

## SELECTED PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY IRREGULAR WARFARE

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Received on 21 January 2015; accepted in revised in April 2015

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### **Abstract:**

*An essential feature of irregular warfare is applying special forms of combat activities allowing the forces conducting them both survival on the terrain controlled by the enemy and efficient interaction with enemy forces. Forces expected to participate in irregular warfare can be prepared in the peace time or during the war. They should be able to execute mission in isolation and in conditions of insufficiency of logistic support, without direct support from the supervisor. Due to the facts presented above, nowadays planning and executing irregular warfare seems to be a complicated process.*

### **Keywords:**

*irregular warfare, tactical activities in depth*

## INTRODUCTION

Dynamic changes in the security environment, the evidence for which is e.g. the change of borders established after the dissolution of the USSR<sup>1</sup> provokes a reflection on the shape of contemporary military conflicts. At the same time it is worth considering the validity of current concepts of conducting military actions and referring them to contemporary challenges and threats. From the perspective of the above mentioned aspect, it seems important to return to considerations related to the issues which in the military theory and practice are referred to as irregular warfare. The indicated

<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the arrangements of the so called Budapest Memorandum, Russia annexed Crimea which belonged then to Ukraine. The policy based on facts conducted by Russia and the use of unmarked combat formations acting as self-defence troops is a reason for concern and shows a new dimension of contemporary military conflicts. M. Wrzosek, *Krym – polityczno-militarne aspekty konfliktu*, Kwartalnik Bellona, No. 2/2014, pp. 25-27.

problem is extremely important because, according to some representatives of military thought, the issue of irregular warfare does not really function (outside special warfare) in the contemporary Polish military doctrine and military art<sup>2</sup>. Undoubtedly it is a reason for concern because the described warfare is a “strong” and effective form of armed struggle<sup>3</sup>. The above assumption is based on praxeology, namely *...a stronger collective enemy can be defeated by subsequent fights with particular members of their team when one has advantage over each of them. However, if the enemy constitutes one organised entity with a distinguished and extremely conditioning part, it is advisable to incapacitate this part exactly...*<sup>4</sup>. On the basis of the above presented premises, one can successfully assume that scientific considerations related to irregular warfare is still topical in the defence science, however, it requires a new perception perspective of this special way of fighting the enemy than before.

### 1. IRREGULAR WARFARE DILEMMAS

In doctrinal perspective irregular warfare is defined as *...a type of operations conducted in a special manner in the enemy formation by interim tactical formations used in a way depending on the needs and situation. These formations can be prepared during peace or they can also be created ad hoc during war*<sup>5</sup>. The basic forms of irregular warfare are assumed to encompass sabotage, elimination, psychological operations, attacks and ambushes, i.e. nearly exactly the same forms as the ones used in guerrilla warfare<sup>6</sup>. The success of then described operations requires respecting the rules which have been developed for centuries and which have a scientific grounding, such as: flexibility, initiative, surprise, manoeuvrability and mobility, concentration and co-location of forces and resources, secrecy and knowledge of the local area<sup>7</sup>.

Taking into account the above presented information it is worth asking the question of the nature of “irregularity” of the described operations. According to the definition in the Dictionary of the Polish Language, the word irregular means: occurring in uneven intervals, out of proportion, without symmetry, not based on rules and regulations<sup>8</sup>. However, as it has been emphasised earlier, irregular warfare is conducted according to the adopted rules of military art conditioning its efficiency and they are based on

<sup>2</sup> J. Buczyński, *Działania nieregularne w Polskiej nauce wojskowej [Irregular Warfare in the Polish Military Science]* [in:] S. Jaczyński, H. Królikowski, W. Włodarkiewicz (ed.), *Działania nieregularne w Polsce i Europie [Irregular warfare in Poland and Europe]*, CBW, Warszawa 2007, p. 7 [in Polish].

<sup>3</sup> R. Jakubczak, *Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej. Militarne bezpieczeństwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia [Territorial Defence Forces. Military Security of the Republic of Poland on the Threshold of the Third Millennium]*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa 2002, p. 428 [in Polish].

