

REVIEW

MONOGRAPH BY BRANIMIR FURLAN
ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Last year (2020), the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia published a monograph by Brigadier General Branimir Furlan, Ph.D., titled Nacionalna (varnostna) strategija² (National (security) strategy). It was published in the period following the adoption of the Resolution on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia (ReSNV-2) in 2019, and at the time when the process of military strategic consideration and the drafting of a Military Strategy proposal in the Slovenian Armed Forces began. The authors of the latter used the monograph as help and support. The monograph will certainly also be a useful tool for the drafters of the next Defence Strategy and strategic planning documents. For those who use and study the ReSNV-2, this monograph serves as a scientifically based tool facilitating the understanding of the processes behind the drafting and the contents of the resolution as well as its positioning in theory and practice. In addition to the book Marsova dediščina (Mars's Heritage) by Anton Žabkar, PhD, this monograph is the second Slovene work related to national security strategy, which can help us study the strategic environment, improve strategic thought and theory, and design and implement strategies.

Brigadier General Furlan begins by presenting the development and roles of strategies in general, and then focuses on the field of national security. This is also important from the point of view of the contemporary application of strategies, when they are, at least in a popular sense, not applied only to large domains and systems, but also at the »individual« level. In the military and defence domains, this is also essential due to the level of military operation. Consequently, Brigadier General

¹ Brigadier General David Humar holds a master's degree and works at the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. The views in this article are his personal and are not necessarily the same as those of the Slovenian Armed Forces.

² The monograph was published in Slovene.

Furlan describes the relations between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operation. He guides us through the development of these relations, explaining the current situation where different levels are more interconnected and interinfluencing. This is especially important for the countries of the size of Slovenia, where most strategic solutions are implemented at a lower tactical level.

Additionally, Brigadier General Furlan explains the difference between operational art and operation(s), and provides Slovene equivalents of English terms. As a result, in addition to the substantive gaps, the monograph also fills the terminological gaps. Throughout the monograph, the author devotes effort to using Slovene terminology and substantiates the important concepts and terminology for the development of the scientific field of strategy theory. By doing this, he encourages the use of Slovene strategy-related terminology in practice both in the military and throughout the national security system.

The central part of the monograph presents and explains the elements for the formulation of a national strategy, and describes various strategies and strategic methods, the ways to operate and achieve goals. In the case of the latter, deterrence is particularly important and emphasized. Moreover, it has not been sufficiently emphasized in Slovenian theory and practice, despite the fact that any deterrence is better than war. Escalation and nuclear strategy are also discussed in detail. Both are interesting for Slovenia from the point of view of its EU and NATO memberships and from the point of view of its use of non-owned mechanisms.

The monograph also presents some specific but essential strategic factors, technology, geopolitics as well as the international order and transnational strategies that should be taken into account when devising a national security strategy. Special emphasis is placed on strategic communications, which is a concept under development, but will certainly become very important in the future.

Brigadier General Furlan successfully connects theory, practice and Slovenian reality. By doing so, he indicates the possibilities of putting the strategy into practice, thus facilitating research of foreign works for attentive researchers and users of the monograph. By comparing foreign systems and analysing different authors, he provides many examples and arguments for the necessary professional and critical strategic thinking, and proves (what he has written in the closing) that the strategic process is about »finding the best approximation of the strategy that will most successfully enable us to achieve the desired end state with the available resources ».

The monograph explains the operational strategy and the development strategy. Both elements make up a comprehensive strategy. The national strategy is always a compromise between several factors, therefore the conclusion of the Brigadier General Furlan, stated in the closing, is very important: »It is essential (according to Betts) that compromises are not made regarding the resources necessary to achieve goals, but regarding the goals.«

By providing scientific substantiation, examples, and the connection between theory and reality, Brigadier General Furlan showed a direction, also to military officers, towards strengthening the strategic thought, work at the strategic level, as well as towards the devising and implementation of strategies. Strategy is generally a way of creating, and for small countries or armies, finding a favourable strategic situation. This search is one of the basic missions of high-ranking officers and generals at the strategic level, and this monograph can be of great help in this respect.

The now retired Brigadier General of the Slovenian Armed Forces Branimir Furlan was one of the most prolific writers in the military. Among other things, he was the key author of the Military Doctrine adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 2006. We thus very much look forward to his next book, which will focus on military strategy.