

Case study

Slovenian Territorial Defense in the Ten-Day War

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INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

In 1991, the process of disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began. The former Socialist Republics of Croatia and Slovenia were the first to announce their secession from the Federation in the last days of June. To restore the constitutional order, units of the Armed Forces of the SFR of Yugoslavia were sent to Slovenia, which faced the armed resistance of the Slovenian Territorial Defense (TO RS or TOS). In the Ten-Day War, the Federal troops, despite their numerical and technical advantage, suffered a defeat in the confrontation with the TOS subunits. Decisive for the success of Slovenian actions turned out to be the right choice of method of operation, knowledge of the combat environment, as well as high morale and support provided by the civilian population. The example of the Ten-Day War, an analysis of its course, shows that with the appropriate use of the TOS forces, they can conduct an effective fight against operational troops and be a fully-fledged component of the Armed Forces.

KEYWORDS

Territorial Defense, the Ten-Day War, Slovenia, the breakup of Yugoslavia



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Introduction

Territorial defense can be characterized as forces carrying out activities in the field of state defense and support for operational troops. An important limitation of the territorial defense idea is the possibility of using it only on the territory of the home state. These forces are created to fulfill tasks supporting the activities of operational troops. They can accomplish this task in the following ways:

- conducting reconnaissance,
- resisting enemy's strikes,
- reducing the effects of enemy hits,
- securing the mobilization development of the Armed Forces,
- protection and defense of designated facilities,
- fight against enemy subversive forces,
- fighting an enemy's airborne assaults.

On January 1, 2017, the fifth type of the Armed Forces was created in Poland – the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF, Polish: WOT). Ultimately, they are to count 50,000 soldiers. The concept of WOT assumes their connection with local communities. These forces are created by soldiers from communities that inhabit areas in Permanent Areas of Responsibility, individual tactical associations and subunits. The resulting concept provides for the creation of 17 TDF brigades – one brigade in each voivodeship and two in Mazovia. The general structure of the TDF brigade is presented in the DD doctrinal document 3.40. According to the doctrine, the model brigade in its structure has a command of three to five light infantry battalions, a command company, a logistic company, a sapper company, and a support company. The battalion, on the other hand, consists of a headquarters, three to five light infantry companies and a command, and a security platoon. However, it should be noted that the above structures are model, and the actual composition of the brigades may differ from the model one. This state of affairs is influenced by several factors, such as the area of the voivodeship in which the tactical association of the Territorial Defense Forces is formed and voivodeship demographics. Therefore, the brigade structure in each province may slightly differ in the number of light infantry battalions and the number of companies in the battalion.

Apart from the concept: “one brigade – one voivodeship”, the idea appeared to link the company with poviats – “one company – one powiat”. This method of linking subunits and soldiers with small homelands means that, in the event of a crisis or war, soldiers performing Territorial Military Service are more available, know the area of operations, and have higher morale. The mission of the Territorial Defense Forces is to provide support in defense operations to operational troops and stabilize the situation in the Republic of Poland in terms of the state of military security. The purpose of establishing a new type of Armed Forces includes:

- strengthening the potential of the Polish Armed Forces,
- providing support to operational troops,
- upholding the inviolability and indivisibility of the territory of the Republic of Poland,
- conducting activities of an irregular nature in the area under enemy occupation,
- providing support to government and local administration bodies in creating safe living conditions and developing local communities,
- supporting activities in the field of protection of civilians in the event of natural disasters and liquidation of their effects [1, p. 11-13].

Opponents of the TDF concept argue that they are insufficiently trained, and question the whole sense of the creation of this branch of Armed Forces. The dominant view among critics is that only a few highly mobile professional operational troops are effective on the contemporary battlefield. The fact that there is a need for forces capable of providing support to the operational troops, knowing the area of operations, and having contact with the local community is completely ignored. Armed conflicts have repeatedly shown that soldiers have the highest morale when they fight to protect their own families and homes. The concept of territorial defense takes this aspect into account.

In view of the concept of creating TDF troops, there is an accusation about the inability to conduct combat by territorial defense units against regular – operational troops. This is not a real opinion. Well-motivated and commanded troops, despite their imperfections, can effectively fight a stronger enemy, even taking into account a short training time and a small number of days spent on exercises during the year.

The TDF troops in Poland and in other countries are to increase the potential of the Armed Forces, support operational troops, and take an active part in combat. These forces, associated

with given regions, in the event of an armed conflict may be universal, “ubiquitous” as the forces operating throughout the country and capable of fighting the enemy in any commune or district. As a result, the potential aggressor must take into account the possibility of armed resistance in every town.

The fall of the Iron Curtain caused the collapse of the totalitarian communist system in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula. These events led to the reunification of East Germany and West Germany, the collapse of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. In the above-mentioned countries, the changes were peaceful. However, the fall of communism in Yugoslavia resulted in a bloody state disintegration. The first country to be independent was Slovenia, whose territorial defense, supported by the Police and the civilian population, defeated the majority of the regular Federal army, the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), after a ten-day war.

