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Riječ urednika

Poštovani čitatelji,

pred vama je prvo izdanje časopisa Strategos u 2025. godini. I u ovom izdanju prikupljeno je nekoliko kvalitetnih i, nadam se, čitateljskoj publici zanimljivih i korisnih radova. Spektar tema vrlo je širok, što pokazuje otvorenost Strategosa za radove različitih autora i afiniteta u području vojno-obrambenih i sigurnosno-obavještajnih znanosti.

Umjetna inteligencija danas je izuzetno aktualna tema i primjenjiva na široki spektar aktivnosti. Članak „Integracija generativne umjetne inteligencije u taktičko vojno odlučivanje" govori o donošenju odluka u vojnim organizacijama, gdje je podrška za donošenje odluka ključna. Autori u radu istražuju određivanje primjene sustava generativne umjetne inteligencije (AI), kao što je ChatGPT, unutar taktičkog vojnog odlučivanja kao potencijalne komponente C2 modela.

Sljedeći članak „Evolucija NATO-a: strateška prilagodba u promjenjivom sigurnosnom okruženju" ispituje kontinuiranu transformaciju NATO-a kao sveobuhvatan i kontinuiran proces prilagodbe, identificirajući obrasce i trendove koji odražavaju njegovu temeljitu promjenu i evoluciju.

„Ispitivanje transformacije američkog sustava nacionalne sigurnosti nakon 2001" rad je u kojem autorica istražuje pristupe koje je zauzeo SAD tijekom reforme svojeg sustava nacionalne sigurnosti. Također sintetizira zaključke i identificira ključne nedostatke u vezi s operacijama američkog sustava nacionalne sigurnosti.

I dalje uredništvo prihvaća, razmatra i objavljuje radove iz Domovinskog rata. Tako su i u ovom broju dva rada s takvom tematikom. Autori rada „Operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu" uz primjenu izvornih i živih svjedočenja, kao i izvornih dokumenata analiziraju

operativno-strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu, s naglaskom na njegovu ključnu ulogu u obrani grada Siska i sprječavanju prodora neprijateljskih snaga prema Zagrebu.

Na kraju ovog izdanja još je jedan rad – „Uključivanje Varaždinske bojne 104. brigade HV-a u oslobađanje zapadne Slavonije u jesen 1991.", aktivnih sudionika ovih događanja. Ovo djelo razmatra uključivanje Varaždinske bojne u borbena djelovanja u širem području pakračkog bojišta kako bi se spriječio gubitak Lipika i Pakraca. U radu se koriste originalni zemljovidi koji slikovito prikazuju kretanja postrojbi u vrijeme navedenih borbenih djelovanja.

I ovom prilikom preporučam čitateljstvu radove u zajedničkom izdanju Sveučilišta obrane i sigurnosti i Hrvatskog vojnog učilišta te pozivam i druge autore da ponude radove iz svojeg područja ekspertize. Također, vjerujem da će mnogi autori koristiti prikazana djela kao referentnu literaturu u svojim radovima.

Glavni urednik

Editor's Word

Dear readers,

You are holding the first issue of the Strategos journal in 2025. As in previous editions, this issue features several high-quality papers which, I hope, will prove interesting and useful to our readership. The range of topics is quite broad, demonstrating Strategos' openness to contributions from various authors and their diverse interests in the fields of military defense and security-intelligence sciences.

Artificial intelligence remains a highly relevant topic today, with applications across a wide range of activities. The article "Integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence into Tactical Military Decision-Making" discusses decision-making within military organizations, where decision support is crucial. The authors explore how generative AI systems, such as ChatGPT, could be integrated into tactical decision-making processes as a potential component of the C2 model.

The following article, "The Evolution of NATO: Strategic Adaptation in a Changing Security Environment," examines NATO's ongoing transformation as a comprehensive and continuous process of adaptation. It identifies patterns and trends that reflect the Alliance's profound change and evolution.

The paper "Examining the Transformation of the U.S. National Security System after 2001" explores the approaches taken by the United States during the reform of its national security system. The author synthesizes conclusions and highlights key shortcomings in the operations of the U.S. national security structure.

The editorial board continues to accept, review, and publish papers on the Homeland War. This issue includes two such contributions. The article "Operational-Strategic Significance of the Sunja Bridgehead in the Homeland War" draws on original testimonies and documents to analyze

the operational-strategic importance of the Sunja bridgehead, emphasizing its key role in the defense of the city of Sisak and in preventing enemy forces from advancing toward Zagreb.

Concluding this issue is the paper "Engagement of the Varaždin Battalion of the 104th Croatian Army Brigade in the Liberation of Western Slavonia in Autumn 1991," written by active participants in those events. This work discusses the battalion's involvement in combat operations in the wider Pakrac battlefield area, aiming to prevent the loss of Lipik and Pakrac. The paper features original maps that vividly illustrate troop movements during the reported military operations.

On this occasion as well, I recommend these contributions from the joint publication of the University of Defense and Security and the Croatian Defence Academy to our readers. I also invite other authors to submit works from their fields of expertise. Furthermore, I believe many authors will find these papers valuable as reference material in their own research.

Editor-in-Chief

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STRATEGOS

Examining the Transformation of the US National Security System after 2001

Ivana Pokrajčić[1]

Abstract

Today's security challenges are far more complex than ever before. The hypothesis of this article is that timely adaptation and innovation in response to new security circumstances, along with the development of innovative capabilities, are critical factors for effectively addressing the intelligence and defense challenges of the 21st century. Using a scientific approach through the analysis of available scientific research, congressional reports, and other relevant information associated with the United States of America (US) after September 11, 2001 (09/11), this article systematically explores the approaches taken by the US during the reformation of its national security system. It also synthesizes conclusions and identifies key shortcomings related to US national security system operations. The resulting conclusions and proposals in support of the stated hypothesis indicate that the transformation of national security related intelligence and defense systems require optimal reor ganization, the development of new and improved business processes, and the implementation of innovative technology that enable better and more efficient operation of the entire system.

Keywords:

contemporary security challenges, security system reform, defense system reform, security intelligence system, national security adaptation

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INTRODUCTION

Three words describe the events in America since September 11, 2001:
Failure...reform...failure of reform.

Phillip H.J. Davies, 09/11
Final Report of the National Commission

The attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) was a global "security turning point", and September 11, 2001 was "the day that changed the world" (Davies 2012: 349). Pundits regularly draw parallels between the failure of the American intelligence community to anticipate Pearl Harbor and the WTC attack. Subsequent analyses of both events revealed that intelligence analysts and agencies ignored numerous indicators and warnings that the imminent attack on American soil would occur, and that there was a large terrorist supporting machinery behind the planned attack which was also located on American soil (Burch, 2008). In its efforts to support the hypothesis that timely adaptation and innovation in response to new security circumstances, along with the development of innovative capabilities, are critical factors for effectively addressing the intelligence and defense challenges of the 21st century, this article examines the transformation of US National Security System following 09/11. The hypothesis suggests that the ability to adapt quickly and innovate is essential to overcome the complex and evolving security threats in today's global landscape. It implies that failure to do so could lead to ineffective responses to modern intelligence and defense challenges. The scientific approach is based on structured, evidence-based methodology to analyze, compare and evaluate available scientific research related to US national security, including academic journals, studies, and theoretical frameworks relevant to intelligence, defense, and national security post-09/11. A significant part of the methodology involves reviewing congressional reports. These documents, such as those produced by the US Senate and House Intelligence Committees, offer insights into governmental inquiries and assessments of the national security system after 09/11.

The national security reforms following 09/11, at all levels, were immense. These included radical changes at the political level, the entire organizational

transformation of the security-intelligence system, and the creation of new tasks for the US Armed Forces. In the past 20 years or so, American federal level experts and the international scientific community investigated all aspects of the US national security system's reformation, its advantages and disadvantages, and the reformation's effects. Authors such as Burch, Davies, Sullivan, Massa, Klippstein and others based their theoretical research on detailed analyses of primary source data - congressional reports and independently conducted scientific research that provided an additional scientific contribution to the article's conclusions.

According to Burch, the US intelligence community's peacetime structure emerged from the creation of the Defense Department in 1947. These changes included organizational mechanisms such as new protocols for sharing information, and the process of directing and overseeing the work of intelligence services. This was the last major reformation until the conclusion of the Cold War (Burch, 2008). During the Cold War, intelligence committee analyses revealed deficiencies in analytical capabilities, duplicated efforts, excessive classification, and poor inter-agency intelligence sharing.

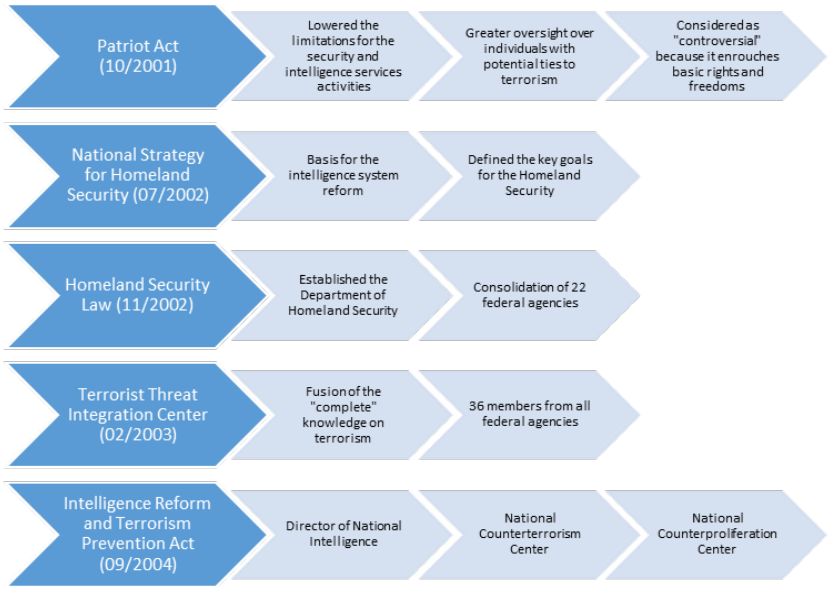
The WTC attack showed that the entire US security-intelligence architecture was overly restricted by bureaucracy and politics, and that "loyalty" to one's own agency took precedence over collective cooperation. Also, the analyses showed that the intelligence products of each of the intelligence agencies was under the influence of its "own corporate objectivity", which was potentially limited due to internal organizational factors such as biases, conflicts of interest, leadership, or even politics. After the 09/11 attack, theorists wrote for years about possible reasons for the US intelligence community's failure.

In examining why the failure occurred, the key question was: Could America, long viewed as an unequalled economic and security power, recognize and accept a real threat to itself? The second question was, if America was realistic enough to perceive and accept the possibility of such a threat, did the parochial and compartmentalized climate within the security-defense system contribute to the WTC failure? (Davies, 2012: 351). To answer these questions, Congress created two intelligence committees. Each encountered resistance during their investigations, both from the agencies themselves, which tried to conceal their failures, and from the George W. Bush administration itself,

which did not like to focus on its own failures. Without waiting for the final report, the Bush administration rapidly implemented corrective measures to improve the US's entire intelligence and defense systems. It wanted to give the Intelligence Community (IC) the capabilities the US desperately needed to detect and prevent future terrorist attacks on the country in a timely and effective manner (Sullivan and Lester, 2022:83).

The creation of the Homeland Security System after 2001 produced major organizational changes as well. Still, it did not replace or fully merge with the traditional national defense system led by the Department of Defense (DoD). Instead, these two areas became more interconnected while maintaining distinct roles. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 was signed into law by President George W. Bush on November 25, 2002. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was formally established on March 1, 2003, when it became operational by consolidating 22 federal agencies. The move represented the largest reorganization of the federal government since the National Security Act of 1947 with the creation of the DoD. These changes addressed all the identified shortcomings that contributed to the 09/11 attack and the IC's inability to predict and prevent the terrorist attack on the WTC.

Figure 1: The organisational and legislative changes post 09/11



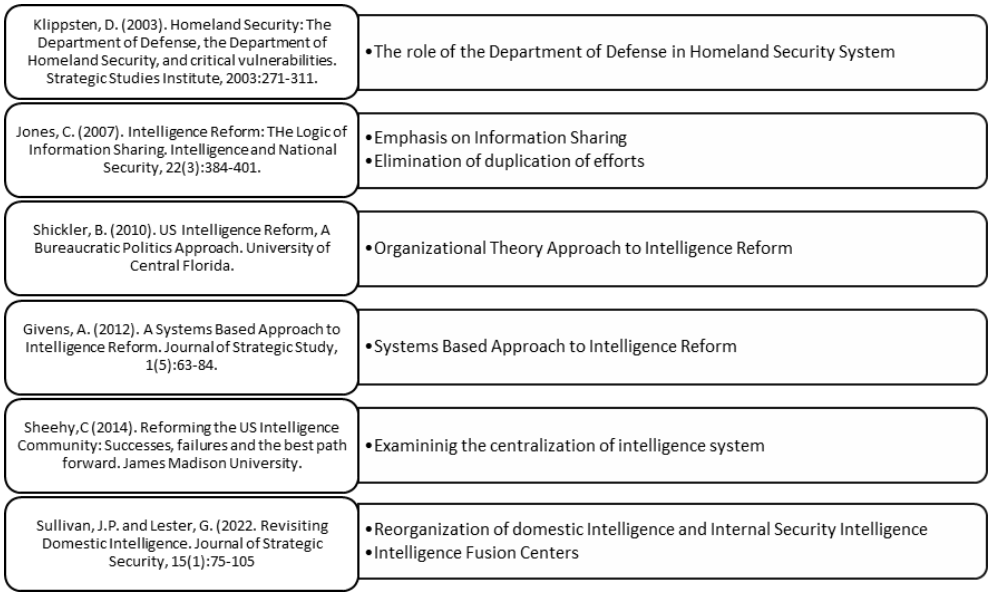
Source: Author

The reforms implemented in America after 09/11, and the performance of the security and defense agencies provide important lessons. Despite extensive academic literature, few researchers have offered useful models for intelligence system reform.

Jones (2007) suggested that a cornerstone of US intelligence reform must be 'information sharing' as a means of adapting to contemporary security challenges. Givens (2012) proposes a systems-based approach to intelligence reform model which enhances effectiveness while reducing the risk of unintended consequences. The research conducted by Givens shows that the benefits of the proposed model manifest themselves primarily in reducing duplication of effort, streamlining operations, and avoiding missteps by anticipating technical and organizational complications (Givens, 2012: 63). While the systems decision pathway suggested above would not necessarily be linear or continually progressive, it presents a hypothetical example of improving intelligence sharing in a holistic way.

Sheehy (2014), on the other hand, examined a model which emphasized the need for centralization, but the study showed that centralization is a "quick fix" that appeases the perceived need for reform but finds difficulty in implementing measurable results, possibly demonstrating a misunderstanding of IC functions (Sheehy, 2014:92). Shickler (2010) offers an organizational theory and a comparative approach to intelligence reform. She indicated that intelligence systems, due to their multifaceted missions and priorities, face far greater challenges than defense systems when it comes to reforming and adapting to new challenges. It is because intelligence systems serve a broader range of missions, face entrenched bureaucratic cultures, operate under secrecy, and deal with rapidly evolving threats, their reform processes are more complex than those of defense systems, which are hierarchical, typically more focused and centralized.

Figure 2: Relevant academic research and models for the intelligence system reform



Source: Author

Of note, most of the publicly available research focuses on only one segment of the intelligence reform process, and, therefore, it is useful to systematically present the most important conclusions that emerge from the examined scientific literature and other relevant sources.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CENTRALIZED VS. DECENTRALIZED INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM

The post-09/11 analysis revealed that one of the major flaws in the intelligence system was poor information sharing among national security components. The main reason for this was the centralization of the intelligence system. Generally, systems and organizations that are centrally organized, have stove-piped structures and overly detailed prescribed procedures (such as decision-making protocols requiring multiple layers of approval) limit many of their processes (Rice, 2004:141). With the aim of improving processes, organizations often implement specific restrictions on themselves, such as information sharing protocols and formal channels of reporting. These limitations often inhibit the development of new capabilities and the incentive to adapt to new circumstances. Therefore, multiple national security experts favor a decentralized intelligence system. They support the creation of an adaptable system that easily accepts and implements changes, has a modular structure, and has fewer restrictive regulations. Each of these options, however, has its advantages and disadvantages (Sheehy, 2014). While centralized systems require (or impose) more precise strategic guidance and better focus in managing collection resources, decentralized systems are more agile, and intelligence sharing is easier.

INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION FUSION

After 09/11, the implementation of fusion centers at the state and federal levels represented an attempt to share intelligence across multiple governmental agencies. This organizational structure represented a significant step forward in intelligence operations. It provided certain advantages in circumstances where security threats were constantly changing and developing. Local

and federal fusion centers transformed multiple sources of information into actionable intelligence products. These centers remain an essential element of today's US homeland security system.

Contemporary threats, however, require a combined and cooperative approach. The establishment of such analytical centers at lower (local) levels presents certain challenges. First, the entire philosophy of fusion centers rests on the assumptions of their mutual interaction and connection with the agencies that provide intelligence data and information. But linking hundreds or even thousands of offices, branches, and divisions of security or intelligence agencies through fusion centers is an extensive and time-consuming process (Givens, 2012:66). From an effectiveness perspective, the entire process of intelligence fusion exists to reduce intelligence gaps by integrating intelligence gathered from diverse sources, and, subsequently, to define new intelligence targets more precisely. The fusion center's primary purpose is to "break the bureaucratic culture that, because of resistance to sharing information with others and a desire to pursue its own particular interests, keeps important intelligence information to itself" (Burch, 2006). Some theorists believe that the intelligence service must make a significant shift from its current practices and way of thinking. It is legitimate to protect sources, methods, and raw data, but in today's security environment, the time it takes to protect that data and to produce intelligence reports that are "shareable" can render the data unusable.

ELIMINATING THE DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS AND IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVE ANALYTICAL METHODS

Alternative analytical methods to evaluate all assumptions and expand the range of practical solutions. These methods attempt to rise above the generally accepted "herd opinion" – that leads to premature consensus and conclusions. From the above, there is a significant friction between attempts to reduce the level of duplication of intelligence efforts and the implementation of alternative analytical methods. Since security and defense systems are increasingly facing a shortage of personnel, especially in the number of analysts and processes (such as alternative analytical methods, specialization

in a certain narrow area, etc.), which are absolutely necessary to achieve continuous monitoring and to improve the quality of intelligence products, are often eliminated. Faced with the increasing amounts of information that analysts must process, prioritize, and incorporate into intelligence assessments, they often shorten the analytical process to avoid duplication of effort and meet deadlines. Any reform of the intelligence system must consider that properly established analytical processes, an analytical knowledge base, and proven analytical methods, along with collection capacities, are the most valuable organizational resources. Jones (2007:396) explains how to apply similar techniques within the intelligence analysis environment, many of which are well developed in the literature on organizational innovation and learning in conditions of uncertainty. Many scholars recommend using advanced technology to make sense of information as well as providing access to it, through social network analysis, exploratory modeling (used by US Intelligence agencies in Al-Qaeda Threat Assessment post-09/11 to assess the likelihood of future attacks), visualization, and other methods such as use of artificial intelligence and large language models.

A NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIES FRAMEWORK IS A "MUST HAVE"

Changes in the contemporary global security environment are constant, dynamic, unpredictable, and extensive. As such, they present a great challenge to modern security systems, which are struggling with the exponential amount of information that needs processing with the decreasing number of qualified analysts. Therefore, determining and establishing intelligence priorities is one of the key processes. Organizational research increasingly demonstrates that as more information is available, those with superior means of interpretation have a strategic advantage (Jones, 2007:394). Moreover, modern intelligence analytics must respect long-term priorities and respond to short-term intelligence requirements (Pillar, 2007: 151). The complex task of monitoring nuclear proliferation is an example of a long-term priority, while a short-term requirement is a prevention of an imminent attack.

In 2005, the US intelligence community developed and implemented the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF). It is a framework of "rational and coherent structure that supports analysis, collection and modernization of systems." It also balances resources "to direct them towards priority objectives and intelligence requirements" (Pillar, 2007: 151). It is based on a multidimensional matrix of state and non-state actors on the one hand, and functional processes on the other, while priorities are determined according to the overall role/performance of each actor/process. According to various sources, the NIPF was the most comprehensive mechanism ever implemented within an intelligence system. NATO uses this framework today.

INVESTING IN PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT IS IMPERATIVE

Selecting, training, and retaining quality intelligence personnel is an ongoing challenge that all developed countries have faced for decades. Although each previous generation of intelligence personnel has struggled with certain challenges, the period after 09/11, emphasizes the criticality of this problem. The need for intelligence personnel who can receive, prioritize, and process the exponentially growing amount of intelligence data and information, apply various analytical techniques and methods, and simultaneously use increasingly sophisticated technical tools is imperative. Training programs must transform from antiquated Cold War approaches and broaden the horizons of intelligence personnel. After 09/11, intelligence committee reports (The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report on US Intelligence Community's Pre-09/11 Failure, the House Intelligence Committee's Report on the Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After Terrorist Attacks on 09/11, and the 09/11 Commission Report) highlighted the neglect of training and education of intelligence personnel. They stressed general intelligence training was not standardized, creativity of operatives was discouraged, and analyst training was formalized through repetition of certain procedures. Due to these concerns and different analytical methods such as capability analysis, intelligence targeting modeling, pattern or trend analysis, link analysis, temporal analysis, and financial analysis, analysts

were not effective critical thinkers. (Burch, 2006). This research emphasizes an analyst's physical context, exposure to alternative conceptual approaches, availability of diverse search and analysis tools, and informal, low-risk communication allowing the open discussion of tentative ideas (Jones, 2007:394). Developing enough professional intelligence personnel with the right skills is a long-term process that requires careful planning, sustained focus, resources, time, and above all, consistency and patience. Strategic decision-makers and management personnel in the intelligence system must create and encourage an environment in which the continuous development of professional staff occurs. It must also forge an environment where decision makers accept critical and divergent thinking, which includes the toleration of certain risks that intelligence work entails.

MAINTAINING OPTIMAL LEVELS OF SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Maintaining optimal levels of security classification in intelligence operations is essential for striking a balance between protecting sensitive information and enabling intelligence sharing (Betts, 2007). The detailed process of document classification and declassification is familiar to a relatively limited number of intelligence personnel, and a relatively limited number of end users. Data, information, and reports marked with a certain level of classification are subject to strict legal regulations that restrict their handling. Even in the post-09/11 period, when intelligence and information fusion centers were already in place, problems in sharing this data with those who really needed it continued to exist.

Therefore, decision-makers at strategic levels have issued guidelines for reducing the classification of documents at all levels, except in those situations in which it is justified to maintain a high level of compartmentalization. This is important to protect sources, methods, locations or other sensitive information that could harm the US or the IC if the information is compromised. This does not imply strictly that the state and its security and intelligence services must renounce the principle of secrecy within all security activities. However, it must find a way to respond more quickly and effectively to unpredictable

events through the exchange of intelligence. Furthermore, Held (2004), Posner (2006) and Schneier (2015) in their publications emphasize that states and their security and intelligence services in this new concept of security must be more transparent to the public. They should consider public disclosures when designing, presenting and implementing security policies in accordance with the time and context in which certain risks occur. The disclosures such as white papers and policy reports, annual transparency reports, public hearings and consultations on security regulations and risk assessments and impact statements are essential for fostering transparency, building public trust, and ensuring accountability.

INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING

This tenet of intelligence adaptation and reform is related to the previous one. It is important to emphasize that the term "sharing" primarily depends on an individual agency's organizational attitude and policies, primarily within the agency that collected the information. For example, the National Security Agency (NSA) has extremely strict internal procedures regarding the transfer, handling, and distribution of signals intelligence (SIGINT) data between its organizational units and it enforces rigorous compliance measures. Hundreds of reports, articles, and reviews of the failures of the American intelligence community after 09/11 support the need for more effective "intelligence and information sharing". Relevant data and information must be shared with pertinent participants, processes, or systems (IRTPA, 2004), and the determination of what is relevant lies with several key actors within a state's government, security apparatus, and sometimes international agreements. The process is determined by national security priorities, legal frameworks, and diplomatic considerations.

The crux of the issue is: does information sharing only involve sharing final intelligence reports, or does it also include the necessity of sharing raw intelligence? By analyzing published articles and reports, the following can be concluded. The need for information sharing among and between intelligence agencies is a requirement that most publicly available documents stress as a major shortfall of the US intelligence system. Information sharing

depends mostly on the agency that collected the information. While the literature is concerning whether the necessity of sharing applies only to final products, or to raw data as well, it is realistic to assume that pundits left this issue open for debate. This allows the involved agencies to decide which data, or information, they will share laterally with other intelligence system components, and which ones they will (of course, in order to protect sources, methods, or for some other important reason) still report within the agency's structure.

Almost all intelligence agencies incorporate "information sharing" into their organizational mission, but they share information only in those cases when they are explicitly asked to do so - that is, when they are asked a precise question or for a specific piece of information. Efforts to improve information sharing for national goals have repeatedly failed in transforming intelligence systems. Instead, authors Herman (1998), Betts (2007) and Turner (2015) believe that intelligence organizations can achieve more effective results through better and more precise allocation of areas of responsibility among individual agencies, and by evaluating agency effectiveness solely on information collected within the assigned area of responsibility.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S ROLE IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM

After 2001, and immediately after the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, the US Department of Defense's (DoD's) role in homeland defense was vague. Namely, there was no clear distinction between the terms "homeland security" and "homeland defense," so it is not surprising that the DoD's roles and tasks were ambiguous. However, over time (and also prompted by some natural disasters that struck the US, such as Hurricane Katrina), the DoD's role in the homeland security system crystallized DoD's role as defined through several key strategic documents - the US National Security Strategy (NSS), the US National Defense Strategy (NDS), the Strategic Defense Guiidance (SDG), and the National Military Strategy (NMS). These documents provide strategic guidance for the application of national and military power in support of homeland security

(Winslow, 2013:5). The Secretary of Defense still refers to the DoD's tasks in support of homeland security as "homeland defense," emphasizing more than just the semantic difference between the two terms. Defense implies deterrence or response to a threat, while security is a more comprehensive concept in which the DoD participates with other actors. The establishment of the US Northern Command and the more active role of the National Guard are two of the best examples of the active contribution of the US DoD to homeland security. These two examples also represent a shift away from the traditional defense paradigm in the direction of increasing the ability to anticipate threats and prepare for their response (Erchenbrack and Scholer, 2004:3).

THE NEED FOR CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND DEFENSE SYSTEMS

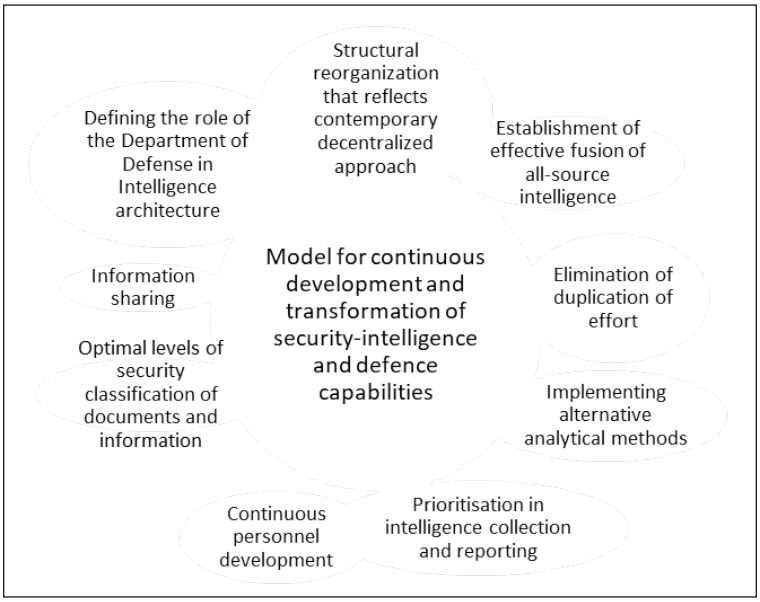
Some of the implemented reforms have taken root, but others have proven ineffective. Major organizational changes implemented in a brief period often create significant problems during their execution. Therefore, when considering these, or any other similar reforms as a starting point for making similar decisions, one must carefully consider all the advantages and disadvantages, and to provide an answer to the following. "Have these changes made the security and defense system more efficient?" "Is America today, after the implemented reforms and because of them, a safer country and more resilient to modern security challenges?" There are metrics to measure success (such as number of terrorist attacks and foiled attrmpts, cyberattack frequency and impact, preparedness and emergency response, public perception and trust etc.), but it's important to remember that these metrics are often influenced by multiple factors, and not all reforms can be easily quantified.

