

SURPRISE OR INSTANTANEITY AS A PRINCIPLE OF WAR

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Abstract

The analysis of different military theories shows that the notions of “instantaneity” and “surprise” are frequently used as synonyms. Thus, in certain periods of the development of military science, in the works of different military analysts, as well as in the regulating documents, as principles of war we can encounter, at times, the term “instantaneity” and, at times, the term “surprise”. One question arises: “Should these two terms be considered identical, bearing in mind their semantical proximity, or is it necessary to seek differences in their essence and purpose in military science?”

Keywords: principles of war, instantaneity, surprise

“The principles of war”¹ represent a corpus of rules and norms providing general directions for organisation and conduct of military actions. Their applicability and relative importance is defined in dependence on the actual environment. According to one of the interpretations of this term, “they are founded on the way in which the general uses his army in the battle.” [21] They are not dogmas and they have evolved with time, been enriched and became more concrete in unison with the stage of development of technology and society, with each country or organisation adopting its own ones.

¹ In English “The Principles of War”, in Russian „ Принципы войны”, In French “Les principes de la guerre”.

Viewing the regulating documents of NATO, other leading military nations and those of the Republic of Bulgaria, we can observe a difference in the principles of war. As can be seen in table one, the term “instantaneity” is used in the Bulgarian ones, while the term “surprise” is used by NATO and other leading nations.

The term, spelled “Surprise” in English, when translated to my native language², is used with many meanings such as “surprise, amazement, astonishment, bedazzlement, wonder” or “sudden, unexpected, not waited for, and surprising”. That creates the impression that a distinction is not always made between “instantaneity” and “surprise”, which, in itself, is a sufficient reason to make interesting and worthy research.

In the explanatory dictionary, the term “instantaneously” is recorded as “which happens or starts abruptly, fast and unexpectedly”³, and in the dictionary of military terms [11] for “instantaneity” we find “actions unexpected by the enemy”.

“Surprise”, as a term, on the other hand, is used to represent “Event, case or move, which happens unexpectedly, suddenly.” In the same dictionary of military terms “surprise” is defined as “what happens unexpectedly and changes the impression and the state of the enemy as a result of an unexpected action.”

Bulgaria ¹	NATO ²	United Kingdom ³	Canada ⁴	France ⁵
Principles for use of the Armed Forces	Principles of Allied Joint and Multinational Operations	UK principles of war	The principles of war	Les principes de la guerre à la française
Clear formulation of objectives	Definition of Objectives	Selection and maintenance of the aim	Selection and Maintenance of the Aim	
Unity of control for achievement of purposes	Unity of Purpose	Cooperation	Co-operation	
All-round and reliable support and sustainment	Sustainment	Sustainability		
Concentration of efforts (forces)	Concentration of force	Concentration of force	Concentration of Force	la concentration des efforts

² <http://translator-bg.com/content/view/33/54/lang,bg/>.

³ The same definition is provided by the dictionary database of terms.

Bulgaria ¹	NATO ²	United Kingdom ³	Canada ⁴	France ⁵
Rational use of recourses and forces	Economy of Effort	Economy of effort	Economy of Effort	l'économie des moyens: - La surprise
Flexibility	Flexibility	Flexibility	Flexibility.	
Initiative	Initiative	Offensive action	Offensive action	
Maintenance of morale	Maintenance of Morale	Maintenance of morale	Maintenance of Morale	
Instantaneity in actions	Surprise	Surprise	Surprise	
Force protection	Security	Security	Security	
Interoperability	Multinationality		Administration	
				et la liberté d'action
	Simplicity			

¹ октрина на ВС на Република България НП – 01 С., 2012 (Doctrine of the Armed Forces of Republic of Bulgaria).

² AJP-01(D) ALLIED JOINT DOCTRINE DECEMBER 2010.

³ Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01 (5th Edition), dated November 2014.

⁴ Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01 (5th Edition), dated November 2014.

⁵ www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/doctrineF...fond/FT_02/ft_02.htm.

Table 1. Principles of war described in the military doctrines of different countries and organisations

It becomes evident that these are not terms identical in meaning and the disclosure of their essence and nature would contribute to the clarification of the problem connected with one of the main principles of war.

In order to disclose the similarities and the differences between the terms “surprise” and “instantaneity”, the most apt idea is to review the the definitions presented in the doctrinal base of different countries and organisations. The analysis of the definitions will allow us to see which of the terms has precedence in their doctrines.

