

DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN PEACE TIME WITH REAL RISKS AND THREATS FOR SECURITY

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ABSTRACT. In a state of emergency it is reasonable to raise the question of using the Armed Forces. The answer is directed towards actions requiring the use of weapons; however, those partially reflect the available military resources. The commanding structures of the military undoubtedly have the capability to apply all the necessary management procedures, and perform them in a non-military setting. These capabilities are part of the managerial capacity of the state and are appropriate to be used in a state of emergency. The report defends the possibility of increasing the effectiveness of managerial decisions in an active state of emergency through the process of planning in the Armed Forces.

Keywords: State of emergency, decisions, features, assess, efficiency

ВЗЕМАНЕ НА РЕШЕНИЯ В МИРНО ВРЕМЕ ПРИ РЕАЛНИ РИСКОВЕ И ЗАПЛАХИ ЗА СИГУРНОСТТА

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РЕЗЮМЕ. При извънредно положение е резонно да се повдигне въпроса за използване на въоръжените сили. Отговорите се насочват към действия, изискващи употребата на оръжие, което частично отразява същността на ресурса, с който те разполагат. Органите за управление на въоръжените сили притежават несъмнени способности за прилагане на разнообразни управленски процедури и много бързо биха могли да ги изпълнят със съдържание от невоенно естество. Тези способности са част от управленския капацитет на държавата и затова е целесъобразно да бъдат използвани в трудните за страната условия. В доклада се обосновава възможността за повишаване ефективността на управленските решения при въведено извънредно положение чрез процеса на планиране във въоръжените сили.

Ключови думи: извънредно положение, решение, оценка, ефективност

Introduction

The state of emergency imposed in our country due to the epidemic situation caused by the spread of COVID-19 has created conditions for wide debates on the decisions of the Government and the work of the newly established National Operations Staff. Many of these measures have been identified as extreme and incompatible with the peaceful living and working conditions of society. There were doubts about the legitimacy of the governing bodies and the effectiveness of the actions taken. The government used various principles and models to justify one or another of its decisions, which ranged from purely peacetime practices known to all citizens, to alleged wartime ones, instilling fear and insecurity among the people. Urgent measures had to be implemented, requiring special legislation balancing consent and coercion.

It is necessary to understand the essence of the state of emergency, as it forms an intermediate legal space in the legal world, where a number of contradictory principles for decision-making and management of the country's resources overlap. There is a difference between governance principles in peacetime and in times of emergency, martial law or state of war. And mixing the guiding principles for decision-making distances the decisions from the objective conditions of the situation, increases subjectivism and therefore can lead to extremely large losses of people, raw materials and financial resources, even endangering national security, which can slow

down or stop the development of the country. It can be argued that the rationale behind the state of emergency is rooted in the governance model rather than in the circumstances and reasons for its imposition. In this context, modern military planning models offer good practices for assessing the effectiveness of decisions taken, which should not be overlooked.

The purpose of this report is to propose good practices from military decision-making models to increase the effectiveness of governance in the face of real risks and threats to the country's security in peacetime.

Crises, conflicts and disasters usually create atypical, extraordinary conditions for decision-makers, especially given the great dynamics of change in the environment. Limited time and unpredictability impose serious difficulties on the government, which can be overcome only with unpopular measures close to wartime conditions.

Extraordinary conditions are generally accompanied by the effect of many subjective factors, which can both favor the management process and create additional difficulties. Different ambitions of the representatives of the governing bodies are manifested, formed mostly by the idea of changing the prerogative powers. Moreover, decisions sometimes have to be taken without a clearly defined hierarchy of management structures and a lack of competence with regard to exceptional circumstances. In such conditions, opportunities for realization of personal passions are revealed against the background of socially significant goals, which hides additional risk. To reduce

the problems of a subjective nature, we can again take advantage of the experience in the system of command and control of the armed forces. Military procedures, especially after the introduction in our country of NATO practices for planning operations, provided a decision-making environment with guaranteed competence and active position of the participants in the management process. More importantly, the decisions follow a clear logic and ensure transparency and trust in the management system.

