opened the door. Asmus argues that a show of Western unity in Bucharest would probably have made Russia back off, but concedes at the same time that the unity was never there to begin with. To this reviewer at least, unity would have been the surprising outcome. Thus, the MAP question should never have been brought out in the open the way it was, since that only put the disunity on display. In short, the summit sent no new signals, but perhaps, at the most, confirmed the alliance's pre-existing division that were already well-known.

What is unambiguous, though, is that Russian provocations were stepped up during the spring and early summer, becoming more serious and more deadly all the time. On at least one occasion in June war seemed imminent, but the West did little to calm things down. Amazingly, given this background, the main focus of subsequent debate was over who fired the first shot on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. Asmus easily concedes that when viewed that narrowly, it was the Georgians who made the first major escalation. But he paints a vivid picture of the pressure the Georgian leadership was under that night: Heavy artillery shelling from the separatists (supported by the Russian 'peacekeepers'), reports of attacks on ethnic Georgian civilians, intelligence reports of Russian troops being moved into South Ossetia in large numbers. To the Georgians it looked like the preparations for a full-scale invasion. It was then that Saakashvili decided for a hastily-prepared, limited pre-emptive attack, to head off a Russian invasion.<sup>10</sup> The wide-spread Western suspicion that Georgia had been engaged in a land grab doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Asmus lists the many, many ways that the Georgian armed forces were completely unprepared for war in July/August, and his study of the battle

plans (such as they were) shows clearly how limited the Georgian objectives were.

The Russian smoke screen was effective, though. Few Westerners dared at the time to condemn outright the Russian aggression, waffling their responses and pointing to the faults on both sides. In five days the war was effectively over, as the Russian army and air force swatted their opponents aside and moved deeper into the country. It became painfully clear that Georgia was on its own, even though Asmus reveals that the military option was briefly considered, and quite wisely rejected, in Washington. The French-led mediating effort amounted to little more than recognising the new situation on the ground, and was a bitter pill to swallow for the beleaguered Saakashvili. At that point, he must have remembered what Putin had ominously told him during their last meeting in March 2008: “You think you can trust the Americans, and that they will rush to assist you? *Nobody* can be trusted! Except me; I’ll provide what I promised.” Reading this account, one is under no illusion as to the pressure Mihkeil Saakashvili was under, from the international community, and from Nicolas Sarkozy the peace broker. He soon caved in and signed the plan.

### **But was Georgia completely blameless?**

*A Little War that Shook the World* leaves the reader in little doubt as to who the real culprit was. It was Russian machinations that brought the calamity about. All the same, at the end of reading Asmus’ account, this reviewer could not completely escape the feeling that as much as Russia’s policies appalled, the Georgians’ reading of the international political scene was extraordinarily poor throughout the years 2003-2008. In fact, it is hard to think of a foreign policy course more perfectly crafted to bring disaster to the country.

Mihkeil Saakashvili and his group of advisors wanted it all; territorial integrity, Western alignment, recasting the whole region – and they wanted it in double quick time. Saakashvili’s vision of a democratic region balancing an unstable Russia, by joining NATO, and acting as an energy corridor to Europe, by-passing Russia, was indeed a breathtaking vision (p. 57). Breathtaking indeed, but for its absolutely reckless audacity! Did Saakashvili and his advisors seriously think that they could antagonise powerful Russian interests on so many fronts and get away with it? That they could both reclaim their territories from Russian control and at the same time join the

alliance Russia feared the most? One might of course ask; why should such things matter? Is Georgia not as free as anyone else to choose its friends, and with as much right as anyone to have its territorial integrity respected?

Indeed, in a perfect world it would be. However, in the somewhat less than perfect world that we live in, such things as relative power between states still matter, and right does not always, however much we would like it to, trump might. Saakashvili forgot that Georgia is not America, but a small, relatively weak state. And small states, especially those with large, hostile neighbours, must mix principle with pragmatism in ways larger states do not always have to. In short, he would have been wise to heed Hans Morgenthau's classic advice that one must distinguish sharply "...between what is desirable everywhere and at all times, and what is possible under the concrete circumstances of time and place"<sup>11</sup>.