National security related intelligence agencies and armed forces, although often more efficient, are, also significantly more resistant to change than other organizations. Any structural, organizational, or procedural changes in these systems are inherently slow. Legal statutes and other normative

acts, which are restrictive and whose changes are subject to a long bureaucratic procedure, inhibit the speed of change. Organizational rigidity, and inefficient implementation of structural organizational changes creates problems when introducing new business processes. According to Lozančić, the focus of intelligence efforts has shifted from collecting information to managing, prioritizing, and understanding large data and developing predicting capabilities. Therefore, reforming the security intelligence system is vital and should involve all relevant stakeholders (Lozančić, 2020).

According to Bilandžić, most developed countries organize their security intelligence systems to comply with two fundamental principles: centralized management and decentralized functioning (Bilandžić, 2009). In this regard, organizational mechanisms, such as effective data exchange and intelligence oversight and assessment (not necessarily as a corrective componentt, but also a guiding and development-supporting element), and respecting the principle of timeliness are crucial aspects of effective national security intelligence systems.

Figure 3: Proposed model for continuous development and transformation



Source: Author

The contemporary security environment presents threats that modern states face today are extraordinarily complex and require intelligence systems that adapt quickly, prioritize requirements, and are decisive, focused, and persistent. In this context, it is important to emphasize that although the transformation of the intelligence and defense system is often associated with the implementation of new technological achievements and the introduction of new weapons systems, it is important to emphasize that the two are by no means synonymous. Intelligence and defense system transformation must include optimal reorganization, the development of innovative business processes, doctrinal and procedural adaptations and innovations, and the implementation of new technological achievements that will enable better and more efficient operation of the entire system (Foster, 2010:137). Organizational and defense transformation is a demanding and extensive process. Adopting national strategies and policies without clearly outlining steps and responsibilities can negatively impact the process. In

such circumstances, the risk of "strategic failure" increases significantly, while the gap between strategy and real capabilities increases. Even if the desired end state is vague, it is reasonable to expect that the transformation will be successful.

CONCLUSION

Comparing the processes, successes, and failures of other countries can assist in decision-making but may also obscure judgment and reduce objectivity. Therefore, the question "If something is unknown, can it be solved through the examining the past?" is justified. Today's security dilemma is evident, but it does not mean ignoring relevant history is acceptable. In our contemporary security environment, identifying state and non-state adversaries and their intentions is increasingly difficult. A state's intelligence and defense system must be proactive and share experiences and information to address this strategic uncertainty.

The swift progression of events and the short timeliness in which intelligence and defense systems must respond to potential security threats nesessitate the development of predictive capabilities to mitigate these strategic uncertanties. Furthermore, the information revolution of the last decade has exacerbated the problem identified during the Cold War, namely the need to collect and process enormous amounts of data with insufficient human resources.

The transformation of the US security, intelligence, and defense systems after 2001 indicates the need to adapt the government's legal framework for intelligence agencies' collections, differentiating it from domestic police or law enforcement intelligence processes. Domestic law enforcement agencies conduct these operations against a person or group suspected of committing a criminal act. To protect human rights and freedoms, there must be reasonable suspicion, and such actions must be approved by competent, legitimate institutions and established legal processes. However, when collecting national security intelligence data, especially in the context of predicting and preventing hostile threats and actions, it is nearly impossible to precisely determine intelligence collection targets, and it requires mass

collection capabilities. In this sense, most Western countries have adapted their legal frameworks to enable intelligence agencies to collect more efficiently to better detect and prevent an adversary's hostile action. In summary, effective security organizations must learn from the experiences of others. Although the Republic of Croatia is a relatively safe and secure country today, the absence of evidence of a threat is not evidence of the absence of a threat. Therefore, the Croatian national security, intelligence, and defense systems must prepare for future transformations to keep pace with rapid and unpredictable changes within the security environment.

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SAŽETAK

Sigurnosni izazovi s kojima se države danas suočavaju složeniji su nego ikad prije. Ovaj rad polazi od temeljne pretpostavke da su pravodobna prilagodba novim sigurnosnim okolnostima i razvoj novih sposobnosti ključni preduvjeti za učinkovito suočavanje suvremenih sigurnosno-obavještajnih i obrambenih sustava s izazovima 21. stoljeća. Korištenjem znanstvenog pristupa, kroz analizu dostupnih znanstvenih istraživanja, kongresnih izvješća i drugih relevantnih dokumenata, na primjeru Sjedinjenih Američkih Država nakon 11. rujna 2001., ovaj rad sustavno prikazuje kako su Sjedinjene Američke Države pristupile reformi nacionalnog sigurnosnog sustava. U završnom dijelu donosi se sinteza stečenih spoznaja i identifikacija ključnih nedostataka u funkcioniranju američkog nacionalnog sigurnosnog sustava. Iz analize se izvode zaključci i prijedlozi koji ukazuju na to da transformacija sigurnosno-obavještajnog i obrambenog sustava mora uključivati njegovu optimalnu reorganizaciju, razvoj novih i unaprjeđenje postojećih poslovnih procesa te implementaciju novih tehnoloških dostignuća koja će omogućiti bolje i učinkovitije funkcioniranje sustava u cjelini.

Ključne riječi:

suvremeni sigurnosni izazovi, reforma sigurnosnog sustava, reforma obrambenog sustava, sigurnosno-obavještajni sustav, nacionalna sigurnost

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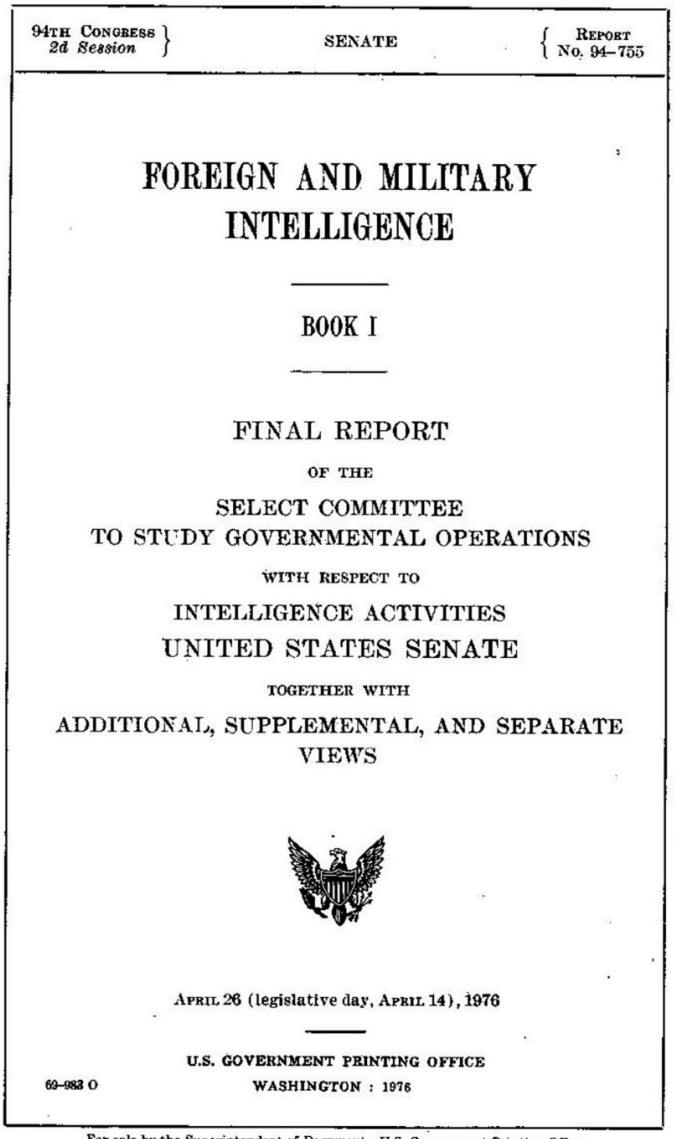

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BOOK I

FINAL REPORT

OF THE

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TO STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

WITH RESPECT TO

INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES
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STRATEGOS

Integrating Generative AI into Tactical Military Decision-Making

Domagoj Tuličić, Robert Fabac[1]

Abstract

Decision-making in military organizations is particularly challenging at all levels, from tactical to strategic. Therefore, support for decision-making is crucial, which, in modern systems, includes traditional and more advanced command and control (C2) models. Due to the complexity of contemporary military operations, tactical decision-making should involve rapid, precise, and informed consideration of courses of action (COA). This research focuses on determining the application of generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems, such as ChatGPT, within tactical military decision-making as a potential component of the C2 model. As an advanced language model, ChatGPT can provide potential support to commanders in analyzing and selecting the optimal course of action by generating relevant situational solutions based on large data sets utilized by artificial intelligence. The research shows that using ChatGPT in this context enables the automatic generation of relevant scenarios based on realistic and hypothetical input data. Furthermore, by analyzing possible solutions through interaction with the generative AI system, it is possible to optimize decisions as well as the decision-making process at the tactical command level. This reduces human error and improves response time in dynamic and complex military situations. Although increasingly advanced AI models can significantly enhance military decision-making, this process must not be fully automated. Human oversight must be maintained in the final decision-making phase, thereby preserving accountability in critical military decisions.

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Keywords:

military decision-making, C2 system, generative artificial intelligence, course of action

1. Introduction

Decision-making in a military organization is generally considered at the three levels of war, including strategic, operational and tactical. Strategic decision-making occurs at the highest level, within the context of national policy and long-term objectives, and involves planning policy, strategies, resources and alliances. Operational decision-making focuses on implementing strategy through specific military operations (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2020). Commanders at the operational level consider various potential courses of action (COA) to coordinate multiple tactical units and different operations, aiming to achieve strategic objectives on the ground (U.S. Army, 2023). Tactical decision-making refers to specific decisions regarding battlefield situations, where commanders assess courses of action (COAs) at the level of individual battles.

The military decision-making process (MDMP) at the operational and tactical levels involves evaluating courses of action through three steps: developing options, analyzing, and selecting. The development of options involves a situational analysis, which results in identifying acceptable courses of action. The analysis includes evaluating each option based on its potential advantages, risks, timeframes, resources, and expected actions of the adversary. Finally, the process concludes with selecting the most acceptable course of action.

Modern battlefields, where extremely fast and accurate contemporary computer-based weapon systems prevail, exceed the organizational capabilities of military decision-makers to manage and plan their use and respond to similarly equipped adversaries (Kott, 2004). As a result, traditional command and control systems face the challenge of processing vast amounts of real-time data while ensuring speed, accuracy, and relevance in decision-making. Modern commanders must also contend with the rapid pace of

adversarial tactics, including cyber threats and disinformation, as well as the complexity of integrating advanced technologies like AI, autonomous systems, and multidomain operations, which demand faster and more adaptive responses. To address this issue, command and control systems are being enhanced with computer technology—computers and software—so that information can be sorted, filtered, and displayed to assist the commander in focusing on the "right" information, at the speed of relevance. Naturally, this approach assumes that the commander's responsibilities, the circumstances they find themselves in (situational awareness), and the decisions to be made are sufficiently understood in advance to predict their informational needs (Brannon et al., 2009).

The approach to solving the problem, which relates to the limitations of cognitive abilities in decision-making by commanders (or any human being), is implemented as previously mentioned—using computer technology. Artificial intelligence (AI), and especially generative AI, has seen a rising trend in development and application. The advent of deep learning in the first decade of this century enabled the use of convolutional neural networks (CNN), whose models brought significant advances in image and pattern recognition tasks (He et al., 2016). CNNs are applied, for example, for autonomous driving purposes, including object recognition and real-time traffic sign identification. Chronologically, after CNN networks, the focus shifted to generating high-quality synthetic images, enabled by the introduction of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), with a significant contribution from Goodfellow et al. (2014). Focusing on the architecture of AI models, a major advancement was made with the transformer architecture, which enabled the development of large language models (such as ChatGPT).

These AI algorithms, particularly large language models, have opened a new path for the development of automated C2 systems—decision-making systems that can process large volumes of information, learn from complex patterns, and make decisions based on context, in a manner that was previously reserved for human decision-makers. Generative artificial intelligence represents a significant breakthrough in AI, offering numerous capabilities beyond the reach of traditional models. Specifically, it involves the ability to create entirely new content, which was not within the scope of

traditional AI models. Models such as Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPT), leveraging large datasets, have shown the ability to understand and generate human-like text, leading to their widespread application across various fields. ChatGPT, as an example of a generative AI system, falls within the broader category of multimodal systems capable of processing and generating various types of data, including text, images, and code.

Although generative AI models possess advanced data processing capabilities, they face particular challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) models face primary challenges such as instability during training and the generation of adversarial examples that can deceive the models or compromise system security. In response to these challenges, newer approaches based on the concept of diffusion have been developed, ensuring greater stability and reliability of models (Ho et al., 2020).

Thanks to the exceptional development of large language models, particularly GPT models, their application has become feasible across various domains of human activity, including education, healthcare, agriculture, lifestyle, marketing, video games, entertainment, finance, industry, travel, transport, and e-commerce (Yenduri et al., 2024), as well as in specialized fields such as military decision-making (Goecks & Waytowich, 2024). Therefore, it can be said that today's AI algorithms have the potential to revolutionize military decision-making as well as command and control.

Command and control (C2) in modern militaries focuses on supporting commanders in accomplishing their missions by ensuring proper coordination and the timely positioning of resources (Brehmer, 2007). C2 systems are often part of more complex C4ISR systems (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance). The development of C2 military systems and solutions has led to the integration of technologies such as satellite communication systems (SATCOM), control interfaces for unmanned aerial systems (UAS), mobile command posts, real-time intelligence-sharing platforms, cloud computing, cyber defense systems, sensor integration solutions, and other advanced technologies (Army Technology, 2024).

This paper aims to explore the possibilities, methods, and effectiveness of using large language models in C2 systems, with a particular focus on the components of command and control systems related to situational analysis and proposing courses of action. The main research question is as follows:

Is it realistic to apply publicly available generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) models to support the military decision-making process in developing and selecting courses of action at the tactical decision-making level?

The paper is structured as follows: it begins with an introductory section, then a review of previous research, then an experiment applying the ChatGPT-4 model to analyse a tactical military situation. Based on the results obtained, an analysis of the effectiveness is conducted, and finally, a conclusion is drawn.

2. Previous Research

A literature review on the application of artificial intelligence and generative pre-trained transformers (GPT) in command and control (C2) systems is essential for understanding this technology's current development and potential in military operations. This chapter will examine existing research and works that propose and describe the application of artificial intelligence and GPT in areas such as situation awareness, decision-making, and the suggestion of courses of action (COA).

For the search of scientific papers, indexed databases such as Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, the scientific literature search tool Google Scholar, the specialized database for technical and engineering disciplines IEEE Xplore, and ChatGPT 4.0 were used. The keywords employed in the search included: "course of actions", military, "command and control", and "artificial intelligence". Using these keywords, papers discussing the application of generative pre-trained transformers (GPT) in command and control systems were discovered. Furthermore, considering the observed application of GPT in C2 systems, to improve the search, ChatGPT was used with a query asking it to suggest relevant keywords for the paper on the application of

generative pre-trained transformers in command and control systems. The suggested terms that can be used as keywords include:

1. Generative Pre-trained Transformers in Command and Control
2. AI in Military Decision Making
3. Large Language Model in Military Planning
4. Artificial Intelligence in Command and Control
5. COA-GPT Military Applications
6. Network-Centric Warfare AI Integration
7. AI-Driven Course of Action Development
8. Decision Support Systems in Military Operations
9. Human-AI Collaborations in Command and Control
10. Application of LLMs in Defense Systems
11. AI in Emergency Command and Control
12. Military Planning AI Tools

In addition, a query was made in ChatGPT 4.0: "Find articles related to the term AI in Military Decision Making" in an attempt to find additional papers linking C2 systems with GPTs. Although GPTs were not explicitly mentioned in the query, the three articles on the application of artificial intelligence in military decision-making that were suggested are interesting because they highlight how AI can assist in military operations through decision support (Horyń et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2023; Zhou & Rosalie, 2024). Additionally, they emphasize the problems, primarily of an ethical nature, that arise when humans overly rely on automated systems in military decision-making (Morgan et al., 2023; Zhou & Rosalie, 2024).

The report (Morgan et al., 2023), which addresses the ethical issues of using artificial intelligence for military purposes, also highlights technological advancements in several key areas of AI that could be utilized to improve military operations. Business organizations largely drive this progress in AI development for various reasons. Business organizations have the ability to leverage capital investments and academic resources that military services find difficult to secure or may not have access to. Therefore, technologies

developed by these organizations for commercial purposes are expected to be adapted for use in military contexts.

The most important areas of technological advancement in AI with potential applications in military operations include computer vision, specifically image recognition, text analysis, autonomous vehicles, simulations, and computer gaming. The same report (Morgan et al., 2023) also lists the potential benefits of applying artificial intelligence for military purposes, obtained through structured interviews. According to the respondents, the most mentioned advantages are the increased speed of decision-making and big data.

The advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence to support decision-making and process big data are discussed in a NATO report (Reynolds & Atalan, 2024). This report is significant for understanding how AI can be integrated into military structures such as command and control, as it provides insight into the complex processes that enable effective application of the technology in military operations. The seriousness and importance of AI for military purposes can be seen in NATO's promotional video "Using Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Military Decision Making," released in the spring of 2024, which presents a vision of artificial intelligence supporting decision-making (NATO Science & Technology Organization, 2024).

Morgan and Waller explore the advantages and potential of artificial intelligence in supporting and taking over decision-making processes in complex situations requiring speed and processing large amounts of information (Waller & Morgan, 2019). They argue that AI will play a key role in future military operations in the air, including tactical control of aircraft and rapid decision-making on the battlefield.

McDowell et al. (2024) propose the use of generative pre-trained transformers (GPT) in military operations to accelerate decision-making and the development of courses of action. The authors believe that advanced technologies like GPTs can transform C2 systems, significantly contributing to military decision-making and operations, making them faster and more efficient.

Furthermore, Goecks and Waytowich present COA-GPT, a model that uses generative pre-trained transformers to accelerate the development of courses of action (COA) in military operations. This model enables the rapid generation of tactical courses of action, taking into account military doctrines and mission-specific data. The authors highlight that COA-GPT significantly reduces the time needed for decision-making and allows commanders to review and adjust proposed courses of action in real-time, making the decision-making process more flexible and adaptable in the dynamic conditions of the battlefield (Goecks & Waytowich, 2024).

The introduction of GPT into decision-making processes in the military is not limited to military operations alone. Due to its exceptional content interpretation capabilities, the author of the article, Hong (2024), suggests that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) develop its own generative artificial intelligence model, like GPT models such as ChatGPT. The author discusses the potential and needs of the DoD for its own system of generative large language models (LLM), which could support legal professionals and broader military personnel in daily tasks and decision-making.

Yenduri et al. (2024) argue that generative pre-trained transformers undoubtedly have the potential to transform various areas of human activity, making it logical to conclude that transformers can also be applied for military purposes, specifically in military operations where C2 systems are a key element for success on the battlefield.

In addition to GPTs, which, according to the suggestions of the authors of the previously mentioned articles, can enhance command and control in C2 systems, there are also other approaches worth mentioning, which are considered to have the potential to contribute to improving decision-making in military operations. Goecks et al. (2021) explore how games and simulators can be used as platforms for developing artificial intelligence that supports command and control (C2). These systems allow for the development of AI models through the simulation of real military scenarios. The use of simulators and games enables AI systems to learn through interaction with the environment, accelerating the process of optimizing strategies and courses of action. The authors emphasize that deep learning algorithms, such

as those developed in simulations, are particularly effective in improving situational awareness and suggesting optimal decisions on the battlefield.

Given the vast capabilities of artificial intelligence and generative pre-trained transformers, which, as Yuval Harari put it, have 'hacked the operating system of human civilization,' referring to the underlying structure of human language as the key tool for communication and understanding, their application holds immense potential for military purposes, especially in enhancing military command and control (C2) systems. Although further research is needed to better understand the ethical, security, and technical challenges, existing works clearly indicate that the application of GPTs and other AI systems will play a crucial role in the modernization of military structures. This literature review provides a solid foundation for further research into the potential of artificial intelligence in military operations, with a particular focus on enhancing command and control systems in the Croatian Armed Forces.

3. Research

In this chapter, the GPT model ChatGPT 4o will be utilized in the field of military decision-making to propose courses of action (COAs). To demonstrate the capabilities of the ChatGPT 4o model, a textual template and a COA sketch will be provided, after which the model will be tasked with generating its own version of the COA. An expert or a commander can further evaluate this version within the context of a C2 system.

3.1 The version of operations generated by the commander and staff

The version of operations and its sketch shown here were taken from the work (Tuličić, 1996). The text of the operation version is as follows:

"TASK OF THE BATTALION: 2-66 INFANTRY ATTACK 250100Z MAY 96, with the objective of destroying the enemy's security in the area of NB 135871 (TARGET WOLF) in order to enable the NOP (task-organized unit – TF) 1-12 MECH to continue the attack eastward along Osborne Road."

Operation Formulation COA: "The battalion crosses the starting line at 0100, advancing in the direction of the attack with one company (three infantry platoons, one engineering platoon, and a Stinger section) at the front; followed by the command group; the second company (three infantry platoons and a Stinger section); and the third infantry company (minus) the last (two infantry platoons and the anti-armor platoon). At checkpoint 2, the second company (minus) and the anti-armor platoon occupy Hill 652 to provide fire support for the forces on the main axis of attack. One infantry platoon sets up an ambush in the area of NV 140857 to destroy enemy armored vehicles and prevent the enemy from reinforcing TARGET WOLF. The leading company occupies TARGET 1 to allow the assigned company (attack force) to pass through and secure the key area. The last company passes TARGET 1, occupies TARGET 2, and prevents the enemy security from engaging NOP 1-12 with fire support, while the latter attacks south along Wheeler Road and east along Osborne Road." Figure 1 depicts the sketch of the offensive version of operations described in the previous text.

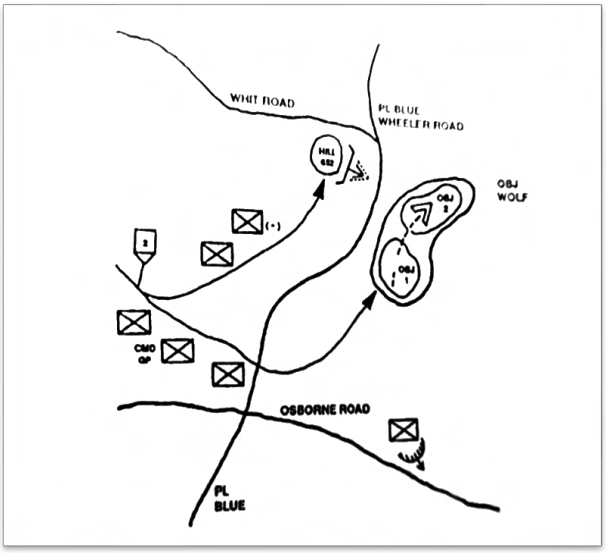

Figure 1. Sketch of the offensive version of operations (Tuličić, 1996, according to MPRI training materials)

3.2 The version of operations generated by ChatGPT 4.0

A new version of operations was generated using the ChatGPT 4.0 artificial intelligence by first loading the existing version into the model. Then, through prompts[2], the model was familiarized with the context and asked to analyze the provided operation sketch and generate a new version of the course of action based on this input, considering tactical objectives and key elements. This would guide the model in understanding the request and generating an appropriate response based on the context.

3.2.1 Creating Context and Understanding the Situation in GPT Models

To familiarize the model with the existing version of the operation, the following prompts were used:

Prompt: "You are now the chief of the military staff. I am the commander, and I need your assistance. Do you understand?"

ChatGPT's response: "Understood, Commander! The Chief of Staff is ready to provide assistance. How can I help with your mission?"

Prompt: "Explain the image I have attached."

ChatGPT's response: "The image provided is a tactical military map that illustrates the operation plan or the battlefield situation. Here is a detailed analysis:

Key Elements in the Image

1. Roads and Lines:
   - Whit Road and Wheeler Road to the north.
   - Osborne Road runs horizontally through the middle of the image.

2 A prompt in the context of artificial intelligence and model like ChatGPT refers to the input tex tor set of instructions given by the user to prompt the model to generate a specific response . A well-constructed prompt is crucial for obtaining a relevant and useful answer from the model. The prompt is a question or instruction that the model uses to understand the context and generate a response.

- PL BLUE: The presumed line of blue forces (PL - Phase Line), located in the southern part of the map and further north along Wheeler Road.

2. Topographical Features:
   - Hill 652: A hill with an elevation of 652 meters, marked as a tactically significant point.
   - OBJ WOLF: The objective of the operation with two subzones marked as OBJ 1 and OBJ 2.
3. Representation of Forces:
   - Rectangles with an "X" inside represent units (likely infantry or mechanized units).
   - Movement Directions: Black arrows show the direction of the attack or the movement of forces towards Hill 652 and OBJ WOLF.
   - On the western side of the map:
     - A group of units located on the western side of Osborne Road.
     - CWO OP: Label for the Command Observation Point.
     - The unit marked with the number "2" on the left side likely represents a command element or support unit.

4. Dynamics of the Operation:

   - Two main axes of attack:
     - The first axis targets Hill 652 (to the north).
     - The second axis targets OBJ 1 and OBJ 2, indicating the key objective within OBJ WOLF.
   - Units are deployed for a converging attack, meaning the forces are moving towards the objectives to converge at critical points.
   - The symbol on the right side of Osborne Road represents a unit ready for maneuver.

Interpretation of the Operation:

1. Focus on Hill 652:
   - Hill 652 is a key elevation point providing an advantage for observation and terrain control.
   - Likely, the first objective is to secure this point in order to gain a terrain advantage.
2. Objectives OBJ WOLF (OBJ 1 and OBJ 2):
   - Securing OBJ WOLF appears to be the main objective of the operation.
   - Forces are advancing from multiple directions to neutralize resistance within these objectives.
3. PL BLUE:
   - The PL BLUE line marks the phase line or the initial line of strength for the operation.

Conclusion:

The image depicts an attack tactic involving coordinated force movements towards the elevated position of Hill 652 and the final objectives of OBJ WOLF (with sub-objectives OBJ 1 and OBJ 2). These elements suggest an operation focused on securing key positions and controlling the terrain.

If you need a more detailed analysis or an assessment of potential scenarios, I am at your service, Commander!"

3.3 Alternative attack course of action (COA) generated by ChatGPT

One of the objectives is to explore whether the GenAI tool can offer alternative actions for the situation described and presented in Figure 1. After ChatGPT demonstrated an understanding of the context and situation – as the analysis of the situation, dynamics of events, and interpretation of the operation align with the COA example from the paper (Tuličić, 1996) – the following prompt was given:

Prompt: "Can you create another version of the attack presented on the same map?"

ChatGPT's response:

Figure 2. Visual response of the ChatGPT tool to the request for alternative courses of action

"The alternative course of action is shown on the map. The main changes include:

1. A flanking maneuver from the south via Osborne Road.
2. Convergence of forces on OBJ WOLF, with a focus on OBJ 1 and OBJ 2.
3. Maintaining observation on the key elevation point Hill 652.

This approach allows for the avoidance of direct conflict on the hill and the concentration of forces on the objectives within OBJ WOLF. If further assessment or elaboration is needed, I am at your disposal!"