The study aims to show the possibilities of territorial defense units to undertake effective combat with regular armed forces units on the example of the Slovenian War of Independence, organization of the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces, the Slovenian defense plan that assumed the use of only the TOS forces supported by the Police to fight the Yugoslav People’s Army, the importance of cooperation between the TOS formation and the civilian population for the fate of the armed conflict. Conducting an analysis of the above issue may provide answers to the emerging questions regarding the possibility of using the TDF in armed combat, their effectiveness, and the ability to achieve the set goals. The aspect of planning TDF subunits’ activity is also essential. It should be assumed that the TDF will be less equipped and trained than the operational forces. That makes the planning process for TDF troops fundamental, because with the appropriate use of forces and terrain, it becomes possible, at least partially, to gain the advantage over the enemy.

1. Organization of the Slovenian Territorial Defense

The Operation Danube – the Warsaw Pact countries’ armed intervention caused by liberal reforms in Czechoslovakia – began on August 20, 1968. This event caused Yugoslavia’s confidence in the Soviet Union to decline. The authorities in Belgrade began to fear that the so-called “Titoism”¹ would be considered a significant departure from the communist idea and would require forceful correction to keep the idea in line with the Soviet pattern.

On the wave of the above events, the political and military authorities of the SFR of Yugoslavia adopted the “Doctrine of the General People’s Defense”, which assumed the creation of Territorial Defense units. It was assumed that these would be partially independent forces, established in the socialist republics and autonomous provinces that made up the Yugoslav Federation. Moreover, they were to be subordinate to the authorities of the republics and provinces. Territorial Defense became the fourth branch (next to the Land Forces, Air Force and Navy) in the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia. It was proposed that the troops would be supporting the JNA in the event of a war.

On November 20, 1968, the General Staff of the Territorial Defense of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia was established in Ljubljana. In the same year, the process of forming the first sub-units began. The Slovenian nationality dominated among the officers of the General Staff.

¹ Yugoslav version of communism; its name derives from Marshall Josip Broz Tito – the founder of this political trend.

The language used in the TOS troops was Slovenian². After Marshall Tito's death, and the increasing influence of Serbian politicians, more and more officers of Serb nationality were delegated to the General Staff. That was due to a lack of trust in the Slovenes.

In the first phase of creating the territorial defense forces, the model was based on the guerrilla structures of the Second World War. By the summer of 1969, 24 TOS troops were formed. They counted from 600 to 1500 soldiers. They consisted of 2 to 4 battalions with 3 to 5 companies. The standard battalion consisted of 380 to 490 soldiers. However, the number of companies did not exceed 100 soldiers. The companies were formed by three vods of about 30 soldiers each³ and were divided into three teams. It is worth adding that TOS units were associated with the regions in which they were formed. Typically, as for the administrative division, a unit comprised from one to three communes. In the summer of 1969, 27,826 soldiers in 215 companies served in the TOS [2, p. 33-34].

In 1974, the reform of the TOS structures began. Under the adopted Federal laws, their existing branches were reorganized. In their place, 60 Regional Territorial Defense Staffs were created, which were the equivalent of a battalion. The structure of subunits smaller than the battalion has not changed [2, p. 60-62].

The third reform of the territorial defense, not in the entire Federation but only in Slovenia, took place in the spring of 1991. On April 30, 1991, the TOS municipal headquarters were liquidated, and the following day – on May 1, Provincial and Regional Territorial Defense Staffs were formed. In the structures of the Territorial Defense of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, in May 1991, there were 7 Provincial Territorial Defense Staffs (which included a total of 26 Regional Territorial Defense Staffs). In addition, the 1st Special Brigade MORIS was formed (Table 1).

The organizational structure of the Regional Territorial Defense Staffs was as follows (the 53rd Regional Territorial Defense Staff from Logatec until September 1, 1991, was given as an example):

- Staff:
 - a) 1st reconnaissance team,
 - b) 2nd reconnaissance team,
 - c) a liaison team,
 - d) a protection platoon,
 - e) a security platoon,
- “Lokacija Logatec” (a company):
 - a) a subversive platoon,
 - b) a counter-subversive platoon,
 - c) the 46th Independent Platoon Rovte,
 - d) the 41st independent territorial defense platoon,
 - e) the 42nd independent territorial defense platoon,
 - f) the 43rd independent territorial defense platoon,
 - g) the 44th territorial defense unit “Logatec” (from June 29, 1991),
 - h) the Strela-2M infantry unit (from June 29, 1991),

² The language used was the dominant language in a given republic or autonomous province, similarly in the Serbian Territorial Defense – Serbian, the Macedonian Territorial Defense – Macedonian, etc.

³ Vod – in the military nomenclature of Yugoslavia and the successive countries, the name of a subunit, equivalent to a platoon; in addition, the company is referred to in the above nomenclature as “Četa”.

Table 1. The organizational structure of the Slovenian Territorial Defense in 1991 before the hostilities started

Staff of the Coordination of Special Operations	Staff of the Territorial Defense of Slovenia
2 Provincial* Territorial Defense Staff (Novo Mesto): – 21 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (OT) (Novo Mesto), – 23 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Črnomelj), – 25 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Brežice), – 27 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Ribnica)	3 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Kranj): – 31 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Kranj), – 33 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Radovljica), – 35 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Škofja Loka)
4 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Postojna): – 41 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Cerkljica), – 43 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Izola), – 45 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Sežan)	5 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Ljubljana): – 51 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Ljubljana), – 53 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Logatec), – 55 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Domžale), – 57 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Grosuplje)
6 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Nova Gorica): – 61 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Nova Gorica), – 63 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Tolmin)	7 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Maribor): – 71 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Maribor), – 73 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Ljutomer), – 75 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Murska Sobota), – 77 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Ptuj), – 79 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Slovenska Bistrica)
8 Provincial Territorial Defense Staff (Celje): – 81 Regional Territorial Defense Staff T (Žalec), – 83 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Slovenj Gradec), – 85 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Slovenske Konjice), – 87 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Trbovlje), – 89 Regional Territorial Defense Staff (Velenje)	1 st Special Brigade MORIS (Kočevska Reka)

* The Slovenian word "Pokrajinski" can be translated into Polish as provincial, territorial.

