Once again about Fighting with Asymmetric Threats Based on the Example of Fight with Subversion

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Abstract. The article presents the most important issues related to fighting with asymmetric threats. The issues are introduced in the context of undertaken counter-subversive activities. A crucial element of the discussion is that the actions and their properties are presented in the form of an open set, which might be used for training purposes by forces using subversion. Such an assumption led the author to introduce the problem followed by methods and characteristics of fighting with subversion. These were the bases for presenting basic problems related to the description of counter-subversive activities and protective and defensive measures. In the further part of the article the author describes kinds and manners of counter-subversion highlighting the indicators of their effectiveness and interrelations between them. The article finishes with conclusions which synthesize the assumptions and particular parts of the article.

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Introduction

Armed conflicts have always been the most dramatic experience in the history of mankind. Having been aware of the fact that there is a possibility of starting a war at any time, as this is an inherent attribute of every state, everyone had to be prepared to fight in a war either as an aggressor or as a defender. The key element of preparation among the defenders was coming to a situation in which a potential opponent would resign from the attack as he would be discouraged by the potential loses and costs of war. The preparation phase is called "preparation for defence". This term is closely related to the term "defence". A country's defence is a value which entails creating safe conditions for the state in time of peace and makes it possible to defend against armed attacks. Defence is one of the key elements of basic state interests, which are undoubtedly our common good. Concern for our common good requires citizens to be burdened with responsibility which will turn out to be necessary to ensure the state security. This is connected with taking some specific responsibilities in case of threat to the state's independence and restrictions, which are justified in time of peace to ensure the proper functioning of public administration and preparations for the purposes of defense.¹ Preparation to defend

¹ Paździor M, Konstytucyjne organy administracji publicznej właściwe w sprawach bezpieczeństwa narodowego, [in:] Piątek Z, Wiśniewski B, Osierda A (Eds), Administracja publiczna a bezpieczeństwo państwa. Papers from a scientific seminar organized by the Faculty of Administration at the School of Administration in Bielsko-Biała and the Department

the state against an armed attack covers many different issues. Their level is high enough only when some basic requirements are met, such as: peaceful foreign policy, full legal regulations, appropriate financial expenditure on defence, promoting the knowledge about security and the scientific exploration of the effective measures against threats caused by armed conflicts. The experience of the last few years has shown that more and more often we deal with issues concerning effective opposition against asymmetric threats, subversion included.

In order to ensure the highest level of defence potential, Poland "(...) aims to optimally balance its needs in terms of defence and its social and economic capabilities. The national defence-related needs are determined taking into account Poland's current and anticipated political and strategic position in Europe and the predicted development of the international status quo. Additionally, in terms of the alliance block, Poland's border-like location in the area of NATO responsibilities is also of great importance.

In contemporary military conflicts, a significant role is played by so-called special operations, which are closely related to asymmetric threats. Among the above mentioned operations, subversion is of incredible importance. This is the reason why there is now a growing interest in such operations. Although subversion is not a new method of operation, recognition of its effectiveness requires that the theoretical aspect of engaging in subversion needs to be dealt with.²

It is beyond any doubt that the main perpetrator of sabotage is forces designed for special operations³, who are now "experiencing a real renaissance. This definitely comes as a result of the needs expressed by the modern world with regard to addressing crisis situations and all kinds of conflicts, which are most frequently (but not only) of small intensity and of an encroaching nature. If special operations are to be an effective way of eliminating this kind of social and international tensions, one should think about their role and position not only in the present-day armed struggle but also in contemporary international relations, as well as think about their definition and content, which — as it seems — are still of a rather fluid nature."⁴

Preparation to defend the state against an armed attack covers many different issues. Their level is high enough only when some basic requirements are met, such as: peaceful foreign policy, full legal regulations, appropriate financial expenditure on defence, promoting the knowledge about security and the scientific exploration of the effective measures against threats caused by armed conflicts. The experience

of Administration and Mobilization in the Institute of National Security at the Faculty of Strategy and Defence at the Academy of National Defence in Warsaw of 6 December 2006, Bielsko-Biała 2006, p. 108 cited from: a verdict of Constitutional Tribunal of 25 November 2003 (ref. no. Akt K 37/02, OTK-A 2003/9/96).

