Models of Conflicts and a New Paradigm for the 21ˢᵗ Century Security Environment

Hrachya V. Arzumanian

PhD, Director of the Ashkar Center for Strategic Studies
Address: Tigran Metz str. 23a, 375000 Stepanakert, Armenia
E-mail: hratchya@yahoo.com

The last decades of world history have been described as an epoch of deep and rapid changes, compelling researchers to think of a new paradigm for the security environment, based on a refinement of principles, classification systems, and models of conflicts. The development of a new paradigm needs to be correctly formulated. It is necessary to understand clearly that new ideas and principles need to be connected with the collective experience of a society and its narratives, and to be related to practice. The modern meanings of notions and ideas are formed through immersion in history; analogies are developed as part of the process of interpretation and the creation of narrative. As a consequence, the politician and the researcher are on the edge of possible meanings, focusing the attention of society on the ideas society will be able comprehend and include in its narrative. The development of a paradigm is a difficult theoretical problem requiring both objectivity and subjectivity. The objective aspects are constant for historical epochs and cultures, which allows the use of the world's treasury of experience and knowledge. Subjective aspects depend on the specifics of the society, leading to an intellectual phenomenon. The developoment of a new paradigm for the security environment of the post-soviet space, in virtue of its complexity, should be considered more art than science.

Keywords: globalization, security environment, paradigm shift, models of conflicts, continuum of conflict, complexity, nonlinearity

The last decades of world history have been described as an epoch of deep and rapid changes. Attempts to comprehend the changes lead to an understanding that they are based on deeper processes than just technological innovations (Rosenau, 1997). These changes have touched the patterns underlying social institutions such as the family, the state, and the global political system as a whole (Rosenau, 1998: 145–169). Here it is possible to speak about the uniqueness of the emerging epoch, when the development of philosophical and conceptual bases of the new world takes place concurrently with the changes themselves. In such conditions, the only sustainable basis for the comprehension of the new era is a flexible theoretical basis

However, such a conclusion appears to be non-functional and, as a consequence, unacceptable for national security (NS). Having stated that the security environment of the 21ˢᵗ century is undergoing qualitative changes, the organizations responsible for forming the responses to the security challenges have no right to postpone the theoretical compre-

hension of the threats and the formation of responses by appealing to the impossibility of grasping the dynamics and of creating an internally consistent and coherent vision of the future. NS cannot be bound exclusively to a theoretical discourse; it includes elements and systems which are part of society and public life. The development and operation of NS systems requires concepts and doctrines, which are based on the comprehension of the challenges and threats to the society, and the methods of responding to them, although that comprehension and the methods may be incomplete.

In this sense, one may speak about a serious challenge and a paradox when the imperatives of the emerging epoch force the development of a theoretical basis originally assuming the qualitative changes realized through the mechanisms of adaptation and co-evolution. The semantic network of the underlying «basis» concept, traditionally including analogies and meanings, associated with constancy and stability, now include new elements linked with continuous and qualitative changes.

Is such an approach to thinking in terms of the NS acceptable? Being inertial and rigid, NS systems demand a corresponding rigidity from their own doctrines. How in the given conditions can their objective static and rigid character be interfaced with the imperative of continuous innovation? Where is the balance between inertia and flexibility? On what philosophical positions, on the basis of what paradigms, and in terms and concepts of what sciences should it be formed?

A response to the challenge is the synthesis of complex thinking, philosophy, and the sciences of complexity, systematicity and networks (Arzumanian, 2012). The implementation of the language of complexity, networks and nonlinearity into military theory can be observed at all levels of conflict. For example, the modern tendency for operational analysis is preferred to discourse on complex operations and intergovernmental operations (Kelly, Brennan, 2010), which are rooted in the science of the system, and to a holistic approach covering all elements of national power and society.

It is possible to speak about two dominant visions for future operations. The first rests on centralized, integrated military-civil campaigns. This direction evolves within the limits of the theory of operational holism, terms from the 20th century evoking the idea of, for example, a blitzkrieg. This vision is accompanied by doctrines of netwars and network-centric wars. The second vision develops within the concept of irregular warfare (Arzumanian, 2015) and qualitatively differs not only from the centralized vision of the doctrine of operational holism, but also from the military operations of the 20th century.