The state of emergency is perceived as a safeguard against security threats and risks. Emergency has different faces given the nature of the threats that create it and the suitability of the management system to deal with specific threats. Under normal conditions of social development, there are risks and threats, but in principle it can be argued that the state maintains resources and capabilities with which it could systematically neutralize them. When the country's security guarantees are assessed as insufficient for a specific threat to national interests or for the functioning of the national security protection system, the available resources are used by priority and the management system creates conditions for acquiring new, necessary resources to deal with the existing problems. In fact, the situation calls for concrete, new capabilities based on a solution that, due to the obvious link to the national security system, may require the imposition of emergency measures. Therefore, the decision concerns both the executive and the legislature in the state, because it is in principle associated with threat to society or weakness of the management system.

Extraordinary circumstances exacerbate the sensitivity of citizens, political parties and government bodies in the country. It should be noted that each specific threat creates conditions for a number of accompanying negative phenomena that cannot be ignored by decision makers. The following can be specified:

- aggravation of political relations between the ruling party and the opposition;
- increase in crime;
- increasing attempts to influence the society by external organizations on ethnic and religious grounds;
- decline in economic growth or economic crisis;
- increase in corruption;
- outbreaks of infections, epidemics and pandemics, etc.,

which, together with the main threat as a whole or in combination with each other, can lead to significant social changes. Therefore, in a state of emergency, the state is allowed to take unconventional or unpopular actions, including with its law enforcement agencies. It is possible to create new structural elements with special prerogatives to manage and carry out tasks in the interest of the national security system.

Under exceptional conditions, all sources of aid are used to compensate for the lack of resources, either from donations or by provoking the economic entities in the country to transform their production towards the necessary material resources. In an emergency, it is important to unite the efforts of the whole society for a common understanding of the problems and reaching the desired state. That is, the decisions for management of public processes under extraordinary circumstances concern both the resources of the country and many organizational issues in a very short time (as a rule, decisions are made in short time). Therefore, an action may not be justified from all sides, but in any case the division of

responsibilities for its implementation and the means to achieve the common goal must be clear. In this context, a key issue in emergency decision-making is compliance with the principle of efficiency and compromise on divergent objectives in the name of common national interests or priorities. That is, a decision-making mechanism is needed in the event of a state of emergency.

The analysis of the military decision-making models shows that the requirements for efficiency can be combined with diverse sources of resources and services. These models support an ongoing process of review and feedback on results, which assesses the effectiveness of actions and provides an opportunity to adapt (change) to extraordinary circumstances. Procedures are proposed for evaluating the results in many unknown parameters of the existing situation. Trends for changing the conditions at a certain desired end state are formulated, which assess the various effects of the actions taken.

A strength of military models is the implementation of a "Comprehensive Approach" to operation planning. This approach is widely applied in NATO and takes into account both the extraordinary conditions in military operations and the political consensus of the Allied members to achieve a common goal. A number of researchers have demonstrated the leading role of the NATO decision-making model in terms of "its ability to join forces and determination to act" (Nedyalkov, 2019). The systemic characteristics of the NATO decision-making model overlap with many conditions and factors in the analysis of the changing environment, which is why it can be argued that it is applicable in an emergency situation. Moreover, this model offers opportunities to study new, unknown circumstances in order to create a common and unified understanding of the situation in its political, military, economic, social, informational and infrastructural domains.

Modern models for decision-making in the military sphere are not isolated from the social life. In terms of military policy, information and infrastructure, they are quite flexible and applicable to various crisis or emergency circumstances. Therefore, the system of management of the armed forces and the available resources can be used for the purposes of governance not only under martial law or in war, but also under peaceful conditions with a high degree of risk, which usually causes the imposition of a state of emergency. Thus, the idea of applying military models for decision-making under a state of emergency has its logical justification. Possible fears that the military models are oriented mainly towards the achievement of the set goals, regardless of the funds spent, i.e. inefficient, are unfounded. In the context of military planning, the process of evaluating the effectiveness of actions has a certain place. The general management process sets several reference, control and end states, which mark the unacceptable and acceptable conditions, goals and effects of the actions taken. In this process, the evaluation of effectiveness is continuous and determines both the objectives and the cost-risk analysis in terms of results.

Diagram 1 clearly shows the links in the evaluation process that can be used to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken. In fact, measuring change through the results achieved allows informed decisions to be made. The principle is that "what can be measured can be managed" (NATO operations assessment handbook, 2015).