Source: Own elaboration based on: [3, p. 431-434].

- „Lokacija Vrhnik” (a battalion):
 - a) a subversive platoon,
 - b) a counter-subversive platoon,
 - c) a protection platoon,
 - d) a protection company,
 - e) an independent company Laze,
 - f) the 531st territorial defense company,
 - g) the Strela-2M infantry unit (from June 29, 1991) [4, p. 57, 95].

From the moment of forming TOS units in Slovenia, the service in them was popular among the inhabitants of the Republic of Slovenian nationality. The TOS soldiers were treated with respect as they saw them not as servants of Yugoslavia, but as servants of Slovenia. The soldiers perceived their service in the same way. They did not feel like soldiers of the Yugoslav People's Army (formally the TOS troops of the republics and autonomous provinces constituted the fourth branch of the JNA), but they were soldiers of the informal Slovenian army.

On the eve of the Ten-Day War, on June 25, 13,103 soldiers served in the TOS. Particularly noteworthy is the rapid pace of the mobilization of the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces in the face of the opportunity to win independence. Within less than six days, the number of Territorial Defense troops increased by 249%, to 32,624 soldiers [5, p. 47] (Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in numeric strength of the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces from June 25 to July 08, 1991 (The Ten-Day War)

Period	June 25	June 26	June 29	June 30	July 1	July 3	July 4	July 5	July 8
Number of the TOS soldiers	13103	16567	19135	27581	32624	27666	30519	33845	28888

Source: Own elaboration based on: [5, p. 47].

When writing about the TOS troops, one should mention the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the summer and fall of 1990, the friction between the Slovenian government and the Serb-dominated Federal government was increasing. The authorities in Belgrade did not trust the new authorities in Ljubljana, who came from the democratic opposition. Therefore, the leadership of the Yugoslav People's Army decided to confiscate the weapons of the Territorial Defense troops and transfer them to the JNA barracks and take control of the Republican Staff of the Territorial Defense Forces of Slovenia. In response to the above-mentioned actions, a secret paramilitary organization was established in Ljubljana – Manevrska Struktura Narodne Zaščite (MSNZ)⁴, which was to take over the role of the General Staff of the TOS. It recognized the sovereignty of the new democratic government of the Republic. Some of the TOS officers simultaneously served in the Republican Staff of the OT RS controlled by the JNA and in the underground Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The secret staff dealt mainly with the creation of defense plans in the event of a military intervention by the SFR of Yugoslavia and the analysis of the obtained intelligence data [6]. One of the greatest successes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the subjugation of all TOS units and the People's Militia. The structures ceased to exist on October 3, 1990, by decision of the Secretary of the Interior of the SR of Slovenia, Igor Bavcar, and were incorporated into the structures of the Republican Territorial Defense Staff, which was subordinated to the authorities in Ljubljana on September 28. Besides, the later general, Janez Slapar, was appointed Chief of Staff.

2. The genesis of the conflict

Slovenia is a country bordering Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Italy on the north. Additionally, in the western part of the country it has little access to the Adriatic Sea. Slovenia is classified as a Slavic nation, and Slovenes as a South Slavic nation. Historically and culturally, they are

⁴ MSNZ – Manevrska Struktura Narodne Zaščite, can be translated into Polish as Maneuvering Structures of National Defense.

associated with the influences of Western European culture (Austrian and Italian influences). Slovenia is associated with the Balkans as it was one of the republics that made up the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in the past. Before World War II, after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, it co-founded the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS) established in 1918 and renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia⁵ on January 6, 1929. The Slovenes, although administratively assigned to Yugoslavia, never felt a bond with the “state of southern Slavs”. That was due to the feeling of national identity and their own distinctiveness, which Slovenes had to a greater extent than, for example, Macedonians or Montenegrins.

On April 17, 1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated to Germany, the country was divided into occupation zones, and the “puppet” Independent State of Croatia was created and it collaborated with Germany and Italy. It was headed by the leader of Ustasha, Ante Pavelić. At the turn of April and May 1941, the formation of the first anti-Nazi partisan units began. The struggle against the occupant began on a large scale in September 1941, when partisans of the communist National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia liberated mountainous areas around the city of Užice in Serbia. That initially small group of guerrillas by the end of 1941 turned into a group of about 80,000 resistance movement soldiers. When the war in the Balkans ended, the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia could count up to 800,000 soldiers. Moreover, Yugoslavia was the only country in Europe that liberated itself.

After the end of hostilities and the proclamation of the creation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the head of the state was taken Josip Broz Tito – the commander of the victorious partisan forces and the leader of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia, who ruled until his death on May 4, 1980.