The image generated by ChatGPT in response to the given request did not meet expectations, even after several iterations and additional instructions for creation. Therefore, the following prompt was given:

Prompt: "Write the second course of action in words. An image is not required."

ChatGPT's response:

"The second course of action represents an alternative attack plan with an emphasis on bypassing key points and concentrating forces on the primary objectives. Here is a detailed description:

Situation

Main topographical point: Hill 652 remains marked as the dominant elevation, but a frontal assault on it is avoided.

Main objectives: OBJ WOLF, divided into two subzones – OBJ 1 and OBJ 2.

Alternative Course of Action.

Flanking maneuver from the south:

- Instead of a direct assault on Hill 652, forces regroup south of Osborne Road.
- The movement proceeds eastward along Osborne Road towards OBJ 1 and OBJ 2.

Two axes of attack:

- The first group advances directly towards OBJ 1, using support from behind.
- The second group maneuvers slightly to the east and concentrates the attack on OBJ 2.

Maintaining observation:

- A smaller unit remains on Hill 652 in an observation role to ensure battlefield surveillance and report on enemy movements.

Converging attack:

- Both groups advancing towards OBJ WOLF coordinate the final attack from the west and southeast, ensuring simultaneous pressure on OBJ 1 and OBJ 2.

Advantages of the plan:

- By avoiding a frontal assault on Hill 652, the loss of resources and units is reduced.
- The flanking maneuver allows for faster progress and concentration of forces on key objectives.
- The observation unit on Hill 652 ensures battlefield surveillance and information coverage."

After ChatGPT provided a detailed description of the new course of action, it was sketched, as shown in Figure 3

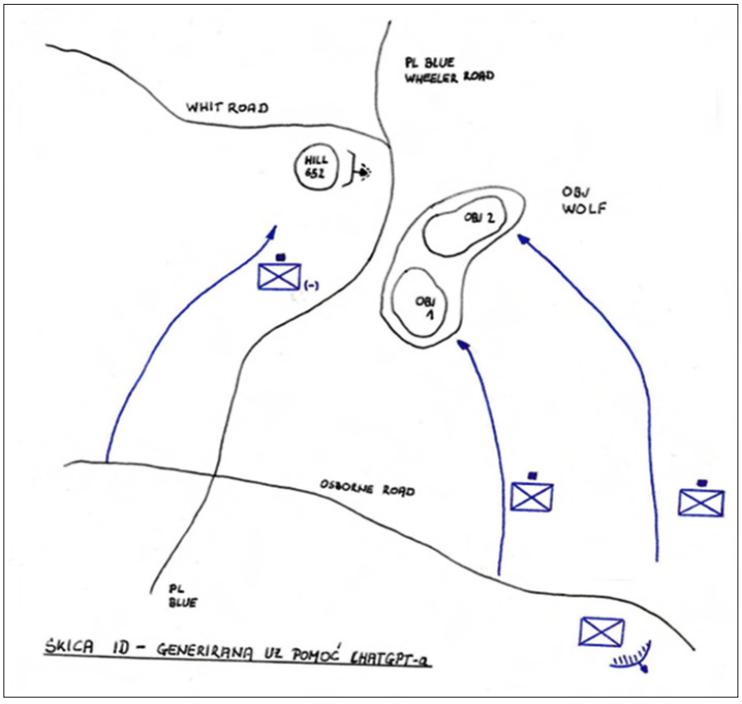

Figure 3. COA sketch created based on the course of action developed by ChatGPT.

3.4 Evaluation of the results generated by ChatGPT

To assess the result of the attack course of action generated by ChatGPT, the text and the subsequently created sketch were evaluated by a human expert. The expert's opinion is that, given the input information used by the model, the generated attack course of action demonstrates a satisfactory level of logical coherence and strategic grounding. However, certain deficiencies in the detail of specific elements were noted, which could be improved with additional specific information or human intervention. The identified deficiencies primarily relate to ChatGPT's tendency to provide overgeneralized responses that lack domain-specific precision, particularly in interpreting military terminology and adapting to real-time operational scenarios. These limitations suggest that, at present, ChatGPT's responses should be supplemented with human oversight to ensure operational accuracy. The AI tool is limited by the knowledge it derives from specific records contained in the databases it learns from. Furthermore, ChatGPT should be enhanced with data from a local database relevant to the context of the military decision-making situation. The expert particularly emphasized that the model demonstrates an understanding of the basic principles of planning and scenario generation, but further study is required to achieve full operational usability.

It should be noted that ChatGPT could enable the generation of recommendations for effective courses of action based on specific military objectives, considering additional external factors such as terrain conditions, enemy tactics, and logistical and strategic considerations.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzed the application of generative pre-trained transformers (GPT) in command and control (C2) systems, with a particular focus on the generation and optimization of courses of action. Generative models, such as GPT, represent a significant advancement in military systems, enabling faster situational analysis, development of courses of action, and decision-making in dynamic and complex operational environments.

The paper demonstrated the following:

1. Cognitive support for commanders – The integration of GPT can significantly enhance key cognitive functions of commanders, such as intent, situational analysis, and planning.
2. Acceleration of decision-making processes – GPT models enable faster generation of courses of action, reducing the time required for decision-making in crisis situations.
3. Flexibility and adaptability – Models like ChatGPT can process large volumes of data and generate strategic options based on military doctrines, situational analysis, and available resources.

However, the paper also identified certain challenges:

1. Reliability and accuracy – GPT models occasionally generate inaccurate or biased information, which can be critical in a military context.
2. Ethical and security concerns – Additional regulation is required to ensure the responsible application of AI technologies in command systems.

In response to the research question (Is it realistic to apply publicly available generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) models to support the military decision-making process in the development and selection of courses of action at the tactical level?), a conditional positive evaluation can be given. Greater reliability in conclusion about GenAI potential would be possible if we had conducted simulations of different scenarios, that is, applied ChatGPT in various tactical situations. Further development of these systems and their integration with local databases and context promises even better results.

Future research should focus on the development of more reliable and specialized GPT models tailored to military needs, as well as the integration of GPT with simulation tools and real-time sensors. Additionally, future research should explore the integration of generative AI with existing C2 systems and the potential risks associated with adversarial use of these technologies. Furthermore, ethical concerns regarding the deployment of generative AI in military decision-making should be carefully examined, particularly in relation to accountability, bias, and the human oversight required to ensure responsible application.

In conclusion, the application of generative pre-trained transformers in C2 systems has the potential to revolutionize decision-making, enhancing efficiency and situational awareness in modern military operations. The integration of AI technologies is a crucial step toward developing advanced, autonomous, and adaptable command and control systems on the future battlefield.

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Primjena generativne umjetne inteligencije u vojnom odlučivanju

Sažetak

Odlučivanje u vojnoj organizaciji osobito je zahtjevno na svim razinama, od taktičke do strateške. Stoga je važna potpora odlučivanju koja u suvremenim sustavima uključuje C2 i još naprednije modele zapovijedanja i kontrole. Uslijed složenosti suvremenih vojnih operacija, donošenje odluka na taktičkoj razini treba uključivati brzo, precizno i informirano razmatranje inačica djelovanja (Courses of Action, COA). Ovo istraživanje usmjereno je na utvrđivanje primjene sustava generativne umjetne inteligencije poput ChatGPT-a, u okviru taktičkog vojnog odlučivanja, kao moguće sastavnice modela C2. ChatGPT, kao napredni jezični model, može osigurati potencijalnu podršku zapovjednicima u procesu analize i odabira optimalne inačice djelovanja putem generiranja relevantnih situacijskih rješenja, zasnovanih na velikim količinama podataka koje umjetna inteligencija koristi. Istraživanje pokazuje da primjena ChatGPT-a u ovom kontekstu omogućuje automatsko generiranje relevantnih scenarija na temelju stvarnih i hipotetskih ulaznih podataka. Nadalje,

analizom mogućih rješenja ChatGPT-a, putem interakcije sa sustavom generativne umjetne inteligencije, moguća je optimizacija odluka, kao i samog procesa donošenja odluka na razini taktičkih zapovjednika. Time se smanjuje ljudska pogreška i poboljšava brzina reakcije u dinamičnim i kompleksnim vojnim situacijama. Premda modeli umjetne inteligencije, koji su sve napredniji, mogu bitno poboljšati vojno odlučivanje, taj proces ne smije biti potpuno automatiziran. Mora se zadržati ljudski nadzor u finalnoj fazi odlučivanja, čime se među ostalim čuva i odgovornost u ključnim vojnim odlukama.

Ključne riječi:

vojno odlučivanje, C2 sustav, generativna umjetna inteligencija, inačica djelovanja

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STRATEGOS

The Evolution of NATO: Strategic Adaptation in a Changing Security Landscape

Dražen Smiljanić[1]

Abstract

NATO's relevance stems from its political and military instruments of power. The longevity and success of the North Atlantic Alliance stem from its significance and cohesion, which are rooted in its core values and capacity for adaptation and transformation.

Since its inception, adaptability has been a key quality of NATO. The Alliance adapts its tasks, mission, organisation, and military capabilities. Moreover, since 2003, with the formation of the Allied Command Transformation, the alliance has systematically transformed its military instrument of power to improve its effectiveness.

The article examines NATO's continuous transformation as a comprehensive and continuous process of adaptation, identifying patterns and trends that reflect its thorough change and evolution. It employs a three-pronged analytical lens: historical, institutional, and future-oriented. Through document and policy analysis, the study identifies six core trends of transformation.

This article contributes to the understanding of NATO's evolving strategic culture by highlighting its shift toward proactive planning, institutional foresight, and innovation as tools for resilience.

Keywords:

NATO, transformation, adaptation, security environment

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Introduction

NATO's relevance is generally measured by its military power, materialised in its defence capabilities and forces. It is also revealed in the coherence of its members' values and goals. However, the longevity and success of its mission are significant due to its power to adapt and transform its missions, tasks, and capabilities. For over seven decades, NATO has been a cornerstone of global security, transforming from a Cold War-era defence pact into a dynamic, interconnected security alliance. The Alliance has consistently demonstrated its ability to adapt in response to evolving geopolitical, technological, and military challenges. NATO's ability to adapt its missions, structures, and doctrines has been critical to its longevity and effectiveness in a changing security landscape.

The need for transformation has never been more urgent than in the 21st century, where emerging security threats, including cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, hybrid conflicts, and strategic competition with adversaries, require greater interoperability, rapid decision-making, and multi-domain operational capabilities. The 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war have further highlighted the critical need for continuous strategic adaptation. As NATO expands its reach with new members such as Finland and Sweden, it must ensure that its political cohesion, military capabilities, and strategic vision remain aligned with contemporary threats and challenges.

This article argues that NATO's strategic adaptation has evolved from a predominantly reactive model to a more proactive approach, particularly in the post-2014 security environment. This shift has been driven by the institutionalisation of foresight mechanisms and the adoption of innovation as a core strategic tool. The analysis explores how NATO's structures and strategies reflect this evolution and what it means for the Alliance's long-term resilience.

Paper's objectives, methodology and data

The article examines NATO's capacity for strategic transformation and its ability to adapt to an evolving security environment. The research pursues two primary objectives: (1) to identify key changes that NATO has undergone since its founding, along with their causes and strategic context, and (2) to identify patterns and trends that reflect the scope and quality of NATO's adaptation and transformation efforts over time.

The analysis is guided by the hypothesis that NATO's adaptation model has increasingly adopted a proactive approach to strategic transformation, one that aims not only to respond to contingencies and crises but to actively shape and influence the future security environment before destabilising factors materialise.

Methodologically, the study uses a qualitative document analysis, focusing on official NATO policy documents, strategic concepts, planning frameworks (e.g. NDPP, NWCC, SFA), and relevant academic and institutional publications. The primary sources include materials from NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT), NATO headquarters, and publicly accessible strategic guidance issued between 2000 and 2024, with particular emphasis on developments following the 2014 Ukrainian crisis and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. These sources support not only the institutional and foresight-oriented analysis but also the historical analysis of NATO's transformation over time, allowing for the identification of key inflexion points and adaptation phases.

The research covers the period from NATO's founding in 1949 to 2024, with a particular emphasis on the post-2014 strategic environment marked by Russia's annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The article applies a three-pronged analytical approach:

- A historical lens to trace NATO's evolution across defined strategic phases (Cold War, post-Cold War, post-2014, etc.);
- An institutional lens to assess policy mechanisms, planning structures, and capability development;
- A foresight-oriented lens to examine NATO's use of strategic anticipation, innovation, and long-term transformation planning.

This approach enables a structured assessment of how NATO's adaptation has evolved from a reactive posture to one driven by foresight and innovation embedded within institutional frameworks.

Transformation – theoretical framework

Military transformation aims to equip the armed forces with the capabilities to protect the nation from unpredictable threats. It is important to recognise that transformation is not a simplistic idea or a fixed formula for change. Instead, it represents a commitment to innovative approaches to warfare and support for war-making forces (Asch & Hosek, 2004).

In the broadest sense, defence transformation includes the following areas (Williams, 2001):

- The transformation of military culture (patterns of behaviour and action) refers to the armed forces' leadership, management, administrative ethics, value systems, and the traditions upon which they are based. Some examples of this dimension of transformation include a stronger orientation towards modern technologies (informatics) in implementing business processes (e.g., the distribution of official documents and orders), as well as decentralisation of decision-making.
- Transformation in human resources - the composition of the military organisation according to the necessary competencies, skills, and training. It includes, for example, the development of leaders and intellectual capital and is most often related to education, training, and personnel management.
- Organisational transformation – typically a technocratic process that regulates the organisation's size, tends to achieve an optimal structure and optimises management processes.
- Capability transformation is generally part of long-term defence planning and must represent a thoughtful and analytical process that ultimately ensures the essential function of the armed forces.
- Doctrinal transformation implies creating and adopting new doctrinal and conceptual documents.

Defence transformation

The common denominator of defence transformation is that it refers to a specific example of defence reform, which includes military innovation, emphasises changes in military organisation (structure, communication, command and control), technology or doctrine, and changes in orientation at the strategic level (e.g., expansion of operational domains, nation building vs. interventions, partnership establishment, etc.).

Transformation may also be considered a discontinuous change in defence policy not limited to a specific period or set of technologies. Its more important dimension is that it describes far-reaching changes in the country's defence policy and approach to the military. Transformation, as defined here, involves managing a series of changes in the defence sector, aiming to enhance the compatibility and relevance of the military instrument to achieve the objectives of the state's foreign and security policy in response to significant shifts in the international security environment.

Not all changes within the armed forces qualify as transformation. The transformation of military instruments of power is a unique phenomenon. It includes a policy change that promotes changes in the military organisation's goals, strategies and structure. This highlights the fundamental nature of the implemented change. Transformation refers to discontinuous, profound change (as needed), sometimes referred to as evolutionary change in military instrumentation. Unlike incremental (gradual) change, which only improves existing processes and systems, transformation represents qualitative changes in strategies, organisation (structure), procedures and efficiency measures for performing critical tasks (Stulberg & Salomone, 2016). At the same time, transformation does not only include developing and using new technologies. It represents fundamental and far-reaching changes in the military organisation's policies, concepts and functioning.

NATO specific transformation

In NATO, the concept of transformation refers to a process of change aimed at gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage against potential adversaries, including eliminating deficiencies that are created by evolving challenges and threats in the future (NATO ACT, 2015).

In addition to structural change, which occurs only at the end of the process, transformation encompasses modernisation (capabilities), readiness improvement, interoperability, and sustainability. The significance of transformation for NATO members is already evident from the fact that the primary mission of one of the two strategic NATO commands, Allied Command Transformation, is to serve as the "architect" of the military capabilities that the Alliance needs to conduct ongoing operations and build readiness for responding to future security challenges.

However, there is no "collective" understanding of transformation. As a result, the change strategies of NATO member states varied considerably. In 2002, NATO member states committed to institutional reform to ensure the Alliance's continued existence, which had been in place for over 50 years. This was in a changing security environment. Moreover, although all NATO member states agreed to implement the transformation, these defence reform initiatives were primarily shaped by changes in threat perceptions within the security environment and national strategic cultures.

NATO's concept of transformation is not a singular goal but rather a continuous process. Transformation is perceived as imperative because, in a constantly evolving security environment, defence systems must adapt to change to remain relevant. Transformation within NATO is also crucial because it represents the fundamental means by which the Alliance strives to maintain cohesion and develop collective capabilities to address shared security threats.

Ideally, the defence transformation process should have provided an improved foundation for alliances in the 21st century. Instead, the diversity of transformation trajectories has become an expression of the fundamental difficulties that NATO faces in order to maintain alliance solidarity, especially in an age when NATO faces security threats that come from beyond the territorial borders of the Alliance and in other domains (cyber, space) rather than only "at home" (such as terrorism). For NATO, the beginning of the 21st century marked a growing trend of irregular warfare, followed by a period of hybrid warfare after 2014 (the Ukrainian crisis) and a return to interstate war after February 2022.

Active vs reactive strategic paradigms

Traditional models of strategic adaptation tend to emphasise reactive responses to geopolitical shifts, strategic shocks, or emerging threats. This reactive paradigm has historically defined how military alliances, including NATO, adjust to changes in the security environment. However, in recent years, there has been a deliberate shift within NATO toward a more anticipatory approach to strategy. This evolution is grounded in the institutionalisation of strategic foresight and the integration of innovation-driven capability development into core strategic planning processes. Such developments support the hypothesis that NATO's adaptation model has increasingly adopted a proactive approach to adaptation, aiming not only to respond to crises but also to actively shape and influence the future security environment before destabilising factors materialise.

Strategic foresight initiatives, such as NATO's Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA), as well as frameworks like the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept and the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), illustrate this trend toward a forward-looking strategy. These internal shifts parallel broader trends seen across global institutions, where the practice of strategic foresight has gained significant traction. Organisations such as the United Nations, OECD, and the European Commission have adopted comprehensive foresight frameworks that align closely with NATO's approach.

For example, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) defines strategic foresight as "*an organised, systematic way of looking beyond the expected to deal with uncertainty and complexity*." It highlights its role in enabling "*effective emergent strategic planning in volatile and rapidly changing environments*" (UN CEPA, 2021). The OECD describes foresight as a method for "*exploring different plausible futures that might emerge, and the opportunities and challenges they might bring*". to make better decisions and act now. Similarly, the European Commission presents foresight as "*the discipline of exploring, anticipating, and shaping the future to help build and utilise collective intelligence in a structured and systematic way to anticipate developments*". It is, they argue, essential for "*preparing the EU to withstand shocks and shape the future we want*" (EU EC, 2022).

These shared definitions underscore a common understanding: that the future, while neither entirely predictable nor predetermined, can and should be systematically explored to reduce vulnerability to strategic shocks and support resilient, adaptive policymaking. NATO's incorporation of foresight into its long-term strategic planning reflects a broader recognition among international actors that proactive anticipation, rather than mere reaction, is essential to maintaining security and stability in an increasingly complex world.

Analysis of nato's transformation in perspectives

This analysis examines how NATO has responded to challenges, threats, and opportunities in the evolving security environment. In the historical perspective paragraph, we examine NATO's evolution over time, primarily in response to geopolitical and security challenges. The strategic perspective examines NATO's strategy development and its characteristics in relation to the current and future security environment. Finally, in the context of strategic foresight, we analyse how NATO approaches scanning future horizons and shaping the future.

A critical dimension of transformation in NATO is that it extends beyond the military instruments of power. More importantly, transformation also occurs within the "political NATO." Since 2022, the security landscape in the Euro-Atlantic region has seen a resurgence of armed conflict in Europe alongside a range of disruptions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The instabilities and challenges affecting Western economies, particularly in Europe, primarily stem from the lockdowns and supply-side disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The liberal world order, with its globalisation, allowed many nations to escape poverty and crises. However, it proved to be vulnerable in periods of crisis, such as the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, due to the high interdependence of nations in the economy, particularly in sectors like energy and food. These developments also affect NATO as a security provider for almost 1 billion people in Europe and North America. However, this has not been the first time NATO has needed to adapt.

NATO evolves in response to new contexts and over time. It adjusts to changed circumstances by outlining its missions, tasks, strategies, concepts, and policies, consequently transforming its structure, organisation, and capabilities. NATO's cohesion, which is its central focus, stems from its core values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, relations among allies have not always been idyllic. The primary source of internal disagreements stemmed from differing transatlantic perspectives on strategic priorities, burden sharing (see Cornish, 1997; Cornish, 2004), and the transatlantic capability gap. Disagreements have occasionally escalated significantly. The first significant shock to alliance cohesion occurred in 1966 when President Charles de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's integrated military command structure. De Gaulle sought to enhance France's military independence, particularly in relation to the United States. Nonetheless, NATO has consistently faced its internal challenges (Thies, 2009).

Furthermore, NATO has faced challenges defining its role in a post-Cold War world. Its member nations have often clashed over the extent of the alliance's commitments and individual responsibilities, which involved contribution to aggregate capabilities via national defence budgets. Accusations went against the USA for "*Washington's arrogant unilateralism that weakened NATO*" with the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 (Brzezinski, 2009) to European allies' lack of credibility, such as former US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates' warning of "*a dim if not dismal future*" for NATO unless more member nations scale up their participation in the alliance's activities (Shanker, 2011). The criticism also included narratives such as French President Emmanuel Macron's warning of Europe that NATO was becoming brain-dead (The Economist, 2019).

Despite its vigorous internal dynamics, NATO has always stayed resilient due to its core principles of solidarity, freedom, and democracy. That was not the case with its antagonist, the Warsaw Pact. As Angela Stent noted in her article published in Foreign Affairs, "*The Warsaw Pact was an alliance that had a unique track record: it invaded only its own members*," referring to the Pact's interventions in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 (Stent, 2022).

NATO's relevance as a security provider is based on its deterrent capacity, stemming from its political and military instruments of power, as well as its collective defence pledge. Its strength also lies in its cohesion due to shared values and its ability to adapt through transformation.

Historical perspective

NATO's political and military leadership has frequently hailed it as the most successful military alliance in history. Its success stems from its capacity to adapt and evolve in response to changes in its strategic context (Vergun, 2020) and overcome internal conflicts. Since 1949, NATO has consistently demonstrated this through the evolution of its mission and capabilities.

The history of NATO's transformation can be examined using several criteria and distinguished by the drivers of change that led to adaptation. We began by considering NATO's initial mission, "to keep Russia out, Germany down, and Americans in," which focuses on Russia (and the former Soviet Union). This approach seems particularly valid because NATO's destiny and purpose have been, and continue to be, in significant measure, closely tied to Russia.

For that purpose, we borrow Strobe Talbott's division of the three major phases: (1) the morphing of World War II into the Cold War, (2) the prospect of "Europe whole and free"; and (3) Russia's return to its predatory and authoritarian past (Talbott, 2019).

1. The Cold War period. Diego Palmer (2019) provides a detailed description of different NATO periods. He divides the Cold War period into five phases: (1) First steps (1949-1954), (2) Strengthening NATO (1954-1957), (3) The Berlin crisis: transition to Flexible Response (1957-1967), (4) False start: NATO's lost decade (1965-1975), and (5) NATO's strategic and operational renaissance (1975-1987).

During the Cold War, NATO concentrated primarily on collective defence and shielding its allies from potential threats posed by the Soviet Union. The nuclear arms race and large standing armies characterise this era. For example, when NATO leaders convened in Lisbon in 1952, the Alliance aimed to have 50 divisions ready to deter a Soviet attack (Time, 1952). By the

conclusion of the Cold War, NATO maintained approximately 170 divisions compared to 295 belonging to the Warsaw Pact (TFMD, 1988).

2. The prospect of "Europe whole and free" (1990-2014)**.** This post-Cold War period could also be examined in several phases.

After the Cold War, NATO experienced its first significant transformation. Its centre of gravity shifted from confrontation to cooperation, from a military Alliance to a political one, from deterrence to protection against risks and the guarantee of stability, and from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Furthermore, it transitioned from a US-led Alliance to a genuine partnership where Europeans played an equal leadership role.

In the immediate post-Cold War period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, NATO faced a significant existential crisis. Scholars of realism and neorealism posited that NATO's primary purpose of counterbalancing the Soviet threat had vanished, leading them to argue for its disbandment. Conversely, liberal scholars contended that NATO remained essential, even after the end of the bipolar world. They claimed that NATO embodies the shared values of the transatlantic community, enhancing the benefits of transatlantic cooperation. While seeking to address emerging threats, NATO evolved into an alliance dedicated to promoting values, principles, and democracy—elements that were urgently needed on the European continent at the time.

Former NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner expressed concern that removing nuclear weapons from European soil "*would not provide more security but less*" (Wörner, 1990). Nevertheless, he feared that the elimination of atomic weapons would render Europe vulnerable to nuclear blackmail and make conventional warfare feasible again.

During that period, some considered NATO a relic of the Cold War. Stanley Hoffmann wrote in 1981 in Foreign Affairs that the history of the Atlantic Alliance is a history of crises. He claimed it resulted from "*not simply an inevitable divergence of interests but dramatically different views of the world and priorities*" (Hoffmann, 1981). NATO Public Diplomacy published a series of debates from 2003 to 2004, discussing the pros and cons of Euro-Atlantic

security options (NATO PD, 2004). The pessimism was apparent and went so far that some scholars like François Heisbourg (in the debate with Steve Larrabee), sensing a general loss of unity and purpose in NATO, said that "*invocation of Article 5 would be difficult to recreate, so great has been the growth of transatlantic disaffection*" (NATO PD, 2004:p.33).

In the early 1990s, NATO's function evolved, transforming into a framework for stabilising an unexpectedly volatile geopolitical landscape in Central and Eastern Europe (Brzezinski, 2009). Additionally, NATO contributed to resolving the ethnic conflicts in the former Social Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, marking the first instance of NATO's involvement outside its territory.

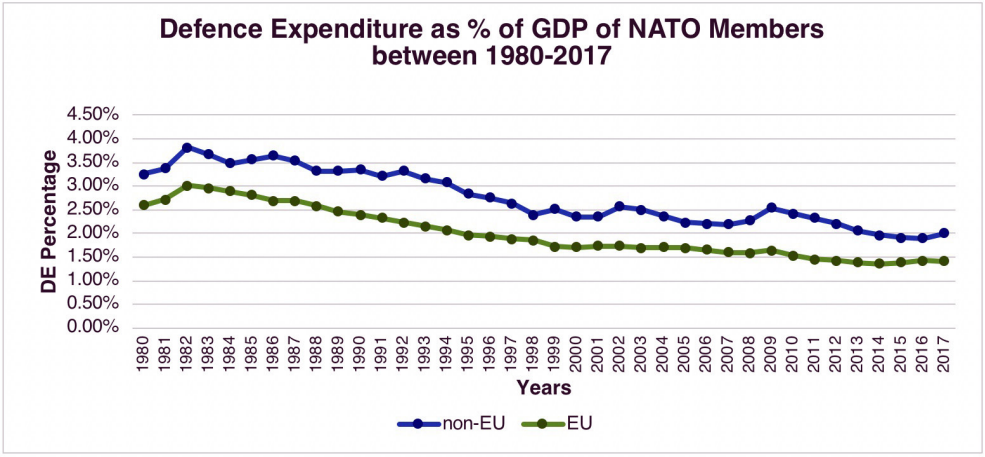

Figure 1: Information on Defence Expenditures (Source: SIPRI, 2018).

The post-Cold War period was also one of "strategic optimism" that highly impacted defence expenditure among NATO members. Allies generally decreased their defence expenditures in favour of peace dividends[2].

2 *"The peace dividend is the economic benefit that was expected in the world after the end of the Cold War, as a result of money previously spent on defence and arms becoming available for other purposes."* (Collins English Dictionary, 2024)

The post-9/11 period was marked by NATO almost completely engaged beyond Euro-Atlantic territory. This period is characterised by the flexibility to deploy forces as and where required, whether for operations in the Sahel or Afghanistan, combating forest fires, or constructing emergency hospitals for COVID-19 patients locally.

