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Conclusion. Special Issue on the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)

The changing security situation in Europe in 2014, precipitated by Russia's invasion and annexation of the Crimea, prompted the development of a multinational and interagency effort that resulted in the publication of the *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)* by the Swedish National Defence University and US Special Operations Command Europe in 2019. In the spring of 2021, the co-editors of this edition of the *Journal on Baltic Security* began a conversation regarding a Special Issue that would critique and examine the current *Resistance Operating Concept* with the aim of delving deeper into specific resistance themes and promoting new areas for resistance research, development, and thinking. The *Resistance Operating Concept's* potential application in a real-world conflict and occupation scenario appeared remote at the time. Yet, the present reality in Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the

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need for resistance planning and capabilities as a part of a comprehensive national defense strategy for other Eastern European, Nordic, and Central Asian countries facing a revisionist and aggressive Russia.

Despite being submitted during the early stages of the current Russo-Ukrainian War, many articles in this issue allude to the ongoing events in Ukraine. Currently, information received from the Russian occupied regions is fragmentary making it impossible to get a complete picture of how Ukrainian resistance has developed and whether it has been successful or unsuccessful in its efforts. Indeed, the Ukrainian resistance experience in its currently occupied regions will be the subject of vital future field research on resistance, providing new and important insights for resistance writings beyond the *Resistance Operating Concept*. Careful analysis of these recent activities will be extremely valuable for the further development of the *Resistance Operating Concept*, which is largely based on distant historical examples.

Nevertheless, in this Special Issue of the *Journal on Baltic Security*, contributors have already introduced several useful ‘newer’ cases for consideration, such as the 1990s Chechen wars (Sandor Fabian’s article) and the 2003-2004 Iraqi resistance (Brian Petit’s article). More such cases, especially non-Western ones, are needed to pave the way for future resistance prospects and possibilities. A more systematic approach to building the historical case study pool would also provide a greater reservoir for study and analysis to develop reliable and survivable models and procedures for future clandestine underground resistance organizations.

This volume has also looked in-depth at several concerns linked to the *Resistance Operating Concept*, some of which were identified in the article by Dr. Maskaliūnaite (‘Exploring Resistance Operating Concept: Promises and pitfalls of (violent) underground resistance’, 2021) in the previous issue of the *Journal*. Jones and Lipert-Sowa’s article, and particularly that of Petit, focused on the command and control (C2) issues associated with resistance. While there is no straightforward answer to how this element should be structured, policy-makers considering developing such organizations can get some ideas

for consideration from these pages. Comparably, Stringer's and Pettersson/Ilis-Alm's papers provide pragmatic ideas on how national special operations forces can be utilized in developing and organizing national resistance efforts, connecting them to the wider stakeholder landscape. Fiala's article delves deeply into the essential question of the legitimacy of resistance, covering it more substantially, while Runts and Mehan/ Klisz offer perspectives on how the relationship between overt structures such as territorial defence forces or state armed forces in general and covert underground organizations should function. The articles by Jones and Lipert-Sowa, as well as that of Stejskal, address the challenges of resistance recruitment in peacetime, deepening our understanding of this important topic. In addition, strategic communication is discussed in these articles.

As the *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)* has already demonstrated, it is hardly possible to address an issue as vast as resistance in a single volume. With this *Journal on Baltic Security* Special Issue, we broaden and deepen the conversation, fill some gaps, and acknowledge that numerous themes remain to be explored. In this light, there are several resistance subjects that need further research and examination in the future to fully comprehend and apply this important national defence and irregular warfare capability. Besides the previously mentioned need for greater variety in resistance historical case studies, the editors propose the following topics for future investigation as they pertain to resistance activities: strategic communication, ethics, special operations and territorial defence integration, governance, non-violent resistance, and disciplined terminology.

Strategic communication in general requires more attention in irregular warfare, particularly when it comes to communicating with one's own population and explaining the need for resistance, as well as the use and role of both passive and active resistance during an occupation. The population at large should be involved in developing a country's defence if the concepts of comprehensive defence, resilience, and resistance are to become reality. In this case, it is not enough to tell people what to do; they should feel ownership for

their own country's defence. It is often the case that both political and military leadership are eager to discuss the obligations of the citizens of the country without touching upon their rights. The discussion of resistance would thus be most fruitful if it is linked with that of civil protection, clearly showing that the people are of equal value to national territory. The connection of these two discussions may be vital for the successful implementation of the *Resistance Operating Concept*.

Another aspect that requires more emphasis is the ethics of resistance. This facet has been largely ignored in the current *Resistance Operating Concept*. While the legal and ethical aspects of armed conflict are closely intertwined and the ROC does pay significant attention to the legal components of resistance, a greater emphasis on the ethics and particularly the requirements for training in ethical issues for the potential members of the resistance organization is critical. This topic is particularly vital for ensuring the proper C2 of the organizations, as well as for post-conflict reconciliation. During resistance phases, clarity on legal governmental responsibility and accountability is critical for the latter.

In terms of operations, since territorial defence forces provide the critical military mass for resistance operations in many countries and serve as an important link to the overall population, their integration and relationship with SOF should be carefully examined and considered. Going beyond C2, which refers only to military organizations, greater study on the governance of resistance movements is required to ensure both legitimacy and effectiveness. Extremely under-researched areas for application are that of non-violence resistance activities and their overall contribution to national resistance plans and efforts. Since military organizations lead or coordinate national resistance planning in many countries, this situation may lead to this critical subject area being overlooked or ignored, putting total defence at risk.

Finally, the resistance community of interest, both practitioner and academic, needs a longer conversation on doctrine and terminology that the *Resistance Operating Concept* did not resolve. An important point is the differentiation

between ‘resistance to invasion’ and ‘resistance to occupation,’ and what this difference means for resistance preparations, tactics, techniques, and procedures. Similarly, the interchangeable use of the terms unconventional warfare, support to resistance, resistance, asymmetric warfare, special warfare, and hybrid warfare creates confusion in most multinational forums, hampering planning efforts.

In essence, these are just a few of the subjects that the editors would recommend for future examination and study in the field of resistance. We hope that the papers in this Special Issue of the *Journal on Baltic Security* catalyze further study, research, and application of resistance, as well as inspire forthcoming discussions on the topic within the academic-practitioner communities of interest and action. For in the end, as the ancient Roman military expert Vegetius wrote, ‘*Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum*’.

Bibliography

Maskaliūnaitė, Asta. (2021) ‘Exploring Resistance Operating Concept. Promises and pitfalls of (violent) underground resistance’, *Journal on Baltic Security*, Vol 7(1), pp 27-38.