<sup>4</sup> T. Kotarbiński, *Hasło dobrej roboty [Good Job Slogan]*, Warszawa, 1975, p. 136 [in Polish].

<sup>5</sup> *Regulamin działań wojsk lądowych [Land Forces Operations Regulations]*, DWL, Warszawa 2008, p. 241, [in Polish].

<sup>6</sup> Comp. C. Kurowski, B. Woźniecki, *Działania partyzanckie [Guerrilla Operations]*, WMON, Warszawa 1975, p. 187, [in Polish].

<sup>7</sup> W. Więcek, *Zwalczanie przeciwnika nieregularnego [Fighting with Irregular Enemy]*, AON, Warszawa 2010, p. 13, [in Polish].

<sup>8</sup> [online]. [available: 18.03.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/nieregularny>.

praxeology. Thus it seems that “irregularity” does not refer to the forms and ways of fighting, but to the forces conducting this fight. This assumption is in accordance with the above presented doctrinal justification, according to which irregular warfare can be conducted by formations prepared for this kind of operation during peace or they can be interim formations created during war. In numerous situations these will not be regular military forces but irregular formations<sup>9</sup>. This is confirmed in contemporary military conflicts and exercises conducted in our country<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. THE ESSENCE OF IRREGULAR WARFARE

Irregular warfare is one of the basic forms of armed struggle. It is avoiding open, armed clashes with the numerically superior enemy and instead employing surprise attacks of weaker positions of enemy factions (organisational structures) with forces taking advantage of defence features of the terrain and acting on a large area<sup>11</sup>.

Irregular warfare can be intended or imposed. Unplanned irregular warfare is conducted by factions which as a result of unsuccessful actions or after tactical activities in depth were left on the enemy terrain and it was impossible for them to join the main forces. In the case of intended irregular warfare, its goals and main tasks result from an earlier adopted fight plan.

The essence of irregular warfare is harassing the enemy and paralysing his action plans. During this kind of activity the army attempts to attain a number of goals, such as: enemy reconnaissance, direct and indirect weakening of his combat and logistic potential, disruption of the enemy command systems, support and operations support systems as well as blocking enemy forces manoeuvring (limiting opportunities to use them in another place and at other time). It should be emphasised, however, that particular goals of irregular warfare will depend on the operational and tactical situation, available forces and resources, enemy position and a number of other factors which can take in combat space.

On the basis of conclusions drawn from contemporary military conflicts, one can assume that the basic environment for irregular warfare are developed areas. However, one cannot exclude conducting this kind of action also on other terrain types. The above assumption results from a variety of hypothetical combat environment, among which forests and mountains are considered characteristic and hence favourable for

<sup>9</sup> The term *irregular armed forces* is not new in the theory of the discussed problem. In primary sources they are defined as troops or formations which are not regular army units, they encompass: volunteer forces, vigilante groups and guerrilla formations reporting to a person responsible for his subordinates, they also observe war laws and customs. See: W. Więcek, *Taktyka formacji nieregularnych [Irregular Formations' Tactics]*, Zeszyty Naukowe AON, No. 2/2014, p. 175, [in Polish].

<sup>10</sup> E.g. the exercises of pro-defence organisations conducted between 27 and 28 September 2014 whose subject was: *Kompania w Działaniach Nieregularnych w Terenie Zurbanizowanym [A Company in Irregular Warfare in Urban Areas]*. For more information see: <http://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/pl/zycia-wojska/33977,iii-ogolnopolskie-cwiczenia-organizacji-proobronnych-.html>.

<sup>11</sup> R. Jakubczak, *Wojska obrony terytorialnej...*, quoted edition, p. 427.

the described type of warfare<sup>12</sup>. Historical experience shows that a well assessed and used area always supports military forces in their operations. It can be especially easily observed during a clash between a weaker and a stronger adversary. Varied topography, high level of afforestation, occurrence of places routing the enemy traffic and poorly developed road infrastructure allowing for surreptitious preparation of operations and invigilating enemy factions.