After Marshall Tito died, Yugoslavia began to plunge into crisis. In the early 1980s, tensions began between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. An anti-Albanian propaganda campaign was launched in the Socialist Republic (SR) of Serbia, and in Kosovo Albanians began persecuting Serbs. In 1981-82, there were student protests. In the second half of the 1980s, a political and economic crisis developed into social problems. At the summits of power, there was a struggle for control over the party and the Presidium of Yugoslavia between representatives of the constituent republics of the state. The economic crisis was manifested by a decline in GDP, an increase in debt, a decline in the value of the Yugoslav dinar, and collapses of state-owned enterprises.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the leaders of the SR of Slovenia and the SR of Croatia, as well as the opposition forces, noticed that the socialist system was beginning to collapse. In both republics, the demands for reform of the SFR of Yugoslavia or secession and the proclamation of independent states were gaining popularity. In autumn 1989, the authorities of the Slovenian SR allowed opposition groups to legally participate in public life. The Croatian authorities in Zagreb decided to take a similar step. Slovenian politicians began to increasingly demand Federal reforms. They called for the transformation of Yugoslavia into a confederation, the authorities of individual republics would exercise real power in the administered area. The authorities of the Belgrade confederation would be responsible for foreign, defense, and customs policy.

Moreover, it was postulated to democratize the political and social life of Yugoslavia, as well as to open the economy to capitalism [7, p. 7]. Between 20 and 22 January 1990, an extraordinary convention of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia took place. Bosniaks,

⁵ Yugoslavia – the idea of the state of united South Slavic nations.

Croats and Macedonians joined the Slovenian reform plans. The idea of a confederation was firmly rejected by Serbs, so Slovenes left the debating chamber, and the party's congress was broken. It led to the break-up of the party – the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and the Federation.

The first multi-party free elections to the Assembly of the Republic took place in Slovenia on April 8, 1990. The victory was won by the coalition of opposition parties DEMOS, which won the majority in parliament and formed the government. In the following months, the pro-democratic forces gained victories in the SR of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the SR of Croatia. In the mid-1990s, the independence forces in the constituent republics of Yugoslavia began to speak more and more loudly about the need for self-determination of nations and about the end of the idea of a common state of the southern Slavs. Only the SR of Montenegro and the SR of Serbia, still ruled by local communist parties, sought to maintain the Federation.

After the unexpected victory of the opposition in the Slovenian elections and the appointment of Milan Kučan the Chairman of the Presidium of the Republic, the Federal government in Belgrade began planning a possible military intervention. The seizure of power by the opposition demanding changes in Yugoslavia and even the independence of the republic was interpreted as a threat to the existence of the state. In addition, similar views to Slovenes were expressed by Croats, and aspirations for self-determination began to appear also in the SR of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the SR of Macedonia. The Republic's authorities in Ljubljana, aware of Belgrade's dissatisfaction with the outcome of the elections and Slovenia's aspirations, began to consider the possibility of a forceful attempt by the Federal government to subjugate the "rebellious" republic. The response to this threat was the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia on September 28, 1990, which provided for the transfer of command of the Republic's Territorial Defense Forces in the event of a crisis or war to the Presidium of the Republic (i.e., the Chairman of the Presidium, Milan Kučan).

In February 1991, talks that proved decisive for the future of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took place. The summit was to discuss the future of the Federal state, its problems and attempts to overcome them together. However, the leader of the Croatian SR, Franjo Tuđman, did not arrive, and the Chairman of the Slovenian SR Presidium left the meeting after the first day. The talks did not bring a breakthrough, and the same month the parliamentary assemblies of the SR Slovenia and the SR Croatia adopted amendments to the constitution that allowed for secession from the Federation. Another blow to the SFR of Yugoslavia was Slobodan Milosevic's, the leader of the SR Serbia, statement in March 1991, when he announced the non-recognition of Federal authorities.

However, the most important events for the fate of the Federation took place on December 23, 1990, and June 25, 1991. On December 23, 1990, Slovenes voted for independence in an independence referendum (95.71% voted in favor). Six months later, the Croatian SR and the Slovenian SR declared independence [7, p. 7].

3. The course of the conflict

The Slovenian declaration of independence provoked a reaction from the government in Belgrade, which decided to subjugate the republic by force, and a decision was made to move the units of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) stationed in garrisons on the territory of Slovenia from the barracks, and introduce troops from the Croatian SR. The Slovenian leadership previously considered the possibility of the military secession of their country, and in

April 1991 a defense doctrine was enacted. The document contained guidelines on how to conduct the struggle.

Being aware of the insufficient equipment, training, and numerical superiority of the Federal forces, Slovenes made the following assumptions:

- hostilities would be asymmetric,
- Territorial Defense units are to carry out guerrilla operations,
- frequent ambushes,
- channeling the enemy's movement⁶,
- using the area to minimize the technical and numerical advantage of the Yugoslav troops,
- widespread use of MANPADS, anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), and anti-tank grenade launchers by territorial defense units,
- using the "Hit and Run" tactic,
- blocking of the JNA units in barracks located in the territory of Slovenia,
- attacking Federal forces throughout the country to prevent the concentration of forces,
- construction of barricades on local and main roads to prevent the maneuver and delay the march of the JNA,
- taking control of border crossings with Austria, Hungary and Italy, establishing border posts with Croatia and taking control of the Brnik airport near Ljubljana.