A strong focus on coherence in capability development characterises this period. In April 2009, NATO adopted the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) framework model, and in June 2009, defence ministers approved its implementation and transition plan. The NDPP (NATO, 2022) provides a defined methodology to link the political and military strategic levels into a standardised, functionally cohesive defence planning approach. This process follows an integrated five-step method over a four-year cycle. The NDPP is designed to help NATO meet its ambitious capability development objectives and ensure all necessary resources are available. Thus, step 3 of five is crucial, as it entails allocating commitments among allies. In this distribution process, the political principles of equitable burden sharing and reasonable challenge are applied to determine each ally's Capability Target package.

NATO also strongly emphasised innovation as the decade of the 2010s ended. NATO focused on the institutionalisation of innovation and its adoption into organisational culture. Institutionalisation comprises different efforts, from establishing the Innovation Hub and Lab in NATO ACT and the NATO Innovation Board at NATO HQ to the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA). NATO also changed the organisation's culture and mindset towards looking at novel ideas and fostering their adoption. It also secured support for changes that would help NATO innovate. This aspect of innovation is specific as it aims to inspire innovation from the bottom up, in addition to a defence industrial innovation that goes top down, from producer to customer.

3. Russia's return to its predatory and authoritarian past.

The post-Ukrainian crisis 2014 period (2014 - 2022) signalled the need to develop "hard power" (i.e., conventional warfare) defence capabilities. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, along with the emergence and

decline of ISIL (RAND, 2024), highlighted the urgent need to sustain robust conventional military capabilities. However, hybrid warfare and "grey zone warfare" also continued to play a significant role. These notable shifts in the strategic landscape prompted the Alliance to enhance its deterrence and defense posture. Consequently, in 2006, NATO member states agreed to allocate at least 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defense, aiming to meet this target by the decade's end.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022-? period (currently underway) reaffirmed Carl von Clausewitz's principles of war (the nature of war) and made them relevant again today. This also increased the importance of NATO's military side. NATO Military Authorities and military leadership are vital in strategic and defence planning. They provide their best military advice to the political level, ultimately allowing NATO to maintain its advantage.

During the varied historical periods, NATO adapted its capabilities and expanded its mission from purely collective defence to crisis response and collaborative security. These adaptations also included different mechanisms, such as partnering with non-NATO members and non-governmental organisations.

NATO is still the strongest political-military alliance in the world. It remains attractive to "newcomers," comprising four out of six former Yugoslav Republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia), with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia currently not members, as Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the Membership Action Plan phase. Finland and Sweden became full NATO members in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Institutional perspective

NATO transformation is institutionalised. Although the NATO Defence Planning Process is the most tangible driver of transformation, it is consistently guided by policy-level decisions and documents. The development of Strategic Concepts, NATO summits, NATO defence and foreign affairs ministers' meetings (e.g., DEFMIN, FORMIN), and sessions at the Military Committee level comprise NATO's "battle rhythm," which drives and guides adaptation coherently.

From 1949 to the present, NATO has adopted eight strategic concepts. The first four were adopted during the Cold War and were primarily based on deterrence and collective defence. As the Cold War waned, there was an increasing emphasis on dialogue and détente. From 1991 to the present, four strategic concepts have been adopted in 1991, 1999, 2010, and 2022. They responded to the geopolitical and security context in which the Alliance found itself at a specific historical juncture. The institutional character of developing strategic concepts, approximately every 10 years since 1991, has not necessarily been aligned with the reality of what happened on the ground.

The most "dramatic" challenge emerged in 2014, with the so-called Ukraine crisis, where aggressive Russian behaviour and a potential threat to Europe's east had become apparent. Along with the challenges of the high-intensity conflict, the NATO environment has been characterised by some other features:

- Blurred lines of conflict between peace, crisis and war and the blurring of the reality of forward and rear (hybrid warfare, war in grey zone). Additionally, there is a systemic competition that compels NATO to be on the front line at all times[3].
- The extension of conflict into new domains where physical borders become irrelevant, such as Cyber,
- Space or Information sphere, but also the cognitive warfare;
- Combination of effects in these domains;
- Multiplication of non-state actors in the theatres;
- The acceleration of time in the infosphere directly influences decision-making.

The challenges described above suggest that the myth of "strategic stability" must instead give way to the recognition of a perpetual "real-time corrected instability" or what Sean McFate calls "durable disorder" (McFate, 2019).

Regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, NATO's main challenge was to eliminate concerns about its strength and dedication to

3 See, for example, the concept of unrestricted warfare at: Liang & Xiangsui, 1999.

collective defence. This is addressed in the Strategic Concept 2022, which sets the strategic direction for the alliance until 2030. NATO's response to the military threat posed by Russia reflects the need to address challenges arising from China's strategic activities. The threat from China stretches US military resources, while its technological capabilities expose vulnerabilities. This highlights the need for European NATO members to bolster their defence commitments. However, the effectiveness of this initiative, which relies on the support of European allies, is hindered by the pressures on European defence and resilience due to backing Ukraine.

NATO is a composite of nations and allies because they provide forces, and the aggregation of their capabilities form NATO's capabilities. However, NATO also has its headquarters and a permanent command and Force Structure. This unique organisation allows for a focus on two main domains: operations (warfighting) and transformation (warfighting development). Allied Command Transformation is among NATO's two strategic commands, tasked with shaping the Alliance's long-term military capabilities. This vision is articulated through the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC). The Concept outlines an aspirational "North Star" vision that guides NATO Allies in evolving their militaries to ensure superiority over the next two decades (NATO ACT, 2021).

NWCC is a new concept endorsed in 2021. It is unique because no similar concepts of this type have existed before in NATO. NWCC, together with the 2020 Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, represents a tool to operationalise the NATO Military Strategy, which was endorsed in 2019. It is also unique in that it does not reflect a fixed future vision but a concept of how NATO should proceed to achieve its strategic military objectives. In terms of its adaptability and flexibility, it is designed to respond to changes in the strategic environment as it evolves. This flexibility is exercised through the Concept's implementation plan, the Warfare Development Agenda (WDA).

The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept is informed by threats that are based on both risk and opportunity. This enhances the NATO Defence Planning Process, ensuring cohesion and coherence in the development of

Alliance capabilities. As a living document, the Concept promotes continuous practical application. Its implementation benefits from drawing lessons daily, conducting experiments, harnessing data and new technologies, and developing an ecosystem—a network—of partners, including nations, academia, and industry. With this approach, NATO experts can gain a deeper understanding of the operating environment, enabling them to anticipate challenges and opportunities while maintaining their technological edge.

With NWCC (NATO ACT, 2021), NATO changes the paradigm of the security context from "peace-crisis-conflict" (i.e., linear escalation) to "shaping-contesting-fighting" (i.e., proactive and anticipatory response to threats). NATO considers itself a defensive alliance, viewing armed conflict as a last resort. That is what NATO adversaries are trying to avoid; that is why hybrid warfare emerged—to circumvent NATO's conventional military superiority. Competition occurs in the shaping and contesting dimension, and hybrid warfare could be seen as a tool adversaries use to shape the security context. Even though NWCC is forward-looking, the war in Ukraine did not undermine its assumptions and guidelines. However, it seems rather compelling to implement it as soon as possible. The institutionalisation of foresight through ACT's Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) represents a turning point in NATO's strategic culture, shifting from a reactive approach to past threats to one of anticipating future challenges. This supports the hypothesis that NATO's adaptation model is increasingly proactive and innovation-driven.

Finally, the "institutional" NATO is intended to reflect the "NATO of values." No structure can keep an alliance together without the glue of values. Cohesion is and will remain the Alliance's centre of gravity. Therefore, as far as the Alliance's future is concerned, it will depend heavily on the USA. Any future US administration may opt for one of three options: withdrawal (of the USA), the status quo, or a genuine internal rebalancing of the Alliance that puts the Europeans at the centre. Still, they would have to want it and try to get it. Although less likely than not, the potential US withdrawal exists. The US President, Donald Trump, considered that possibility during his first presidential campaign and, later, privately (Barnes & Cooper, 2019). The EU has an appetite for building its strategic autonomy, which entails reducing

its dependence on other countries, particularly the USA, in strategically significant policy areas (EU EP, 2022).

Future anticipation perspective

One specific challenge that emerged after the Cold War was the phenomenon of strategic surprise. The events in the global security environment after 2001 compelled NATO's leaders, particularly its military authorities, to recognize that simple adaptation in a reactive mode was insufficient. NATO began to require greater anticipation and involvement in shaping the future environment to maintain peace in the Euro-Atlantic area.

NATO Military Authorities introduced strategic foresight as a systemic effort relatively recently. NATO Allied Command Transformation published the first Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Report in 2013, with updates provided in 2015, 2017 and 2023 (NATO ACT, 2024), resulting in wholly revised versions. The SFA is envisaged as an iterative process that is updated regularly.

The SFA report identifies trends shaping the future strategic context by analysing five broad themes: Politics, People, Technology, Economy/ Resources and Environment. This analysis aims to derive defence and security implications for the Alliance. Although each impact is identified under a single theme, they are not mutually exclusive. The SFA assumes that several accelerating trends could interact unpredictably, increasing complexity with unknown consequences and implications.

The development of the Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) is based on the understanding that the future is neither entirely predictable nor predetermined. Nevertheless, foresight serves as a critical tool for anticipating potential disruptions and reducing the likelihood of strategic surprises. NATO member states recognise the importance of continuous monitoring and analysis of the global security environment in order to build a shared understanding of emerging trends. This collective awareness forms the foundation for coordinated planning and action, enabling the Alliance to shape its strategic posture in a proactive manner.

It is not surprising that NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) initiated the SFA process. NATO is responsible for leading the military transformation of the Alliance and developing capabilities to meet future defence and security challenges. ACT needed to create an enduring ability to provide future military assessments, perspectives, and advice to accomplish this task. Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) directly supports and informs the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and other forward-looking processes in the ACT's portfolio. The SFA builds on the principles described in the Strategic Concept NATO to pave the way for Alliance security in the future. The SFA is developed through the collective effort of all Allies. By sharing their perspectives, they aim to achieve a shared understanding of future challenges and opportunities.

NATO ACT develops strategic foresight by identifying trends (i.e. threats and opportunities) and defence and security implications identified through in-depth academic studies and extensive stakeholder consultations. This community comprises representatives from NATO and partner nations, NATO headquarters, NATO command structures and agencies, NATO centres of excellence, universities, think tanks, and research centres. The process is generally open to a broader community and individuals with expertise and interest in future trends and their implications for the security environment and the development of the future military power tool. The fundamental principles guiding these meetings are inclusivity and transparency, achieved through open collaboration and discussion.

Strategic foresight represents a significant shift in NATO's strategic culture, making the Alliance more determined to anticipate the future rather than react to it. This "future orientation" is reflected in the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (preparation for future wars) and the NATO Defence Planning Process (capability development).

Regarding SFA methodology, two traditions of future studies can be distinguished in the West. The first is the American school from which the term Strategic Foresight was derived, and the second is the French school called *La prospective*. The two traditions share the principle that "*humans have the will and capacity to influence the future to favour the desirable*" and that

"*this capacity creates a moral obligation to reflect upon the future and its possible paths*" (Godet & Durance, 2011). The difference between the two schools lies in the fact that the French integrate more critical actors into shaping the future, such as society, politics, and management. In contrast, due to their different roots, Americans focus primarily on technological changes and forecasting methods, which were developed mainly in a military milieu. In that regard, NATO's SFA reflects more principles of the French school. That is unsurprising because most allies are European, and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (who heads NATO ACT) has been a post occupied by the French general since 2009.

Discussion and synthesis

> "*So a military force has no constant formation, water has no constant shape: the ability to gain victory by changing and adapting according to the opponent is called genius.*"
>
> Sun Tzu, "The Art of War" (Tzu, 2000)

The findings of this paper support the hypothesis that **NATO has undergone a strategic evolution from a reactive security alliance to a proactive and future-oriented organisation.** Through foresight mechanisms like the SFA and capability frameworks such as the NDPP and NWCC, NATO is not merely responding to emerging threats but actively shaping the future security environment.

Evidence from the analysis of the historical perspective:

- Cold War: NATO responded to the Soviet threat through collective defence and deterrence.
- Post-Cold War: Shift to crisis management and peacebuilding (e.g., Balkans).
- Post-9/11: Operations beyond the Euro-Atlantic area (Afghanistan, Sahel).
- Post-2014: Focus on resilience, hybrid warfare, innovation, defence planning.
- Post-2022: Return to conventional warfare, along with enhanced foresight and coordination.

These phases demonstrate that NATO evolves in response to systemic changes; however, the period post-2014 marks a qualitative transformation. The shift is no longer just about reacting to crises but about building capacity and political will to anticipate threats and maintain strategic cohesion across domains, including cyber, space, and hybrid. The addition of Sweden and Finland further proves NATO's continued relevance and strategic appeal amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Evidence from the institutional perspective:

- Establishment of NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) in 2009.
- Alignment of capability targets among Allies.
- Use of NWCC to set a "North Star" vision of future capabilities.

NATO has institutionalised coherent and collective defence planning, moving beyond national silos. Through the NDPP and NWCC, the Alliance defines future operational requirements before the threats fully materialise. This underscores NATO's shift to a proactive strategic culture, aiming to shape capability development in a unified, forward-looking manner.

Evidence from strategic foresight and innovation initiatives are the following:

- NATO established Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) starting in 2013, regularly updated in 2015, 2017 and 2023, led by Allied Command Transformation (ACT).
- Introduction of NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC) in 2021.
- Creation of innovation-focused structures like the Innovation Hub, DIANA, and the NATO Innovation Board.
- Emphasis on bottom-up innovation culture, not only top-down industrial innovation.
- Use of foresight to shape rather than react to the security environment.

These initiatives demonstrate an explicit institutional commitment to long-term, anticipatory planning. Rather than waiting to respond to emerging threats, NATO now systematically scans the strategic horizon and builds capabilities to prepare for plausible future scenarios. This reflects a paradigm shift from reactive adaptation (post-crisis) to proactive shaping (pre-crisis).

It also demonstrates that NATO's transformation is no longer *ad hoc* but rather embedded in formal structures and planning cycles. The summary of key indicators are shown below (Table 1)

Table 1. Key indicators supporting the hypothesis of NATO's proactive strategic transformation

Evidence	**Interpretation (in supporting hypothesis)**
SFA, NWCC, ACT-led foresight efforts	NATO is embedding foresight to anticipate rather than react.
Strategic concepts, phases of adaptation (from Cold War to post-Ukraine war)	NATO evolves both structurally and conceptually in response to changing threats.
NDPP and capability development frameworks	Proactive, integrated planning replaces fragmented national responses.
Innovation structures (DIANA, Innovation Board)	NATO promotes innovation as a core enabler of strategic agility.
Expansion with Finland & Sweden	NATO remains adaptive and attractive in times of threat.

Source: own

Conclusion and policy recommendations

It can be said that the success of NATO as a security provider over the past 75 years is mainly due to its adaptability. NATO has adapted, changed, and evolved. The most distinctive aspect of its adaptations is NATO transformations observable in the six following trends:

- from a predominantly military to a post-Cold War political-military alliance (e.g. enlargements, introduction of cooperative security in its mission),
- from reaction (to strategic shocks) to anticipation of challenges and threats (through strategic foresight introduced in 2013), i.e. the evolution from a reactive to a proactive paradigm,

- from status quo power (e.g., defending the post-war order) to shaping the environment (with partners that include nations that do not belong to NATO, industry, academia, etc.),
- from massive and robust (nuclear and conventional) to agile and resilient (e.g. multi-domain)
- from the contribution of national armed forces to coherent (i.e., "cross-alliance") capability development (including interoperability and the introduction of the NATO Defence Planning Process in 2009),
- from a defence industry customer to an active innovation, science and technology, and capability development stakeholder.

Ensuring security in the Euro-Atlantic area necessitates ongoing and continuous adaptation by NATO. NATO's evolution through transformation and adaptation exhibits increasing trends towards closer collaboration, the coherent development of the military instrument of power, outreach to broader types of partners (including industry and academia), and greater agility in shaping the future and anticipating its developments.

Transformation has not often been praised as a primary contributor to strategic brilliance (to paraphrase Sun Tzu), but its value cannot be underestimated. This capacity to adapt and change should also be maintained at the national level. The current strategic environment, which is complex and time-constrained and is expected to become even more complex, will pressure defence and security organisations to exercise enhanced agility, including the ability to adapt and transform. Continuous transformation requires not only well-designed processes and systems but also, often, cultural shifts focused on mindset change. As a result, transformation demands dedication, commitment, and solid intellectual capital. NATO dedicated one of the two strategic commands (i.e. Supreme Allied Command Transformation, Norfolk, VA, USA) to fulfilling a transformational mission.

As NATO (hopefully) continues to evolve into a more proactive and innovation-focused alliance, its member states will need to adapt their national policies and strategic cultures accordingly. The following implications highlight some of the practical considerations and adjustments that governments may take into account:

1. National defence strategies need to evolve alongside NATO's transformation. Member states should ensure that their own defence reforms and military planning align with NATO's broader strategic direction. This means moving beyond threat response approaches to build capabilities that anticipate and shape future security challenges. Greater interoperability, multi-domain readiness, and agility should be central to national defence strategies.

2. Investing in emerging technologies is no longer optional. Suppose NATO wants to remain relevant in maintaining a technological edge. In that case, member countries must contribute to this effort by prioritising investment in key areas, such as cyber defence, artificial intelligence, space technologies, and autonomous systems. These are not just future priorities - they are already shaping the current security landscape.

3. Foresight should be a shared responsibility. Strategic foresight, long seen as a NATO-level function, should be mirrored within national systems. Governments should consider developing dedicated foresight organisational units (teams) within their defence establishments that can engage directly with NATO's Allied Command Transformation and contribute meaningfully to collective horizon scanning and future planning.

4. Rethinking burden sharing. The 2% GDP target remains important (as proof of the political will), but it should not be the only measure of commitment. Contributions to innovation, leadership in planning initiatives, or support for new NATO projects, such as DIANA or the Innovation Board, are equally critical. A more nuanced understanding of "burden sharing" would allow for fairer and more effective contributions across the Alliance.

5. Tapping into civilian expertise and innovation ecosystems. NATO's approach to innovation increasingly involves collaboration with science and academia, private sector actors, and think tanks. Member states should facilitate similar partnerships in their countries, integrating civilian expertise into defence planning and capability development. This helps foster the kind of bottom-up innovation that can complement NATO's top-down frameworks.

6. Communicating NATO's evolving role to the public. As NATO expands its role into less traditional areas, such as hybrid threats, information warfare, and cognitive security, member states need to bring their citizens along. Clear, transparent communication about NATO's missions and the rationale behind defence investments will be essential for maintaining public trust and democratic legitimacy.

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Sažetak

Relevantnost NATO-a proizlazi iz njegovih političkih i vojnih instrumenata moći. Dugovječnost i uspjeh Sjevernoatlantskog saveza temelje se na njegovoj važnosti i koheziji, koje su ukorijenjene u temeljnim vrijednostima te sposobnosti prilagodbe i transformacije.

Od osnutka NATO-a, prilagodljivost je njegova ključna osobina. Savez prilagođava svoje zadaće, misije, organizaciju i vojne sposobnosti. Štoviše, od 2003. godine, s osnivanjem Zapovjedništva za transformaciju (Allied Command Transformation), Savez sustavno transformira svoj vojni instrument moći kako bi poboljšao njegovu učinkovitost.

Članak istražuje kontinuiranu transformaciju NATO-a kao sveobuhvatan i neprekidan proces prilagodbe, identificirajući obrasce i trendove koji odražavaju njegovu temeljitu promjenu i evoluciju. Koristi se trostrukom analitičkom prizmom: povijesnom, institucionalnom i orijentiranom na budućnost. Analizom dokumenata i politika, studija identificira šest ključnih trendova transformacije.

Ovaj članak doprinosi razumijevanju evoluirajuće strateške kulture NATO-a, naglašavajući njegov pomak prema proaktivnom planiranju, institucionalnom predviđanju i inovacijama kao alatima za otpornost.

Ključne riječi

NATO, transformacija, prilagodba, sigurnosno okruženje

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Pregledni znanstveni rad

STRATEGOS

Operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu

Matej Mađarić, Predrag Krapljan[1]

Sažetak

Rad analizira operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu, s naglaskom na njegovoj ključnoj ulozi u obrani grada Siska i sprječavanju prodora neprijateljskih snaga prema Zagrebu. Sunja, kao jedina neokupirana točka na desnoj obali Save, bila je pod stalnim pritiskom JNA i srpskih paravojnih formacija. Kroz povijesni, geopolitički i vojno-operativni pregled, autor prikazuje kako je obrana Sunje bila od presudnog značaja za stratešku stabilnost Pounja i cjelokupne hrvatske obrane u tom dijelu bojišta. Poseban fokus stavljen je na razvoj bojišnice, značajne borbe, zapovjedne strukture i operaciju Oluja, u kojoj je sunjski mostobran bio polazišna točka za oslobađanje Banovine. Korištenjem relevantne literature, ratnih dokumenata i vojnih analiza, rad doprinosi boljem razumijevanju ključnih obrambenih točaka Domovinskog rata.

Ključne riječi

Sunja, mostobran, Domovinski rat, strategija, Pounje, Banovina, obrana, operacija Oluja

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1. Uvod

Dosadašnja znanstvena literatura o Domovinskom ratu pretežito se fokusira na velika bojišta poput Vukovara, Dubrovnika, Maslenice i Velebita, dok su manja, ali strateški ključna područja poput Sunje uglavnom ostala izvan fokusa sustavne akademske analize. Premda postoje memoarski zapisi i operativni izvještaji sudionika (npr. Bobetko, Brleković, Gajdek), znanstveni pregled koji bi obuhvatio strukturalne, operativne i geostrateške karakteristike sunjskog mostobrana još nije objavljen. Ovaj rad popunjava tu prazninu kroz analitički prikaz razvoja, obrane i značaja Sunje u kontekstu Domovinskog rata.

Metodološki pristup temelji se na analizi primarnih i sekundarnih izvora, uključujući zapovjedne dokumente Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, dnevnike zapovjednika, vojne karte te memoarsku i znanstvenu literaturu. Pristup je kvalitativan i deskriptivno-analitički, s ciljem povezivanja konkretnih operacija s njihovim širim strateškim značenjem.

Sunja, smještena s desne obale Save, povijesno je važno prometno i željezničko čvorište na putu prema Beogradu, Sarajevu i Zagrebu. Tijekom Domovinskog rata imala je ključnu stratešku ulogu jer bi njezino osvajanje omogućilo neprijatelju (JNA i srpskim pobunjenicima) prodor prema Sisku. Značaj sunjskog mostobrana u obrani Hrvatske postao je presudan, a Sunja je stekla operativni značaj zbog intenzivnih borbi u okolnim mjestima poput Gline, Petrinje, Dvora i Novske.

Ovaj rad analizira sunjsko bojište s naglaskom na njegovu operativno strateškom značaju. Prikazat će se geografski položaj Sunje, demografska struktura te povijesni i ratni kontekst. Poseban fokus bit će na vojno-političkim ciljevima neprijatelja i strategiji hrvatskih snaga, uključujući ulogu sunjskog mostobrana u VRO-u *Oluja*. Rad će obuhvatiti analizu početka agresije (srpanj 1991. – Sarajevsko primirje), dolazak snaga UN-a te zaključne operacije.

2. Teorijski okvir

U vojnoj teoriji, mostobran (njem. *Brückenkopf*, engl. *bridgehead*) označava utvrđeni prostor na neprijateljskoj strani rijeke koji se koristi za obranu, zadržavanje protivnika i pripremu daljnjih operacija. Mostobrani su ključne točke stabilnosti i omogućuju manevriranje te operativnu dubinu. U slučaju Sunje, riječ je o jedinstvenom primjeru obrambenog mostobrana koji je služio i kao oslonac za kasnije ofenzivne operacije poput *Oluje*.

Koncept obrambenih crta temelji se na doktrini pozicijskog ratovanja, gdje prirodne prepreke postaju temelj organiziranog otpora. Sunja, smještena uz rijeku Savu, bila je ključna točka za obranu Pounja i pristupa Zagrebu.

3. Povijesna važnost

Prema službenim izvorima općine Sunja, povijest naseljenosti područja seže u pretpovijest, s nalazima keramičkih ostataka naselja Pleće. Rimljani su 30. godine pr. Kr. izgradili ceste koje su povezivale Sisciju (Sisak) sa Sirmiumom (Srijemska Mitrovica) i Salonom (Solin), što je Sunju učinilo važnim prometnim čvorištem (Općina Sunja, n.d.-a). Bez obzira na promjene vlasti, Sunja je zadržala ovu ulogu.

4. Geografski položaj

Općina Sunja nalazi se u središnjem dijelu Sisačko-moslavačke županije, koja graniči s Karlovačkom, Zagrebačkom, Bjelovarsko-bilogorskom, Požeško-slavonskom i Brodsko-posavskom županijom te Bosnom i Hercegovinom. Slika 1 prikazuje položaj općine Sunja u Sisačko-moslavačkoj županiji.

Slika 1. Općina Sunja (Izvor: https://www.sunja.hr/sunjani.html)

5. Stanovništvo

Najraniji pokazatelji stanovništva Sunje potječu iz crkvenih zapisa. Prva župa spominje se 1334. godine u selu Greda Sunjska, tada sjedištu župe Zagrebačke nadbiskupije. U 16. stoljeću kralj Ljudevit II. posjede župe daruje grofu Petru Kegleviću, što dovodi do naseljavanja kmetova iz gornje Posavine. U 17. stoljeću dolazi do promjene etničke strukture doseljavanjem Vlaha. Sunja stječe status slobodnog kraljevskog mjesta za vladavine Marije Terezije, čime započinje njezin razvoj kao trgovačkog naselja. (Općina Sunja n.d.-a)

Prema popisu iz 1991., Sunja je imala 2113 stanovnika, od čega 61,75 % Hrvata, 25,36 % Srba, dok su ostale manjinske skupine činile preostali udio. (Službeni vjesnik 2006)

6. Gospodarstvo i promet

Sunja razvija obrazovanje od 1827., a današnja crkva sv. Marije Magdalene dovršena je 1824. godine. Izgradnja željezničke pruge 1881. dodatno jača njezinu trgovačku i administrativnu ulogu. (Općina Sunja n.d.-a)

Danas se Sunja oslanja na poljoprivredu, šumarstvo, lovni i seoski turizam te tradicionalnu baštinu. (Državni zavod za statistiku n.d.-a)

Prometno je povezana državnim cestama i željezničkim pravcima koji spajaju Zagreb, Sisak, Novsku i Bihać, dok rijeka Sava nudi potencijal za daljnji razvoj riječnog prometa. (Općina Sunja n.d.-a) Na Slici 2 je kartografski prikaz općine Sunja.

Slika 2. Područje općine Sunja (Izvor: https://www.sunja.hr/sunjani.html)

7. Društveno-politička situacija uoči Domovinskog rata

Težnje za „Velikom Srbijom" potaknute su još 1844. godine „Načertanijem", a obnavljaju se krajem 20. stoljeća. S padom Berlinskog zida 1989. dolazi do političkih promjena u Europi, a na prvim višestranačkim izborima u Hrvatskoj pobjeđuje HDZ. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Srpske pobune eskaliraju 1990. kroz „balvan revoluciju", a JNA se uključuje u agresiju 1991. s ciljem osvajanja teritorija istočno od crte Virovitica – Karlovac – Karlobag. (Hrvatska enciklopedija 2024)

Srpski plan teritorijalnog proširenja očitovao se u ukidanju autonomije Kosova i Vojvodine te Miloševićevoj izjavi o potrebi ujedinjenja svih Srba.