A particular characteristic of irregular warfare is its special tactics expressed in<sup>13</sup>:

- close cooperation with local people;
- maintaining initiative;
- mobility and operating flexibility;
- avoiding open clashes with the enemy;
- operating in the area (space) and not along the line;
- dispersion of forces and their concentration when performing a task;
- surprise operations;
- short fire strikes to make it impossible for the enemy to organise a counter strike;
- command decentralisation to support a high degree of autonomy of fighting factions;
- superseding the enemy in activity and initiative.

The theory of this problem emphasises also that the tactics of irregular warfare is characterised by a special treatment of the terrain. Forces conducting the described operations are usually the “host” of the area of clashes and as a result they know it very well. Moreover, they do not have to keep its particular parts all the time and can choose the place of confrontation with the enemy themselves. The main goal of manoeuvring in the described operations is avoiding open clashes and attacking the back and flanks of the enemy forces, additionally the surprise element is treated as the basic success indicator. The tactics of irregular warfare is giving up models to become flexible so as to ensure constant ability to adapt to the changing situation. The described tactics does not always employ unchangeable rules, on the contrary, it allows its participants a possibility to show initiative and creatively use various operation concepts<sup>14</sup>.

The basis for starting irregular warfare is a well-developed plan which should encompass: information about the involved object, distribution of roads to be used to access and depart from the place, possibility to use disguise and achieve a surprise element, conditions hindering enemy’s attempts to chase factions. The experience of contem-

<sup>12</sup> *Regulamin działań wojsk...*, quoted edition, p. 173.

<sup>13</sup> Comp. Z. Ścibiorek, R. Chrobak, *Działania nieregularne na obszarze kraju [Irregular Warfare Used Nationwide]*, AON, Warszawa 1994, p. 41, [in Polish].

<sup>14</sup> P. Kleut, *Taktyka działań partyzantki jugosłowiańskiej [Yugoslav Partisan Tactics]*, WMON, Warszawa 1973, p. 119-120 [in Polish].

porary military conflicts shows also forces conducting the described operations use various vehicles (mainly civilian ones), which will significantly improve possibilities of hiding intentions and misleading the enemy<sup>15</sup>.

### 3. CONDUCTING IRREGULAR WARFARE

Regardless of the character of irregular warfare (intended or imposed), it will be conducted in the enemy faction, which can have a significant influence on the psychological condition of soldiers fighting with enemy forces, performing manoeuvres within enemy factions or waiting to start an operation. In the case of an favourable forecast for situation development and support of local people, irregular warfare will not be seen as failure, but as the only way to preserve combat ability and fight with the aggressor. However, mainly in the case of imposed operations, one should take into account the phenomenon of morale decrease and unwillingness to fight among the soldiers, especially in a situation when it is not possible to quickly join the main forces. In the described case there may also be a collapse of support among civilians who do not fight for irregular warfare<sup>16</sup>.

One of the factors influencing the success of irregular warfare seems to be the ability to define the areas in which it will be possible to gain advantage over the enemy<sup>17</sup>. This will allow to find the strengths and weaknesses of one's own forces and the enemy forces, and in consequence generate chances and threats. It is most significant very to search for solutions enabling the achievement of the set goals with minimum effort, however, without direct impact, the goal should be achieved thanks to secondary consequences of certain actions. The above assumption is realised in surprising and harassing the enemy with simultaneous taking advantage of his strengths against him. In recent years such approach was defined as "asymmetric warfare" which should be simple yet at the same time flexible and showing multi-variant possibilities of using it. It is expressed, for example, in unexpected violent strikes of enemy facilities with par-

