THE TASKS OF ARMED FORCES AND NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract. The paper presents the tasks of Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in national crisis management operations. In addition to important information and experiences from different types of operations – disaster damages, accidents, migration, organized crime, terrorism and other, it shows the possibilities and problems the units of Armed Forces face during planning, organization and execution of operations. The paper also focuses on the possibilities that Armed Forces have to protect critical objects against terrorist attacks.

Key words: armed forces, crisis, defence, protection, safety.

Introduction

Some strategic documents of the Slovak Republic (Security Strategy, Defence Strategy) and Slovak Republic laws define the scope of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (AF SR) in the area of national crisis management. For example, the law about Armed Forces SR (Law 321/2002) states that the main task of the armed forces is, among other things “... to participate in maintaining public order and security of the state, its sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. The role and responsibilities of the armed forces are to work on the tasks in an emergency situation in which they are endangering the lives and health of persons or property and to eliminate its consequences”.

In the next section of this Act it is specified that “... the armed forces can be used to:

– protect the state border of the Slovak Republic,
– protect and defend buildings that were considered, by the decision of the government, as objects of special importance, or other objects important for national defence,
– remove the consequences of martial law or emergency and to solve an emergency situation,
– fight against terrorism,
– search for aircraft and rescue human lives”.

The Act further states that at the request of state authorities and municipalities, the commander can, to the extent of his competence, decide about the immediate deployment of troops and the necessary logistical support needed to deal with emergency situations.

Defence Strategy states: "... An assistance role of the Slovak Armed Forces is to support public authorities, monitor radiation, chemical and biological situation, provide information thus obtained to the national warning system and participate in these activities in the case of emergency ...”.

The Police Act states (Law 191/1993) that "... the government can make a decision that soldiers support the Police for some time if police forces and resources are insufficient to ensure the protection of national borders, guarding objects and public order”. The above citations show that the executive branch of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) SR plays a crucial role in the national crisis management to eliminate the non-military threats. Therefore, generally a joint intervention will be managed by the Police Force and Fire and Rescue Service. In this process, armed forces will be involved as military reserve. A priority task for the Slovak Armed Forces in this direction will be the prevention and elimination of consequences of emergencies, especially natural disasters and accidents that represent a permanent threat to people and their property. It also indicates the following examples and experience from the deployment of the Slovak Armed Forces in various types of operations of the National Crisis Management.

1. Deployment of Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in National Crisis Management operations

In the past, Units of AF SR (ASR, CSLA) contributed to operations in (Law 387/2002):
– natural disasters,
– industrial accidents,
– mass migration of the population,
– epidemics and pandemics,
– support of state power,
– terrorist threats and the fight against organized crime,
– search for aircraft and rescue of human lives.

The most important ones include several cases.

The examples of the AF SR operations during natural disasters:
– during severe flooding in Jarovnice in 1998 mechanized and engineering units were used in coordination with the Brigade Rescue Corps;
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- the use of units of land forces for eliminating the consequences of floods and heavy snowfall and also when removing ice dams on rivers,
- participation in the TISA international project, which deals with the aftermath of floods in the Tisza River establishing a multinational Engineer Battalion, which consists of engineers of the Armed Forces of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. These are annually performed command-staff exercises with participation of units in one of the participating countries;
- share units on the spot of a windstorm in the High Tatras in 2004, particularly in the release of barricaded roads.

The summary of operations AF SR in industrial accidents:
- an accident in the Kosice Iron factory in 1995, linked to the widespread leakage of carbon monoxide and industrial air pollutants and subsequent infestation on the relatively large territories where military forces NBC were used to carry out a chemical examination by the helicopter, monitor and indicate the affected area and forecast a chemical situation;
- an explosion in a military repair factory in Nováky in 2007 associated with the destruction of facilities, fire and leaks of industrial pollutants – military forces were used to eliminate the consequences of the explosion, and they, for example, guarded area, did chemical research, performed pyrotechnic activity;
- a fire at the warehouse of toxic waste in DETOX, Rimavská Sobota in 2006, coupled with the release of industrial pollutants into the air, CBRN battalion was used to do chemical research and remove the consequences of the fire.

The operations of AF SR in mass migration of population
In 2002, during the period of increased migration of refugees associated with smuggled goods through the Ukrainian border, mechanized reconnaissance units, then made up of conscripts, were appointed to strengthen the border police on the eastern border of Slovakia. Selected units were temporarily allocated to each border department in border villages where they were temporary residents. The tasks fulfilled by joint patrols with the border police are presented below.

The examples of the operations during epidemics and pandemics
- to prevent and respond to outbreaks of bird influenza and swine flu in recent years, appropriate medical units and NBC units were selected and allocated;
- during the swine flu epidemic military doctors were allocated to border crossings with Ukraine to monitor the health status of persons entering the territory of Slovakia.
The summary of operations AF SR in search for aircraft and rescue of human lives

In particular, units of the Air Force have enough experience of search and rescue in military aircraft and helicopters disaster, including the air disasters of military transport aircraft AN-26 in 2006, in the Hungarian village Hejce, where rescue work was done by Hungarian and Slovak military and civilian units. In this case, units from mechanized brigade were used for the rescue and elimination work in the rugged and forested terrain.

The examples of the operations aimed at supporting the State authorities

– military assistance during exchange and referendums,
– assistance in suppressing the rebellion of prisoners in Leopoldov associated with fugitives detention,
– assistance in curbing Roma riots in Eastern Slovakia,
– assistance in ensuring the visit of presidents Bush – Putin in Bratislava.