U ljeto 1991. Hrvatska organizira obranu, a bojišta se dijele na istočnoslavonsko, zapadnoslavonsko, banovinsko i druga područja obrane. (Bjelajac i Žunec 2009)

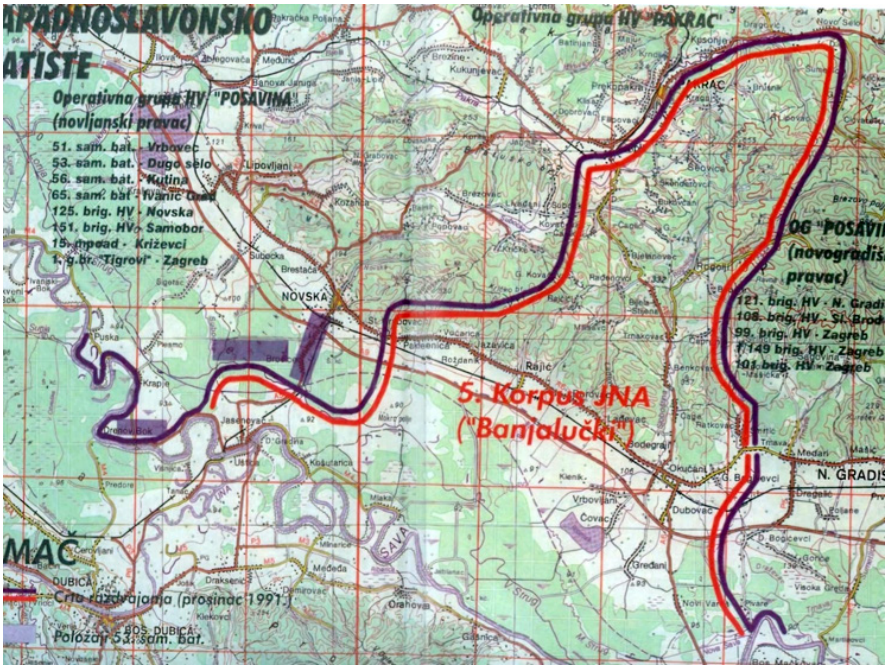
8. Društveno-politička situacija u Sunji

Početkom 1991. u Sunji jačaju aktivnosti SDS-a, a Srbi organiziraju straže i barikade. JNA nadzire naselja, dok hrvatsko stanovništvo priprema obranu. Tijekom 1990. nabavljene su prve automatske puške radi zaštite, a organizirane su seoske straže u ključnim selima. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

U to vrijeme na prostoru Banovine okončavaju se borbe za gradove i mjesta te agresor pod svoj nadzor stavlja hrvatsko Pounje, Glinu, okolna sela Hrvatske Kostajnice i Petrinje. U okruženju od neprijateljskih snaga našla se Hrvatska Kostajnica (lijevo krilo banovinskog bojišta) i Topusko (desno krilo banovinskog bojišta), time se Sunja i sunjsko područje našlo u neprijateljskom okruženju te postalo jedino slobodno područje s desne obale rijeke Save. (Gajdek 2008)

Zapadnoslavonsko bojište uključuje prostor općina Novske, Nove Gradiške, Pakraca, Grubišnog Polja, Daruvara te dio područja općine Virovitice, Slatine, Orahovice i Požege (Slika 3). Napad na Policijsku postaju Pakrac smatra se prvim oružanim sukobom na tom bojištu. Tijekom kolovoza 1991. godine Zbor narodne garde odupirao se 5. korpusu JNA („banjalučki"), čime je otvorena bojišnica u pravom smislu te riječi. (Hrvatska enciklopedija 2024)

Napetosti kulminiraju 1991., kada srpske snage progone Hrvate na Banovini. Hrvatska Kostajnica i Petrinja padaju u rujnu, a obrana Sunje postaje ključna. Sisak, Sunja i Komarevo izloženi su stalnim napadima. (Gajdek n.d.-a)



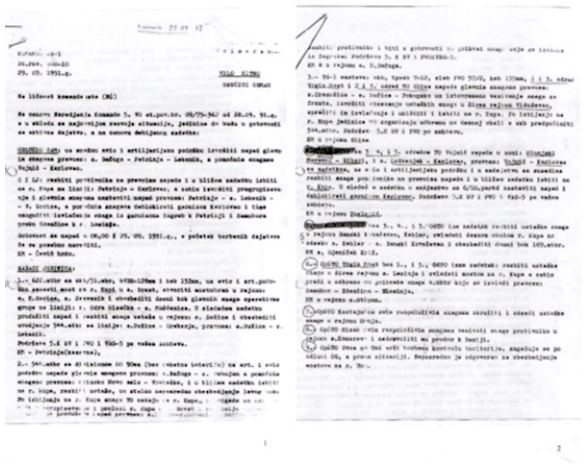
Slika 3. Operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu (Izvor: Stipčić, R., Napokon smo krenuli..., Sveučilišna Tiskarna, 1996.)

9. Vojno-politički ciljevi protivnika (JNA i pobunjeni Srbi) na širem prostoru Sunje

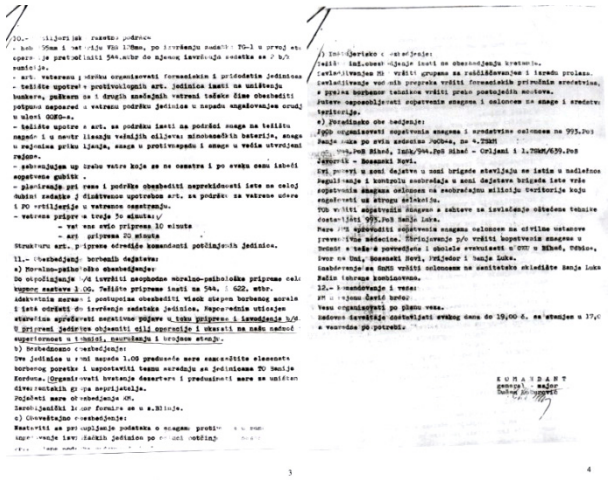
Sredinom ožujka 1990. godine, prema zapovijedi Generalštaba OS SFRJ upućenoj zapovjedništvu 5. vojne oblasti, zapovijeda se da se izrade naputci za borbenu spremnost i korištenje snaga te preuzimanje oružja TO-a ako se dogode neki izvanredni događaji. Sredinom kolovoza 1990. godine izdaje se zapovijed kojom se želi povećati borbena spremnost zbog zaoštravanja društveno-političkih odnosa. Početkom listopada 1990. godine proglasila se srpska autonomija u Hrvatskoj, čime se dodatno zaoštrila političko-sigurnosna situacija. Na sisačko-banovinskom području naoružani muški stanovnici srpske nacionalnosti imaju zadatak da se napadne neko hrvatsko selo na prostoru Gline, ako hrvatski „specijalci" interveniraju u Glini.

Na prostoru Petrinje je mirnija situacija. Značaj interpretacije medija je velik. Na sjednici skupštine u Vrginmostu odlučeno je o odcjepljenju od Hrvatske. Tijekom srpnja 1991. godine miniraju se hrvatske kuće u Glini, poslije zauzimanja Gline od strane JNA i paravojnih postrojbi, obučavaju se srpski vojnici te su poznati podatci o snazi redarstvenika i Zbora narodne garde u Hrvatskoj Kostajnici. Krajem srpnja 1991. godine započinju oružani sukobi u Strugi, Kozibrodu i Glini te su počinjeni zločini nad hrvatskim redarstvenicima i masakr hrvatskih civila u selu Struga. Prvim otvaranjem vatre prema hrvatskim snagama i napadom na Policijsku postaju Glina 26. 7. 1991. godine se željelo isprovocirati uzvraćanje vatre od hrvatskih snaga. Na taj dan su napadnuta i sela Divuša, Unčani, Struga, Kozibrod. Opis političko-sigurnosne situacije u Hrvatskoj napravljen je 12. kolovoza 1991. u Zagrebu od strane zapovjedništva 5. vojne oblasti. Jugoslavenska narodna armija primjenjuje zaključak Brijunske deklaracije u djelo, tj. nastoji spriječiti prolijevanje krvi i međunacionalne sukobe. Narušavanjem političko-sigurnosne situacije smatra se postojanje paravojnih formacija koje se sve više uvježbavaju i razvijaju, uvoz oružja u RH te ustrojavanje ZNG-a i MUP-a. (Rupić 2007)

Prema izvještaju tzv. SAO Krajine od 1. i 2. rujna 1991. godine područje oko Vrginmosta i sam Vrginmost je pod srpskom kontrolom, u Petrinji se ne događaju promjene situacije te se navodi pripremanje većih akcija, u Hrvatskoj Kostajnici hrvatske snage su dobro utvrđene te otvaraju vatru na teritorij Bosne, srpski cilj je blokirati komunikaciju koja spaja Kostajnicu i Dubicu. Na području Dubice čvrsto se drže hrvatske snage MUP-a. Zapovjedništvo Operativne grupe 1 na 29. rujna 1991. godine odlučuje da će se provesti napadna operacija na Veliku Goricu i Karlovac te na taj način omogućiti srpskim snagama izvlačenje iz blokiranih područja Karlovca, Samobora i Zagreba. (Rupić 2007)



Slika 4. Odluka Komande Operativne grupe 1, prvi dio zapovijedi (Izvor: Hrvatski državni arhiv)



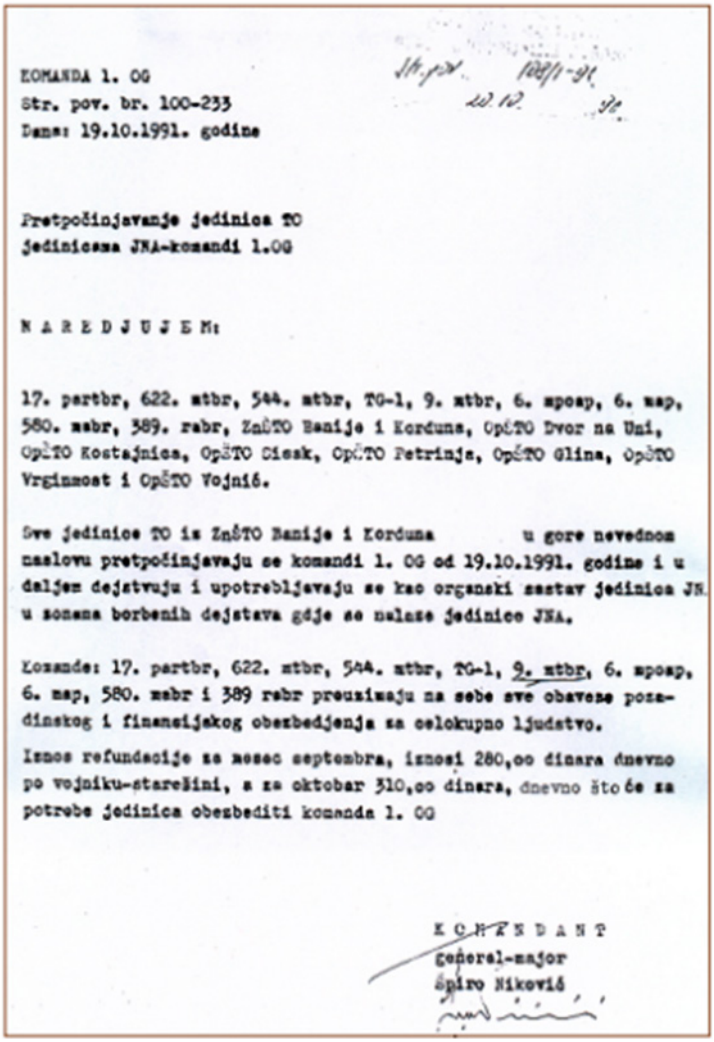
Slika 5. Odluka Komande Operativne grupe 1, drugi dio zapovijedi (Izvor: Hrvatski državni arhiv)

Slika 4 i Slika 5 prikazuju zapovijed Komande OG-1; zadaće koje se moraju postići su osvajanje područja do rijeke Kupe na pravcu Petrinja – Karlovac, a zatim grupiranje snaga te provedba napada na glavnom napadnom pravcu Sisak – Lekenik – Velika Gorica.

Štab 2. i 3. operativne zone za Baniju i Kordun 8. listopada 1991. godine zapovijeda da se nakon što se izbije do desne obale rijeke Kupe, cilj postaje prelazak u obranu i utvrđivanje položaja dostignute crte te postizanje spremnosti za prihvaćanje snaga JNA s prostora Zagreba, Jastrebarskog i Samobora. (Rupić 2007)

Sredinom listopada 1991. godine donosi se zapovijed kojom se sve vojne formacije TO-a Banije i Korduna podređuju zapovjedništvu 1. operativne grupe. Također se spominje i da sve novčane izdatke preuzima na sebe zapovjedništvo 1. operativne grupe (Slika 6).

Na sastanku koji se održao 11. studenoga 1991. godine u Glini raspravlja se o vojno-političkoj situaciji te pronalaženju rješenja, učvršćivanju obrane te formiranju zajedničke vlasti u zoni koja obuhvaća Kostajnicu, Vojnić, Sisak, Petrinju i Glinu. Također, diskutira se i o suradnji Banovine i Korduna sa BiH (Slika 7).



KOMANDA 1. OG
Str. pov. br. 100-233
Dana: 19.10.1991. godine

Pretpočinjavanje jedinica TO
jedinicama JNA-komandi 1.OG

N A R E D J U J E M:

17. partbr, 622. mtbr, 544. mtbr, TG-1, 9. mtbr, 6. mpoap, 6. map, 580. mabr, 389. rabr, ZnŠTO Banije i Korduna, OpŠTO Dvor na Uni, OpŠTO Kostajnica, OpŠTO Sisak, OpŠTO Petrinja, OpŠTO Glina, OpŠTO Vrginmost i OpŠTO Vojnić.

Sve jedinice TO iz ZnŠTO Banije i Korduna u gore navednom naslovu pretpočinjavaju se komandi 1. OG od 19.10.1991. godine i u daljem dejstvuju i upotrebljavaju se kao organski sastav jedinica JNA u zonama borbenih dejstava gdje se nalaze jedinice JNA.

Komande: 17. partbr, 622. mtbr, 544. mtbr, TG-1, 9. mtbr, 6. mpoap, 6. map, 580. mabr i 389 rabr preuzimaju na sebe sve obaveze pozadinskog i finansijskog obezbedjenja za celokupno ljudstvo.

Iznos refundacije za mesec septembra, iznosi 280,oo dinara dnevno po vojniku-starešini, a za oktobar 310,oo dinara, dnevno što će za potrebe jedinica obezbediti komanda 1. OG

K O M E N D A N T
general-major
Špiro Nikolić

Slika 6. Zapovijed 1. OG (Izvor: Gajdek, neobjavljena knjiga)

Z A K L J U Č C I

sa sastanka održanog 11. XI 1991. godine u prostorijama Skupštine opštine Glina s početkom rada u 13 sati kojim je predsjedavao Jović dr Dušan, predsjednik Skupštine opštine Glina.

PRISUTNI:

1. SKUPŠTINA OPŠTINE KOSTAJNICA
   Dmitrović Branko, predsjednik SO
   Žebić Dušan, predsjednik IV-a
   Milovanović Nikola, član IV-a
2. SKUPŠTINA OPŠTINE VOJNIĆ
   Gošeša Rade, predsjednik SO
   Trbojević Nikola, predsjednik IV-a
   Jenjić Miloš, sekretar SO
3. SKUPŠTINA OPŠTINE SISAK
   Bundić Milutin, predsjednik SO
   Abramović Milan, predsjednik IV-a
   Kutlić Jovo, sekretar SO
   Krajčić Jovo, član
4. SKUPŠTINA OPŠTINE PETRINJA
   Miljković Radovan, predsjednik SO
   Bandur Nikola, predsjednik IV-a
   Burazé Ranko, sekretar SO
5. SKUPŠTINA OPŠTINE GLINA
   Jović dr Dušan, predsjednik SO
   Kerač Milan, predsjednik IV-a
   Boksanđić Dragan, sekretar SO

Jović dr Dušan, predsjednik SO Glina konstatuje da sastanku nisu prisutni predstavnici Skupštine opštine Dvor i Vrginmost.

PREDSJEDNIK: daje prijedlog dnevnog reda koji je jednoglasno usvojen.

D n e v n i r e d

1. Upoznavanje s vojno-političkom situacijom i izmjenjivanje mišljenja,
2. Držanje jedinstvenog sistema odbrane III zone,
3. Uspostavljanje civilne vlasti na nivou III zone,
4. Privredna saradnja regije Banije i Korduna sa Bosnom i Hercegovinom i funkcionisanje društvenih djelatnosti,
5. Funkcionisanje ministarstva u Vladi Srpske autonomne oblasti Krajina,
6. Pitanja i prijedlozi.

Tačka 1. i 2.

Nakon opširne rasprave u kojoj su učestvovali Jović dr. Dušan, predsjednik Skupštine opštine Glina, Trbojević Nikola, predsjednik IV-a SO Vojnić, Rade Gošeša, predsjednik SO Vojnić, Krajčić Jovo, član iz SO Sisak, Abramović Milan, predsjednik IV-a Sisak, Branko Dmitrović, predsjednik SO Kostajnica, Miljković Radovan, predsjednik SO Petrinja, jednoglasno je donesen:

Slika 7. Zaključci sa sastanka 11. studenog 1991. godine u Glini (Izvor: Gajdek, neobjavljena knjiga)

10. Operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana

Sunjski mostobran povezuje banovinsko i zapadnoslavonsko bojište te čini lijevo krilo obrane Siska. Nakon pada Hrvatske Kostajnice i Topuskog, Sunja ostaje jedino slobodno područje s desne obale Save. (Gajdek 2008)

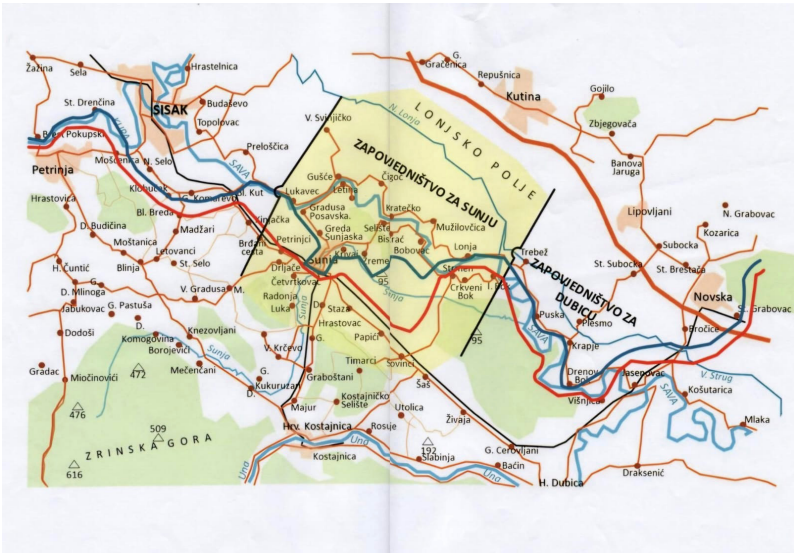
Na zapadnoslavonskom bojištu prvi sukobi započinju napadom na Pakrac. U kolovozu 1991. ZNG se suprotstavlja 5. korpusu JNA, čime otvara ključnu crtu bojišnice. (Hrvatska enciklopedija 2024)

Slika 8. Privremeno okupirano područje s glavnim smjerovima napada JNA i pobunjenika (Autor: brg Predrag Krapljan)

Slika 8 prikazuje okupirano područje krajem 1991. godine te položaj Sunje s obzirom na okolno područje. Sunja je predstavljala jedino mjesto s desne obale rijeke Save na potezu Sisak – Jasenovac (i nizvodnije) koje nije bilo okupirano.

Polovicom rujna 1991. godine hrvatske snage blokiraju vojarne i ostale komplekse JNA. JNA nakon blokade vojarni nastoji provesti strategijsku ofenzivu usmjerenu na Republiku Hrvatsku. (Marijan 2008)

Oružjem zaplijenjenim u blokadi vojarni oprema se Hrvatska vojska i naposljetku brani se Hrvatska. Također, oružje se koristilo za učvršćivanje obrane Zagreba, koja se protezala uz rijeku Kupu, tj. pravac Karlovac – Sisak, te uz rijeku Savu, tj. pravac Sunja – Novska i dalje do Nove Gradiške. (Gajdek 2008)



Slika 9. Područje odgovornosti sunjskog zapovjedništva (Autor: brg Predrag Krapljan)

Slika 9 prikazuje sunjski mostobran, koji se nalazi uz desnu obalu rijeke Save i predstavlja crtu obrane od srpskih pobunjenika iz okolnih sela. Crta obrane sunjskog mostobrana proteže se ispred sela Gradusa Posavska kao desnog krila obrane Sunje, zatim ispred sela Greda, pa je središnji i najistureniji dio crte obrane Sunje kod željezničke stanice; prema lijevom krilu crta ide kroz sela Krivaj Sunjski, Žreme, Selište, Bistrač te krajnje točke lijevog krila sunjskog mostobrana sela Bobovac.

Željeznička pruga Sunja – Bosanski Novi minirana je 1. srpnja 1991. od strane srpskih pobunjenika, čime je izolirano područje Pounja i pripremljen teren za daljnje vojne akcije uz potporu JNA. Istodobno, cesta Sisak – Hrvatska Kostajnica (preko Blinje i Bjelnika) bila je pod nadzorom tzv. Milicije SAO Krajine, što je ugrozilo sigurnost prometa. (Gajdek 2008)

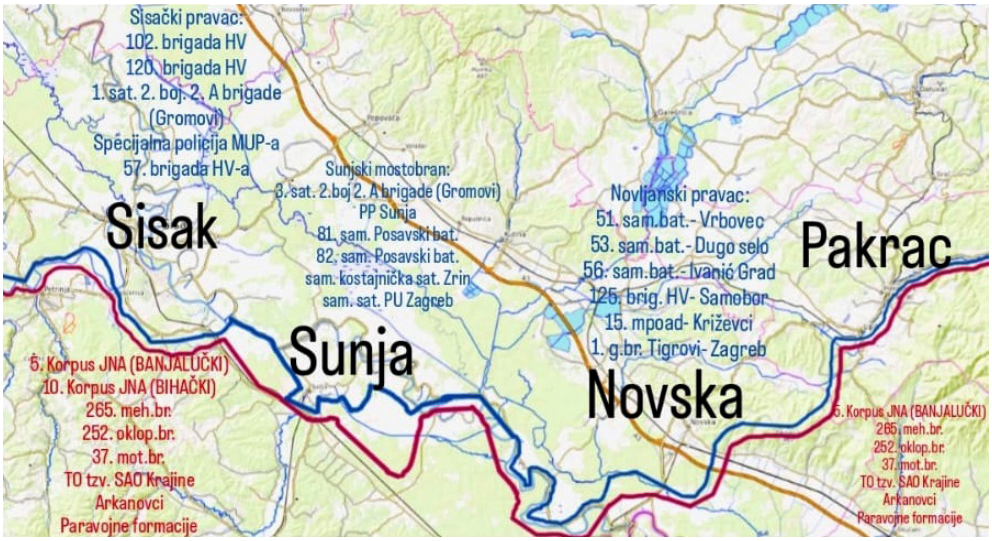
Janko Bobetko ističe stratešku važnost sela Pola, Komarevo i Klobučak, čijom kontrolom neprijatelj drži „ključeve grada Siska". Komarevo, smješteno na uzvisini, omogućavalo bi nadzor nad ključnim gospodarskim objektima – JANAF-om, Termoelektranom, Željezarom i Rafinerijom. Pad Sunje i Komareva značio bi opkoljavanje Siska i otvaranje puta prema Zagrebu, koji bi bio ugrožen topništvom. (Gajdek 2008)

S obzirom na očekivani pritisak neprijatelja, ključni obrambeni položaji postavljeni su kod Komareva, Klobučaka i Sunje. Sunja je imala stratešku ulogu zbog željezničke pruge koja povezuje Bihać i Beograd. Njezinim padom ugrozila bi se obrana Pounja, dok bi zauzimanje policijske i željezničke postaje omogućilo daljnje neprijateljsko napredovanje. PU sisačko-moslavačka stoga je pojačala obranu i osigurala ključne točke. (Bobetko 1997)

U kolovozu 1991. uspostavljen je skelni prijevoz na Savi kod Kratečka, jedina veza Sunje s ostatkom Hrvatske, jer su agresorske snage blokirale cestu Sisak – Sunja (Gajdek 2008) [8]. Prema Međimorčevim riječima, pad Sunje značio bi i pad Zagreba. Cilj agresora bio je ovladavanje željezničkim raskrižjem u Sunji, čime bi spojili Beograd i Knin. Sunja je postala ključna strateška točka zbog svoje prometne važnosti, dok je vlak s pšenicom na željezničkoj postaji služio kao obrambena barijera. (Međimorec 2004)

Ovim je Sunja postala jedina slobodna enklava na desnoj obali Save, a njezino zauzimanje omogućilo bi agresoru spajanje okupiranih područja i ostvarenje strateških ciljeva.

Krajem kolovoza 1991. godine, vojno-operativna zapovjedništva JA zapovijedaju povećanje topničkih napada na Komarevo i Sunju zbog važnosti njihovih strateških i inferiornijih položaja. Zapovjedništvo JA s tih prostora prognoziralo je otvaranje istočne strane napada na Sisak kao rezultat napredovanja ostalih snaga JA koje bi napredovale iz smjera Okučani – Jasenovac – Novska – Sisak. (Gajdek 2008)



Slika 10. Crta razdvajanja u prosincu 1991. godine (Autor: pr Matej Mađarić)

Sunja se nalazi s desne obale rijeke Save, nizvodno od grada Siska. Sunja i okolna sela s većinskim hrvatskim stanovništvom čine sunjski mostobran. Sunjski mostobran u prosincu 1991. godine i tijekom cijelog Domovinskog rata nalazio se u okruženju agresora (srpskih pobunjenika i JNA). Neokupirano područje su sela Gradusa Posavska, Greda Sunjska, mjesto Sunja, Krivaj Sunjski, *Žreme*, Gornja Letina, Donja Letina, Selište, Bistrač i Bobovac. Jasno prikazan položaj Sunje s obzirom na neprijateljske snage (Slika 10) uvjetovan je neprijateljskom snagom i prethodnim napadima na gradove Hrvatsku Kostajnicu, Hrvatsku Dubicu, Petrinju, Dvor i ostale.

Neprijateljske snage okružile su Sunju s tri strane, dok je jedina veza s ostatkom Hrvatske bila skela preko Save. Sunja je činila lijevo krilo obrane Siska, a njezin pad omogućio bi agresoru prodor u grad i zauzimanje ključnih industrijskih pogona. Također, otvorio bi se prostor za obuhvatne napade s područja Gline, Petrinje i lijeve obale Save. Posebna važnost Sunje istaknuta je nakon pada Bosanskog Broda u listopadu 1992., kada je postala jedina slobodna točka na desnoj obali Save na pravcu Sisak – Orašje. (Puljizević n.d.)