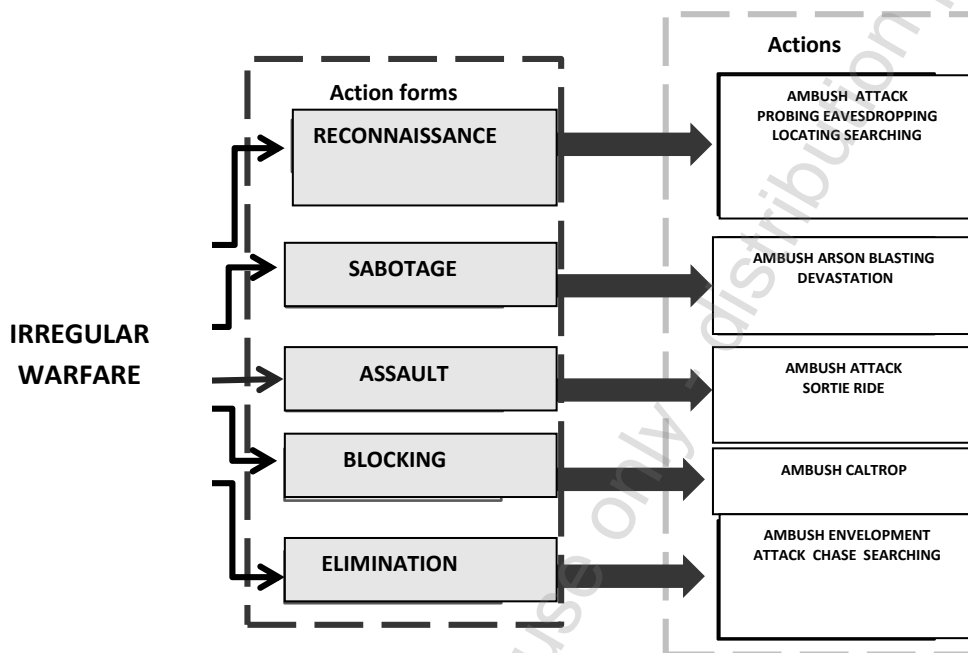
<sup>15</sup> M. Wrzosek, G. Roślan, *Zagrożenia i ochrona strefy tyłowej [Threats and Defence of the Back of the Military Formation]*, Przegląd Wojsk Lądowych No. 9/2006, p. 23 [in Polish].

<sup>16</sup> The following components will have influence on shaping the attitudes and behaviour of soldiers in the battlefield as well as people who do not participate in fights but live in the area of irregular warfare: 1. Intellectual – it is strictly connected with education and knowledge of a given subject or phenomenon; 2. Evaluating with emotional colouring – it refers to feelings accompanying them (fear, hatred, love, joy, affection, enchantment, respect, compassion, anger, yearning); 3. Motivating; 4. Experimental – shown in behaviour. See G. Nowacki, *Organizacja i prowadzenie działań psychologicznych w wybranych państwach [Organisation and Psychological Warfare in Selected States]*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2004, p. 71 [in Polish].

<sup>17</sup> As it was accurately observed by Henri Jomini, occupation forces control only the area where they camp, while outside their camps everything is hostile and there are numerous difficulties which only grow when there are advantageous conditions for forces conducting irregular warfare. Moreover ...each armed civilian knows every small path here and knows where they lead and everywhere they meet relatives or acquaintance who will always help them. The commanders know their country equally well and they will immediately know of any moves of enemy forces. See H. Jomini, *Zarys sztuki wojennej [An Outline of Military Art]*, WMON, Warszawa 1966, p. 48 [in Polish].

allel use of ambushes for enemy forces and enemy forces columns which can be a source of supplies for one's own forces.

The tactics of irregular warfare is characterised by the earlier presented axioms which have been shaped over centuries and which allow to fight following the rule "fight and flight". Its determiner is not striving to defeating the enemy but keeping enemy forces in the state of constant psychological stress leading to an impression that a dangerous situation can occur at nearly any time. Meeting the above requirements is connected with the necessity to use particular forms of influencing the enemy which in turn result in particular ways of combat (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Action forms and types of irregular warfare (a variant)

*Source: own elaboration*

Each of the above presented forms will be realised using appropriate actions, among which, based on experience, one can choose the ones assumed to be most common: reconnaissance, preparing ambushes, attacks and destructions as they bring measurable consequences in the form of losses suffered by the enemy and maintaining enemy forces in constant uncertainty and stress.