Instantaneity of actions is based on swiftness, concealment and deception as to our intentions, it allows the achievement of advantage over the opposite force. [1]

“*Surprise* entails striking the enemy at a time, place or in a manner for which he is unprepared, creating confusion and paralysis in his chain of command and destroying or damaging his ability to fight. It is not essential that the enemy

be taken completely unaware, but only that he becomes aware too late to react effectively.” [18]

Surprise is termed as, “Strike the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which he is unprepared. Surprise can decisively shift the balance of combat power. Surprise can be in tempo, size of force, direction or location of main effort, and timing. Deception can aid the probability of achieving surprise.” [19]

Many other states have existing definitions of their own, but in principle they coincide with the notion expressed in the US documents.

The analysis of the definitions given above confirms the differences between the ideas and, if the instantaneity is characterized with swiftness and concealment, with surprise that the stress is on time, place and lack of readiness. The only common element, which is mentioned in the definitions, is “deception”.

As a confirmation of the statement, we can quote the words of the US researcher Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Robert R. Leonhard, who mentions in his report [24] that surprise can occur if two main elements are present – time and lack of readiness of the forces. But, in order to search for additional facts that confirm or refute this statement, we will look at the historical records and we will check its validity.

Practice continually confirms the great importance of unexpected actions. This fact does not remain hidden from the military analysts, specialists and researchers, who, according to their views regarding achievement of victory against the enemy, followed their own rules, which with the passage of time shaped themselves as principles for conduct of military actions and, while some of them encouraged instantaneity, others relied on surprise. In order to achieve that goal, we will look at historical and modern views, first about the instantaneity, and then about the surprise.

For a long time *instantaneity* has been reduced, above all, to the results of the impact on the morale of the enemy of the unexpected actions. The Greek military leader, Xenophon⁴, stated that [7] the more unexpected (sudden) are the actions,

4 Xenophon (430—354 B. C. E.) (in Greek Ξενοφών) was a Greek philosopher, soldier, historian, memoirist, and the author of numerous practical treatises on subjects ranging from horsemanship to taxation.

the greater fear they inspire, and Vegetius⁵ points out: “The unknown scares the enemy, the customary things are worth nothing.” [20]

In the period after the Great French revolution, wars started to be fought with considerably more advanced assets and with the application of new forms and ways of armed combat. Practice and theory marked fast development. The great military leaders and theoreticians, such as Suvorov, Napoleon and Clausewitz, were the first to pay attention to instantaneity.

In its “formula of trinity”, besides “eye measurement” “(correct situational awareness) and “pressure” (concentration of forces), Suvorov placed “swiftness”, through which it is aimed, above all, at the achievement of surprise for the enemy. According to him, the swiftness is the “soul of war” and “only the one” who succeeds in astonishing the enemy can rely on victory. “The enemy does not expect us, it thinks that we are 100 versts⁷ away. And, all of a sudden, we strike it like a bolt from the blue. Its head swims.” Suvorov figuratively represents his notion of instantaneity in this way.[15]

The first person to place instantaneity among the original rules of military science was Napoleon. In his memoirs for the siege of Toulon, he states: “In order to win you must act instantaneously.” [10] It was not possible for the extremely active military leader not to see, in practice, the great importance of unexpected actions for the achievement of victory over the enemy.

Clausewitz, in principle, accepts the formulations given before by Suvorov and Napoleon. One of the principles of war, established by him, is called “not to waste time”, explaining that under this one should understand swift and sudden actions, in which “lies the real stake for victory”. [4] He connects suddenness, above all, with the aspiration for concentration of forces and creation of predominance over the enemy. The Russian general, Leer⁸, even accepts that instantaneity produces

5 Flavius Vegetius Renatus, **most popular as Vegetius, (flourished 4th century AD), the Roman military expert who wrote what was perhaps the single most influential military treatise in the Western world. His work exercised great influence on European tactics after the Middle Ages.**

6 In Russian “окомер”.

7 Verst – an old Russian unit of length, equivalent to about 1, 07 km.

8 Genrikh Antonovich Leer (Apr. 4,1829 - Apr. 16,1904) **Russian military theorist and historian; general of the infantry (1896); corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.**

a horrifying effect greater than armament on the mentality. At that, the fear, the panic and the inability to muster any resistance take hold fast on the entire frontline or a large part of it. [6]

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the military specialists also paid some attention to instantaneity. Thus, the French marshal, Ferdinand Foch⁹, placed surprise in actions among the principles of war, while the Russian general, Leer, chose instantaneity. The latter also strives to give a kind of definition of instantaneity. He accepts it as a result of the deft usage of time, which in itself is an important element in times of war. “To earn precedence in time during war means to win, to be late – to be defeated.” It is a principle which plays an important role, not only in preparation for military actions, but also in their performance. [6] Leer also paid attention to the scope and the role of instantaneity and the means for its achievement.