Geostrateški položaj Banovine bio je ključan jer je povezivao Savu, Unu, Alpe i Balkanski poluotok s Jadranom. Time je bio izravan put prema Zagrebu, čije bi zauzimanje od strane agresora imalo dalekosežne posljedice za obranu Hrvatske. (Gajdek 2008)

Napad pobunjenih Srba na Banovini započeo je 26. lipnja 1991. napadom na policijsku postaju Glina, a krajnji cilj bio je osvajanje Siska. Do rujna 1991. neprijatelj je probio obranu Hrvatske Kostajnice, Dubice i Petrinje, čime je ugrozio cijelu regiju. Ključni ciljevi bili su osvajanje Sunje i ovladavanje desnom obalom Save te uništenje hrvatskih snaga kod Farkašića. (Hodalj 1999)

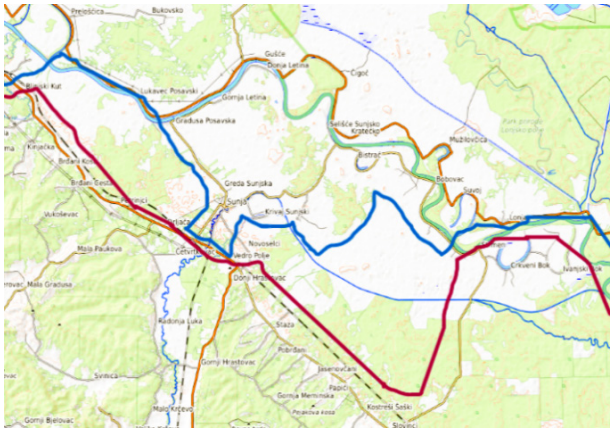
Crta obrane Banovine protezala se od Sunje do Komareva, Mošćenice i rijeke Kupe, a obuhvaćala je 156 kilometara neposredno ispred Siska. U vojnoj dokumentaciji Srpske vojske Krajine naglašeno je da je cilj borbe razgraničenje s Hrvatskom, pri čemu je planirano „čišćenje" područja Kostajnice, Topuskog, Petrinje, Gospića i Slunja te prodor na crtu Sisak – Karlovac – Ogulin – Gospić. (Sekulić 2000)

Napad na Sunju počeo je 27. srpnja 1991. minobacačkom paljbom iz sela Drljače i Četvrkovac, a mete su bile policijska postaja i željeznički kolodvor. Obrambena crta uključivala je Gradusu Posavsku, Gredu Sunjsku, Sunju i okolna sela, a branilo ju je oko 300 vojnika pod zapovjedništvom Žarka Peše. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Prva crta sunjske bojišnice obuhvaća prostor desne obale rijeke Save od sela Gradusa Posavska pa nizvodno do sela Bobovac. Najistureniji dio bojišnice u pravcu Hrvatske Kostajnice, koja se nalazi južno od mjesta Sunje, jest uza sam željeznički kolodvor (Slika 11). Najistureniji dio obrane obuhvaćao je prostor od „Leteće tvrđave" kao lijevog krila i „Hotela Propuh" kao desnog krila. Sunjski mostobran tijekom Domovinskog rata postao je mjesto mnogih borbi. Gledajući kartu, u pravcu sjeverozapada nalazi se grad Sisak, tj. sela Komarevo i Blinjski Kut, o kojima će poslije biti riječ. Najčešće, borbe su se vodile na potezu „Leteća tvrđava" – „Hotel Propuh" na kojem su crtu razdvajanja činili vagoni prepuni žita. Sunjski mostobran opstao je unatoč svojoj maloj dubini obrane.

Minobacačkim napadom 5. kolovoza 1991. iz pravca sela Drljače granatiran je centar Sunje, dok su učestali napadi dolazili s padina pod neprijateljskim nadzorom u selu Četvrtkovac. Srpske snage 9. kolovoza napale su sunjski mostobran iz smjera Drljače i Četvrtkovca, koristeći minobacače i snajpere. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Početnu fazu obrane Sunje obilježila je loša organizacija i manjak naoružanja. Krajem srpnja 1991. formirana je diverzantska grupa od 13 pripadnika, čiji je zadatak bio destabilizacija neprijatelja na njegovu teritoriju. (Puljizević n.d.-a)



Slika 11. Sunjski mostobran i crta razdvajanja (Autor: pr Matej Mađarić)

Uočena je povezanost JNA i srpskih pobunjenika pa su hrvatski branitelji, pod zapovjedništvom Žarka Peše, ojačali bunkere i rovove. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Prva ofenzivna akcija uključivala je pokušaj deblokade prometnice Sisak – Sunja. Više postrojbi napadalo je u različitim pravcima, no zbog loše koordinacije nisu ostvareni ciljevi. Poginulo je pet pripadnika Gromova: Ivica Hrnčević, Ivan Devčić, Osman Mutagić, Žan Marot i Alan Glavan, dok je 17 ranjeno. (Puljizević n.d.-a)

Obrana Sunje ključan je preokret doživjela 3. rujna 1991., kada zapovjedništvo preuzima Slobodan Praljak, pod čijim se vodstvom obrana stabilizirala unatoč sve jačim napadima. Najteži napad dogodio se 30. listopada 1991.,

kada je ispaljeno nekoliko tisuća granata, a neprijatelj je nakratko zauzeo Željeznički kolodvor, no hrvatske snage ubrzo su ga vratile. (Puljizević n.d.)

Prema Dnevniku Žarka Peše, frontalni napad na sunjski mostobran trajao je od 30. listopada do 2. studenog 1991., kada je palo 1700 projektila. (Brleković 2009)

Neprijatelj je probio obranu, ali je protunapadom hrvatskih snaga, uz potporu topništva i samohotki, vraćena prvotna crta. Pod Praljkovim vodstvom obrana je dodatno ojačana, a do kraja 1991. postignuta je visoka razina organizacije, koja se održala do kraja rata. Unatoč stalnim napadima, Sunja je ostala neosvojiva, a najžešće borbe vodile su se oko Željezničkog kolodvora. Minobacački napad 27. srpnja 1991. označio je početak borbi, koje su trajale kroz cijeli Domovinski rat. (Puljizević n.d.-a)

11. Početna faza pobune i agresije (srpanj 1991. – Sarajevsko primirje)

Minobacačkim napadom na Sunju 27. srpnja 1991. započela je pobuna lokalnog srpskog stanovništva, uz potporu JNA, koja je nastojala uključiti Sunju u srpske autonomne oblasti. (Gajdek 2008)

Prema Dnevniku Žarka Peše, napad na Sunju bio je dio operacije „Žaoka", usmjerene na Banovinu. Dva dana prije, srpsko stanovništvo je obaviješteno o planiranom egzodusu. (Brleković 2009)

U studenom 1991. formiran je 82. samostalni sunjski bataljun, koji su činili branitelji mostobrana, uključujući mještane i dragovoljce iz više krajeva Hrvatske (Gajdek 2008) [8]. Dolaskom Žarka Peše, a poslije i Slobodana Praljka, obrana Sunje značajno se poboljšala u vojnoj organizaciji, sanitetskoj i logističkoj funkcionalnosti. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

12. Operacija *Oluja*

Budući da snage UN-a nisu jamčile povrat okupiranog teritorija, načelnik Glavnog stožera HV-a Janko Bobetko izdao je Direktivu „Oluja – 1" s ciljem oslobađanja Banovine i izlaska na granicu s BiH. Iste su direktive obuhvaćale i Karlovac, Gospić te Split. (Bobetko 1997)

Dva sata prije početka napada, zapovjednik Ivan Basarac obaviješten je da na glavnom pravcu Sunja – Kostajnica – Dvor neće biti 81. gardijska bojna, niti bojne sisačkih specijalaca na pomoćnom pravcu. Nositelj operacije postala je 17. domobranska pukovnija, dok je 12. domobranska zamijenila specijalce. (Gajdek 2008)

Na sisačkom se bojištu prije početka provedbe operacije *Oluja* nalazi 2. gardijska brigada Gromovi, 12. domobranska pukovnija, 57. brigada Marijan Celjak, 101. brigada HV-a, 103. brigada HV-a, 145. brigada HV-a, 151. gardijska brigada te 125. domobranska pukovnija. Nasuprot hrvatskim snagama bili su pripadnici 49. banijskog korpusa (Slika 12).

Slika 12. Dio karte *Oluje* s početnim položajima postrojbi HV-a iz ZP-a Zagreb (Autor: brg Predrag Krapljan)

13. VRO *Oluja* – sunjski mostobran

VRO *Oluja* započela je 4. kolovoza 1995. topničkom pripremom, nakon koje su snage 17. domobranske pukovnije, uz potporu tenkova i brigada HV-a, krenule u napad prema Hrvatskoj Kostajnici. Zbog snažnih neprijateljskih utvrda, hrvatske snage povukle su se na početne položaje prvog dana operacije. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Nakon reorganizacije 5. kolovoza, oslobođeni su Strmen i dijelovi komunikacije Strmen – Slovinci, a 6. kolovoza Slovinci i Vedro Polje. Istog dana, 17. domobranska pukovnija spojila se s 125. brigadom HV-a u Šašu, stvarajući uvjete za napredovanje prema Hrvatskoj Kostajnici i Dvoru. Navečer 6. kolovoza oslobođena je Hrvatska Kostajnica, dok su se na sunjskom području provodili pretresi sela radi osiguranja teritorija. Napad na Dvor započeo je 7. kolovoza. Zbog dogovora o predaji 21. korpusa tzv. SVK-a, hrvatske snage privremeno su se povukle iz središta Dvora, no neprijatelj je to iskoristio za noćni protunapad. U protunapadu 8. kolovoza, 2. bojna 17. domobranske pukovnije ušla je u zasjedu i izgubila devet pripadnika. U 13:30 sati Dvor je oslobođen, a 11. kolovoza hrvatske snage spojile su se s Armijom BiH, čime je završeno oslobađanje Banovine. (Gajdek n.d.-a)

Sunjski mostobran bio je ključno ishodište operacije, omogućujući prve napadne akcije na utvrđene neprijateljske položaje te uspješno oslobađanje sunjsko-unskog pravca.

Slika 13. Sunjski mostobran kao ishodište *Oluje*
(Izvor: Gajdek, neobjavljena knjiga)

Slika 13 prikazuje napredovanje hrvatskih snaga u operaciji *Oluja* na širem području Sunje. Napredovanje uključuje kretanje postrojbi od sunjskog mostobrana, kao ishodišta operacije, do uništavanja četničkih uporišta u široj okolici i oslobođenja okupiranog područja, zatim kretanje i oslobađanje u pravcu Hrvatske Kostajnice pa sve do Dvora i dalje (Stanić Polje).

Zaključak

Zaključno, sunjski mostobran predstavlja rijedak primjer obrambene točke koja objedinjuje lokalnu inicijativu, nacionalni interes i stratešku vrijednost. Na lokalnoj razini, riječ je o obrani zajednice suočene s višestrukom nadmoći. Na nacionalnoj, Sunja je predstavljala ključnu točku otpora na prilazu Sisku, štiteći strateške energetske i prometne kapacitete Hrvatske. Na strateškoj razini, njezino očuvanje onemogućilo je neprijatelju stvaranje kontinuiteta okupiranog teritorija duž Save i prodor prema Zagrebu, čime je zaustavljen ključni segment velikosrpske vojne doktrine. Zbog toga Sunja zaslužuje trajno mjesto u analima hrvatske vojne strategije, ali i u znanstvenom proučavanju Domovinskog rata.

Sunjski mostobran predstavlja neosvojivu tvrđavu na jedinom neokupiranom području desne obale rijeke Save nizvodno od Siska do Bosanskog Broda. Područje mostobrana bilo je okruženo selima s većinskim srpskim stanovništvom, a ta sela većinom su se nalazila na višoj nadmorskoj visini, zbog koje su imala dominantne položaje nad obranom Sunje. Sunjski mostobran *činila* su sela s većinskim hrvatskim stanovništvom. Desno krilo obrane predstavljala su sela Gradusa Posavska i Greda Sunjska, središnji i najistureniji dio Željeznički kolodvor Sunja, a lijevo krilo Krivaj Sunjski, *Žreme*, Selište, Bistrač i Bobovac. Operativno strateški značaj sunjskog mostobrana u Domovinskom ratu podrazumijeva potencijalno osvajanje Sunje od strane srpskih pobunjenika i JNA tijekom Domovinskog rata. Sunjski mostobran bio je vrlo značajan zbog potencijalnih mogućnosti koje bi uslijedile njegovim padom. Padom sunjskog mostobrana lijevo krilo obrane grada Siska bi nestalo, a time bi neprijatelj ovladao područjem desne obale rijeke nizvodno od Siska i imao mogućnost prelaska Save. Padom Sunje neprijatelju je dana mogućnost ulaska u Sisak te potencijalno spajanje sa snagama glinsko-petrinjskog područja, što bi rezultiralo padom grada Siska te otvorenim putem za bombardiranje grada Zagreba i ostvarenje određenog dijela cilja projekta „Velike Srbije". Borbe za sunjski mostobran započele su minobacačkim napadom na Sunju 27. srpnja 1991. godine. Najžešće borbe za mostobran vođene su od prvog minobacačkog napada do potpisivanja Sarajevskog primirja 2. siječnja 1992. godine. Nakon toga se smanjio intenzitet

borbi, ali su i dalje nastavljene provokacije s neprijateljske strane. Okupirana sela na sunjskom području oslobođena su u VRO-u *Oluja* 6. kolovoza 1995. godine.

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STRATEGOS

Uključivanje Varaždinske bojne 104. brigade HV u oslobađanje zapadne Slavonije u jesen 1991.

Marijan Kostanjevac, Darko Duhović, Ivan Benković[1]

Sažetak

Glavni stožer Oružanih snaga Republike Hrvatske zatražio je krajem listopada 1991. od zapovjedništva 104. brigade ZNG-a u Varaždinu da pripremi i opremi postrojbu veličine bojne, koja će biti razmještena u širem području pakračkog bojišta kako bi se spriječio gubitak Lipika i Pakraca te oslobodio dio snaga 105. brigade ZNG-a pridodanih Operativnoj grupi Posavina za sudjelovanje u operaciji Orkan 91.

Zapovjedništvo 104. brigade ZNG-a za tu je zadaću mobiliziralo 1. bojnu (varaždinsku), koja je već sudjelovala u oslobađanju Varaždina, bila dobro naoružana i opremljena te ju je, nakon trodnevnih priprema, 30. listopada 1991. uputilo na pakračko bojište. U prvoj borbenoj akciji po dolasku, istoga dana, varaždinski su branitelji, uz pomoć tenkova iz Bjelovara, oslobodili selo Toranj te zaposjeli i osigurali šire područje pakračkog zaleđa, čime je uklonjena neprijateljska prijetnja opkoljavanjem Pakraca.

Dva dana kasnije, u drugoj napadnoj akciji, koja je po svom opsegu i angažiranim snagama bila znatno veća od prethodne, hrvatske su snage pokušale osloboditi selo Kukunjevac, odnosno prometnicu Gaj – Dobrovac – Lipik. U toj su akciji sudjelovale i dvije satnije varaždinske 1. bojne, no zadaća nije bila uspješno izvršena.

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Ovaj je rad nastao kao rezultat projekta izrade znanstvene monografije Varaždinske bojne, temeljen na arhivskim izvorima, dostupnoj literaturi i svjedočanstvima branitelja – pripadnika Varaždinske bojne 104. brigade Hrvatske vojske – koji su sudjelovali u ovim borbenim akcijama oslobađanja zapadne Slavonije u jesen 1991. godine.

Ključne riječi

1. bojna/104. brigada, Varaždin, zapadnoslavonsko bojište, 1991., Toranj, Kukunjevac

Uvod

Ovim radom autori žele u kontekstu razumijevanja situacije prikazati što se to događalo u jesen i zimu 1991. na zapadnoslavonskom bojištu te pojasniti prve borbene aktivnosti varaždinskih branitelja u obrani Pakraca i Lipika.

Svrha je ovoga rada istinito prikazati događaje, kao i doprinos varaždinskih branitelja na početku Domovinskog rata u oslobađanju zapadne Slavonije u jesen 1991. Stručna javnost i pripadnici OSRH-a steći će bolje razumijevanje u sudjelovanju prvih mobiliziranih varaždinskih branitelja u borbenim akcijama na pakračkom bojištu u jesen 1991. Kao lekcija, poučna je za proučavanje jer daje uvid u način borbe vojnika na početku Domovinskog rata, u razumijevanje taktike, način zapovijedanja i pitanje vodstva, odnosno pruža nam uvid u stvaranje oružanih snaga HV-a na početku Domovinskog rata 1991.

U uvodnom dijelu rada daje se kratak prikaz situacije na zapadnoslavonskom bojištu. U nastavku se pojašnjavaju pripreme i dolazak Varaždinske bojne na pakračko bojište te prva borbena akcija zaposjedanja naselja Toranj. Težište rada usmjereno je na neuspjeli napad na selo Kukunjevac. Na temelju uvida u arhivsku građu te usmenih razgovora sa sudionicima akcije opisana je priprema, planiranje i provedba napadne akcije Operativne grupe (OG) Pakrac na uporište koje su zaposjele neprijateljske snage, selo Kukunjevac. U završnom poglavlju metodom analize bitke pojasnit ćemo važne aspekte neuspješnog napada i naučiti lekcije iz navedenog događaja, koja može poslužiti u obuci naših vojnika, dočasnika i časnika.

Situacija u zapadnoj Slavoniji i dolazak varaždinske 1. bojne 104. brigade HV-a

Krajem listopada 1991. hrvatske snage preuzimaju taktičku inicijativu, započinju s operacijama oslobađanja zapadne Slavonije i potiskivanja snaga pobunjenih Srba i 5. korpusa JNA sa zapadnoslavonskog područja. U Glavnom stožeru HV-a odlučili su pokrenuti veliku napadnu operaciju *Orkan 91.* „Operacija je planirana i pripremljena sredinom listopada u zapovjednom središtu OG-a Posavina kao dio plana Glavnog stožera za oslobađanje zapadne Slavonije: plan mi je, kao načelniku stožera, predložen 25. listopada i odobren. (A. Tus, str. 62.)

Namjera zapovjednika OG-a Posavina bila je istodobno s glavnim snagama napasti na smjerovima Novska – Okučani i Nova Gradiška – Okučani prema prometnici Lipik – Okučani – Stara Gradiška i uz pomoć topništva razbiti snage neprijatelja na širem području Okučani – G. Rajic – Stara Gradiška, zaposjesti državnu granicu na Savi i biti spreman za odbijanje protuudara."

Na pravcima Novska – Kričko brdo – Bijele Stijene i Mašićka Šagovina – Širinci – Benkovac bila je namjera s pomoćnim snagama OG-a Posavina napasti i presjeći prometnice Lipik – Bijela Stijena – Okučani, a razbijene srpske snage na području Pakrac – Donji Čaglić – Japaga okružiti i uništiti zajedno sa snagama Operativne zone (OZ) Bjelovar, odnosno Sektora obrane Pakrac. Spremnost za napad hrvatskim postrojbama određena je za 28. listopada 1991. godine u 20 sati, a s napadima se započelo ujutro sljedeći dan.

Operaciju *Orkan 91* namjeravalo se provesti u nekoliko etapa: u prvoj etapi, u trajanju od jednog do dva dana, predviđeno je bilo izvršiti napade u sjevernom sektoru novljanskog bojišta i osvojiti sela Lovska i Bair te motel „Trokut" koji se nalazi na prometnom križanju između ova dva sela. U drugoj etapi u trajanju od oko dva dana bilo je predviđeno zauzeti prometnice između Okučana i Lipika, koju bi istodobno zauzele hrvatske postrojbe iz Novske i Nove Gradiške. U trećoj etapi predviđeno je sa snagama operativne pričuve i postrojbama sektora obrane Pakrac eliminirati opkoljene neprijateljske jedinice u području Lipika i Pakraca. U toj etapi vjerojatno bi sudjelovala i Varaždinska bojna 104. brigade ZNG-a.

Međutim, stvarnost na bojištu nije se odvijala prema planiranim željenim stanjima po etapama.

U prvoj etapi operacije do 9. prosinca 1991. u teškim borbama hrvatske snage oslobodile su sela Bair, Popovac, Brezovica Lovska, Korita, Jagma, Gornja i Donja Subocka te Gornje Kričke i strateški važno područje motela „Trokut". Ovim uspjehom olakšan je položaj postrojbama OZ-a Bjelovar koje su branile Pakrac i Lipik.

U drugoj etapi operacije Orkan 91. težište glavnog smjera napada promije njeno je i usmjereno na presijecanje komunikacije Okučani – Lipik na području Donjeg Čaglića. Operacija je započela 10. prosinca 1991. i produžila se sve do potpisivanja primirja, 3. siječnja 1992. Na novljanskom bojištu, unatoč više puta pokrenutim napadima, hrvatske snage nisu uspjele osloboditi komunikaciju Okučani – Lipik. Pomaka hrvatskih snaga na bojištu bilo je samo na novogradiškoj bojišnici (Zbornik, 122.). U operaciji *Orkan 91* snage OG-a Posavina napredovale su dva kilometra zapadno i istočno od ceste između Pakraca i Okučana, ali je nisu uspjele presjeći. Ukupno je u prvoj i drugoj etapi oslobođeno 1090 km^2 *(Vrbanac i Antolašić, 412.).*

Iako su hrvatske snage uspjele osloboditi veliki dio zapadne Slavonije i uništiti san o granici Velike Srbije na rijeci Ilovi, osnovni cilj (misija) zadan u operaciji *Orkan 91,* pad Okučana kao strateški najvažnijeg uporišta, nije ostvaren. Pod nadzorom snaga JNA ostalo je oko 600 km^2 zapadne Slavonije.

Niz je čimbenika koji su utjecali na tijek i ishod borbenih aktivnosti Hrvatske vojske koja je tada bila u nastajanju: od nedostatka kvalitetnijeg naoružanja i streljiva (posebno topničkog i protuoklopnog streljiva), nespremnosti mobiliziranih postrojbi (nedostatak obuke pojedinaca i nižih postrojbi, nedovoljne opremljenosti postrojbi i naročito neisprofiliran zapovjedni kadar), loše komunikacije i koordinacije među postrojbama, nedostatak pravodobnih obavještajnih informacija, česta zaustavljanja akcija zbog potpisivanja kratkotrajnih primirja, iscrpljenosti mobiliziranih branitelja do ekstremno niskih temperatura od –15 °C, što je otežalo provođenje napadnih akcija.

Tijekom operacije *Orkan 91* poginula su 246 branitelja, *(Natko),* ranjeno ih je 557, a nestalo ih je 9. Na neprijateljskoj strani poginula su 224 vojnika, a više od 600 ih je ranjeno (Hrvatski vojnik, broj 639, rujan 2021.).

Operacijom *Orkan 91* hrvatske snage na novljanskom i novogradiškom bojištu vezale su snage 5. korpusa JNA na sebe i time olakšale hrvatskim snagama provođenje operacija *Otkos 10* i *Papuk 91* na sjevernom dijelu zapadnoslavonskog bojišta. Neprijatelj je odbačen dalje od Virovitice i time je otklonjena opasnost ugrožavanja podravske magistrale, jedine veze s istočnom Slavonijom (Hribernik, 2013.)

Operacija *Orkan 91* kasnije je poslužila kao model za pripremu operacije *Bljesak*, kojom su 1. svibnja 1995. oslobođena preostala okupirana područja zapadne Slavonije: *„karte dviju operacija gotovo su identične, osim po vatrenoj moći snaga potpore!"* (A. Tus). U operaciji Bljesak u svibnju 1995. za 36 sati hrvatske su snage izvršile zadanu misiju danu snagama u operaciji *Orkan 91*.

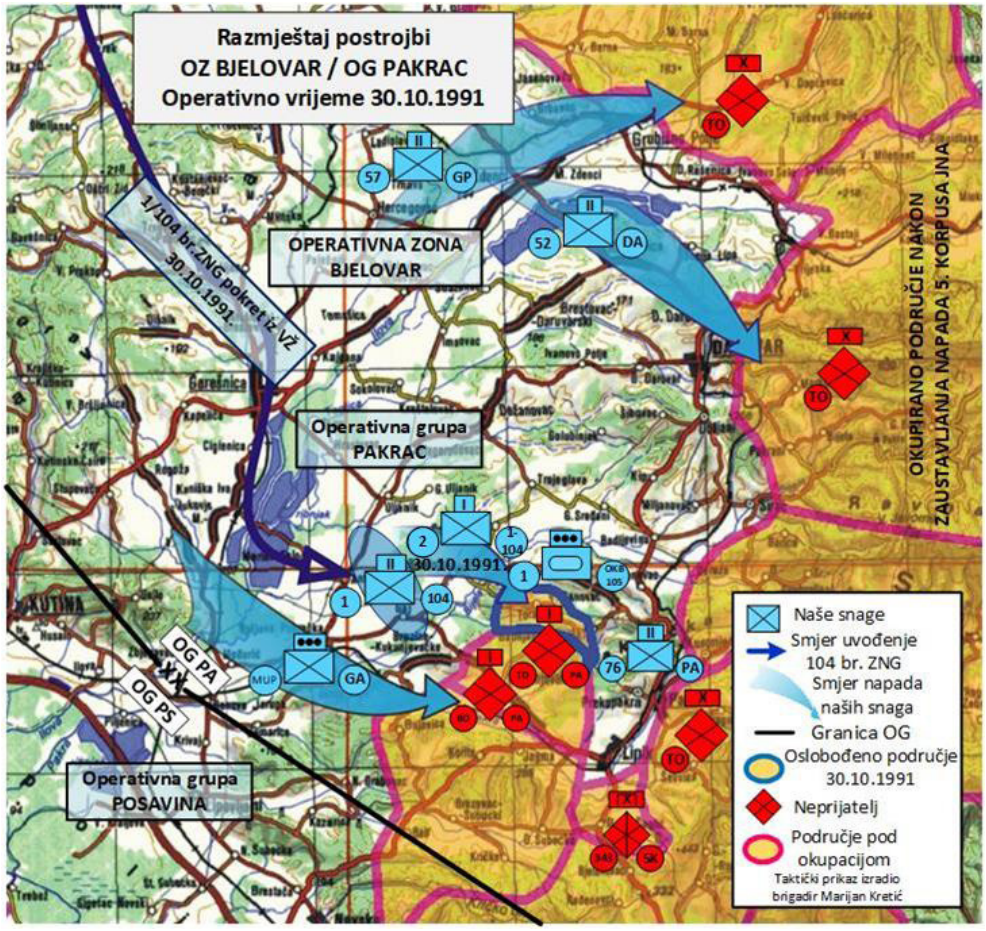
Pripreme i dolazak Varaždinske bojne na pakračko bojište

U operaciju oslobađanja zapadne Slavonije načelnik GS-a HV-a Antun Tus uključio je i varaždinsku 104. brigadu ZNG-a. Umjesto odlaska u istočnu Slavoniju, 104. brigada HV-a je s više od tisuću ljudi dovedena u šire područje pakračkog bojišta kako bi spriječila gubitak Lipika i Pakraca i oslobodila dio snaga 105. brigade HV-a, koje su pridodane OG-u Posavina radi sudjelovanja u operaciji *Orkan 91*.

U nastavku rada detaljnije i šire ćemo pojasniti kako je prošlo „uključivanje" varaždinskih branitelja na pakračko bojište u listopadu i studenom 1991.

Glavni stožer OSRH-a, svjestan što bi značilo osvajanje Pakraca i Lipika za daljnje napredovanje srbočetničkih snaga u tom dijelu zapadne Slavonije, upućuje dana 25. listopada 1991. zapovijed 104. brigadi ZNG-a u Varaždinu da pristupi osnivanju i opremanju postrojbe veličine bojne koja bi mogla duže vrijeme boraviti na bojištu u području Pakraca (Monografija, 1994. str. 24.). Trebala je to biti postrojba sastavljena od iskusnih branitelja koji su sudjelovali u oslobađanju varaždinskih vojarni.

Zemljovid 1. Dolazak 1/104. ZNG-a u zapadnu Slavoniju



Izradili: Benković i Kretić

Nakon trodnevne dodatne obuke i psiholoških priprema, 1. bojna 104. brigade ZNG-a, krenula je ujutro u srijedu 30. listopada 1991. prema zapadnoslavonskom bojištu. Prije podneva stigli su u selo Antunovac i razmjestili se po mjestima: 1. satnija u selo Brekinska, 3. satnija sa Zapovjedništvom bojne i desetinom veze u selo Ploštine, a logistički vod u selo Kapetanovo Polje. Druga satnija odmah je po dolasku u selo Brekinska

dobila zadaću zaposjesti selo Toranj, protjerati neprijateljske snage iz sela i organizirati obranu. Marijan Kos, zapovjednik druge satnije uz potporu tenkovskog voda 105. brigade ZNG-a smještenog u selo Batinjani (četiri tenka T-55), uspješno je toga dana bez neke veće borbe i gubitaka izvršio zadaću zaposjedanja sela Toranj. To je bila i prva zadaća Varaždinske bojne koju je Zapovjedništvo obrane sektora Pakrac dodijelilo na zapadnoslavonskom bojištu. U toj akciji nije bilo ranjenih ni poginulih. Zaposjedanjem sela Toranj Varaždinski su branitelji osigurali „cestu spasa" za siguran promet, jedinu cestovnu komunikaciju koja vodi od sela Gaj – Tornaj – Banovac – Batinjani – Omanovac, tada ključnu komunikaciju za opskrbu i obranu Pakraca i Lipika. Neprijatelj je mjesta na kojima je bila razmještena Varaždinska bojna stalno napadao minobacačkom i streljačkom vatrom iz šume Turkovača.