² For preparing the article the author widely used: Wiśniewski B, Cechy prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych, [in:] Jakubczak R, Wiśniewski B (Eds), Właściwości dywersji i jej zwalczania. Zarys problemu. Warsaw: DZKiSO MSWiA, 2006, pp. 58–78.

³ More: Jakubczak R, Wiśniewski B, Wprowadzenie, [in:] Jakubczak R, Wiśniewski B (Eds), Właściwości dywersji..., *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁴ Hermann H, Działania specjalne w wojnach i konfliktach zbrojnych po drugiej wojnie światowej. *Zeszyty naukowe AON*, 2004, no. 3(56)A, p. 30.

of the last few years has shown that more and more often we deal with issues concerning effective opposition against asymmetric threats, subversion included.

"Analysis of armed conflicts and threat conditions proves that developing the principles of use of armed forces involves, among others, an area of so-called "special operations". The strategies of a great number of countries include extending beyond the traditional framework of armed conflict and considering special methods of combat on a bigger scale than ever before (...). Experts claim that operations will be conducted in two major areas: military and ideological and propaganda. Those operations will cover areas of the countries which defend aggression. It is not difficult to notice the problems related to identification and kinds, forms and methods of opposition against them, when defending the country's territory".⁵

Methods and Qualities of Fighting Subversion

One of the most effective ways of fighting subversion are counter-subversion combat actions, which are a part of country's territorial counter-subversion defence policy. They involve combatting with subversion-reconnaissance groups, saboteur and terroristic opponents.⁶ Their essence is constant reconnaissance and direct fight with an identified enemy.

"To put it simply, counter-subversive combat activities consist in opposing enemy's sabotage actions and preventing such actions and then destroying their forces. Counter-sabotage means securing and protecting facilities which may become the objects of diversion. Prevention means locating the saboteur forces, limiting their freedom of movement and cutting the retreat way and the supply way off. Therefore this is the activity that creates conditions for the destruction of subversion forces".

Counter-subversion activities are characterised by a lot of space in which they are performed, definite struggle to establish a battle contact with the enemy, intensive mobility, intensity and sustainability as well as conducting actions with small manpower.

The space in which subversive activities are conducted is of utmost importance for their development and course of events. It requires the use of proper tactics and flexible action, proper filling the area with counter-subversive forces and providing proper proportion of forces.

Constant aiming at establishing a battle contact with the enemy distracts the opponent's interest from protected objects, allows to impose one's own initiative to the opponent, forces him to take actions compatible with the expectations or plans of the counter-subversive forces.

The mobility of forces which conduct counter-subversive activities is gained through equipping them with the proper number of adequate quality means

⁵ Jakubczak R, Wiśniewski B, Wprowadzenie, [in:] Właściwości dywersji..., op. cit., p. 6.

⁶ Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej. MON. Warsaw, 1979, p. 104.

⁷ Kubajewski D, Bojowe działania przeciwdywersyjne. Właściwości taktyki, organizacji i prowadzenia działań. Warsaw: ASG, 1977, pp. 14–15.

of transport to be used in non-standard and difficult terrain. High ability to transfer forces from one place to another in a short period of time is a prerequisite to counteract and fight with the enemy.

The intensity of counter-subversive activities depends on the amount of manpower on the side of the enemy, relation between the local inhabitants and diversive forces, terrain conditions, size of the area and their own manpower.

Conducting actions by small, manoeuvrable and mobile forces has an influence on reaching the proper intensity of counter-subversive forces in the action area. It also leads to taking control of the area and limiting the freedom of movement on the side of the enemy. The proper intensity can be reached through close cooperation with the army's surveillance, forces of territorial defence and forces which do not belong to the army.

To sum up, the dynamically developing situation as well as frequent necessity to make new decisions will require to have adequately strong and manoeuvrable reserves, which might be used in particularly threatened sectors and areas at a specific time or situation which will bring success.