On the other hand, the intervention plan of the Yugoslav People's Army was based primarily on:

- taking troops out of the garrisons organized in Slovenia to the streets,
- the seizure of the Territorial Defense command centers and training of,
- preventing the concentration of Slovenian forces, attempting to disarm small groups of soldiers,
- maintaining control over border crossings with Austria, Hungary and Italy, as well as the Brnik airport near Ljubljana to isolate the republic from the outside world,
- the capture of the border between the Slovenian SR to prevent any possible cooperation between secessionists,
- besides, a tactic was developed to reflect border crossings at the hands of Slovenes:
 - a) demanding surrender of the border crew,
 - b) the threat of opening fire,
 - c) firing near border crossing buildings,
 - d) firing at the border crossing infrastructure [8].

The second part of the JNA intervention plan assumed the introduction to Slovenia of part of the forces of the 10th, 13th, and 32nd Corps stationed in the territory of the Croatian SR. The Federal troops were to push in the following (main) directions:

- Karlovac – Ljubljana – Jesenice,
- Varaždin – Ormož – Gornja Radgona (the border crossing with Austria),

⁶ Canalizing – a tactical task in which the commander limits the enemy's movements to a narrow area by skillful use of the terrain combined with the use of dams, fire, and a maneuver of own forces.

- Maribor – Šentilj (the border crossing with Austria),
- Maribor – Dravograd,
- Vrhnika – Brnik,
- Postojna – Ajdovščina – Nova Gorica (the border crossing with Italy) [9, p. 45-46].

Although the war began on June 27, 1991, the first clashes took place the day before. On June 26, the armored column of the 13th JNA Corps crossed the border between Croatia and Slovenia and began marching towards the border crossings with Italy. The main goal was to master the transition in Nova Gorica, the largest border crossing between the disintegrating SFR of Yugoslavia and Italy. Yugoslav soldiers encountered resistance, the civilians, seeing the beginning of the intervention, started building barricades along the paths of the JNA march. The idea turned out to be right, thanks to the blockades the advancing troops were delayed. Within a dozen or so hours, the news of the effectiveness of delaying the enemy with the help of barricades spread throughout the Republic, and soon they were built everywhere.

On June 27 at 1:15 a.m. a battery from the 306th anti-aircraft regiment in Karlovac crossed the Croatian-Slovenian border at Metlica (Fig. 1). In the morning, some of the JNA units stationed in the Slovenian garrisons left the barracks and began implementing the intervention plan. At 2:40 a.m., a tank battalion from the 1st Armored Brigade set out from the barracks in Vrhnika to capture the capital international airport Brnik. The march was delayed by barricades created by civilians. The battalion moved in two columns: the first – along the highway and the Ljubljana ring road, and the other – along the main road. The first elements of the battalion reached the airport at about 5:00. At about 6:00 p.m. Federal forces positions were attacked by the TOS troops. In the afternoon, Slovenian soldiers stopped a column of armored personnel carriers on their way to Ljubljana, using a barricade, in the village of Medvedjek. In Trzin, the JNA tank battalion left three armored personnel carriers, which were reinforced with a commando unit. In the evening, there was a clash between Federal soldiers, the TOS troops and the Police, and four Yugoslav and one Slovenian soldiers were killed. The JNA soldiers surrendered, the commando unit withdrew and on the next day it was disarmed by the TOS subunit.

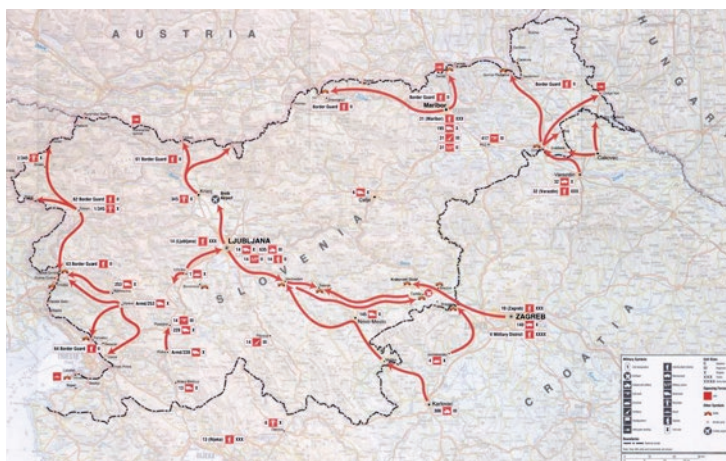


Fig. 1. Directions of the attack of the Yugoslav People's Army
Source: [10].

In the east of Slovenia, in Maribor, a tank group of 10 vehicles left the barracks and was directed to Šentilj (the border crossing with Austria). The second group, consisting of 5 tanks and 10 armored vehicles, was advancing towards Dravograd. The column heading towards Šentilj was stopped by a barricade in Pesnica. Federal soldiers tried to destroy it by shelling. These forces were attacked by the TOS soldiers at about 5:00.

In addition to the above-mentioned, the TOS troops attacked armored and mechanized columns (advancing from Rijeka) in Kosezy near Ilirska Bistrica and in Ormož (on the border with Croatia), where the 32nd Mechanized Brigade advancing from Varaždin tried unsuccessfully to break the resistance of Slovenes all day long and enter the territory of the Republic. In the evening hours, the TOS soldiers managed to shoot down two helicopters, one over Ljubljana, the other over Ig.

On the first day, the Yugoslav People's Army, despite Slovenian resistance, managed to complete most of the tasks set. The Brnik airport was captured and most of the border crossings were taken. However, the JNA did not manage to avoid the initiation of military operations and further escalation of the conflict [8].