A similar collision of inherently polar visions and approaches to the estimation of the nature and forms of military confrontation in the 21st century can be observed at the strategic and political-military levels of conflict. The issue here is not the full and final victory of one of the visions, but a dynamic balance reflecting the results of a political and theoretical struggle.

The metaphor of "the hedgehog and the fox," used in the discussions related to strategy and war, is from the work of the Greek poet, Archilochus: "The fox knows many things. The hedgehog knows one big thing" (West, 1989). "Isaiah immediately began dividing the great minds of the past into hedgehogs and foxes: Goethe and Pushkin were foxes; Dos-

toyevsky and Tolstoy were hedgehogs," writes the biographer of Berlin, Michael Ignatieff (Ignatieff, 1999: 173). Hedgehogs are people of a single idea which defines their thoughts and acts. Foxes are pluralists and are little concerned about the integrity of their outlook: "[T]here exists a great chasm between those . . . who relate everything to a single central vision . . .—a single, universal, organizing principle—and . . . those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected only in some *de facto* way." In many respects a conditional dichotomy highlights the difference between the focused, centripetal hedgehogs and the fluid, centrifugal foxes.

Looking at the security environment of the 21st century through the lens of this metaphor allows us to speak about the necessity of both a focused and broad approach, intended to cover the phenomena and processes within the limits of a general basis, and the decentralized and irregular aspiring to reflect the processes without developing such a basis. The solutions related to the globalization processes are, first of all, political, social and economic, not military. Nevertheless, globalization compels nations to reform their NS systems as a whole and their military organization in particular by developing a new paradigm for the security environment.

The Traditional Linear Model of Conflict

The linear thinking of the Cold War, especially in the USA, tended to divide conflicts into two categories: "major war" and "operations other than war" (OOTW) (U.S. Joint Chiefs Staff, 1995). The dichotomy was built on the assumption, that small threats can be overcome by small military efforts and the tools that are used in the resolution of large conflicts (Fig. 1).
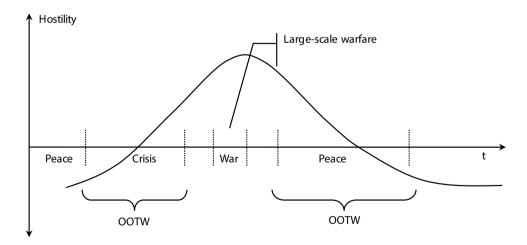

Figure 1. The traditional linear model of conflict

This division is a consequence of a linear paradigm and the European model of the war which emerged in the middle of the 17th century (Czerwinski, 2008). War is conducted by state actors. The beginning of a war is defined clearly by its formal declaration. As soon as one of the parties surrender, military actions stop, and a truce is arranged. Then a peace treaty is signed, the population of the states starts to return to normal life, and the hostility, the essential attribute of war, gradually fades away.

Within the limits of the model a legal base has been developed, time frames for the transition from peace to the war are defined. The model was supported by corresponding international law which, to some extent, was complied by all the participants of the conflict. There was also a statement regulating the behavior of armed forces in peace time, a country's transition into war, including considerations of future or on-going war as legal and fair, both from a moral and theological point of view (a just war). The criteria and substantiations were already visible in the works of St. Augustine (Russell, 2013), and the same principles inherently underlie the work of the UN Security Council. Though while the traditional model of conflict per se was seldom applied, it forms the framework which prescribes permitted activity. The model also helps to evaluate the parties of conflicts, war, and the coming peace.

A Nonlinear Model of Conflict

Although the traditional model continues to dominate western military thinking, in the 20th century war frequently developed within the bounds of other ways of thinking. In the 21st century many conflicts do not end with a peace treaty, but continue to smolder in a condition of "no war no peace," forming a separate, "hybrid" category in conceptual and categorical apparatus by which the security threats are described (Gray, 2013; 2012; Arzumanian, 2015). Wars and crises in the 21st century can conditionally be correlated with the legal framework of the traditional model. The separation of any stages and especially the transitions between them become problematic, and most wars of the 21st century can be conditionally interpreted as "just." Armed forces in the 21st century should be ready to conduct operations against both regular and irregular enemies. Moreover, a regular enemy can resort to irregular, asymmetric tactics and strategy for the preparation and waging of war (Gray, 2005: 29).