The examples of the operations in the fight against terrorism and organized crime

Since 2005, a training centre has been built in the Institute of Health and the special training centre of the Ministry of Defence to practice different elements of the security system in Slovakia that would prospectively be used for training foreign counterterrorism forces. The joint training and preparation of special units, military intelligence services and the department of special purpose police, which conduct counter-terrorism operations and fight against organized crime, have been organized for a long time. Military units allocated performed tasks in the deployment against smugglers and migrants on the eastern border in 2002, together with police members they supervised special importance objects after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA, or in police-military action in 2006 in search and detention of especially dangerous criminals.

2. Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in National Crisis Management operations

Air defence units after 11 September were prepared to defend the objects of special importance – Nuclear power plants in Mochovce and Bohunice, and the capital Bratislava against means of air terrorism (Figure 1). In this case, computers projects for AD were used (Sopóci 1991, 1995).
Figure 1. Killing zones of Air Defence units during the protection of objects of special importance

The examples show an important and irreplaceable role of the Slovak Armed Forces in National Crisis Management operations.

Even more important and challenging tasks are performed by AF SR to protect the objects of critical infrastructure. Especially after September 11, 2001 as the most serious threat from air terrorism is considered hijacked airplane. While on the ground there is a possibility, due to various factors, of preventing terrorist acts, or at least mitigate their consequences such as providing emergency medical and technical assistance, in the air the possibility of saving is practically zero. Moreover, the relatively safe environment for terrorists – suicide, is the reason why planes are so often the target of terrorist action.

However, in recent years airspace brings another far more serious danger, even greater than air terrorism and that is the uncontrollable movement of different means in the air (airplanes, helicopters, ultra light aircraft etc.). In the past five years there were over two hundred violation of the principle of air operations in the airspace of the Slovak Republic, from simple cases such as level busts, or the deflection of the air corridor to the airspace disruption, and uncontrolled movements of aircraft in it. The reduction of forces and means of armed forces meant a reduction in the number of recco means of Air Forces. This reduces the possibility of finding a reliable tracking targets mainly at low altitudes. If we look at the partition of the recco, one can see (by application of the program that uses a digitalized model of the terrain) that the number of six radars held by Air Force SR is insufficient to create a continuous radar field over the territory of the Slovak Republic and thus continuous information on the movement of airborne objects at a certain height (Sopóci 2008: 351-358, 2012) (Figure 2).
Figure 2. Percentage coverage of the SR territory by radar field at the height of 500 m

If we bear in mind not only the safety of airspace, we should not merely require that NATO creates a continuous radar field of 3,000 m, but we should also consider the rugged terrain of the Slovak territory, the training of pilots, especially ensuring the sovereignty the airspace above the territory. Our neighbours from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have a more responsible role (Walancik 2014). In most cases, this information is secure since the height of 500 meters, where the traffic in the airspace is the most difficult, mainly because of the use of small airborne objects (gyroplanes, gliders, micro lights). Currently, selected objects of critical infrastructure defence raise a number of questions to which the answer is very difficult now. The first order is necessary to determine the priorities of defence, given the fact that there are considerably fewer resources allocated to defence than the elements of the critical infrastructure, so we must decide which objects to defend. The competent authorities have material in which individual objects are divided into several categories, but the system of selection of objects and their classification into categories was designed based on the subjective view of the evaluator (Defence strategy 2005).

A few years ago a project which is based on selected criteria for the evaluation of the order of assessed objects was developed in the Department of Management. The following evaluation criteria were selected (Sopoci 2008):

- a number of objects,
- a political – administrative purpose of object,
- the economic importance of the object,
- the importance of the communication object,
- the military significance of the object.
Of the total number of objects of critical infrastructure, 100 most important objects were selected for protection by the Air Force. After assigning the air defence unit (which the Air Force have at their disposal) to individual objects of critical infrastructure and the implementation of another project, we can optimize defence objects as shown in Figure 3 (Sopoci 1991).

Figure 3. Variant of critical infrastructure objects defence

Due to the importance of objects, special attention is paid to capital Bratislava and power plants in Mochovce and Jaslovske Bohunice. Even after September 11 they were protected against an air attack by Air Defence units of small and medium range. A terrorist threat is present in SR too, as well as related to the objects of critical infrastructure, such as J. Bohunice and Mochovce, and the Slovak capital Bratislava also deserve an adequate defence, for example an emergency system. Its operation costs are minimal compared to the measure of damage that may result from a terrorist attack on any of these objects.

Conclusions
AF SR participate in the tasks of National Crisis Management operations only as assistance to rescue and police forces. AF SR that perform these tasks do not have special forces or units. Standard competences are necessary to eliminate non-military threats. Practice shows that this system is no effective for the planning, preparation and deployment of common units of the Ministry of Interior and Armed Forces. This is necessary to increase the quality of cooperation and collaboration from the departmental level to all, territorial and local levels. This means that commanders should clearly understand the tactics of the intervention of rescue and police they assist and support. To improve the preparation of AF SR and effective use of units in National Crisis Management operations, it is necessary to take certain measures in the following fields:
- legislation – updated law on civil protection,
- interdepartmental relations and training and the expansion of the range of joint exercises of AF SR units, police and rescue units at all levels,
– in the field of logistics – to ensure the necessary equipment for units in terms of suitable material, techniques and equipment,

They may contribute to discuss the ongoing transformation of AF SR and prepare a new model of Armed Forces.

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