Principles of Counter-subversive Activities

Like every action against military activities, counter-subversion is characterised by some generally accepted principles, such as purposefulness of action, maintenance of operational capacity, economy of force, surprise, activeness and maneuver.⁸

Purposefulness of action (Selection of the aim) is one of the primary elements conditioning success while conducting counter-subversive activities. It involves the allocation of adequate forces and measures necessary to combat subversive forces, as well as the use of appropriate kinds, forms, methods and manners of operation — designed to oppose the enemy who is clearly undefined, very well trained and prepared, and smaller in manpower.⁹

Operational capacity entails precise preparation and conducting of counter-subversive activities, which will make it possible to achieve the aim having suffered minimum losses to one's own resources and will ensure continuous readiness for combatting subversion.

Economy of force consists in employing available forces and measures designed to oppose subversion in the most effective way, which is to ensure the achievement of the aim in the shortest time possible and having suffered the least losses to one's own resources. In order for this principle to be implemented, it is necessary to precisely demarcate the area of action.

Surprise in counter-subversion can be achieved through maintaining precedence of counter-subversive offensive operations over defensive and protective measures,

⁸ Compliance with these principles ensures success in combatting subversion. Still, it may be difficult to use the principles in practice because saboteurs conduct their activities in an unconventional way.

⁹ *More*: Wiśniewski B, Cechy prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych, [in:] Właściwości dywersji..., *op.cit.*, pp. 67–69.

avoidance of conventional solutions and implementation of undertakings designed to mislead and deceive subversive forces.

Activeness in counter-subversion first of all involves continuous maintenance of initiative, which makes it possible to impose one's own will on subversive forces. Activeness in combatting subversion should be characterised by systematic and decisive action aimed to create the state of constant threat to the enemy, without waiting for the subversive forces to show any signs of activity.

What is understood by maneuver is efficient movement, which can result in concentration of counter-subversive forces in the right place and time. The essence of maneuver is quick dislocation and smoothly moving on to perform other tasks. It should be remembered that manoeuvre is achieved through a good knowledge of the action area and — as emphasised many times before — proper organisation of cooperative efforts.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the above principles of warfare, when applied to counter-subversion, create the basis for developing successful and effective ways of combatting subversion. All the same, it needs to be stressed that the above mentioned and briefly outlined principles must be used in a creative manner. Any failure to comply with those principles, however, can lead to counter-subversive forces fighting a losing battle.

Types and Methods of Counter-subversion

In the context of the previous considerations it must be once more emphasised that counter-subversive offensive operations are the main type of counter-subversion. They involve different forms, ways and elements of fighting used in a given time and space. They are aimed to detect and locate subversive forces, establish a battle contact with them, take them captive or destroy the enemy.

"Depending on the scale of threat from subversive activities (their target, employed means and forces, time and space) counter-subversive offensive operations can be tactical, tactical and operational, operational and strategic in nature. Each of them employs similar methods and manners of conducting counter-subversive operations, the difference consisting in the volume of engaged measures and forces to suit specific needs"10. It is assumed that counter-subversive operations conducted mainly by sub-units, units and army detachments will first of all be supported — within the scope of their statutory competence/ characteristics and capabilities — adequately to the level at which counter-subversion is organized — by forces which are not part of the army.

Counter-subversive offensive operations involve different forms and ways of action in an effort to destroy the enemy. Their aim is to detect or confirm the presence of saboteurs, enter into contact with them, reduce their freedom of operation, block them, establish a battle contact and consequently to destroy or take captive the subversive forces.

¹⁰ Jakubczak R, Udział sił obrony terytorialnej w zwalczaniu dywersji, [in:] System obrony terytorialnej III Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*, 1998, no. 1(30)A, p. 188.

Counter-subversive offensive operations, depending on how a given situation develops, terrain conditions, amount of engaged forces, activeness on the part of the enemy or reliability of information obtained about the enemy, can have the form of reconnaissance, hunting, blocking and liquidation activities.