So Georgia would have had to step carefully to achieve its goals, and it would have had to choose which to prioritise; territories or NATO membership, for it could not possibly have had both in the short term. As long as NATO was on the table, Russia would not have budged on the territories; as long as the frozen conflicts remained, the leading European NATO members would not contemplate accepting Georgia among them. Did it never occur to the Georgian leadership, that their would-be European allies might not be all too keen on the possibility of NATO's §5 being invoked by Georgia against Russia - all over two small territories in the South Caucasus? Instead of engaging with such questions, the Georgians did all the things they could to antagonise the Russians and alienate the Europeans: Jumping on the Bush Administration bandwagon, which hardly endeared them to anyone outside Washington; dabbling in dismissive Eurosceptic rhetoric; labelling anyone who disagreed with them, particularly the Germans, as Russian stooges; and forcing the issue of NATO membership to the fore, even when rejection seemed a certainty. It had to go wrong.

But could it have gone any other way? Of course we will never know, but it is not hard to see the contours of a different route, which might have served Georgia better. It is often forgotten today, that Saakashvili's victory in the Rose Revolution was actually greeted positively in Moscow, where his predecessor, Eduard Shevardnadze, was positively loathed. Asmus even reports that his first meeting with Putin had been a moderate success. Russia's restrained reaction to Georgia's reacquisition of Adjara also

suggested a more cooperative attitude during Saakashvili's first year in office<sup>12</sup>. Whether this early relationship could have become more cooperative is impossible to tell now. But it would seem that a certain amount of Russian goodwill, essential for a solution to the other frozen conflicts, existed then. Such goodwill as existed, however, was squandered by the aggressively pro-Western course which the Saakashvili government charted for Georgia.

That is not to say that Georgia would have had to abandon all Westernising ambitions in terms of democratisation or economic reform - these were not the main things Russia despised - only that they might have thought more carefully about the international form. It might have been wiser to fix more attention on Brussels and the EU, rather than on Washington and NATO. By embracing the opportunities of the European Neighbourhood Policy fully, Georgia could have secured many of the concrete advantages of European integration, as well as technical and financial support for its democratic and economic development. Saakashvili was completely right in thinking that through change in those two fields, Georgian soft power would surely help in bringing the separatist regions back. The European Union never caused as hysterical reactions in Moscow as NATO and the US did, and the ENP might have provided an avenue for Georgia to overcome European scepticism about its European credentials. But not at any point during Saakashvili's presidency, Asmus writes regretfully, did Georgia ever come up with a coherent strategy for how to approach the Europeans.

Conducting a policy of Western-minded reform and integration, without seeking actual membership of those organisations; all while continuously seeking to reassure Russia, and using that reassurance to gain their help in solving the frozen conflicts, would have been a real high-wire act - Finlandisation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century - and quite possibly an impossible one for anyone to pull off. Naturally, what happened is history, and one cannot today know with any degree of certainty if events could have turned out any other way. Yet to this reviewer, with the full and unabashed benefit of hindsight, it seems there were less controversial roads that Georgia chose not to take. Perhaps the disaster of August 2008 would have happened regardless of anything Georgia could possibly have done. But the Saakashvili policy made it a near-certainty.

## But a New Cold War?

As is probably clear by now, the position of this reviewer differs slightly from that of Ron Asmus on the exact motivation for Russia's invasion. Asmus argues that Russia fought the war as a deterrent, so as to prevent further encroachment by NATO in its backyard – a possibility it felt had moved dangerously close by the summer of 2008. Certainly, Russia did not want Georgia in NATO, but that was not about to happen either. Continued NATO divisions would have seen to that. Russia's motivation, in the mind of this reviewer, was more basic: They had been pushed around by the West for too long, and the Kosovo issue made them determined to retaliate. They wanted to make an example of someone, and, to them, Saakashvili had had it coming for a really long time. The war served its purposes of signalling to the world that Russian still mattered and was not to be messed with; of slapping down the Georgians; putting the frozen conflicts beyond solution, and destroying Georgia's credibility in the eyes of the West for a generation.