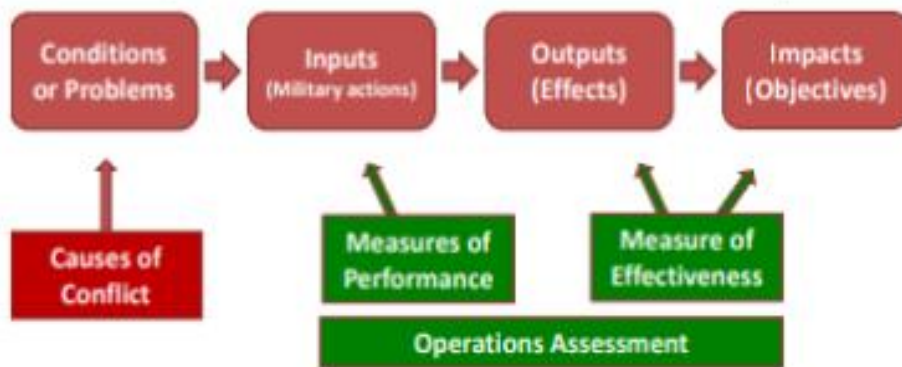


Diagram 1. Place of assessment in the NATO operational planning process

Military practice proves the applicability of NATO decision-making model for control of targeted cyclical and continuous actions (measures), which are related to studying changes, adapting plans and making recommendations for building new capabilities. In other words, it is logical that under a state of emergency a previously designed plan will be used or a new plan will be worked out in a short time. This practice does not necessarily have to be borrowed from one of the models of armed forces management, but it is applicable when it comes to assessing the effectiveness of measures in the vague and rapidly changing emergency situation.

The above considerations fully support the creation of the National Operations Staff in connection with the state of emergency in our country, introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19. The structure itself, called "staff", is of military origin and is oriented towards decision-making and planning of targeted actions to achieve the desired end state. It is logically headed by a military given the extraordinary conditions for making a decision. The information processed by the National Operations Staff is indicative of the functions assigned to it as a top-level governing body, namely:

- organizes all actions of the institutions in the country related to the health dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- collects, summarizes and analyzes data on the current health of Bulgarian citizens and data from other countries in their fight against the coronavirus;
- coordinates the actions of the institutions and allocates the available resources related to the causes of the emergency situation;
 - controls the results achieved;
 - assesses the changes and prepares forecasts for the health condition of the nation;
 - informs the media and the public about the decisions taken and their effects.

Other functions may be imposed on the National Operations Staff as well. But it must be clear that the work model of the staff is invisible to the public and must remain so. Of course, any requested information is provided in full and with accurate data. Many of the activities follow the operational nature of the changes in the emergency situation and cannot be discussed in the general public. However, the results of these activities are subject to verification and comparison.

These clarifications are in view of the criticism in the media of the National Operations Staff regarding their way of decision-making and especially the doubts about the correctness of the distribution of resources (available and necessary) between the various subjects in the public space. There is always room for

criticism, but for the purposes of the state of emergency and the level of governance that the Staff embodies, the results are undoubtedly timely action, fair treatment of the public representation, purposefulness and legality of the measures and, last but not least, effectiveness.

The problems are mostly in organizational terms. By analogy with the staffs of the armed forces and the NATO model for planning joint actions, certain management procedures and algorithms can be applied to facilitate the work of the National Operations Staff. So far so good, but the extension of the state of emergency will inevitably lead to exhaustion of the experts, and any exhaustion leads to mistakes. Given the high level of governance, errors can be irreversible, i.e. the benefits will be eliminated from the losses to the public. In this regard, the Staff may form a working group to assess measures and actions during the state of emergency, which will implement the procedures of the "Comprehensive Approach" to NATO planning. The idea is to facilitate the work of the Staff with a systematic analysis of the conditions during the state of emergency, the actions of the institutions and their effects. A number of the algorithms used can be optimized, mostly by analyzing the critical conditions and creating a matrix for the interaction between the different actors.

Of course, such a proposal is accompanied by some trade-offs in the operation of the country's governance system. Heavy (large) and therefore cumbersome management structures claim greater accuracy of decision-making information, but this does not mean that the decisions themselves automatically become more effective. For example, a number of publications (Slavov, P.) dispute the legitimacy of the National Operations Staff or argue the idea of organizing the fight against COVID-19 from the bottom up of the health system in our country (Todorov, G.). That is, the state should consult epidemiologists and infectious disease specialists from the "first line" of contact with the infection, given the greater accuracy of information for decision-making. However, this is unacceptable for the governance process, because even the most accurate information in the health domain is not enough to make decisions taking into account the future of society. The country needs a large picture of the state of emergency in its political, economic, social, informational and infrastructural aspects, along with health information about the coronavirus, which can only be seen in a top-down management system. Public administration is a collective image of governance in all social systems and it is not acceptable to eliminate important functions of public life at the expense of one of them. The National

Operations Staff is a hierarchically positioned body of government solely for the purposes of the state of emergency.