Reconnaissance involves a set of undertakings aimed at obtaining information about the enemy forces, their detection, establishing contact and creating conditions for their destruction. Depending on the situation, reconnaissance is conducted together with blocking activities, organised in directions or tracks of reconnaissance.

Hunting activities are started after the obtaining of information about the appearance of subversive forces. Their aim is to establish contact with them and create conditions for their destruction. Hunting activities are also conducted after noticing attempts of the enemy withdrawal.

The aim of blocking activities is to reduce subversive forces' manoeuvre capabilities, as well as locating and creating conditions for destroying the enemy. They are started after establishing contact with the enemy while conducting reconnaissance or hunting activities.

Having precisely located the enemy, liquidation activities are organised. They involve surrounding subversive forces' location (more rarely the zone) covertly and by surprise, which is followed by destroying the enemy (taking them captive). Liquidation activities are conducted only when anti-subversive forces possess reliable data on where and when the enemy forces are present as well as what their manpower is.

Particular forms of counter-subversive offensive operations are conducted using the following tactics or techniques: surveillance¹¹, search, counteraction¹², pursuit, ambush (network of ambushes), barrier, raid and encirclement.

The above considerations incline the author to briefly characterise the methods of conducting counter-subversive operations, which he has done below.

Surveillance is one of the methods of conducting counter-subversive operations, the essence of which is to control the area and hinder the courses of action open to the enemy. It is designed to make a reconnaissance of the ground and the enemy with judicious employment of one's own combat power, and is achieved through: area reconnaissance, seeking to detect the presence of subversive forces and starting cooperation with local government bodies and local community.

Search is the main method of making a reconnaissance. It involves a close control and inspection of the area — facilities where subversive forces could hide. It is aimed either to locate and destroy or to apprehend the enemy in direct combat. Search is organized having noticed symptoms of subversive forces' presence or activity in a specific area (location).¹³

Counteraction is a method of counter-subversive offensive operations which consist in detecting and shadowing the enemy, and — under favourable conditions

¹¹ *More*: Gawlak K, Wiśniewski B, Prowadzenie bojowych działań przeciwdywersyjnych przez batalion piechoty zmotoryzowanej. Poradnik. MSW, Warsaw, 1995, pp. 14–15.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 19–21.

¹³ *More*: Wiśniewski B, Cechy prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych, [in:] Właściwości dywersji..., *op. cit.*, p. 73.

— in destroying or reducing the freedom of the enemy's action. The success of counteraction is determined by covert operation both as regards the enemy and local community. Counteraction should be characterised by a large degree of camouflage activities. It is organized when there is a need to complete and confirm data obtained from other sources, as well as when there is no possibility of or no point in using other methods of counter-subversive offensive operations.

Forces responsible for counteraction usually perform their tasks on foot. Their march always takes place at night or in conditions of reduced visibility. Marching routes should be designated in suitable areas where the enemy may establish their own bases and hiding places.

Pursuit is a military impact of designated forces on the enemy who avoids confrontation. It involves decisive movement of counter-subversive forces following the withdrawing enemy until a point of contact is secured. The essence of pursuit is a fast-paced march in chase of the withdrawing enemy. The relevant literature distinguishes three kinds of pursuit: frontal, parallel and combined, the last one being a combination of the other two types.¹⁴

A raid is a secret approach and encirclement of a subversion unit's hideout (base), and then a violent strong attack. The essence of the raid is a surprise possible only when the raid is prepared thoroughly and carried out secretly and with determination. The aim of the raid is to destroy the enemy or their bases and hideouts and it is achieved through a careful recognition of the object, secret approach and carrying out a sudden and strong attack. Depending on a terrain, the raid may be carried out on foot from one or more directions, in a vehicle from one or more directions, or in a mixed way.