Conclusions based on the Iraq and Afghanistan experience indicate that a properly organised ambush, with appropriate combination of favourable landforms, a surprise effect and a strong strike as well as cutting off his escape route guarantees success. The most effective ambushes are prepared in places which make the enemy column slow down, e.g. on sharp turnings, culverts and narrow passages or among buildings. Additionally it is justified to also to make sure that one of the ambush sides is secured with a natural terrain obstacle. Forces preparing an ambush should take fire positions



on terrain relative elevations ensuring a wide field of fire and in places which will be difficult to access for enemy forces.

The size of forces needed to prepare an ambush in irregular warfare can vary and will depend on the existing conditions and needs. Depending on the operation goal, the following elements of an ambush formation have to be organised:

- shock group responsible for the destruction of the enemy with the fore of available means;
- caltrop group whose task will be blocking the escape route to keep or cut off a part of the enemy column which was selected for destruction,
- security group which does not allow any help to be provided to the object of the ambush from outside and used to protect the shock and caltrop groups when they withdraw.

An ambush can be started with rocket-propelled grenade fire, maintained to break the continuity of the enemy column. Successive saturation fire with small arms, as a rule, will be conducted from a small distance (about 200 m). After a few-minute-long fight the shock group withdraws in the most convenient direction to break the contact with the enemy, then the burden of the fight is taken over by the security group distributed at higher land parts allowing effective fire. Depending on the level of threat that the enemy will use helicopters, it is possible to organise air-defence teams armed with man-portable air-defence systems and distribute them in the places of the most probable airstrike. During the preparation of an ambush it is recommended to organise apparent positions to mislead the enemy and make it impossible for him to find out about the real distribution of combat formation elements.

An efficient way of conducting irregular warfare is also attack. For military forces participating in such operations, it is less advantageous than an ambush because it requires involvement of larger forces and is connected with a higher risk of bigger losses. Attack can have the form of a direct strike at an object located in the enemy formation or a fire strike. The latter is used during fights with enemy outnumbering our own forces and distributed in a fortified object. The way of performing attack will depend on the capabilities of counteracting the enemy forces, the number of own forces, character of the object and its location.

During the preparation to the attack, it is necessary to conduct thorough reconnaissance of the area of the future operation with particular account for access and withdrawal routes, the protection and defence systems of the object, terrain conditions and distribution of fire positions. Soldiers who are selected for such an operation should know the terrain and be able to secretly move and should also be able to act independently in case of dispersion.

The essence of attack is striking suddenly with maximum use of the surprise effect and the power of fire leading to total elimination of the enemy (object) or their severe losses. The aim of attack is usually an enemy during a layover or staying in stationary



facilities. When the enemy is moving it is more beneficial to use an ambush<sup>18</sup>. A combat formation of the forces selected for the attack must be flexible and must ensure performance of the task. On the basis of the experience so far, one can assume that it will be composed of: a shock group, a security group and a military reserve. The composition of groups can be modelled depending on needs, type of object, terrain and time of day. Depending on situation, there can also be a priming group, protective group, etc.

The basic factor which influences the success of attack is proper taking advantage of favourable weather conditions (fog, rain, blizzard, limited visibility) to surprise the enemy. Approaching the object must be concealed and one must use various roads. After taking starting positions for the attack, it is necessary to organise a security system, update reconnaissance data and if need be correct the action plan. One of the determinants of success will be quick approaching the object and elimination the enemy security, if possible without using firearms or using suppressors. The activity of the shock group should be violent, surprising and quick. After completing the task (usually at a signal), the attacking forces cut off from the enemy. In the case when not all enemy forces are crashed, breaking contact must be protected with small arms fire and grenades and must also be well organised, the order should be as follows: front security, the wounded and injured, main forces and back security. After completing the task the subunit gathers in the indicated region and next goes to the staging area.

Examples from the history of military art show that a well organised attack conducted in a reconnoitred terrain can turn out to be profitable venture ensuring obtaining the expected tactical results. However, its success will largely depend on the attitude of local people and range of support given by them to the forces involved in irregular warfare<sup>19</sup>.