Shortly before WWI a significant step forward was made in terms of instantaneity. It had already found an important place, even at times under a different name, in the principles of war. The concepts, however, did not match the practical occurrences. Having entered its “machine period”, the war was fought with many new and advanced assets. They not only imposed the pursuit of instantaneity, but also allowed its more successful achievement and increased its role significantly. New theories also evolved: the one for the “tank war”, the one for the “air war” and the one for the “total war”, which found numerous supporters in all countries. Each of these theories relies on finding a successful practical application based on the principle of instantaneity in military actions.

Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff¹⁰, for example, is certain, that the “total war” must begin unexpectedly, not only for the enemy, but also for one’s own nation. “It is evident”, he adds, “the instantaneity will have a special importance, so that the enemy will not be able to take any measures for counteraction.” [6] That principle later laid down the foundations of all the Wehrmacht’s plans for waging

9 Marshal Ferdinand Foch (2 October 1851 – 20 March 1929) was a French soldier, military theorist and the Allied *Généralissime* during the First World War.

10 Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff (9 April 1865 – 20 December 1937) was a German general, victor of Liège and of the Battle of Tannenberg. Consistently pursuing a purely military line of thought, Ludendorff developed, after the First World War, the theory of “Total War”, which he published as “*Der Totale Krieg*” (The Total War) in 1935g

“Blitzkrieg” against neighbouring or remote countries in WWII. The possibility to act instantaneously is determined by the very essence of the newly-created battle machines, which are fast, maneuverable and with increased battle capabilities. Thus Guderian¹¹ points out that instantaneity in the actions of the armoured troops is determined by their great mobility. He advises that combat actions be prepared and conducted taking instantaneity into account above everything. [3]

The introduction of nuclear weapons in the 1950s led to a certain reevaluation of instantaneity. The military theories of the US and USSR connect the efficiency of its impact, above all with instantaneity and speed. Summing up the views of military specialists, US analysts agree that (“Military Review”, issue 3 from 1959): “The speed and instantaneity are the most important factors in times of nuclear war, so important that they may ensure victory or lead to a disaster. In war, the unexpected is the most successful.” [6] A period began in which speed and instantaneity gained absolute importance. They were elevated as the most essential principles of military science, whose successful application leads to the resolution of the outcome of any war. That also found reflection in the development of types of armed forces and the branches of the service, by paying great attention to ones that were able to achieve maximum speed (maneuvarability) on the battlefield and instantaneity in actions.

Instantaneity, more or less, is in the foundation of everything that is aimed for in military science in order to achieve a superiority in numbers in a specific place at a specific time with retained abilities for combat action. That requirement shows exactly the interdependence between instantaneity and the other principles of war: Massing, Unity of effort, Offensive, Sustainment and Tempo.

The collection, enumeration and description of all instantaneous ways for use of weaponry and military equipment, and of all means and forms of actions of troops and their changes in wars, is a task that is impossible and useless. It is hard even to make a kind of classification according to certain criteria. For the purposes of the survey, it is enough to outline the conditions that provide it and the following can be mentioned:

11 Heinz Wilhelm Guderian (17 June 1888 – 14 May 1954) was a German **general during World War II**, noted for his success as a leader of Panzer **units in Poland and France and for partial success in Russia**. He had pioneered motorized tactics in the pre-war army.

- Speed;
- Spatiality;
- Time;
- Concealment;
- Information advantage;
- Creativity and training.

The *speed* in actions, as a condition for achievement of instantaneity, was noted a long time ago. Suvorov raised it almost to the rank of a principle of military science, and Clausewitz points out that, "speed nips in the bud hundreds of enemy contrivances"[5] The modern means and assets for conduct of war allow, to a greater degree, the conduct of fast military actions, which ensure instantaneity to a great extent.