An ambush (a net of ambushes) is laid when there is lack of thorough, reliable data on the opponent's intentions and when the opponent is believed to act from many directions. The ambush (the net of ambushes) consists of previous secret deployment of the force (taking suitable firing positions) on the predicted or determined routes of the opponent, organizing a system of surveillance and fire and then a sudden delivery of the fire for effect to the subversion unit.¹⁵

A barrier is when sources and resources are secretly deployed along a convenient line in a direction (directions) of the predicted movement of an opposing force. The essence of the barrier is a quick and secret deployment of counter-subversion force along one (two) lines in a suitable area in the direction (directions) of the opponent's movement, organizing an appropriate system of surveillance and fire, and a professional and well-coordinated interaction of its all elements.

An encirclement is performed after obtaining reliable data on the location (base) of a big sabotage group or during other forms of fight (a search, a pursuit, a barrier) after establishing contact with the sabotage unit. Counter-subversion units should perform encirclement in all types of fight. The encirclement means carrying out a manoeuvre that guarantees continuous and tight line of firing positions making it impossible for the sabotage groups to leave (withdraw) the area in which they have been encircled. The essence of the encirclement is an organized, fast

¹⁴ More: ibid., p. 75.

¹⁵ Ibid.

and secret occupation of area around the opponent's location, therefore providing excellent conditions for their destruction or captivity.¹⁶

The second type of counter-subversion actions are protective and defensive actions which aim at providing direct and effective protection and defence to particular objects (persons) that are the subjects of interest, reconnaissance and attacks of the subversion groups. "Protective and defensive actions are treated as supportive to counter-subversion actions because they do not provide a possibility to eliminate subversion forces. Moreover, if protective and defensive actions are not aided with counter-subversive offensive actions carried out on the approaches to the protected objects, then in many instances the protection forces will not be able to protect those objects against subversion. It is difficult to discuss the effectiveness of protective and defensive actions if the subversive forces are allowed to identify the system of protection and defence and the manoeuvre is carried out on the approaches to the protected objects, which means that the opponent is given an opportunity to choose the place, time and way of committing sabotage."¹⁷

In a state appropriate military and administrative authorities are planning to take under protection specific objects that are crucial for the state economy and administration, the army, institutions responsible for the state internal security and conditions for the society survival.¹⁸

Objects that by virtue of their importance are or become protected and defended against sabotage are industrial plants, institutions, communications and technical facilities, storehouses, military objects and national cultural and scientific achievements, towns and places important for the state security (defence included).

Protective and defensive actions are conducted in many ways in order not to let the opponent get into the protected object (objects) area. These actions may be carried out as object protection and object defence.

The object protection involves a set of actions and activities that prevent an opponent from taking armed control over the object or causing damage to it. It also means providing safety to object inhabitants.¹⁹

The object defence includes a set of actions and activities that prevent an opponent from locating, recognizing and taking armed control over the object or causing a substantial damage to it.²⁰

Taking into consideration object's importance and location, a type of terrain, an assigned task, sources and resources, protective and defensive actions are carried out by a guard or a protection group.²¹

¹⁶ *More*: Wiśniewski B, Cechy prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych, [in:] Właściwości dywersji..., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁷ Kubajewski D, Bojowe..., op. cit., pp. 24–25.

¹⁸ *Cf.* Ochrona i obrona obiektów i tras komunikacyjnych w warunkach zagrożenia dywersyjnego. Inspektorat Obrony Terytorialnej MON, Warsaw, 1970, p. 8.

¹⁹ Cf. Instrukcja o zasadach prowadzenia działań ochronno-obronnych. Part I (kompania — pluton — drużyna). MON, 1983, p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

²¹ *More*: Wiśniewski B, Cechy prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych, [in:] Właściwości dywersji..., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Object protection and defence seem to be an extremely important part of counter-subversive activities. Protected and defended objects are within areas of operation (responsibility areas) assigned to brigades (regiments). Protection and defence will be organized as part of undertakings aimed at order and security maintenance in objects, but mainly to counteract subversion conducted by an opponent. The protection and defence of objects are carried out by forces trained specifically for this purpose. Object protection and defence should be treated as one inseparable action. In order to improve effectiveness, the protection and defence of objects should be supported by counter-subversive offensive actions.²²

Forces that take part in counter-subversive activities may organize protection and defence of a communications route individually or under forces at a higher level. Depending on the type and nature of communications route, terrain, number of objects on the route, and opponent's threats, direct protection and defence of the communications route are conducted through organizing protection and defence service in the objects, monitoring and patrolling the route sections, as well as performing activities on close approaches to the object (route).