Ulazk i zaposjedanje sela Toranj

Zapovjednik 2. satnije Marijan Kos – zaposjedanje sela Toranj:

„Kada smo se iskrcali u selo Brekinjska, zapovjednik bojne Marijan Strelec pozvao me je i zajedno smo otišli u Zapovjedništvo obrane sektora Donja Obriježna prijam zadaće. Ušli smo u jednu drvenu nisku slavonsku kuću, vidio sam časnike koji sjede za stolom i gledaju u topografski zemljovid na kojemu su bili ucrtani rasporedi naših snaga i snaga neprijatelja, JNA, četnika i drugih paravojnih formacija.

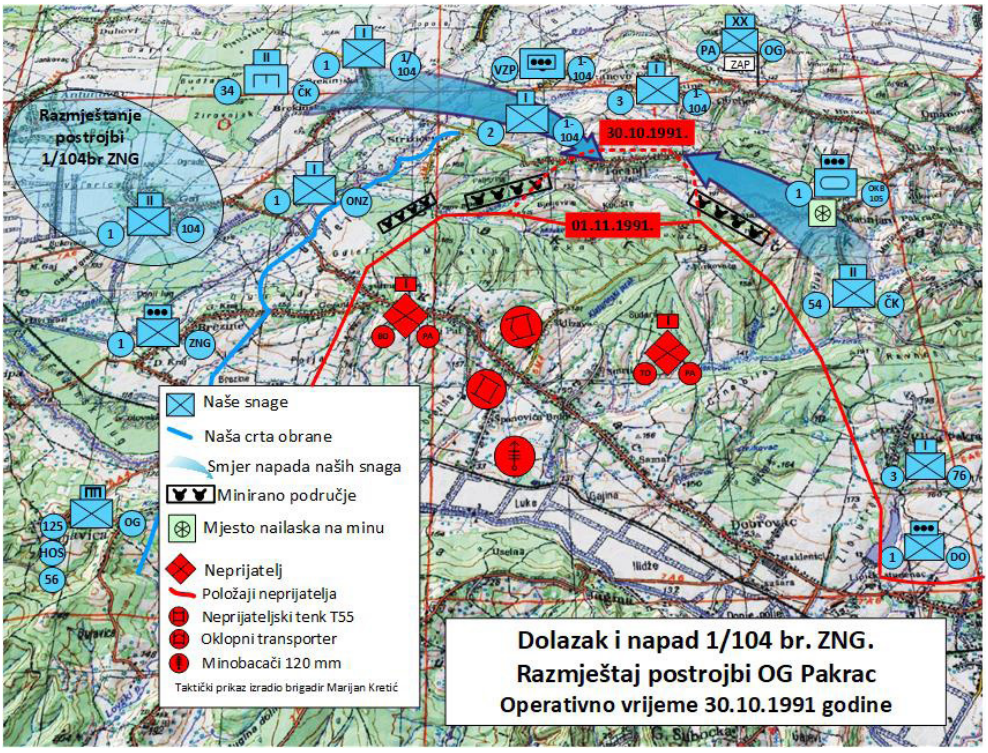
Zapovjednik nam je na karti pojasnio raspored neprijateljskih postrojbi u području Pakraca, Lipika, Šeovice, Kusonja, Starog Majura i Omanovca, pojasnio nam širu situaciju, a zatim mi je izdao zadaću: *„iz mjesta Strižićevac u taktičkom borbenom rasporedu, pješačkom hodnjom krenuti u selo Toranj u kojem se vjerojatno nalaze zaostale neprijateljske snage (nije bilo preciznih informacija o jačini i rasporedu četničkih snaga), neutralizirati neprijateljske snage i izvršiti pregled kompletnog mjesta, kuća, gospodarskih objekata i drugih prostora; zaposjesti područje sela Toranj, čuvati preostalo civilno stanovništvo od nasilja, maltretiranja i raznih drugih oblika ugrožavanja."* Zapovjednik mi je napomenuo kako će iz sela Batinjana i Banovaca u pravcu Tornja četiri tenka iz bjelovarske postrojbe borbeno djelovati i podržavati naše aktivnosti.

Dobivenu zadaću, prenio sam svojim podređenima, a sa svojim sam zapovjednicima razradio plan za našu zadaću. Satniju smo podijelili u dvije skupine, izvidnički dio s oko 30 branitelja i glavni dio satnije s oko 80 branitelja. Ja sam vodio izvidničku skupinu, a moj zamjenik Rajko Košćak sa zapovjednicima vodova drugu skupinu, odnosno glavninu satnije. U dvije hodne kolone u taktičkom borbenom poretku krenuli smo cestom prema selu Toranj koje je udaljeno oko 4,5 km od sela Brekinjska.

Zbog zadane radiošutnje, sredstva veze koristili smo samo po potrebi, a za razgovor su korištene kodirane karte. Došavši do sela Toranj izvidnička skupina osigurala je šire područje šume i dočekala ostali dio satnije. Sa svojim zapovjednicima analizirao sam novonastalu situaciju, dodijelio zadaće svakom vodu za daljnje kretanje, kao i za odbijanje neprijateljskog napada ako do njega dođe. Krenuli smo dalje u zaposjedanje cijelog sela. Tijekom kretanja satnije prema selu Toranj otvarana je pojedinačna i rafalna paljba iz pješačkog naoružanja prema našoj postrojbi, ali nitko nije stradao tijekom našeg kretanja.

Nakon što je 1. vod zaposjeo položaje, započeli smo s razmještanjem 2. voda. Preko naše radioveze javljeno mi je da se zrakoplov bivšeg JNA, kreće prema selu Toranj. Tada sam zapovijedio vojnicima da potraže zaklone, a zapovjedniku tenkovske postrojbe neka sakrije tenkove u gospodarske objekte kako nas ne bi uočio i raketirao. U brišućem preletu zrakoplov bivšeg JNA na izlasku iz sela Tornja izbacio je aviobombu tešku 250 kg, zvanu „krmača", na naše položaje. Odjeknula je silna detonacija od koje nam je dugo odzvanjalo u ušima. Srećom, pala je dalje pa nije nitko stradao od ove velike eksplozije. Do 15.30 sati završili smo s našim borbenim aktivnostima i organizirali obranu mjesta.

Zemljovid 2. Dolazak i napad na selo Toranj



Izradili: Benković i Kretić

Drugi dan, nakon zaposjedanja sela Toranj, uslijedilo je utvrđivanje naših položaja: kopanje rovova, staze kretanja, izrada minskih polja te uređivanje smještaja za duži boravak. Međutim, četnici nisu mirovali, često bi pucali po nama iz strojnica ili minobacača. Rovove, zemunice i prsobrane natkrivali smo i maskirali kako bi se što više stopili s prirodnim okruženjem. Ispred naših uređenih rovova na udaljenosti od 30 do 50 metara postavljali smo mine koje su nas štitile od iznenadnih i neočekivanih napada četničkih snaga iz šume Turkovača u koju su se bili povukli nakon ulaska naše satnije u selo Toranj.

Slika 1. Zapovjednik 2. satnije Marijan Kos (lijevo) i Josip Kapeš (desno) u centru sela Toranj

Zaposjedanjem sela i odbijanjem napada neprijatelja iz šume Turkovača potrošili smo puno streljiva, pa sam u kasno poslijepodne 31. listopada 1991. zatražio popunu streljiva iz logističke baze u Ploštinama. Tijekom večeri saznajem da je kombi-vozilo, koje je trebalo dovesti streljivo oko 18.30 sati, naišlo na protutenkovsku minu i da su Ivan Sokač i Vladimir Leskovar, koji su bili u tom vozilu čudom preživjeli eksploziju mine u selu Mali Banovac.

Boravak na ovom području postajao je sve teži i suroviji. Dani koji su slijedili bivali su sve hladniji, a noćima bi se temperatura spuštala dosta ispod nule. Vatra se nije smjela ložiti kako se ne bi otkrivali naši položaji. Neprijatelj bi pucao po našim položajima iz sveg oružja koje je imao na raspolaganju i danju i noću. Činilo se da imaju svega u neograničenim količinama. Često bi nas zasipavali rafalima iz strojnica, a posebno je bila opasna snajperska paljba na moje vojnike. Minobacačke mine od 80 do 120 mm često su padale po našim položajima. Nakon toga nastala bi duga i jeziva tišina kao da su svi četnici nekamo otišli, a onda odjednom ponovno jaka paljba. I tako su tijekom noći ponavljali paljbu, a nakon toga bi skupine četnika iz šume Turkovača krenule u pješački napad. Pripadnici 2. satnije boravili su u rovovima za stojeći stav do jutra, sprječavajući četnike da probiju naše crte obrane. Tijekom noći morali smo po nekoliko puta pojačavati obranu i premještati branitelje s jednog boka na drugi kako bismo odbili napadna djelovanja.

Teško je opisati i ljudima predočiti situaciju u kojoj smo se nalazili. Ali morali smo izdržati jer smo bili svjesni da nas nema tko zamijeniti i nije bilo drugog rješenja. U konačnici, zbog toga smo i došli ovamo.

Zaposjedanjem sela Toranj i organiziranjem obrane, 2. satnija uspješno je prošla svoje „vatreno krštenje" i izvršila dobivenu zadaću.

Tek pristigla 1. varaždinska bojna od Zapovjedništva obrane sektora Pakrac smještenog u selu Donja Obrijež dobila je i drugu zadaću: s drugim hrvatskim postrojbama sudjelovati u napadu 2. studenog 1991. na neprijateljske snage u selu Kukunjevac, osloboditi prometnicu selo Gaj – Dobrovac – Lipik i organizirati obranu duž komunikacije. U ovu napadnu akciju koja je po svom opsegu i angažiranim snagama bila puno veća od prve akcije, uključene su bile i dvije varaždinske satnije, međutim tu zadaću hrvatske snage nisu uspjele ostvariti.

Neuspjeli napad na selo Kukunjevac

Slika 2. Onesposobljeni samohodni top M36 90 mm hrvatskih snaga na početku sela Kukunjevac 2. studenog 1991.

Operativna grupa (OG) Garešnica bila je sastavljena od 200 hrvatskih branitelja: voda policije za posebne namjene iz Garešnice, samohodne bitnice (tri samohodna topa 90 mm, jedan tenk T55 i jedan BOV 20/3), i satnije varaždinskih branitelja kao namjenski organizirane snage krenula je 2. studenog 1991. u napad radi oslobađanja sela Kukunjevac i prometnice Gaj – Kukunjevac – Lipik od neprijatelja. Cilj stavljen pred tu namjensku organizaciju nije ostvaren.

U napadu su tri branitelja bila teško ranjena, od kojih je jedan kasnije preminuo, a jedna samohotka M36 90 mm bila onesposobljena. Za većinu mobiliziranih pripadnika varaždinske satnije bila je to prva bitka u kojoj su sudjelovali nakon dolaska na pakračko bojište.

Uzroci neuspjelog napada, materijalni gubitci i žrtve branitelja su slojeviti. Kao i u mnogim bitkama, tako i u ovoj, najveći propust bio je u obavještajnoj prosudbi dobivenoj od strane Zapovjedništva koje je bilo na tom području operacije. Snage napada nisu imale ni vremena ni mogućnosti prikupljati ili provjeravati podatke, nego su se morale pouzdati u dobivene informacije. Mudre riječi Sun Tzua napisane u knjizi *Umijeće ratovanja* mogle bi se primijeniti i za ovu situaciju.

> *Upoznaj neprijatelja, upoznaj samo samoga sebe i pobjeda neće biti dvojbena ni u stotinu bitaka.*
>
> *Onaj tko poznaje sebe, ali ne i neprijatelja, pretrpjet će jednak broj poraza i pobjeda.*
>
> *Onaj tko ne poznaje ni sebe ni neprijatelja, doživjet će neuspjeh u svakoj bitki.*
>
> Sun Tzu, Umijeće ratovanja

Poznavati neprijatelja – njegove snage, njegove slabosti, proučiti njegov način djelovanja (*modus operandi*), njegove osobine – važno je kako biste se mogli boriti protiv njega. Svatko tko se natjecao u sportu, zna značenje citata. Pitanje koje se odnosi na *poznavanje i korištenje vlastitih snaga* znači da znate na učinkovit način koristiti vlastite snage, znate izbjegavati neprijateljeve jake strane i ne izlažete vlastite slabosti. Da biste *pobijedili svog neprijatelja*, morate postati on, razmišljati kao on, djelovati kao on. Na taj način možete biti korak ispred njega i poraziti ga prije nego što počinje djelovati.

Neuspjeh u napadu, materijalni gubitci i žrtve branitelja uglavnom se pripisuju pogrešnoj obavještajnoj prosudbi o snazi protivnika i njegovom rasporedu Zapovjedništva sektora obrane Pakrac. Međutim, o vlastitim slabostima, pogrešnom pristupu u vođenju napada, lošoj koordinaciji snaga, nepripremljenosti i nespremnosti varaždinske postrojbe tek pristigle na bojište, kao i o nedostatku vodstva i sposobnosti zapovijedanja u toku provođenja napada nema ni jedne riječi.

Neuspjeli napad nije samo rezultat pogrešne procjene snaga neprijatelja i njegovog borbenog rasporeda, nego i površnosti u planiranju, organiziranju i vođenju napadne akcije. U provođenju napada pokazalo se da glavni zapovjednici nisu bili dorasli izvršenju zadaće.

Ova vrlo poučna napadna akcija potpuno je zaboravljena i više se ne navodi u literaturi. U Zborniku radova iz 2019., Zapadna Slavonija u Domovinskom ratu 1991., u Kronologiji ratnih događanja na pakračko-lipičkoj bojišnici, u prezentacijama i obljetnicama vezanima za pakračko bojište, neuspjeli napad hrvatskih snaga 2. studenog. 1991. na selo Kukunjevac vise se ne spominje. Bio je to napad koji bi bilo najbolje zaboraviti. Za varaždinske branitelje napad na selo Kukunjevac pobuđuje posebno zanimanje i opominje – *nikad više takve akcije ni takvog napada.*

Priprema i planiranje napada

Nakon teških borbi vođenih do sredine listopada 1991. u kojima su hrvatske snage uspjele spriječiti opkoljavanje i okupaciju pakračkog područja, nova crta obrane protezala se od sela Dereza – Pakrac (1/2 grada) – Lipik (južni dio grada) – selo Kukunjevac – Bujavica (Monografija, 2022. str. 112.).

Kako bi se ojačala obrana i spriječilo zauzimanje pakračkog džepa od 28. listopada 1991. na pakračko bojište dolaze nove hrvatske mobilizirane postrojbe iz Bjelovara, Čakovca, Koprivnice, Križevaca i Varaždina opremljene naoružanjem iz zauzetih vojarni JNA. Postrojbe se razmještaju u zaleđu prvih borbenih linija obrane 76. samostalne bojne i pakračke policije spremajući se za prve borbene akcije (Raščlamba, 1999. str. 15.).

Po odobrenju operacije *Orkan 91* utvrđena je koordinacija i „borbena suradnja" sa Sektorom obrane Pakrac, čije su postrojbe djelovale na pravcu Pakrac – Lipik (Stipčić, 49). Dolaskom novih mobiliziranih hrvatskih snaga na pakračko bojište, Zapovjedništvo obrane sektora Pakrac na brzinu je isplaniralo borbenu akciju kojom je željelo smanjiti pritisak neprijatelja na obranu Lipika i Pakraca, ponovno zaposjesti selo Kukunjevac i osloboditi prometnicu Lipik – Gaj. Napadna je akcija osim domaćih branitelja 76. bojne iz Pakraca, uključivala i druge postrojbe pristigle na pakračko bojište.

Zapovjednik obrane sektora Pakrac *„odlučio je s OG-om Pakrac sastava: vod za posebne namjene MUP-a Garešnica, dijelovima bataljuna ZNG-a Varaždin, s postrojbama ZNG-a Garešnica, Varaždin, Čakovec i 1. bataljunom obrane Pakraca izvršiti napad i čišćenje šireg područja sela Kukunjevac, Dobrovac, Lipik, odbaciti snage neprijatelja sjeverno i južno od sela Kukunjevac s ciljem deblokiranja komunikacije selo Gaj – Kukunjevac – Lipik, a zatim jačim snagama istu zaposjesti i držati do daljnjega"* (točka 4. Zap. za napad).

Zapovjednik OG-a Pakrac snage za napad organizirao je na sljedeći način:

OG Garešnica: sastavljen od voda za posebne namjene policije MUP-a iz Garešnice, bitnice od (tri) samohodna topa M36 90 mm, dva tenka T55 i 1. pješačke varaždinske satnije smještene u selu Brekinska napast će neprijatelja iz smjera sela Gaj. Operativnom grupom zapovijedat će zapovjednik policijske postaje Garešnica Ivan Marinko Čajsa.

Pakrački bataljun: 76. samostalni bataljun napast će i osloboditi južni dio okupiranog Lipika do linije željeznička pruga – most na koti tt 149 – rijeka Pakra i organizirati obranu područja Lipik – Matkovac – Klisa.

Satnija ZNG-a Čakovec u suradnji s vodom Dobrovac napast će i zaposjesti istočni dio sela Kukunjevca i selo Dobrovac, organizirati obranu u području: crkva – kota 151 – potok Dobrovac i selo Dobrovac i spriječiti mogući napad četnika iz Jagme i Subocke (Odred TO M. Kovač).

Ostale naše postrojbe štitit će bokove našim snagama u napadu, a kasnije se pridružiti u obrani:

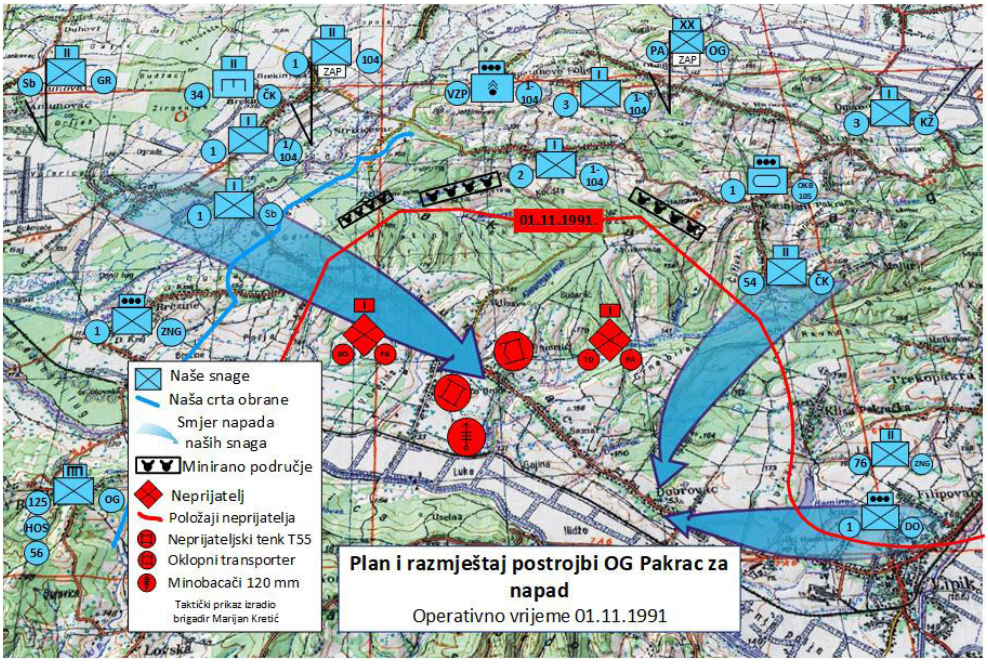
- desno, od sela Kukunjevac u području sela Brezine, satnija ZNG-a Garešnica poduprijet će napad glavnim snagama na selo Kukunjevac

i paljbom djelovati po neprijateljskim snagama u selima Bujavica i Lovska

- lijevo, na pravcu sela Toranj – Batinjani – Prekopakra – Filipovac – Lipik nalazile su se ostale naše snage; u mjestu Strižićevac dio 3. satnije i 2. satnije varaždinske bojne u selu Toranj sa zadaćom zaštite lijevoga boka snagama na smjeru glavnog napada i sudjelovanja u obrani Dobrovca i Lipika.

Satnija ZNG-a Koprivnica na položajima u selu Mali Banovac spriječit će izvlačenje četničkih snaga iz šume Turkovača preko sela Batinjani i dalje prema Krndiji.

Zemljovid 3. Plan i razmještaj postrojbi OG-a Pakrac za napad *(Andrićev plan)*



Izradili: Benković i Kretić

Zapovjedništvo Varaždinske bojne upoznato je sa zapovijedi za napad sredinom 1. studenog 1991. Zapovjednik 1. (varaždinske) bojne Marijan Strelec dolazi sa svojim suradnicima u selo Toranj u zapovjedništvo 2. satnije u popodnevnim satima i upoznaje ih sa zapovjedi o napadu na selo Kukunjevac. Marijan Kos, zapovjednik 2. satnije, navodi kako mu je Strelec rekao da je njegova satnija u pričuvi i u obrani sela Toranj. Ako neprijatelj potisne naše snage, njegova će satnija biti uključena u borbu.

Isti dan, petak navečer na sastanku zapovjedništva bojne i zapovjednika 1. i 3. satnije razmatralo se kako izvršiti dodijeljenu zadaću. Za pripremu i organizaciju napada na srbočetničke snage u selu Kukunjevac preostalo je 12 – 13 sati. Iako su istu večer zapovjednici vodova i ostali branitelji bili upoznati sa zapovjedi o napadu, *ujutro, 2. studenog 1991. od zapovjednika bojne Streleca dobili smo upute kako ćemo izvršiti napad. Prema ranijem dogovoru između njega i zapovjednika naše satnije, prvi u napad kreće treći vod sa zadaćom zauzeti prve kuće i ulaz u selo Kukunjevac, očistiti područje od četnika i organizirati obranu. Zatim slijedi drugi vod i nastavlja napad do sredine sela, propušta se prvi vod koji završava s napadom, raspoređuje se na kraju sela i organizira obranu.* Treća satnija nije izravno sudjelovala u napadu, dio satnije nalazio se u selu Ploštine na osiguranju, a dio u području Strižićevac.

Provedba napada OG-a Garešnica

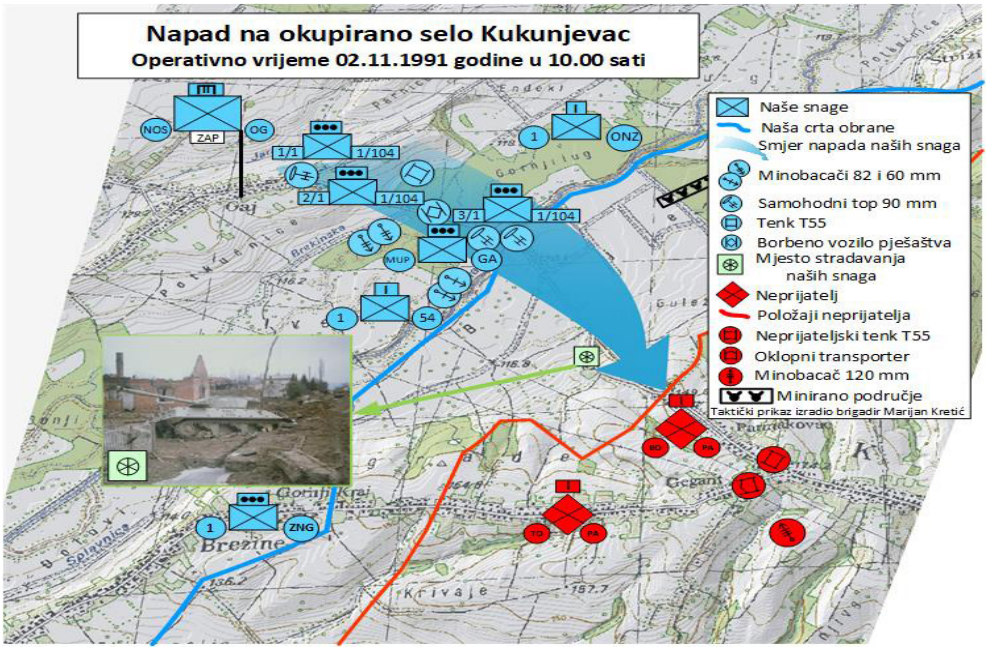
Nakon 24. rujna 1991. dolaskom snaga 5. korpusa JNA i četničkih skupina, selo Kukunjevac postaje baza neprijatelju za daljnje napade na Lipik i Pakrac. Iz šume Turkovača, koja je postala logistička baza sa zemunicama, neprijateljske skupine ulazile su u sela Batinjani, Gornja Obriež i Toranj, pripremale zasjede i blokirali jedinu komunikaciju iz Lipika i Pakraca prema slobodnom teritoriju te dovodili branitelje u okruženje. Na području sela Kukunjevac – Klisa – Majur – šuma Turkovača – Veganov most – Sklizavac bile su razmještene snage jedne bojne TO-a Pakrac i jedne satnije četnika zvani „Beli Orlovi" (Raščlamba, str. 8.). Iako su hrvatske snage dotad dva puta očistile selo od pobunjenika, nije bilo dovoljno snaga branitelja da bi ga zaposjeli i držali pod svojom kontrolom. Zapovjednik OG-a Garešnica M. I. Čajsa početak napada opisuje: „Dana 2. studenog 1991. u jutarnjim

satima krenuli smo iz policijske postaje Garešnica, a po zapovjedi pukovnika Andrića priključile su nam se i tri samohotke sa zapovjednikom. Nakon dolaska u selo Gaj nitko nas nije dočekao niti smo vidjeli pripadnike Zbora narodne garde (pripadnike Varaždinske bojne). Izašli smo iz sela Gaj, prošli most preko rječice Bijela i zauzeli položaje za minobacače s desne strane, a samohotke i oklopno vozilo BOV-a rasporedilo se duž ceste prema selu Kukunjevac.

Kada je prošlo 10 sati, nitko od zapovjednika pješačkih postrojbi nije mi se javio i mi smo započeli s paljbom po selu Kukunjevac. Nakon nekoliko ispaljenih mina neprijatelj je počeo odgovarati na našu paljbu. Od njihove paljbe teško je bio ranjen Željko Nađ. Došavši do njega, vidio sam da je pogođen u trbuh i vire mu crijeva koja sam vratio natrag. Ubrzo je došla hitna pomoć i doktor Miroslav Kinčl te su ga odvezli u bolnicu. Zapovjedio sam tada paljbu iz svih topničkih oruđa, a mojoj sam postrojbi zapovijedio da se primakne bliže zavoju ulaska u Kukunjevac jer smo svojim djelovanjem otkrili naše položaje."

„Nakon što je moja postrojba zaposjela nove položaje kod zavoja iz pravca sela Gaj, pristigla je veća skupina pripadnika ZNG-a, koji su zaposjeli položaje duž odvodnog kanala/šamca. Prišao sam prvim pripadnicima i pitao ih gdje je njihov zapovjednik, odgovorili su mi da ne znaju. Iz pravca Gaja došao je jedan tenk T55 probijajući se kroz naš borbeni raspored došavši do prve samohotke. Nije stao, već se kretao cestom radi zauzimanja borbenog položaja na proplanku s lijeve strane ceste. Tada su se pripadnici ZNG-a maknuli iz odvodnog kanala s lijeve strane zbog svoje sigurnosti. Kako mu je zasmetala prva samohotka, ona je otišla oko 20 m naprijed i izašla svojim prednjim krajem iz zavoja te bila uočena iz smjera Kukunjevca. Tada je bila pogođena protuoklopnom raketom u donji prednji dio, a od eksplozije rakete samohotka se podigla u zrak. Veći dio nas se nalazio s desne strane samohotke i nije nas ništa pogodilo. Zaštitila nas je prednja guma gusjenice koja je bila presječena. Međutim, dva pripadnika ZNG-a 1. bojne Varaždin nalazili su se na cesti nekoliko metara iza samohotke i od eksplozije projektila bili su pogođeni u noge te su pali na cestu. Dotrčao sam do njih, a u isto vrijeme je došao i sanitet i dr. Kinčl pruživši im prvu pomoć, a potom su autima odveženi u bolnicu u Garešnicu" (Čajsa).