The *spatiality* demands that instantaneity be possibly achieved through: instantaneity of ideas, technical instantaneity and instantaneity in actions. Under instantaneity of ideas, we understand the original plans and concepts, the technical instantaneity presupposes the usage of novel weapons, combat vehicles and military equipment; instantaneity in actions includes the ability to achieve mobility and timely and accurate fulfilment of the intentions of the superiors. Instantaneity, in essence, may cause panic among the enemy. When unexpected actions are prepared, not only is the impact on morale pursued. It is rather a desired end state, a consequence of the multifaceted impact which these actions cause among the enemy. Through instantaneity, a significant change in the ratio of forces and assets can be achieved and the instantaneous actions allow a smaller force to be victorious against a superior enemy.

The effect of instantaneous actions is most often limited in *time* and space. Time differs for strategic, operative and tactical levels and it can vary from several days to several hours. Its length depends on the capabilities of the belligerents to react as efficiently as possible to the newly created situation. It is determined by factors such as:

- Efficiency of C2 system;
- Level of training of the military units;
- Availability of reliable information;
- Level of discipline and morale in the military units;

- The delegated rights (given to the subordinates) for action according to the situation;
- And, last but not least, the capability of military units taken by surprise to find ways, means and devices for counteraction.

The *concealment*, concerns the ability to keep one's own plans secret and their protection from enemy intelligence. These measures have to be observed, not only during the planning and the organisation, but also during the use of the forces and the assets. Keeping forthcoming actions secret, not only during the planning or the use of new weapon systems, but also the application of new means, is of crucial importance for instantaneity. All of them can not be accepted as separate ways for achievement of instantaneity, but as factors leading to its achievement

In order to achieve instantaneity, it is necessary to possess enough reliable *information* not only about the situation, the state and the intentions of the enemy, but also about its expectations for actions on our part. In the analysis of the enemy (besides the known requirements), we should also include the possibility for acquisition and usage of new specimens of armament and equipment, resorting to asymmetric means, etc.

The *creativity* in the application of the instantaneity can be achieved through awareness of the lessons learned, learning from foreign experience, authorisation of the subordinates to develop the situation according to the concrete, newly-created situation. The *training* should be aimed not only at the commanding officers and HQs, but also at every military unit and every soldier individually. It is necessary to mention that instantaneity as a principle is in contradiction with the principle of security because of a number of reasons, which is a subject of another survey. [27]

And now, let us also pay attention to surprise, which the military leaders have striven to achieve since the dawn of time, in order to ensure superiority over their opponents. Sometimes planned and sought, sometimes unexpected, it has often led to achievement of victory.

The surprise is the core of the victory of David over Goliath in their battle, as described in the Holy Bible. Strength and military training were not on David's side, but only the equanimity, the accuracy and the confidence in his skills for handling the available "weaponry". But, actually, the surprise was not sought, it

was rather a product of the expectations of Goliath. Believing that he would face a soldier with a similar upbringing and training, he remained incredulous that a young shepherd could muster the courage to fight against the armed to the teeth invincible warrior. The surprise also remained for the whole Philistine army, when their invincible giant fell down struck by a stone thrown from the slingshot of the young shepherd, who had so far guarded his father's flock from wild animals.

Frontinus¹², as one of the main military researchers in ancient Rome, also paid attention to the problems, connected more or less with surprise. He placed the outcome of the battle (fight) as dependent on the skill in hiding the plan of action from the enemy.[14] The military theoreticians in ancient times described the actions connected with the achievement of surprise as cunningness concealment, aspiration to deceive and mislead the enemy. In the first book of his "Stratagems", giving numerous examples from military history, Frontinus demonstrated how to hide the plan of action from the enemy and the weak points of one's own troops, how to set up an ambush, how to lead the forces and the assets covertly to the battlefield, and other things, which in the final aftermath ensure instantaneity. Vegetius [20] also points out "there is no better plan than the one which is unknown to the enemy, until you realise it."

In the Middle Ages, authors such as Maurice ¹³and Macchiavelli point out that surprise is especially formidable for the enemy, that is why one thing should be shown to it and another thing should be done.[8] Macchiavelli also recommends "surprise surrounding of the enemy", as well as setting up ambushes[9] – actions which, taken in due time, may predestine the defeat of the enemy to a great extent.