Systems of protection and defence of a route section is based on protection teams²³ and guards.²⁴ Size of the protection teams and guards will depend on the size and importance of a particular object, terrain type and land cover, natural possibilities to organize protection and defence and the level of threat posed by an opponent. Selection of objects to be protected by the teams should be made after analyzing needs of the whole section assigned for protection and defence. Protection and defence of communication routes may be supported by relevant to the situation forms and means of counter-subversive offensive actions. Their scale, intensity and effectiveness will determine in large measure effectiveness of the main task performance.

To sum up, the object protection and defence is a complex and responsible undertaking. Effectiveness of the operation will influence in large measure a lifespan of objects important for the national security, including the defence of a state.

Conclusions

This work is an author's attempt to systematize results of research that has been conducted by him for many years. Conclusions drawn from them indicate that in the case of war or threat posed to the national security, the issue of providing a stable operation of the system of national defence forces is crucial. Although in a current political and military world the trend is to avoid a confrontation on

²² *Ibid.*,p. 78.

²³ A protection team is a sub-unit assigned to conduct protective and defensive tasks. This team is able to separate from their own forces a guard, a sub-unit for actions on close approaches to an object and a reserve that is not smaller that the guard.

²⁴ A guard is a sub-unit performing tasks of protection and defence of specific objects or people.

a global scale, there is still a chance for the crisis situations to intensify, which may become a hotbed of an external threat to national security or even a war. It is linked with, among other things, an effective fight against subversion to which a potential opponent will engage mainly special forces. A superficial analysis of the rules and ways of using those forces in itself induces the belief that opposing them is a complex issue. Effectiveness of this set of actions will depend not only on armed forces operations but also on support given by the society and institutions responsible for providing public security and safety and if the law allows — their direct involvement in the fight against subversion.

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Streszczenie. Niniejszy artykuł został poświęcony przedstawieniu najważniejszych zagadnień związanych z zwalczaniem zagrożeń asymetrycznych. Zostały one ukazane w kontekście podejmowanych działań przeciwdywersyjnych. Istotną cechą prezentowanych rozważań jest to, że własności wspomnianych działań są przedstawione w formie zbioru otwartego, skłaniającego do doskonalenia warsztatu, jakim się posługują siły przeznaczone do walki z dywersją. Takie założenie sprawiło, że w artykule po wprowadzeniu w sytuację problemową omówiono metody i cechy zwalczania dywersji, co stanowiło podstawę do przedstawienia podstawowych problemów związanych z charakterystyką przeciwdywersyjnych działań zaczepnych oraz działań ochronno-obronnych. W konsekwencji tego w dalszej części opracowania zaprezentowano rodzaje i sposoby prowadzenia działań przeciwdywersyjnych,

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wskazując na determinanty ich skuteczności oraz relacje zachodzące między nimi. Niniejszy artykuł wieńczą konkluzje, w których odniesiono się w syntetyczny do przyjętych założeń wywodów oraz poszczególnych jego cześci.

Резюме. Настоящая статья посвящена основным вопросам борьбы с асимметричными угрозами, которые представлены в контексте предпринимаемых противодиверсионных действий. Существенным является то, что признаки определенных действий составляют открытый по своей форме список, требующий дальнейшего совершенствования мер, применяемых силами, предназначенными для борьбы с диверсией. Именно такое предположение привело к тому, что в статье после описания проблемных вопросов представляются методы и основные элементы борьбы с дивесией, что оказывается основой для презентации главных проблем, связанных с характеристикой противодиверсионных наступательных и оборонно-защищающих действий. В результате этого, в дальнейшей части работы представлены виды и способы проведения противодиверсионных действий и детерминанты, влияющие на их эффективность, а также взаимные связи между ними. В заключении статьи представлены основные выводы, в которых дается синтетический анализ предпосылок данных умозаключений, а также их отдельных частей.

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