

## REVIEW

## ON MILITARY STRATEGIES

This year, the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces issued the monograph *Vojaška strategija* (Military Strategy) by Branimir Furlan, PhD, a retired Brigadier General<sup>2</sup>. After the *Nacionalna (varnostna) strategija* (National (Security) Strategy), issued last year under the collection *Teorija in praksa strategije* (The Theory and Practice of Strategy), this is his second monograph issued under the same collection. It is a continuation of the discussed theory and practice of strategy. Both monographs can serve as science-based tools for the better work of theoreticians and practitioners. The monograph *Vojaška strategija* was written almost in parallel with the process of military strategic consideration and the drafting of Slovenian military strategy within the Slovenian Armed Forces. Once the results of this process are issued, the monograph will be an excellent tool for a better understanding and assessment of their content, and their implementation in theory and practice.

The monograph is a comprehensive scientific work with a logical structure: an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter following the introduction, which acquaints us with the theory of military strategy, the author states the required bases for the study of this scientific field. In the second chapter on war and warfare, the author presents the different views on war and the legal, ethical

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<sup>2</sup> *Branimir Furlan, retired Brigadier General of the Slovenian Armed Forces, obtained his PhD at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. He obtained his Master's degree at the US Army War College and his diploma thesis at the Military Technical Academy of the Yugoslav People's Army. During his career, he merged his practical work as a commander and staff officer with the preparation of theoretical, professional and scientific bases for the operation of the military. He also held lectures, among other things, on strategy. In the last more than ten years, he assumed posts of the rank of Major-General in the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF), the SAF Force Command, and the Ministry of Defence. He also worked at the Allied Joint Force Command in Naples. Among other things, he not only studied and developed strategic solutions, but also applied them in practice.*

and moral aspects of war and of armed conflict, and indicates how and where to carry out research and what future wars will look like. The author writes about warfare in general, selected means of warfare, the warfare of the future, and the theory of victory. In the third chapter, in which he addresses the military as an instrument of national power, the author writes about the use of military power and the characteristics and effectiveness of the military. In the Slovenian environment, this is the first time that a military instrument of power has been addressed at a scientific level. In the fourth chapter, on the formation of military strategy, he presents his view on strategists, strategic leaders and strategic thinking, on the process of developing military strategy, on the strategic concept, and on the impact of technology on the strategic concept. He also presents certain challenges in the process of developing military strategy. In the fifth chapter, which addresses the implementation of military strategy, the author presents the different concepts of and views on military operation, defence planning, operational skill, and military doctrine. In the conclusion, the author underlines the importance of the military instrument of power and the need as well as the necessity for military strategy, especially in times of crisis, and supports his statements with examples from history. He stresses that these examples should serve as a reminder that peace must not be taken for granted and that we should thus not neglect the development of strategic thought, the anticipation of the development of the future security environment, the assessment of the likelihood of the risk posed to vital Slovenian interests in the future, and the preparation of relevant strategies, including the military strategy. We owe this to our successors who rightfully expect it.

The book provides a comprehensive view of the development and the fundamental concepts of military strategy. It explains the significance of the developmental and operational dimension of military strategy. It is informative and a good tool for strategic military operation, including for the developers of other strategies, especially the defence strategy, as well as of military and strategic documents. It helps the understanding of the military as a national instrument of power, which is also important for other stakeholders in the national security system or for the holders of the instruments of national power. At the same time, the book affords relevant attention to the relationship between military strategy and politics. The author notes that it is the civilian authorities who are the final decision-makers in the civil-military dialogue, which usually includes the authorization of military strategy even though the strategy is a professional military document. This is especially important because, in the modern world, we tend to connect the use of military force with the use of different instruments of national power. Military strategy must therefore be a product of civil-military interaction.

The work is challenging; it contains citations of numerous important and intertwining concepts by different authors, which the author, more often than not, neither comments on nor assesses. The work thus represents a good research starting point for future theoreticians and researchers. The author establishes that not all military strategies are necessarily publically recognized or formalized. This may be the reason why the book does not offer explicit solutions, but rather requires the reader's strategic

thinking in trying to apply the different concepts. It therefore seems that the author's ambition is to contribute to the critical thinking of the developers of actual strategies. Such an approach demands a great deal of knowledge on the side of the user, which is also reflected in this book.

Although the author claims that the work is application-oriented, it mainly supports the strategic process and requires an in-depth study approach from the reader. The reader can obtain answers primarily to the following questions: What is military strategy?; What is its purpose and why do we need it?; Who develops the military strategy?; How do we obtain it?; What makes it successful?; Which challenges appear during the development of the strategy?; and What is required for the strategy to be implemented?

The monograph suggests how and where to gain competencies for good military strategists, but at the same time opens more questions than it provides answers to, especially for the operation of a military such as the Slovenian Armed Forces. It encourages the study of theory and practice through which it can also contribute to the strategic reinforcement of military thought.

The author strives to use Slovenian terminology and substantiates concepts and terms that are relevant to the military and the scientific field of military strategy. The monograph includes a lot of Slovenian terms. Some, such as *vojska* (military)/*vojaška sila* (military force)/*oborožena sila* (armed forces), *moč vojske* (military power)/*vojskovalna moč* (fighting power)/*instrumenti moči* (instrument of power), *vojskovanje* (warfare)/*bojevanje* (conduct of battle), and *operativna veščina* (operational skill)/(operational art) are not fully explained. In spite of this, the monograph fills not only content gaps but also terminological gaps, thus encouraging the use of Slovenian terminology in the field of military strategy.

With scientific justification and the intertwining of theory and reality, Dr Furlan has shown a direction, to military officers among others, for the reinforcement of strategic thought and the formation and implementation of military strategy. The book will be reference material for Slovenian soldiers, in particularly those officers who are responsible for the development and use of the military at a strategic level. At the same time, it is no less welcome to all those who are involved in the national security strategy, including the political decision-makers.

Generally speaking, a strategy is a path of development of a favourable military strategic position, for small states or the military, while on the other hand, it is a path of searching for a favourable strategic military position. For officers and generals at the strategic level, this search is one of the basic missions for which this monograph can be of great use. We hope that Dr Furlan will be able to support us in this also in the future.