12 Sextus Julius Frontinus (c. 40 – 103 AD) was one of the most distinguished Roman senators of the late 1st century AD. He is best known to the post-Classical world as an author of technical treatises He is best known as a writer of Stratagems (**Latin: Strategemata**) - a collection of examples of military stratagems from Greek and Roman history, ostensibly for the use of generals.

13 Maurice (Latin: *Flavius Mauricius Tiberius Augustus*; Greek: *Φλάβιος Μαυρίκιος Τιβέριος Αὔγουστος*) (539 – 27 November 602) was Byzantine Emperor from 582 to 602. A prominent general in his youth, Maurice fought with success against the Sassanid Persians. He is traditionally named as author of the military treatise "Strategikon", which is praised in military circles as the only sophisticated combined arms theory until World War II.

The regulating documents, especially the ones from the beginning of the previous century, also encompass surprise under a different disguise. Most often, as a “conditio sine qua non” for victory or as a guiding principle of war, the energetic or instantaneous actions are pointed out in them. That is characteristic for the Bulgarian statutes and manuals. In “The General Manual for the Actions of Big Military Formations”¹⁴ as a main principle, the deft usage of the terrain and time “in order to surprise the enemy” is pointed out [6]. It is accepted, above all, as a phenomenon of morale dimension, based on the ancient rule that the more unexpected the action, the greater the fear from it. Colonel Drangov [2] in his book “Remember the War” says, not without a good reason, “five soldiers behind the enemy lines cost more than fifty at the front line.”

The Bulgarian regulating documents from the period between WWI and WWII also hold an opinion in favour of surprise. Thus, the “Manual for the Military Service” from 1924 states that the enemy must be surprised in the following ways: with secret preparation for the battle; with speed and instantaneity in the performance; with powerful assets, introduced in one unexpected direction; with new assets and ways of fighting that are unknown to it. [12] The concealment in the actions and the deception of the enemy are also added in the next issue of the same manual. [13]

The surprise can also be viewed as strategic, operative and tactical, with each of the above-mentioned levels including elements of the lower one, while the planning and the carrying out of the surprise actions are usually in favour of the superiors.

According to Clausewitz, the strategic surprise appears in war as a whole, and the tactical one – on the field of the battle. There, the strategic one is more important for achievement of victory, because a strategic advance, unexpected by the enemy, may lead to victory in the entire war. [5] But, if that is possible for the situations in the 19th century, then after the technical revolution and the rise of the “machine period”, war is already conducted with multi-million armies and with the increased potential of the belligerents; the sudden start of military actions can not be accepted as a prerequisite for achievement of final victory.

Surprise can also be viewed as one of main factors for gaining the initiative. It forces the adversary to change its plans, to act in haste in unclear situations, and, because of the things mentioned above, it can not achieve the desired results. With its surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, Japan ensured its supremacy in the Pacific and in the air from the beginning of the war until 1943 [6], but because of the contribution of many other factors, it did not lead to conclusive victory in the war.

According to the scope of its achievement, surprise can be full or partial. When this classification is made, the entirety must be taken into account, with which this principle is prepared and, above all, achieved. Partial instantaneity will be, for example, that kind of instantaneity when, during the conduct of offensive military actions, the enemy is caught by surprise with the direction of the main strike, or with the force of the strike or with the time for the beginning of the actions. If all of that is achieved simultaneously, then the surprise will be complete. It will also be complete when on a tactical level it leads to achievement of operational or strategic results. For example, during the conflict between the UK and Argentina over the Falklands, only one military plane from the RAF conducted an aerial bombardment of the airport in Buenos Aires and that forced Argentina to move part of its military formations (set aside for defence of the islands) for defence of the mainland. [26] The reverse effect is also possible, i.e. when only certain tactical results are achieved from the planned surprise on an operative level. It is not complete in this case.

The main means and assets for achievement of surprise are connected with several main historic factors, which have contributed to the gaining of victory over the years. The comparison of the different viewpoints shows that these are the firmly set and universally accepted means for achievement of surprise during the long-lasting development of military history:

- Use of novel weapons;
- Use of new ways and methods for conduct of military actions;
- Application of new doctrinal views for conduct of military actions;
- Use of different forms of deception;
- Use of new space.