#### 4. SELECTED ISSUES RELATED TO COMMAND IN IRREGULAR WARFARE

On the basis of the above presented information on the selected ways of conducting irregular warfare, one can assume that its characteristic feature should be original approach to commands issues. The necessity to function in the enemy formation sets high requirements for the command not only in the aspects of operation preparations but also conducting the operation. Command in irregular warfare will undoubtedly be a more complex venture than during basic or preparatory tactical operations. Fighting in isolation and under the pressure constant enemy action can shorten planning time and tighten up confidentiality and information circulation procedures.

Operation conducted on territories controlled by the enemy must combine with ventures undertaken by the superior level, which is connected with the necessity to main-

<sup>18</sup> Three types of attack are distinguished in the theory of this problem: fire, fire combined with a strike of military forces and penetration of the enemy object. See C. Kurowski, B. Woźniński, *Działania...*, quoted edition, p. 187.

<sup>19</sup> For more information see: Z. Pulit, *Zasady walki zbrojnej UPA w Polsce w latach 1945-1947 [UPA Military Combat Rules in Poland 1945-1947]*, WMON, Warszawa 1991 [in Polish].



tain communications between particular command levels<sup>20</sup>. If in a given area more than one tactical formation operates, it is necessary to issue cooperation guidelines and in some situations appointing one commander (formations' command) and defining subordination rules. Formations' command must be organised on a permanent or temporary basis, then only for special tasks<sup>21</sup>. During irregular warfare the basic types of communications will be radio and satellite communication<sup>22</sup>. To avoid being recognition and detection of these means of communication, one has to define the terms of communication performances and changes of keys, assign additional frequencies and ensure data transmission.

The commanders of irregular warfare formations obtain a task in the form of general directives indicating the main goal (e.g. influencing enemy communication, harassment of enemy forces) without any details related to the forms of fighting and actions. This kind of task will usually refer to a longer period of operation while the selection of objects, ways of acting and time of strike will be the responsibility of commanders of formations who will simultaneously respect the keynote idea and goal of their supervisor, the necessity to cooperate with local inhabitants, enemy activity, terrain conditions and own executive capabilities. In the case of a loss of contact with the superior level, the decision on the type of further operation will be made by the formation commander.

In connection with the fact that irregular warfare by nature is long-term, its concept cannot be a single act. Depending on the development of situation, it must be continuously supplemented and updated on the basis of the obtained reconnaissance information related not only to the enemy but also the attitude of local inhabitants who do not participate in fights. The basic problem which needs to be solved will be selection of objects and impact time as well as determining the necessary forces and means. It seems justified to plan attacking such elements of the enemy formation which when eliminated or damaged will decrease the enemy combat ability or the ones which can guarantee successful elimination with minimum losses.

After choosing the object, one should assess the predicted operation effects and their influence on the implementation of the directive received from the superior. If in the superior commander's plan it is essential to have impact on logistic columns of the

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<sup>20</sup> Organisation of communications in irregular warfare will be influenced by such factors as: size of the responsibility area and access to communication means, organisational structures of the army and independence level of particular subunits, combat conditions and possibilities (hole formation or small groups), the number of staging places.

<sup>21</sup> *Regulamin działań wojsk...*, quoted edition, pp. 181-182.

<sup>22</sup> *Regulamin działań taktycznych pododdziałów wojsk pancernych i zmechanizowanych (pluton-kompania-batalion) [Regulations of tactical operations of armour and mechanised subunits (platoon-company-battalion)]*, DWLąd. Wewn. 134/09, Warszawa 2009, p. 188. In particular situations, especially at lower command levels, a special type of ensuring communication can be liaison officers. However, this is connected with precise defining the time and place of meeting as well as a call sign. The contact points should be clearly defined and easy to locate. The call signal should be used when communicating at a short distance. Their weakness is the fact that they can be received not only by the addressee but also by the enemy.

enemy, this is exactly what should be the focus of the main efforts of irregular warfare. If the time of action was not imposed by the superior, then it is necessary to decide when the preparations for the operation have to be completed and concentrate on the precision of the developed concept.

