

## SYMMETRY AND ASYMMETRY IN MODERN MILITARY ACTIONS

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*Abstract:* Within this context when the United States of America have no much worldwide concurrence and remained the only informational, technological, military and economic superpower, it is expected that the range of asymmetrical confrontations should extend globally and regionally speaking and Romania has the obligation to start its preparations regarding the new context of security environment.

*Keywords:* symmetry, dissymmetry, asymmetry, terrorism, guerrilla.

### 1. INTRODUCTION IN MODERN MILITARY ACTION

Although the war, represented by the armed combat, is out of law in more than 80 countries, is less and less popular in the world public opinion and is more and more tried to be avoided, it is expected that it could not be avoided in a near future.

Of course, the future war will be differently shaped, under much diversified aspects, according to the armies' capabilities, involved in the conflict, starting with the discouraging “surgical” actions, continuing with multiple diplomatic, economic, political actions, to those of informational, psychological, climacteric or cosmic nature.

Most of the military specialists estimate that the dynamic of the military capabilities changes and transformations shall strikingly increase in the next 20-30 years and the most important evolutions shall take place in the field of the military high-tech.

It is expected to increase in a substantial way the range of striking high-tech capacities, the technological sophistication level, the degree of using the stealth technology, sensors and “combat networks” and the unmanned systems shall become indispensable components to all structures and forces.

This profound progress (extensions) in using the last-generation technologies within the occidental armies and especially within the

USA's army, shall determine answers from the other powers or potential opponents, answers that shall include both a symmetrical component – by producing and using the same technologies – and an asymmetrical component, based on the disruptive offensive or defensive capacities.

The future combat space extends the concept of armed conflict by placing the operational aspects in a larger context which includes political, economic, social, demographic, juridical, normative technological and also ecological elements.

The protagonists in the war of the future, shall use complexity, ambiguity and asymmetry in order to discourage and avoid an external intervention and, in case of this strategy failure, they will rely on avoiding the implication in decisive operations and expanded campaigns and they will make use of ways specific to the informational, diplomatic war, which means atypical ways.

Even if the symmetry, dissymmetry and asymmetry issues are under the political-military specialists' magnifying glass only after 1995, it is old ever since the world began and it appeared within the first armed conflicts that is for more than 4000 years.

At the beginning of this millennium, we cannot exclude the possibility of some military conflicts between the powerful and high-developed countries but, as it is noticed during the last 60 years, they have fewer perspectives

to take place, knowing that the great powers of the world avoid direct, military confrontations.

## 2. ASSIMETRY IN MODERN MILITARY ACTION

The existence, during this period, of a single world power, the United States of America, by its military, technological and informational superiority, diminished even more, the symmetry's<sup>1</sup> role within military actions to dissymmetry detriment, which supposes a quantitative and qualitative domination of one of the parts, respectively a lack of proportionality, incompatibility between the two confronting forces.

The conflicts spectrum after the cold war's end, demonstrates the fact that dissymmetry, as domination strategy of one of the parts, determined asymmetry, which is shown by the weaker' part attempt to compensate the lack of proportionality by specific ways.

Therefore, asymmetry means, for the conflict protagonist, an adapted approach, aiming to avoid or to counteract the opponent's strong parts (points, components), without trying to interpose in a direct way, trying to exploit its weak points, in order to maximize its own advantages and to exploit the opponent's weaknesses.

As a rule, the asymmetric actions are deployed according to atypical rules, methods and procedures, aiming to obtain results with the least efforts, casualties and material damage reduced.

Among the forms, procedures and actions specific to the military art of the asymmetric type, we can highlight the "terrorist" actions, the resistance combat, the guerrilla combat, the harassment, the demonstrative actions, the sabotages, etc. so that they could direct to create and maintain a permanent state of anxiety and tension among the opponents. We can also consider as asymmetrical actions the

organized crime, drug traffic, fanaticism and fundamentalism of any kind.

The armies, obliged to face a superior opponent, avoid the open and direct combat, use the techniques of guerrilla war, prefer actions such as "strike and run", misleading actions, harassment, striking in complex zones, which cannot allow its deployment: localities, mountainous-woody fields, swampy regions, jungle, etc.

The characteristics of asymmetric actions are:

- they are uncommon, seen from the perspective of the western democracies;
- they are situated beyond the so called normal actions;
- they don't have a correspondent (equivalent) within the capabilities arsenal of western armies;
- they are intended against some military but also civil objectives;
- it is difficult to be answered to, in the same way, to balance accounts;
- it is difficult to be answered to, in a discriminatory and proportional way;
- they are hard to be anticipated, prevented and they have a powerful psychological impact;

In order to counteract these actions, the states invest ample resources and intelligence to elaborate some multidimensional asymmetric strategies, used both against terrorism and all kinds of fanaticism and also within the informational war, based on the network, the psychological, media and geophysical wars.

In the new context of security environment, in our case, the Romania's, it is necessary to adjust the structures of the national safety insurance, in order to face the menaces, to understand them and to find the adequate ways to annihilate them.

Thus, among the measures of the response type that can be tackled, we can mention, in a stochastic and non-exhaustive order, the following:

- the reorganization of the military structures and the improvement of the armament systems, that is to renounce the high fire power systems and to adapt high tech solutions;

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<sup>1</sup>"Symmetry supposes, in the field of confrontation, forces, doctrines, strategies and resources similar or compatible, which give certain proportionality to action and to reaction", Col. PhD Ion Mitulescu, *Atypical and asymmetrical within modern military actions*, U.N.Ap., Bulletin no. 1/2006, p. 156.

- to employ more mobile and more trained troops;
- adaptations of doctrinal type from the perspective of military actions deployment in marked asymmetry conditions;
- preventive actions;
- using information as a power factor within the preventive actions;
- preparing and deployment of efficient informational and psychological operations;
- disorganization and reduction of the opponents' action capacity by controlling the illegal immigration and the monetary flow of terrorist cell;
- actions of active diplomacy and international cooperation;
- making secure objectives having a high level of importance against some unexpected attacks;
- maintaining the positive mood of the population and of the participants to such attacks, avoiding panic;
- preparing decisional factors in crises management;

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The conflicts spectrum after the cold war's end emphasized the confrontation asymmetry

which is expressed by the weaker' part attempt to compensate the lack of proportionality by specific ways.

I consider that the military actions which are to be deployed in the near future will have the characteristics of an asymmetrical confrontation where the atypical methods and procedures of counteracting the opponent's vulnerability will be prevailed.

I think that everything happening in the future in the field of confrontations, including the military ones, will bear the mark of asymmetry; we shall speak about an art of strategically asymmetry in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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