On the night of June 27-28, the Slovenian Ministry of Defense ordered offensive actions against the Yugoslav forces. In addition, a recommendation was issued to try to force the enemy to surrender and seize their equipment. Throughout the night, soldiers and civilians erected and strengthened the existing barricades. In addition, the TOS kept increasing their number. From the moment of the invasion, reservists and volunteers were adjoining the TOS units.

On June 28, the most severe fighting took place in the east of Slovenia. At about 7:00 in Pesnica, a group of tanks of the Federal troops removed the barricade that blocked its march towards the border crossing in Šentilj for several hours. However, in the next two towns, Ranca and Kaniža, these forces encountered more blockades, and after overcoming them at about 10:30 a.m., they were stopped by an ambush of the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces and the Police at the defense barricade in Štrihovec (4 km from Šentilj). Soon, Yugoslav planes appeared in the sky to carry out a raid on the barricade and Slovenian forces. At about 1:30 p.m., the raid was repeated, then the tanks bypassed the barricade, but after a while they came across another obstacle.

In Limbuš, on the outskirts of Maribor, the TOS soldiers attacked a subunit of JNA tanks. In Gibin, on the border with Croatia, the Territorial Defense troops stopped a column of Federal troops moving along the road towards Murska Sobota. There were also fights in the vicinity of Dravograd. The Yugoslav armored and mechanized group advancing from Maribor was stopped in the suburbs of Dravograd by the TDF soldiers using a barricade at about 2:30 a.m. One Slovenian soldier was killed during the fighting. During the day, Territorial Defense units attacked the Bukovje barracks near Dravograd, where Federal troops were stationed. At 5:30 a.m., the TOS supported by the Police began attacking Holmec, the border crossing with Austria. After the fight that lasted until the early afternoon hours, Slovenes took the facility. Two policemen and three Yugoslav soldiers lost lives, and 91 soldiers surrendered.

There were no major fights in the central part of the country. At about 10:00 in Medvedjek, soldiers of the Territorial Defense attacked a column of Federal troops. The Yugoslav air force carried out raids on, among others, the Brnik airport (two Austrian journalists were killed in the raid), Murska Sobota and simulated assaults on Dravograd and TV transmitters in Krim, Kum, and Nanos. The Territorial Defense Forces attacked the JNA weapons warehouse in Borovnica, which translated into an improvement in the equipment condition of the Slovenes.

In addition, Slovenian soldiers launched attacks against the Yugoslav barracks in Škofja Loka and the warehouses in Drulovka, and the monitoring station in Rožnik was seized.

In the western part of Slovenia, the most intense fights took place over the border crossing in Rožna Dolina (near Nova Gorica) with Italy. At about 6:00, the Territorial Defense soldiers attacked the JNA soldiers guarding the border. The clash ensued, Slovenes obtained support from the civilian population, and with the use of anti-tank weapons, the Slovenian assault units destroyed two T-55 tanks. After a short but intense fight, the Yugoslav soldiers surrendered. Three JNA soldiers were killed, 16 injured, and 98 surrendered. Moreover, Slovenes seized large amounts of military equipment. Interestingly, civilians were actively involved in the process of disarming Federal forces and escorting prisoners [8].

At 9:00 p.m., the Yugoslav People's Army announced a ceasefire. That move was dictated by a significant deterioration in the situation of Federal forces in Slovenia. Most of the gains on the first day of the war were still under their control, but the JNA units were under attack by the Slovenes. The JNA command system was paralyzed by attacks by the Territorial Defense. Moreover, soldiers of Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian nationalities were deserting the army. The morale of the troops was dropping due to the defeats and the omnipresence of the TOS troops.

On the night of June 28-29, 1991, representatives of the European Community met with representatives of the SFR of Yugoslavia and Slovenia in Zagreb to stop hostilities. An agreement was reached, but its provisions were so ambiguous that they never entered into force.

While diplomatic talks were underway, units of the TOS troops surrounded the Brnik airport near Ljubljana. In the morning, the JNA soldiers and policemen laid down their weapons, seeing how bad the situation they found themselves in was. In the central part of the country, the fighting took place near Škofja Loka. Again, the toughest fights were in the east of Slovenia. A group of Federal tanks that attacked the Šentilj border crossing on the third day was again stopped by a barricade outside Štrihovec (approx. 3 km from the border). In the effect of a clash with TOS soldiers, the Federal forces surrendered. Ten tanks were taken over by Slovenes, who repainted the markings on the hulls and, in the afternoon, they formed a company of tanks for the Territorial Defense. In Hrvatini, there was an attempted amphibious assault by the JNA special forces unit. The commandos' goal was to gain an outpost and capture the coastal border section with Italy. However, that attempt was thwarted by Slovenes. Another significant military success of the TOS was the capture of the Vrtojba border crossing (with Italy), where, in addition to taking about 150 Yugoslav soldiers, large amounts of military equipment, including 7 tanks, were seized. An interesting fact is that the JNA soldiers surrendered without a fight, and the object was taken without even a single shot.

The command of the Yugoslav People's Army sent an ultimatum to the Slovenian authorities demanding that hostilities be suspended until June 30 (9:00 a.m.). The demands were rejected [8].

On June 30, there were no major clashes. The most important events were the capture of the Karawanken tunnel under the Alps (border with Austria) by the TOS soldiers. In addition, the JNA garrison besieged in the barracks capitulated in Dravograd, and 416 soldiers surrendered. Slovenes took over a lot of weapons. The barracks in Tolmin and Bovec also surrendered that day. Near Nova Gorica, on the border with Italy, the TOS soldiers seized nine tanks, from which a tank company was formed. At 9 o'clock, the alarm sirens sounded to warn of the raid. The Yugoslav Air Force took off from bases in Croatia and made air strikes on targets in

Slovenia; however, after crossing the border, the planes, for unknown reasons, turned back over Croatian territory [8; 9, p. 55].