Zemljovid 4. Napad na okupirano selo Kukunjevac



Izradili: Benković i Kretić

Zapovjednik samohodnih topova M36 90 mm, Gedeon Berak, opisuje svoje viđenje napada na Kukunjevac:

„Krenuli smo naprijed i kod prve kuće u Kukunjevcu pogođeni smo s četiri protuoklopne rakete Maljutke. Dvije Maljutke, koje su pogodile samohotku, nisu eksplodirale, već su se odbile od oklopa, dok su druge dvije pogodile i eksplodirale. Mi smo tada iskočili iz samohotke. Rikošet jednog od projektila teško je ranio dva pripadnika 104. brigade, a Vlatko Imbrišić je na putu za bolnicu u Kutinu preminuo. U hrabrom pokušaju da izvuče Imbrišića u zaklon teško je ranjen njegov suborac Boris Vinceković."

Nakon što su ranjeni branitelji iz Varaždinske bojne zbrinuti, pojavio se samo jedan naš tenk T-55. On je zatim izgurao s ceste pogođenu samohotku prema kanalu pokraj ceste kod prvih kuća, kako se i vidi na Slici 1. Tenk je zatim zauzeo poziciju lijevo od ceste, a ja sam ušao u drugu samohotku

pripremajući se za nastavak napada. Iza nas nalazio se policijski BOV, koji je djelovao po neprijatelju.

Međutim, nakon ranjavanja varaždinskih branitelja i jake neprijateljske paljbe na tom smjeru nije bilo moguće razmještanje naših snaga i zaposjedanje novih položaja za daljnji napad. Kada sam se okrenuo, vidio sam da su se naši vojnici koji su trebali biti iza oklopa povukli. Neprijateljska paljba bila je vrlo jaka, pretpostavili smo da su ovdje razmještene veće snage neprijatelja nego što je bilo navedeno u početnoj prosudbi. U takvoj situaciji zapovjednik Čajsa nakon konzultacija sa zapovjednikom Andrićem prekinuo je napad.

"Nakon našeg povlačenja prema selu Gaj neprijatelj je pogodio i oštetio most Gaj – Kukunjevac. Dalje više nismo mogli proći cestom. Naša se bitnica premjestila u selo Gaj i odatle je topnički djelovala po okupiranom Kukunjevcu. Tako je bilo sve do operacije oslobađanja Lipika, 7. prosinca 1991. Do tada je naša inženjerija postavila pontonski most i mogli smo u napad tim pravcem".

„Kasnije sam od suboraca čuo kako su na radiostanici Petrova gora izvijestili o napadu i bio je intervju s neprijateljskim vojnikom koji je ispaljivao protuoklopne rakete Maljutke na nas. On je bio u panici jer su naši tenkovi krenuli na njih, a vrijeme od ispaljenja i cilja bilo je kratko".

Slika 3. Zapovjednik 1. bojne Marijan Strelec lijevo i Vladimir Leskovar desno

Slika 4. Oštećeni most na cesti Gaj – Kukunjevac na rijeci Bijela

U monografiji 104. brigade HV-a zapovjednik Varaždinske bojne bojnik Marijan Strelec kratko je opisao samo pripremu i planiranje varaždinskih satnija u napadu na Kukunjevac (Monografija. 27.), ali ne i tijek borbenih događanja. Nakon ranjavanja Vadimir Leskovar je na početku bitke autom ranjenog Borisa Vincekovića odveo u bolnicu Garešnica. U svom osvrtu na događanja nakon Kukunjevca u Monografiji pisanoj 1994. Leskovar navodi kako je nakon povlačenja u selu Gaj 2. studenog 1991. navečer održan sastanak Zapovjedništva bojne i analizirana cijela akcija te je *„utvrđeno kako akcija nije uspjela zbog neodgovarajućih podataka o neprijateljskoj strani, preslaboj topničkoj pripremi napada, angažiranja premalo pješačkih snaga i prekratke priprema za napad." Na*vodi i kako *„neuspjeh u napadu na Kukunjevac, sasvim logično, izazvao je moralnu krizu u postrojbama koje su sudjelovale u napadu, ali i drugim postrojbama. ... Širile su se glasine da je poginulo više ljudi i da je doživljen veći neuspjeh. Ljudi su bili nezadovoljni što ih se neiskusne stavilo u tako težak položaj, na tako teške zadatke"* (Monografija, 28).

Iako je prošlo trideset godina od napada na Kukunjevac, još su živa sjećanja zapovjednika vodova prve satnije varaždinskih branitelja s kojima smo razgovarali, a koji su neposredno sudjelovali u napadu na Kukunjevac: svi zapovjednici vodova i satnije bili su vojno educirani sa završenim školama za rezervne oficire u Bileći.

Izdvojit ćemo samo svjedočanstvo zapovjednika 3. voda Nikole Drpića koji je iz sela Gaj prvi krenuo u vodnoj koloni iza *samohotki*. Njegova prva desetina, odnosno vod bili su na varenoj liniji. „*U vodnoj koloni u taktičkom poretku po desetinama kretali smo se iza samohotke. Kada je započela paljba, eksplozije, čuo sam jauk, a zatim se neprijateljska paljba po nama pojačala. Ja sam tada bio u sredini voda, u jaruzi, a prva desetina bila je gore iza samohotke, poviše, na prilazu selu kod prvih kuća. Zapovijedio sam da se zaklonimo u odvodne kanale uz cestu. Bilo nam je rečeno kako je okolno zemljište minirano, stoga nismo mogli zauzeti drukčije borbene položaje. Nakon saznanja o ranjavanju branitelja pokušavao sam stupiti u vezu s nadređenima, sa zapovjednikom satnije i bojne, ali mi se nitko nije javljao. Tri puta sam zvao preko radioveze (motorole) i nitko se nije javljao, a nadređeni nije bio u blizini. Usmenim putem prenio sam poruku o ranjavanju mojih vojnika. Nakon pola sata dobio sam motorolom od zapovjednika satnije obavijest da mijenjamo smjer kretanja, što je značilo povlačenje u selo Gaj. Kada smo zbrinuli i drugog ranjenog, ja sam zapovijedio povlačenje voda.*

Neodazivanje nadređenih na moje pozive jako me povrijedilo, kao i neorganiziranost te loše vođenje i zapovijedanje u ovoj borbenoj akciji. Sjećam se da mi je Damir Hrašćanec2 na odlasku iz Varaždina rekao kako je situacija na pakračkom bojištu teška i da ne idemo na izlet. Branitelji su govorili kako im je zapovjednik brigade Ivan Rukljić obećao da se neće ići u napadne aktivnosti".

Zapovjednici druga dva voda bili su na cesti iza trećeg voda prema Kukunjevcu. Navode kako su u trenutku kada je samohotka pogođena raketom, zapovijedili vojnicima da potraže zaklone lijevo i desno od ceste u kanale. *Čekali smo daljnje zapovjedi, slušali jaku paljbu, osjetili zujanje metaka iznad naših glava i vidjeli eksplozije granata koje su padale po okolnim njivama, a koje je neprijatelj ispaljivao prema nama. Nismo potražili zaklone okolo jer je bila informacija kako je okolno zemljište minirano i da ne izlazimo izvan kruga ceste. Nakon nekog vremena putem radioveze od zapovjednika satnija došla je zapovijed da se povlačimo u selo Gaj.*

2 Damir Hrašćanec, zapovjednik 1. satnije, u drugoj smjeni teško je ranjen 29. studenog 1991. u selu Omanovac, preminuo u prosincu 1991.

Kao razlog prekida napadne akcije, zapovjednik OG-a Garešnica Ivan Marinko Čajsa navodi: *„snage napada iz smjera Pakraca, prema Lipiku i Dobrovcu naišle su na jaku obranu neprijatelja, bile zaustavljene i nisu mogle probiti neprijateljske snage. Nakon toga je neprijatelj prebacio dio snaga u Kukunjevac, tj u Kolodvorsku ulicu. Budući da je uočeno da se neće moći izvršiti zadaća osvajanja sela Kukunjevac, Dobrovac i dijela Lipika, u dogovoru sa Zapovjedništvom obrane sektora Pakrac, koje se nalazilo u selu Donja Obriježˇ, borbena skupina koja je napadala Kukunjevac povukla se u selo Gaj. U napadu na selo Kukunjevac poginula su dva djelatnika, a jedan teško ranjen"* (Čajsa, 69).

U Ratnom dnevniku varaždinske 104. brigade HV-a zapisano je:

"U izvješću zapovjednika 1/104. ZNG-a po prijmu zapovijedi za napad od Zapovjedništva obrane sektora Pakrac dana 2. 11. 1991., 1/1 bat., s 3./3 čete izvršila je napad uz sudjelovanje specijalne jedinice MUP-a na s. Kukunjevac. Nakon teških borbi sa snagama neprijateljskih jedinica, zbog utvrđenih vatrenih točaka i jake art. i tenkovske vatre iz sela Kukunjevac, specijalne jedinice MUP-a, podržane našim jedinicama bile su prisiljene na povlačenje na početni položaj u selo Gaj. U toku izvršenja zadatka došlo je do teškog ranjavanja vojnika Vinceković (Juraja) Borisa i Imbrišić (Miše) Vlatka, koji su transportirani sanitetskim automobilom u Garešnicu te je saniranje posljedica u toku. U toku izvršenja iskazana je velika hrabrost i zalaganje svih koji su sudjelovali u akciji."

U Ratnom dnevniku Operativne zone Bjelovar samo je navedeno: *"kako su u pokušaju čišćenja Kukunjevca u pravcu Lipika tri gardista ranjena iz varaždinskog bataljuna, od kojih dva teško. Onesposobljena nam je jedna SO 90 mm".*

U dosad objavljenim neprijateljskim dokumentima u koje smo imali uvid: Ratni dnevnik 5. korpusa JNA i Monografija prijedorskih ratnih jedinica u odbrambenom – otadžbinskom ratu (1991.-1995.) nisu zabilježene borbene aktivnosti na selo Kukunjevac za dan 2. studenoga 1991. U potrazi za dokumentima još nismo naišli na zapise iz neprijateljske dokumentacije o ovome događaju.

Analiza događaja

Metodom analize bitke pojasnit ćemo važne aspekte neuspješnog napada i naučiti važnu lekciju koja nam može poslužiti u obuci vojnika, dočasnika i časnika.

Zapovjedništvo sektora obrane Pakrac, znajući za dolazak Varaždinske bojne i ostalih postrojbi, procijenilo je situaciju na pakračkom bojištu povoljnom i osmislilo napadnu akciju šireg opsega radi oslobađanja sela Kukunjevac, Dobrovac i dio Lipika. U Zapovjedništvu su vjerovali kako selo Kukunjevac drže slabije neprijateljske snage. Nagađalo se da šumu Turkovača i selo Kukunjevac brane neprijateljske snage do jedne satnije, oko stotinjak slabo naoružanih neprijateljskih vojnika (Monografija 1994. str. 27.). Procjena je bila da se našim snagama, potpomognutim teškim naoružanjem, neprijatelj neće dugo moći oduprijeti. Na toj pogrešnoj procjeni neprijateljskih snaga u području Kukunjevca na brzinu je organizirana i pokrenuta napadna akcija koja je završila neuspješno.

U odnosu prema obavještajnoj prosudbi koja nije potvrđena od Zapovjedništva, snage neprijatelja bile su tri puta jače i imale su dva ukopana tenka. Ova pogrešna prosudba o sastavu neprijateljskih snaga i vatrenoj moći u području Kukunjevca utjecala je u Zapovjedništvu na planiranje snaga, manevar i taktiku u napadu.

Zapovjedništvo je glavni smjer napada planiralo iz sela Gaj prema Kukunjevcu. Drugi smjer napada bio je iz Pakraca prema Lipiku i Dobrovcu. Na tom smjeru, na desnom boku nalazila se satnija ZNG-a Čakovec u području sela Batinjani, koja je trebala u suradnji s vodom Dobrovac napasti i zaposjesti istočni dio sela Kukunjevca i selo Dobrovac.

Zapovjedništvo je smatralo kako će napad OG-a Garešnica proći na glavnom smjeru, kao i akcija zaposjedanja sela Toranj od prije dva dana kada su 2. satnija varaždinske bojne i tenkovski vod 105. brigade napali i zaposjeli selo Toranj. Zapovjednik Andrić uručio je zapovjed za napad postrojbama dan ranije, tj. 1. studenog 1991.

U vojsci je pravilo da od prijma zadaće do početka pokretanja borbenih operacija jednu trećinu (1/3) vremena koristi nadređeni, a dvije trećine (2/3) podređeni.

U ovom slučaju vidimo da zapovjednik nije dao dovoljno vremena podređenim zapovjednicima kako bi sa svojim postrojbama detaljno i temeljito proučili zapovijed, proveli proces vojnog donošenja odluke i uskladili svoje borbene aktivnosti. Proces vojnog donošenja odluke (PVDO) metodologija je planiranja kojom razumijevamo situaciju i zadaću, razvijamo inačice djelovanja i stvaramo plan operacije ili operativnu zapovijed. PVDO pomaže zapovjedniku da u prosuđivanju bude temeljit, jasan, logičan, da uz profesionalno znanje razborito prosuđuje kako bi razumio situaciju, razvio inačice djelovanja pri rješavanju problema te konačno donio odluku. Zapovjednicima i stožerima PVDO pomaže da za vrijeme planiranja budu kritični i kreativni.

Zapovjednik prije bitke morao je osobno sa svojim podređenima obići mjesto napada, naročito glavni smjer, kako bi raspravio o nejasnoćama sa sudjelujućim zapovjednicima u provođenju borbenih aktivnosti, u koordinaciji snaga i suradnji te vatrenoj potpori postrojbama u napadu. U vojsci to nazivamo zapovjedno izviđanje prije bitke, a vremena za ovakvu ozbiljnu akciju trebalo je biti, možda i napad pomaknuti za jedan dan. Međutim, zapovjednik operacije pukovnik Andrić dan ranije podređenim je zapovjednicima uručio zapovijed za napad po kojoj se trebalo postupiti. Podređene postrojbe nisu imale dovoljno vremena kako bi se pripremile i uskladile svoje borbene aktivnosti u novoformiranoj namjenskoj organizaciji OG Garešnica sastavljenoj od više različitih postrojbi.

„Ova naredba i napad odrađeni su bez sastanaka zapovjednika i razmatranja napada na topografskim kartama i na terenu. Meni, koji sam rođen 30 km zračne linije od navedenog područja, 80 % naziva kota, mostova i kanala bilo je nepoznato, a u kakvoj su tek situaciji bili zapovjednici postrojbi ZNG-a, koji se prije napada nisu upoznali s terenom te nije izvršeno usuglašavanje napada" (Čajsa).

U *Zapovijedi za napad* navedeno je kako će satnija ZNG-a Garešnica smještena u selu Brezine biti potpora u napadu. Međutim, istina je da se tamo nalazila grupa branitelja kao sigurnosni punkt, a Zapovjedništvo satnije nije bilo

upoznato sa zapovjedi i nisu planirali sudjelovanje u napadu. Položaj ove postrojbe vrlo je bitan i omogućio bi bolju i dominantniju poziciju našim snagama u napadu. I umjesto da se istodobno napadne i bok neprijateljske obrane s položaja ove satnije kako bi se olakšao cestom prodor u Kukunjevac, u napad se krenulo *„komunikacijom selo Gaj – selo Kukunjevac jer je okolno zemljište minirano"*, prema tt 145 kao jednom od ključnih neprijateljskih obrambenih terena. U ratu je pravilo izbjegavati ono što je jako, a udarati na ono što je slabo. Usmjeravanjem napada naših snaga na cestu onemogućeno je manevriranje snaga, odnosno zaobilaženje i traženje drugih pravaca napada, a neprijatelju je pružena mogućnost da topništvom gađa naše snage koje su bile raspoređene na cesti. Neprijatelj to nije prepoznao, tako da je izbjegnuta još veća tragedija. Izostao je i faktor iznenađenja, što znači udariti neprijatelja u vrijeme, na mjestu i na način za koji nije pripremljen. Izostala je i inženjerijska potpora napadu jer, da je bila, utvrdila bi se minirana područja i napravili prolazi kroz minska polja, a time bi se omogućio manevar. U zapovijedi se samo govori o zaprečivanju i postavljanju mina nakon zauzimanja sela Kukunjevca. Inženjerijska satnija nije dobila zadaću uklanjanja neprijateljskih mina radi pravljena prolaza našim snagama u napadu. Neprijatelj je na početku sela Kukunjevac bio pripremljen i prije su provodili aktivnu obranu prema selu Gaj. Nakon zauzimanja sela Toranj 30. listopada očito su očekivali napad naših snaga na toj strani na selo Kukunjevac.

S topničkom i minobacačkom pripremom napada započelo se u 10.00 sati, za koju se kasnije utvrdilo da je bila nedovoljna i neučinkovita.

Zapovjednik bitnice samohotki M36, Berak, s dvije samohotke krenuo je u napad cestom prema Kukunjevcu, kako mu je odredio Andrić, a treću je ostavio ispred sela Gaj radi topničke potpore. Od dva tenka T55 nakon početka napada, pojavio se samo jedan. Sve to upućuje kako najrelevantni činioci borbene moći nisu bili usklađeni i koordinirani pa ukupna borbena moć OG-a Garešnica nije bila ni djelotvorna (efikasna) ni (efektivna) učinkovita. Prvi neprijateljski položaj na tt 149 nadvisuju za tridesetak metara naše položaje kod prvih kuća. Uočivši samohotku ispred sela, neprijatelj je započeo s paljbom iz pješačkog i protuoklopnog naoružanja.

U slijedu loših odluka zapovjedništvo varaždinske bojne i satnije odlučilo se da prvi u napad krene treći vod, najmanji i najslabiji po borbenoj moći. Zapovjednik voda Nikola Drpić u napad iza samohotki krenuo je na najjaču točku obrane na početku sela Kukunjevac. Brojno stanje voda bilo je 24 branitelja, naoružanih s automatskim puškama AP M70 i jednom raketnim bacačem "OSA" i s nekoliko "zolja". Ostali vodovi bili su raspoređeni iza 3. voda uz cestu i trpjeli su neprijateljsku vatru bez mogućnosti uzvraćanja i zauzimanja povoljnijih položaja s kojih bi mogli ugroziti neprijatelja. Početak napada sveo se samo na uzak prostor oko ceste na prilazu sela Kukunjevac. U ovakvoj situaciji borbena moć pješačka 1. satnije bila je svedena samo na prednji dio raspoređenih snaga u dodiru s neprijateljem.

Jedno od temeljnih načelo vojnog uspjeha je i moral postrojbi. "U ratu je moral prema fizičkom kao tri prema jedan." (Napoleon Bonaparte). Umjesto jačanja borbenog duha i morala, zapovjedništvo bojne i brigade mobiliziranim pripadnicima prije odlaska na bojište je govorilo kako *"neće ići u prve borbene linije, već im je zadaća zaposjedanje sela te da nema pretjerane bojaznosti, zapravo straha"* (Monografija, 1994. str 24.). Kao posljedica neuspješnog napada u cijeloj se bojni osjetila kriza morala (Isto, str. 28.)

Suprotno od "šetnje i izleta " kroz Kukunjevac eksplozija granata, jaka paljba neprijatelja i teško ranjavanje branitelja šokirala je i mobilizirane varaždinske branitelje na prilazu sela Kukunjevac. Kada je neprijateljska paljba postajala sve jača i žešća, prvo su se počeli povlačiti pripadnici policijskog voda, a zatim i pripadnici varaždinske satnije.

Nedostatak spremnost u vojsci znači više nego što je zadužiti ljude s opremom, oružjem i tako mobiliziranu postrojbu poslati na bojište. Zapovjedništva su odgovorna da pojedinci i postrojbe imaju potrebno vojno znanje i vještine za provođenje dodijeljenih zadaća. Naročito je važno odabrati časnike s iskustvom prve razine i dočasnike s osnovnim vještinama vodstva i samopouzdanjem koji bi se mogli nositi sa izazovima u borbi.

U analizi bitke važno je razumjeti zapovjedne odnose i vodstvo pojedinih zapovjednika u provođenju borbenih aktivnosti.

Ivan Marinko Čajsa, pravnik kriminalist, inspektor prve klase, zapovjednik PP Garešnica od 8. listopada 1990. s dotad stečenim ratnim iskustvom

na pakračkom bojištu od zapovjednika obrane sektora Pakrac dobio je zadaću voditi napad *OG Garešnica* na glavnom smjeru, na selo Kukunjevac. Neposredno podređeni su mu bili zapovjednik samohotki Berak, kojemu je to bila prva borbena akcija i zapovjednik prve varaždinske satnije Stilinović koji je sudjelovao u varaždinskim danima rata u rujnu 1991. I dok je zapovjednik Čajsa bio na prilazu Kukunjevca i neposredno komunicirao sa zapovjednikom samohotki Berakom koji je predvodio napad, *takove komunikacije nije bilo sa varaždinskim zapovjednicima* (Čajsa).

U monografiji 104, brigade HV, se navodi kako: "*akcija nije uspjela zbog neodgovarajućih podataka o neprijateljskoj strani, preslabe topničke pripreme napada, angažiranja premalog broja pješačkih snaga u odnosu na neprijatelja te prekratkih priprema za napad*", odnosno sva krivnja je na zapovjedništvo obrane sektora Pakrac.

Detaljna analiza o prvom sudjelovanju varaždinske bojne u napadu na Kukunjevac, zapovjedništva 1. bojne i 104. brigade HV nije provedena. Mi i danas još ne znamo gdje se nalazi ratni dnevnik varaždinske bojne i što je zapovjednik bojne Strelec zapisao u njega. Nije se ozbiljno istražilo što je učinjeno dobro, a što pogrešno tijekom napadne akcije, pa se ni naučena lekcija nije mogla primijeniti na postrojbe u 104. brigade HV. Izostalo je i pitanje zapovjedne odgovornosti za loše provedenu napadnu akciju u zapovjednom lancu.

No, poruka nezadovoljni branitelja je bila jasna, - ljudi su tražili da im se istinito prikazuje situacija na bojištu, korektan odnos prema njima, bolju organiziranost i vojnu obuku sa zapovjednicima koji će biti na čelu, koji će ih voditi, kao što stara vojna mudrosti nalaže vojnike se *vodi za mnom, a ne naprijed.*

Ipak su neke pouke naučene iz neuspjelog napada pomogle u oblikovanju naknadne vojne operaciju oslobađanja Lipika. Neprijateljske snage su držali navedeno područje do početka prosinca 1991.godine, kad je u dobro planiranoj i koordiniran akciji s ojačanim snagama HV i policije u kojoj su sudjelovali i varaždinski branitelji oslobođeno čitavo područje i sam grad Lipik kao prvi oslobođeni grad u Hrvatskoj.

Zaključak

Hrvatske oružane snage u nastajanju sastavljene od mobiliziranih pripadnika ZNG, policije, dragovoljaca, bivših pripadnika JNA i opremljene zarobljenim oružjem iz skladišta bivše vojske, iako visokog morala u nekim situacijama u napadu na neprijatelja koji se bori s pripremljenih ili utvrđenih položaja, podupiran topništvom i tenkovima doživjavale su neuspjeh.

Slučaj neuspjele napadne akcije na utvrđenu i organiziranu obranu neprijatelja u selu Kukunjevac klasična je ilustracija loše pripremljenosti napadne akcije *OG Garešnica*. Zapovjedništvo *OG Pakrac* na pogrešnoj procijeni neprijateljski snaga o sastavu i vatrenoj moći u području Kukunjevca na brzinu je organiziralo i pokrenulo napadnu akciju koja je završila neuspješno.

Kratko vrijeme dato postrojbama od uručenja zapovjedi do početak napada otkrilo je niz slabosti u pogrešnom pristupu vođenja napada, neusklađenosti snaga, neefikasnoj i neučinkovitoj uporabi borbene moći sudjelujući postrojbi kao i nepripremljenosti i nespremnosti tek pristigli mobiliziranih postrojbi na surovo ratno okruženje. Naročito se osjetio nedostatak samopouzdana, vodstvenih vještina i sposobnosti u zapovijedanju tijekom provođenja napada časnika prve razine i ono što danas smatramo dočasničkom razinom.

S naučenim modelom zapovijedanja iz JNA, a koji su na početku Domovinskog rata primijenili i hrvatski zapovjednici nije se moglo učinkovito zapovijedati i pobjeđivati neprijatelja. Bilo je potrebno vrijeme kako bi se steklo novo iskustvo, ali i postepeno mijenjala kultura centraliziranog načina zapovijedanja koja je kočila inicijativu podređenih zapovjednika.

Kroz ovaj neuspjeli napad vidimo preslika Andrićevog načina zapovijedanja i promišljanja koji se prakticirao u JNA, a koji je bio sličan sovjetsko/ruskom model zapovijedanja. Kako se tijekom Domovinskog rata 1992.-1995. pod utjecajem borbenih aktivnosti Hrvatska vojska mijenjala, tako se mijenjao i način zapovijedanja i uloga vodstva kod hrvatskih vođa približavajući se modelu zapovijedanja koji se danas primjenjuje u oružanim snagama zapadnih zemalja - *Zapovijedanje misijom (Mission Command)*. Kroz to ratno vrijeme u hrvatskoj vojsci stasale su nove generacije vojnih vođa, koje su

iznjedrile novi način rješavanja problema i novi model zapovijedanja, a kojeg je general zbora Janko Bobetko kratko sažeo u svojoj knjizi *„Sve moje bitke":*

> *„Ja nikada nisam određivao: To je jedini pravac kojim morate ići! Ja sam davao orijentaciju: Ovo bi vjerojatno bio jedan od dobrih pravaca, a ukoliko ocijeniti da postoji i drugi način, možete to učiniti na svoju ruku. Ako je potrebno, ostanite dan duže, odustanite od toga napada, čekajte noć, zaobiđite (protivnika) i pokažite inicijativu."*
>
> general zbora Janko Bobetko

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Involvement of the Varaždin Battalion of the 104th Brigade of the Croatian Army in the Liberation of Western Slavonia in Autumn 1991

Marijan Kostanjevac, Darko Duhović, Ivan Benković

Abstract

In late October 1991, the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces requested the command of the 104th Brigade of the National Guard in Varaždin to prepare and equip a battalion-sized unit for deployment to the broader area of the Pakrac front. The aim was to prevent the fall of Lipik and Pakrac and to relieve part of the forces of the 105th Brigade, which had been assigned to the Posavina Operational Group to participate in Operation Orkan 91.

The command of the 104th Brigade mobilized the 1st Battalion (from Varaždin) for this mission. This unit had already taken part in the liberation of Varaždin, was well-armed and equipped, and after three days of preparation was sent to the Pakrac front on October 30, 1991. On that same day, in their first combat operation, the Varaždin defenders – with the support of tanks from Bjelovar – liberated the village of Toranj and secured a wider area of the Pakrac hinterland, eliminating the enemy threat of encircling the town.

Two days later, in a second offensive operation – much larger in scope and manpower than the Toranj operation – Croatian forces attempted to liberate the village of Kukunjevac and the road route from Gaj through Dobrovac to Lipik. Two companies from the 1st Varaždin Battalion took part in the action, but the mission was not successful.

This paper is based on an ongoing project to create a scholarly monograph on the Varaždin Battalion, drawing from archival sources, literature, and testimonies of veterans – members of the 104th Brigade of the Croatian Army – who participated in these combat operations during the liberation of Western Slavonia in the autumn of 1991.

Keywords

1st Battalion / 104th Brigade, Varaždin, Western Slavonian Front, 1991, Toranj, Kukunjevac

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