But that does not mean that Asmus does not have a point when he argues that the war signalled a very serious development in the international system. He most certainly does! The war marked the ending of an era of easy NATO expansion, where new democracies were brought into the multilateral Western institutions. This process was allowed to go on during the Yeltsin years, but no longer. Russia under Putin and Medvedev has turned to a much more belligerent stance, their swagger only slightly tempered by the economic downturn. Unless the West wakes up to this reality, Russia will continue bullying its smaller neighbours if they step out of line, and undermine that very security order that has brought peace and prosperity to Europe. It is easy to think of the Georgian War as being, in Neville Chamberlain's words "a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing". But it is mistaken and complacent to think that way. More than anything else, that what happened to Georgia matters to us all, is the message of Ron Asmus' book, and one he drives home with force and clarity.

And then again, are we actually in a New Cold War? Not really, for it surely takes two to tango. The West most defiantly refuses to recognise that any such conflict exists or to even stand as one when dealing with Russia. In fact, hardly a single major western country is not to some extent busy getting cosier with Moscow: The US pursues its 'reset' policy and talks little

of NATO enlargement; Germany has in recent weeks tabled a proposal for an EU-Russia 'Security Committee' to handle security issues in Europe and its periphery; and France has approved the sale of several advanced warships, in spite of Georgian protests.<sup>13</sup> Asmus, himself a Democrat, refrains from criticising the Obama administration. But deep down, surely he's not pleased with Foggy Bottom's priorities.

Indeed, what is so striking when reading this book, in spite of all its qualities, is that it really is a call in the dark. Looking how fast we all went back to normal after the war, one wonders if anybody is actually listening. The book's very title is almost hyperbolic, for this is a war that's already out of sight and thus out of mind. But at the same time, that is also exactly what makes Ron Asmus' book so important.

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<sup>1</sup> Lucas, Edward (2008): *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*. Bloomsbury, London.

<sup>2</sup> Sakwa, Richard (2008): "'New Cold War' or Twenty Years' Crisis', *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, no. 4. p. 243, 253

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp 261

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Wilson, Andrew & Popescu, Nicu (2009): 'Russian and European neighbourhood policies compared', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 3, pp 325

<sup>5</sup> Socor, V. 2005, 'France Leads The EU's Nyet To Georgia Border Monitoring', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 18 April.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, Andrew & Popescu, Nicu (2009): 'Russian and European neighbourhood policies compared', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Illarionov, Andrei (2009): 'The Russian Leadership's Preparations for War, 1999-2008', in Svante E. Cornell & S. Frederick Starr (eds.) *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*. M.E. Sharpe, London. pp. 49-84

<sup>8</sup> There is a certain irony to this linkage; Kosovo's potential statehood was one of the few issues on which Russia and Georgia were in perfect agreement. For the exact same reasons neither wished the precedent set of territories declaring independence unilaterally. At the time of writing, neither has extended diplomatic recognition to Kosovo.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, David J. (2009): 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies Before the 2008 War', in Svante E. Cornell & S. Frederick Starr (eds.) *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*. M.E. Sharpe, London, pp 126

<sup>10</sup> Asmus makes a persuasive case that the Russians were determined to go to war in August 2008. However he also suggests that it did not happen according to Russia's own time plan. The Georgians' escalation on the 7<sup>th</sup> may in fact have pre-empted an

attack timed for some ten days later. That the Russians fought the two first days in a defensive posture, and needed time to bring up reinforcements, regain the initiative, and ultimately make their superior numbers count, bears this out. The speed with which they did turn the tables, though, shows how advanced the Russian preparations had been.

<sup>11</sup>Morgenthau, Hans (2005): *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. McGraw-Hill. New York, pp7

<sup>12</sup>Wilson, Andrew & Popescu, Nicu (2009): 'Russian and European neighbourhood policies compared', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 3 pp101

<sup>13</sup> Had Russia had such ships at the time of the war, it would have allowed its helicopter gunships to operate from offshore and reach targets in most parts of central Georgia.



**Notes:**