Planning is the more important issue. We need a plan for the work of the institutions under the conditions of the state of emergency, which is mainly a product of the Staff. Once the measures and actions during the state of emergency are determined by law, i.e. the decision has been made, the Staff is obliged to develop a plan for synchronizing the actions of the institutions and assessing their effectiveness.

Information is generally collected through the usual channels, but the plan should regulate the way of reporting the measures and actions. Relying on journalistic questions to evaluate results is highly questionable. Professional arguments are needed for each of the tools used with performance and effectiveness measures. Example parameters such as:

- measuring units;
- scale of variation;
- categorization of the nominal and interval data;
- upper and lower limits;
- sources of information;
- method of data collection;
- responsible individuals for the information;
- frequency of reports, etc.

The plan provides measurability in quantitative and qualitative terms and can favor evaluations with subsequent review and introduction of additional metrics. It reduces the conflict in public discussions and provides peace in governance, because there are insurmountable contradictions regarding the desired and achieved states of the managed social system.

It is clear that not everything can be measured or that the effort to obtain certain information may outweigh the benefits, making it unsuitable. In this regard, the plan disciplines the management by extracting the practical information, which justifies the measures and activities taken.

Planning organizes the information and reduces the possibility of its misuse. It is one thing to collect data from enforcement agencies, it is another thing to evaluate effectiveness. Most comments concern the objectivity of the data, which concern specific sources (actors), the method of processing and the order of provision. The beginning, intermediate changes and the end state are taken into account. It is more difficult to analyze data in processes and functions, where they are not a mechanical sum, but are systematically linked. Moreover, modern management is committed to analyses of complex systems that are built of systems and evaluations are never unambiguous. In this context, without a general plan of measures and actions under emergency decision-making circumstances, contradictions are inevitable.

The plan allows for the governance to be disciplined. Specific methods for collecting information are adopted and the risk of provocations is reduced. It is important where the source of information is located, when the data is analyzed, who makes the conclusions and assessments, how the results of the analysis can be included in the control signals, orders, directives, etc. It is extremely important to maintain the well-known among the military circles "synchronization matrix", with the help of which in the name of common goals and objectives it is possible to allocate efforts and resources and organize interaction.

It is not a question of resorting entirely to wartime planning in an emergency situation, but in the presence of a resource for

staff work in the armed forces, it is prudent to use it to support the activities of the National Operations Staff. Moreover, military experts in operational planning use unclassified software products for data processing. They have experience working with various civil organizations in the context of peacekeeping operations and the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach. Such assistance would certainly increase the efficiency of governance. Because planning is a demonstration of the governance capacity that is needed, including in time of emergency caused by health problems among the population.

In the case of COVID-19 the main connection is between the medical expertise and the governance capacity in the country. The pandemic has proved its negative impact on vital systems that ensure the security of citizens. The main effects of the spread of the infection turned out to be subject to many factors, in addition to those shaping the country's health system. The economic, social and even psychological effects altogether are no less important. On the contrary, some of them have lasting consequences for the development of society. That is why decisions at the highest level are difficult. In an emergency, they are even more difficult given the fact that the goals of governance are related to assessing the opinion of people from different groups, living standards, religious affiliation and culture, in a situation fraught with dangers for society as a whole.

Conclusion

Modern military planning models are a proven source of situational awareness, which is the basis for effective decision-making. The methods used to evaluate the actions offer a good basis for qualitative analysis of the information. Most importantly, the personnel of the control bodies of the armed forces is trained, capable of applying a variety of management procedures, even of a non-military nature. These management capabilities are part of the governance capacity of the state and therefore it is appropriate to use them in time of emergency situations. It is good for the whole society to know that the armed forces are not only an expensive instrument of violence. They have a streamlined, flexible and effective management system for critical social conditions. During a state of emergency, this system must be seen as a national asset and a source of resources.

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