Though both in society as a whole and in the military sphere in particular, a linear culture, outdated thinking and education continue to dominate; an adequate response to the threats of the new epoch should be developed on the basis of the terminology and concepts of a nonlinear paradigm (Whitehead, 2003: 48–49). As a consequence, there is a necessity to develop a new nonlinear model of a conflict (Beyerchen, 1992: 59–90) where instead of a discrete set of states, a continuum of competition and conflict is supposed (see fig. 2).

The continuum includes all the efforts of the nation and all accessible tools for deterrence —from the demonstration of military power to the local use of force. The transition from peace to crisis or from crisis to war is not well-defined, and represents a separate

"transient phase" (gray zone) with its own logic. The party adhering to the new model and knowing about the existence of such a niche can take advantage of it. A possibility which is denied the party continuing to remain within the limits of the old model (Smith, 2006: 11–15).

Under the new conditions it is impossible to allocate a point in time at which the hostilities between the parties begin or come to an end. The hostility which leads to a state of war in the old model, covers the whole continuum in the new one. Along this continuum it is still possible to define with some reliability the beginning and the end of major military operations, however the end of large-scale operations no longer means the end of hostility. Moreover, the opponent adapting to defeat in a conventional military campaign will in all likelihood pass into other forms of war. The struggle proceeds until the nation's possibility, or will, to wage the war is exhausted. The nonlinear nature of complex adaptive systems on which the given model is based leads to those "post-conflict stabilization operations" turning into a series of cycles the end of which can only be defined conditionally and, more often, retrospectively.
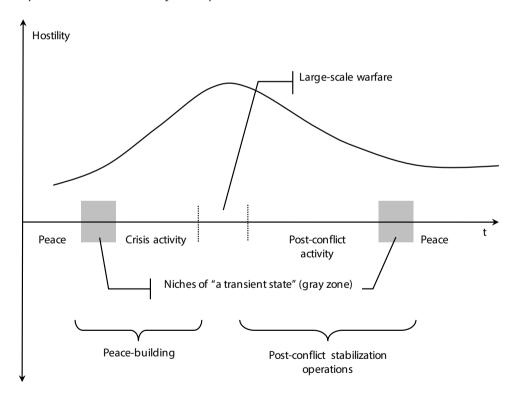

Figure 2. Nonlinear model of conflict

The complexity of the new model is in the interactions between the elements when the system's reactions through feedback and environment influent subsequent actions.

As a consequence, conflict is not a straight line, but a cycle or a series of cycles and a continuum of confrontation (Fig. 3).
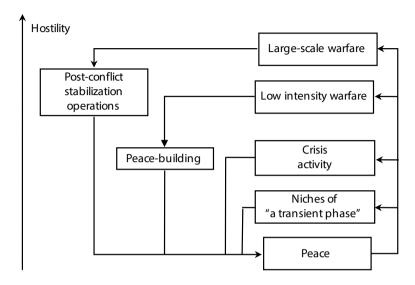

Figure 3. Cyclic continuum of conflict

The lowest internal cycle transitions from peace to some form of interaction in the niches of the transient phase. The second reflects the development of some form of crisis (humanitarian, political) with a return to peace. The third maps a military crisis with low intensity warfare, and the fourth cycle maps large-scale warfare and military operations.

Within the limits of a nonlinear model it is incorrect to speak about a return to the status quo, as once the cycle has begun the initial parameters inevitably change and one cannot return to the initial conditions. The spiral of cyclical interactions, according to the scale, speed and the nature of interactions, becomes a crisis and conflict metaphor (fig. 4).