The planning model of irregular warfare should not deviate from the one generally accepted at the tactical level. The main differences can be observed in information support procedures from the superior and neighbours as well as intensive cooperation with local people. The conclusions from the conducted exercises indicate that in the planning process of irregular warfare, one should pay special attention at gaining and updating information on<sup>23</sup>:

- strength, arms and position of enemy forces as well as their capabilities of counteraction;
- enemy objects, terrain and forces which additionally have to be reconnoitred before the operation;
- forecasted support range and the threat posed by local inhabitants;
- ways and capabilities of conducting reconnaissance;
- terrain conditions in the operation area;
- approach roads to the attacked object and departure (withdrawal) roads;
- forces and means necessary to conduct the operation;
- number, type, composition and place of security organisation;
- operations conducted by other tactical formations involved in irregular warfare in the operation area.

Answers obtained in connection with the above issues, if necessary, should be completed with additional reconnaissance information and will make a sufficient data package to start the process of planning the fight. Subsequently it will be necessary to conduct an analysis the purpose of operation, assessment of the position and time needed to prepare and conduct the operation. When defining the aim of the action, one should pay attention at the expected final condition and assess what should be done to achieve the final result with minimum losses.

During the object assessment it is necessary to determine which of its elements have to be destroyed or damaged to deprive it of its functionality (eliminate it from fight). However detailed assessment will refer not only to enemy forces directly involved in fights, but also the forces which can counteract before and after completing fights. When assessing the enemy forces predicted for participation in the direct face-off but also try to answer the following questions:

- what will be the probable distribution of enemy forces and means?
- how to achieve a surprise effect?

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<sup>23</sup> The conclusions from exercise - codename MAZURY 15, *Tactical operations in the area of forests and lakes*, during which in the structure of forces there was a territorial defence battalion which conducted imposed and not imposed irregular warfare.

- what are the possibilities of ensuring that the operation is covert?
- which firing assets of the enemy should be destroyed first?
- how many elements of the combat formation should be arranged for the operation and what force will be necessary?

On the other hand when assessing enemy forces, one should address the following questions:

- how much time do they need after receiving a signal to start counteraction?
- how big are their forces and arms?
- what are convenient ways to approach their forces?
- what effort will be needed to disorganise their formations?

The effect of the above signalled assessments and analyses should be conclusions related to the size of the formation needed to perform the task, means that they will need and the most efficient combat formation. On this basis one can calculate time whose basis is the date and hour which are the most advantageous for the performance of the operation. Next it is necessary to calculate particular ventures and in consequence define when the forces have to be ready for action.

In the process of terrain assessment one has to consider its influence on the activity of both own and enemy forces with particular. Special consideration should be given to approach and departure roads as well as masking capabilities and surprise effect. Another equally important element is the assessment of weather conditions, especially in the aspect of their influence on covert operations, obtaining the surprise effect and psychophysical stability of soldiers.

Simultaneously to the process of planning fights in the enemy formation, forces achieve readiness for action. After making a decision, the commander can present combat tasks to contractors and on their basis manage the process of achieving readiness or postpone it until the time directly preceding the beginning of fight. Undoubtedly the best variant is the former because the knowledge of the task facilitates the preparation process and task performance. However, in the case when preparations are covert, it is better to apply the latter solution. Allocation of tasks should take place in the staging area of troops where it will be possible to check if the contractors understand them (e.g. thanks to the use of mock-ups) and if need be offer precise explanations. Tasks are presented only to the troops which are going to participate in the action, the same refers to guidelines for security related to arms, explosive materials, mine and barrage resources, vehicles, food and medical aid<sup>24</sup>. If there is a necessity to start cooperation with neighbours, the way of contacting them and the basic arrange-

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<sup>24</sup> Medical aid for the wounded and ill and also the wounded in irregular warfare will be organised using mainly regular forces of the medical security section. The heavily wounded who require evacuation are grouped near landing strips and evacuated by air as soon as possible. If fights are conducted in an area inhabited by people supporting the action, medical aid can be offered by local medical facilities. For more information see: *Regulamin działań taktycznych pododdziałów...*, quoted edition, p. 190.

ments have to be defined (places to strike the enemy, ways to divert his attention from the real action aim, etc.).