On the night of July 1, there was an explosion of a weapons warehouse in Crni Vrh where the weapons of the TOS troops were stored. In the morning, Slovenes took over the weapons warehouses in Pečovnik, Bukovžlak, and Zaloška Gorica. In Nova Vas there was a clash between the Territorial Defense Forces and the Federal forces. The JNA watchtower was conquered. Yugoslav helicopters with Red Cross markings appeared in the sky, but they did not help the injured JNA soldiers, but provided supplies for units in the most difficult situation. A clash began in the central part of the country, in Medvedjek, which had a significant impact on the fate of the war. From the beginning of hostilities, fights between Federal troops and the TOS units continued in the village. The column of the 306th Anti-Aircraft Defense Regiment was still blocked by a barricade. During the night, the command decided to withdraw the unit from the exposed position and occupy a more convenient position near the Croatian border. The JNA soldiers removed the barricade on the highway and began marching towards Brežice. Federal forces were again stopped by a barricade in the Krakovski Gozd forest [8]. Then, the Slovenian forces surrounded the column. The JNA column tried to break the lap ring, but the failed and the Yugoslav commander called for air support. The J-21 Jastreb attack aircraft appeared over the forest. The raid did not change the position of the Federal forces. Due to the impossibility of maneuvering the vehicles, the Commander of the column, Maj. Prodanović, ordered the vehicles to be abandoned and to go on foot towards the border with Croatia to the barracks in Jastrebarsko. On July 2, the soldiers of Major Prodanović were surrounded by a unit of the Slovenian Police near the village of Planina (about 1 km from the Croatian border). After short negotiations, the Yugoslav soldiers laid down their arms.

In response to the failures of the Federal troops in Slovenia, the Minister of Defense of the SFR of Yugoslavia, Army General, Veljko Kadijević, reported to the state authorities that the JNA's first plan (taking over border crossings, strategic points, and disarming the TOS troops) had failed and a full-scale military intervention should begin with the establishment of a transitional military authority in Slovenia. The Presidium of Yugoslavia rejected the military proposal, and a decision was made to continue the undertaken activities.

On July 2, fighting continued near the Krakovski Gozd forest. A mechanized battalion from the 4th Armored Brigade set out to help the encircled soldiers from Jastrebarsko. After crossing the border, it came under the fire of the Slovenian troops. Thanks to the use of appropriate tactics, Slovenes canalized the Federal troops' movement and directed them to a rural road near the village of Prilipe, straight into an ambush. The battalion was stopped by a barricade, and the TOS soldiers opened fire. The M-84 tank was destroyed with anti-tank weapons. In addition, the Yugoslav Commander was hit by a sniper shot. After the loss of the Commander, panic broke out in the battalion, none of the officers wanted to take command. The battalion withdrew chaotically to Croatia.

At 1:30 p.m., Slovenes, supported by a tank subunit, launched an assault on the border crossing in Šentilj. After a brief firefight, the JNA soldiers retreated. At 4:15 p.m., there was the TOS subunits' assault on the Gornja Radgona border crossing. The defenders had tanks and air support. Slovenian soldiers captured the Loznica and Prule weapons warehouses and the logistics base in Rajhenav. Yugoslav aviation carried out raids on communication stations in Nanos, Kum, and Domžale. The barricades in Catez and Krakovski Gozda were also fired upon. From 3:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., a mechanized column of Federal forces attacked Dravograd. The attack was repulsed by the TOS soldiers. The JNA armored column left the barracks in Vrhnika

and headed for Ljubljana, but was blocked. By the end of the day, the border crossings with Italy, Fernetici and Gorjansko, were in Slovene hands.

At 9:00 p.m., the Presidium of the Republic of Slovenia announced a unilateral ceasefire. The decision was motivated by the collapse of the Yugoslav People's Army offensive. Belgrade rejected the suspension of the fighting, the Chief of the General Staff of the JNA, Gen. Blagoje Adžić, threatened to break the resistance of Slovenes [9, p. 60-62].

On July 3, the armored and mechanized division set off from Belgrade towards Slovenia. It never reached its destination, officially, due to numerous technical failures of the equipment. In the morning, Slovenian soldiers surrounded the Yugoslavs, who had withdrawn from Šentilj the day before. Fifty soldiers surrendered without a fight. Near Videm ob Scavnici, the TOS soldiers attacked and stopped the march of the mechanized column on Gornja Radgona. In the afternoon, Yugoslavia agreed to conclude a ceasefire with Slovenia in the result of the complete collapse of the offensive and the breakdown of Federal forces in the Republic [8; 9, p. 62].

On July 4, there were no more fighting. The Yugoslav troops began to withdraw to the barracks and to Croatian territory. Blocked mechanized columns in the vicinity of the Brnik, Dravograd, and Gornja Radgona airfields received permission to withdraw to the Slovenian-Croatian border.