A cyclical view of crisis development and society as a whole is not new. The influence of long or Kondratiev's cycles (Kondratiev, 1988) in the military sphere has been known for a some time. Some authors track 45–50-year cycles of the major wars in the history of Europe (Goldstein, 1988). This new continuum model and the military reality of the 21st century describe the nature and sources of the complexity of modern wars. This complexity is connected with interactions which are focused more on the human dimension of the conflict, is holistic, and involves whole nation.
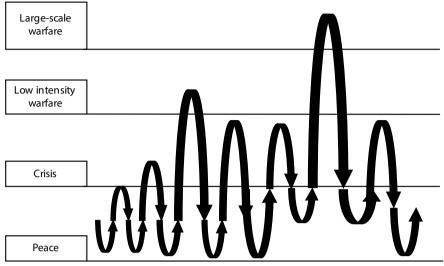
Figure 4. Spiral continuum of conflict

Conclusion: The Necessity of a Paradigm Shift

Changes in the security environment compel researchers to develop a new paradigm based on more refined principles and conflict classification systems. In particular, within the limits of the new paradigm the condition of "no war, no peace," and "transient phases" should be recognized as a variation of the norms of political-military reality.

There is a necessity to define and interpret new phenomena, such as "black zones" where control is lost and there are no sui juris authorities or actors capable of providing order, or the basic needs of the population (Arzumanian, 2015: 38–45). In the security environment of the 21st century the purpose of the international community is to avoid chaos in territories where conflict has developed, and to prevent radical religious and extremist groups, which deny the basis of the existing international order, from coming to power. In other words, the international community is strongly interested in the existence of actors ready to provide basic functions of government in conflict zones regardless of their status in the system of the international relations.

The new paradigm should reflect the changes in meanings of some basic notions, such as "regulation," which, within the limits of the traditional model of conflict, was understood as the achievement of a lasting peace between the conflicting parties fixed by an international agreement. Under the new conditions such an interpretation is inadequate as it appears to be unattainable for the majority of modern conflicts. The dynamics of the processes in the security environment are so fast, that the power centers fail to give exhaustive security guarantees to the parties of the conflict or to compel them to commit over the long term. In the 21st century world powers have often lost control over the processes they have initiated, being unable to realise the plans they have mapped out. In

the new conditions it is necessary to speak not in terms of a definitive end, but an acceptable resolution when the possibility remains to monitor and constrain the conflict within presumptive margins.

The development of a new paradigm is a complex problem which also requires a sound basis in terms of political philosophy. It is necessary, first of all, to understand clearly how any new ideas and principles developed for the new paradigm are formed. According to Schmitt (2000) the emergence and development of ideas and notions cannot be explained within the limits of causality of traditional sociological analysis. Ideas arise from other ideas, not as the result of deduction, but rather as a free response. Emerging ideas and notions bring with themselves relics of their former meanings through interactions within the system of thought and practice of the society in which they have developed. Notions and ideas are connected with the collective experience of a society by a network of diverse relations and are supported by judgments, filled with meaning, within the narratives which are connected with social practices (Kahn, 2011: 106).

As an example of the evolution of the complexity of the distinction between war and peace is the work of Blechman and Kaplan (1978), many principles of which remain relevant. Kahn's (1965) conflict escalation ladder with 44 steps is an impressive theoretical concept for comprehending the structural dynamics of conflict

In search of a better understanding theorists often fail to avoid the temptation to achieve better insight only through ever deeper exploration. However, sooner or later, they notice that they have lost important aspects of understanding and judgment which can only be grasped on the basis of a holistic approach. Metaphorically, theorists appear unable to avoid a fog of theory (Gray, 2012: 13). Nevertheless, it is difficult to overestimate the influence of the theorists on those engaged in the practical realities of NS.