An issue which deserves a separate commentary is the issue of logistic and medical security in irregular warfare. In the case of intended irregular warfare, the troops are equipped with forces and logistic facilities appropriate for the planned time and forms of combat. Combat and material assets are collected earlier and stored in prepared hiding places distributed in the area which is predicted to be given to the predicted temporary control of the enemy. In the case of imposed operations, rationing of combat and material assets is introduced, the same applies to local resources. When communication with the superior is regained (if it was broken), landing strips and drop zones are prepared, accepting helicopters with combat and material assets is organised, collecting drops is prepared. If irregular warfare is conducted directly to the benefit of operational forces, supplied for tactical formations conducting these operations can be delivered by specially organised troops<sup>25</sup>.

The possibility and the need to deliver supplies and evacuate the wounded by air confirms the growing importance of airmobile units in irregular warfare. Apart from support such formations can also perform other tasks such as<sup>26</sup>:

- weakening enemy's potential;
- interfering with the command and logistic security systems;
- reconnaissance of the distribution of fire and command positions,
- transfer of information about repositioning directions and concentration areas of enemy formations;
- blocking communication lines;
- destruction of important targets in depth of enemy formations;
- binding the enemy with fight.

A possibility to use airmobile units in irregular warfare seems to be an interesting solution, however, it is related to a number of risks. The main doubts refer to the problem of introducing such forces in depth of enemy units by air. Taking into account the fact that the enemy will have advantage and initiative, in many cases overcoming the combat contact line by helicopters will be connected with unacceptable risk level making the whole action useless from the perspective of cost-effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Irregular warfare is a complex task requiring firmness, determination, care for subordinates and constant maintenance and reproduction of fighting capability in the situation characterised by shortage of forces and assets. If tasks performed by forces involved in irregular warfare are used for the advantage of the main force, they themselves will not be the goal. Even when communication with the superior level is lost,

<sup>25</sup> *Regulamin działań wojsk...*, quoted edition, p. 182.

<sup>26</sup> For more information see: A. Kups, *Działania nieregularne w taktyce wojsk aeromobilnych [Irregular warfare in airmobile units]*, *Przegląd Wojsk Lądowych* No. 3/1999, pp. 29-31, [in Polish].

the commanders of tactical formations involved in irregular warfare will be obliged to do the task directed at the achievement of the goal indicated in the keynote idea of the superior.

The results of the conducted research indicate that in the foreseeable future the development of technology will have a significant influence on the shape of irregular warfare. Actually this refers to all problems related to conducting this type of warfare. The use of modern radio stations, drones, light reconnaissance aircrafts, remote mines used to destroy helicopters or new types of sniper rifles will increase the efficiency of forces and will have a measurable influence on the final result of the fight<sup>27</sup>. However, it should also be emphasised that the above assumption refers mainly to intended operations conducted by tactical formations which are properly trained for this purpose and appropriately equipped.

As it has been signalled before, irregular warfare can also have imposed character. Then it is not possible to apply new technologies and this fact has to be compensated by tactical astuteness of the commanders using old, already proven to be good, tactical activities in depth. This becomes especially important when it is necessary to maintain combat capability ensuring the performance of assigned tasks in the conditions of shortage of forces and assets as well as significantly limited information.

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<sup>27</sup> The latest development trends in arms and military equipment which can be used in irregular warfare were presented in: B. Pacek, P. Soroka, M. Kubiński (ed.), *Wojska Specjalne w systemie obronnym RP – aspekty organizacyjne, doktrynalne i modernizacyjne [Special forces in the defence system of the Republic of Poland – organisational, doctrinal and modernisation related aspects]*, AON, Warszawa 2013, [in Polish].

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## HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

Więcek W., (2015). Selected problems of contemporary irregular warfare. *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Lądowych im. gen. Tadeusza Kościuszki Journal of Science of the gen. Tadeusz Kosciuszko Military Academy of Land Forces*, 47 (3), pp. 138-151. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/17318157.1187464>



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