On Sunday, 7 July 1991, representatives of Slovenia, Croatia, the SFR of Yugoslavia, and the European Community met on the peace agreements in the Brijuni Islands. During the session, the Declaration was adopted, which provided for:

- ending the fighting between the Yugoslav People's Army and the Territorial Defense Forces of the Republic of Slovenia,
- the recognition that the Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces and Police are sovereign formations under the authority of the Slovenian authorities,
- Slovenia's commitment to delay by three months its formal secession from the SFR of Yugoslavia,
- control over border crossings with Austria, Croatia, Hungary, and Italy by the Slovenian border services,
- the commitment of the SFR of Yugoslavia to the complete withdrawal of its troops from the territory of Slovenia into the interior of the Federation by the end of October 1991 (the last soldiers left Slovenia in the port of Koper on the night of October 25-26),
- the recognition of Slovenia's demands to leave most of the military equipment of the Federal forces in the newly created republic, the weapons left behind were seized by the Territorial Defense units, and some sold to the remaining Yugoslav republics [11].

It is estimated that 19 Slovenian soldiers and policemen were killed and 182 injured during the operations. On the other hand, the losses of the Yugoslav People's Army amounted to 44 killed and 146 wounded. In addition, 4,693 federal troops and 252 members of the People's Militia were taken prisoner. Twelve foreigners died in the effect of hostilities. During the war, there were approximately 70 armed clashes, mostly small skirmishes between the parties [8].

Conclusions

One of the assumptions in favor of the creation of the Territorial Defense Forces in the Armed Forces of the SFR of Yugoslavia was the involvement of the entire society in the defense of

the common Federation. It was presumed that the SFRY society had sufficiently large potential so that the TOS troops, together with the operational forces, would be able to ensure the ability to independently repel possible military aggression on the territory of the state. While the Yugoslav conception can be considered correct, the reality verified the above plans. The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia were dominated by Serbian views on the future of the state, that is, focus on maintaining territorial integrity at all costs. On the other hand, the TOS troops were to some extent autonomous from the political and military authorities in Belgrade. In the TOS, the inhabitants of the given republics were on duty, so they were, in a sense, “national”.

The events of the turn of the 1980s and 1990s led to the break-up of Yugoslavia, which began in 1991 with the secession of the Slovak SR from the Federation. The Slovenian Territorial Defense Forces became the official Armed Forces of the newly formed state, declaring obedience to the supreme command of the Yugoslav People’s Army in Belgrade. These forces took up the fight against the regular JNA units sent to suppress the Slovenes’ independence aspirations. The resistance of the TOS soldiers supported by Slovenian militia/police officers and the civilian population led to an unexpected breakdown of government forces. Despite their numerical and technological advantage, the Yugoslav forces were beaten. That was due to various factors, such as the right choice of tactics, which eliminated the advantage of the opponent, knowledge and ability to use the topography, and high morale among soldiers and civilians.

An additional factor influencing the outcome of the war was the collapse of morale among Yugoslav soldiers. The “omnipresence” of Slovenian soldiers had a significant influence on them. The Slovenian Territorial Defense units were organized in all municipalities in the territory of Slovenia, therefore JNA soldiers encountered resistance in even the smallest towns. Moreover, the maneuver of the Federal forces was forbidden by the barricades built by civilians on national, regional, and communal roads.

The course of the Ten-Day War has shown that the Territorial Defense Forces can be involved in combat with units of operational troops. However, to be effective, several conditions must be met, e.g.:

- choosing the right tactics,
- precise knowledge of the area of operation,
- recognition of enemy forces and direction of attack,
- attempting to prevent the maneuver of enemy troops,
- proper use of the terrain and natural obstacles (forests, rivers, mountains, etc.),
- cooperation of OT troops with public order services,
- obtaining support from the civilian population.

The Ten-Day War is a unique armed conflict, as the TDF forces defeated the larger and better-equipped regular troops – the JNA. This victory allowed Slovenia to gain independence and ushered in the break-up of the Yugoslav SFR. The Slovenian War can serve as a reference point in the context of work on the concept of using the TDF forces. The Slovenian example showed that with the above-mentioned factors, the TDF troops are able to engage in an equal fight with units of operational troops. With proper use of these forces, they can significantly strengthen the defense potential of operational troops.

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The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Słoweńska Obrona Terytorialna w wojnie dziesięciodniowej

STRESZCZENIE

W 1991 roku rozpoczęty został proces rozpadu Socjalistycznej Federacyjnej Republiki Jugosławii. Jako pierwsze w ostatnich dniach czerwca secesję z federacji ogłosiły

dotychczasowe Socjalistyczne Republiki Chorwacji oraz Słowenii. W celu przywrócenia ładu konstytucyjnego, do Słowenii zostały skierowane jednostki SZ SFR Jugosławii, które napotkały na zbrojny opór słoweńskiej Obrony Terytorialnej. W trwającej dziesięć dni wojnie, wojska federalne, mimo przewagi liczebnej oraz technicznej, poniosły porażkę w konfrontacji z pododdziałami OT. Decydujące dla powodzenia działań słoweńskich okazały się właściwy dobór sposobu działania, znajomość środowiska walki oraz wysokie morale i wsparcie udzielane przez ludność cywilną. Przykład wojny dziesięciodniowej, analiza jej przebiegu, pokazuje, że przy odpowiednim wykorzystaniu sił OT, mogą one prowadzić skuteczną walkę przeciwko wojskom operacyjnym oraz być pełnowartościowym komponentem sił zbrojnych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE Obrona Terytorialna, wojna dziesięciodniowa, Słowenia, rozpad Jugosławii

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