The modern meanings of notions and ideas are not derived from the past as the conclusion follows from the premise in a logical construct, but through immersion in history, and as the result of operating with notions and ideas in the process of creating analogies, metaphors and associations. To draw an analogy means to highlight the symbolic structure of the phenomenon, binding it with a semantic network which is perceived by society as "known and owned." The analogy unfolds as a process of interpretation, but not as a revelation of truth or fact. It is a process of manufacturing the truth, which is peculiar for each person and society. People and society are free in their understanding of the world, and the process of such understanding is an act of freedom (Kahn, 2011: 109). Which interpretations will appear as key is impossible to tell in advance, and each society will have its own interpretations. In this sense, the politician, the philosopher or the researcher are on the edge of possible meanings, drawing the attention of society to those elements which society is able to comprehend and include in their narrative. One must speak about society's own narrative which has its own value, and whose meaning is not in grasping the truth, but in providing the rhetorical process to convince society of its correctness and its understanding of the truth (Kahn, 1992). It is impossible to tell in advance whether the new meanings are created or revived from history.

Paradigm development is a complex theoretical problem including both objective and subjective aspects. The objective aspects are constant for historical epochs and cultures using the world's treasury of experience and knowledge. New theorists address a philosophical and military heritage thousands of years old, trying to find answers to the challenges standing before a society developing rapidly (Gray, 2005: 3). Research always underlines the major role of culture, including strategic culture (Gray, 1999), the most important function of which is to exclude the surprise effect, when the society, colliding with a new reality, lets down its guard (Gray, 2005: 28).

The subjective aspects assume the presence of various forms depending on culture, ideologies, traditions and other peculiar features of a specific society. For example, the Western military culture is extremely plastic. Keeping a number of fundamental parameters, it admits a wide spectrum of ideas and influences from other cultures (Gray, 2005: 22). Western military culture is technologically effective and can be called machine-orientated (Parker, 1996).

The presence of subjective aspects leads to the emergence of an intellectual fashion which, like any another, is quintessentially volatile; sooner or later today's big idea gives way to a new one (Gray, 2005: 3). The sustainable development and security of a society in many respects depends on the ability of its elite to effectively work with new ideas, to make out the old ideas and approaches behind the new forms and interpretations, thereby facilitating an adequate response to new challenges. It is important to understand that new ideas sometimes develop unexpectedly even for their authors. "The history of ideas obeys a law of irony. Ideas have consequences but rarely those their authors expect or desire, and never only those. Quite often they are the opposite" (Gray, 2003: 27).

Developing a paradigm for the security environment of the 21st century in the post-soviet space is very complex. Researchers are obliged to be ready to import relevant ideas, but also to interpret the processes of their own societies on the basis of the concepts which have been developed in their own intellectual schools. A process which is nearer art than science.

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Модели конфликтов и новая парадигма среды безопасности XXI века

Рачья Арзуманян
Кандидат технических наук, директор Центра стратегических исследований «Ашхар»
Адрес: ул. Тигран Мец, д. 23а, Степанакерт, Арцах, Армения 375000
E-mail: hratchya@yahoo.com

Последние десятилетия мировой истории характеризируются как эпоха глубоких и быстрых перемен, вынуждая исследователей задуматься о новой парадигме среды безопасности, опирающейся на уточненные принципы и понятия, систему классификации и модели конфликтов. Разработка новой парадигмы нуждается в корректной постановке. Необходимо ясно понимать, что новые идеи и принципы связаны с коллективным опытом общества и его нарративами, находящимися во взаимных отношениях с практикой. Современный смысл и значение понятий и идей формируется через погружение в историю и выстраивание аналогий, разворачивающиеся как процесс интерпретации и создания нарратива. Как следствие, политик или исследователь находятся на кромке возможных смыслов и значений, привлекая внимание общества к тем идеям, которые оно будет в состоянии воспринять и включить в свой нарратив. Разработка парадигмы оказывается сложной теоретической проблемой, включающей в себя как объективные, так и субъективные аспекты. Объективные постоянны для исторических эпох и культур, что позволяет использовать сокровищницу мирового опыта и знаний. Субъективные зависят от специфических черт конкретного общества, приводящих к появлению феномена интеллектуальной моды. Разработка новой парадигмы для среды безопасности постсоветского пространства в силу сложности должна быть отнесена скорее к искусству, нежели науке.

Ключевые слова: глобализация, среда безопасности, парадигмальный сдвиг, модели конфликтов, континуум конфликта, сложность, нелинейность, метафора