Of course, every military specialist would at once add to these means, but all of the rest in principle are either contained in them or can be accepted as separate

means for carrying out unexpected actions. Thus, the skillful use of night, of the terrain, of time and actions, where the enemy is not ready, are elements of the above-mentioned means for action.

History abounds with examples of use of new weapons and combat vehicles. In WWI, poisonous gases and tanks were tested for the first time. As far back as April 1915, the German troops used chemical weapons against the positions of the British troops in Flanders on a front of several kilometres. The surprise was complete, the effect devastating, and the defending troops abandoned the trenches in panic. For the German troops themselves, the surprise came with the mass attack with tanks of the British troops at Cambrai in November 1917.

Considerably more advanced tanks and war planes saw action in the years of WWII. Reactive artillery appeared, rockets and nuclear weapons were used for the first time. But the use of novel military assets, by themselves, can not lead to full surprise. They are only a prerequisite for its achievement. It is also necessary to have a developed theory and acquired practice for actions with the novel weapon in a battle and an operation. It is also essential that the use of the assets be in sufficient quantity and with better technical features than the ones of the enemy.

The aspiration to surprise the enemy with the use of military assets unknown to it has existed naturally since the very birth of war. It was satisfied to a different extent by clear dependence on the achieved level of development of science and technology. Each new asset – from the bow and the javelin, through to gunpowder and battle machines, and even to nuclear weapons – faces its military action on the battle field as fast as possible, always bringing surprise to the enemy. Each country, for that purpose only, secretly develops new assets and armaments, in order to use them in surprise actions. The more advanced the military assets, the greater the effects of the application on the enemy.

A question arises here: can surprise be achieved only through novel military assets and methods? The answer is negative, as it can also be achieved by creative use (according to the concrete situation) of the already known military assets and of the already known means and forms of conduct of armed combat. For example, the unexpected actions on the flanks for enveloping the enemy have been known since ancient times, which, in its turn, have not made them inapplicable in

the epochs to come. The battles of our time also give us examples of achieved instantaneity when using this means.¹⁵

The change in outlooks for the creation of new structures, new branches of service¹⁶, merging of different branches into one organisational unit, the transition from division to corps organisation, etc. and ways to apply them also represent a main characteristic of surprise and played a role regarding the achievement of surprise at the time they were applied. Nowadays, the surprise is achieved through the reduction of the size of the military formations engaged in the conflicts, the use of paramilitary formations and mercenaries, as well as insurgent formations for achievement of goals, for which entire armies were used in ancient times.

At all times, the question how to achieve surprise is viewed in close relation with the solution of another one, not less important than it – how not to allow surprise for one's own troops. As a countermeasure against unexpected actions, Frederick the Great envisaged: demonstrative actions on non-active directions, covert movement of the columns along hills and uplands, cover of troops with cavalry from the side of the enemy, readiness for redirection of the forces and assets. At the moment of counteraction to the surprise, the protection for the force is organised with all its constituent components. That, in its turn, brings the involvement of the principle of surprise with the principle of security.

Deception is a constituent part of surprise. As far back as the beginning of 5 c. BC, Sun Dzu thought that war is that part of human activity in which deception finds the biggest application. [16] Each military action must be based on certain trickery or deception bearing in mind the concrete conditions of the situation. Deception encompasses many and diverse sides of the human mind, behaviour and development. Expressions such as “trick, manipulation, bluff, deception, craft, lie, etc.” are slightly different in their semantics, but are closely connected and, from the point of view of the gain acquired, they share the same desired end state – achievement of profit through delivery of unreal presentation for one's own real condition to the opponent. This is the main reason for the close relationship between the achievement of the victory and the deception.

15 The envelopment of parts of Ukrainian army during the conflict in Eastern Ukraine at the beginning of 2015.

16 Armored troops, landing forces, special force, etc.

Surprise is achieved and, by use of new space in which to transfer the military actions – in air, under water, in space and in the virtual realia.

The factors contributing to the achievement of surprise include: speed, effective intelligence, deception, concealment and disinformation, pretense for non-existent military power, actions during the night or in conditions with limited visibility, security, use of terrain which is considered unfavourable, the variety of forms and methods for use of the troops, information superiority and asymmetry.

The surprise (unexpected actions) may be characterised according to the following criteria:

1. By battle order – using forces where and when the enemy is weakest and does not expect.¹⁷
2. By space – using terrain where the enemy does not expect action.
3. By quantity – achievement of superiority in force which the enemy does not expect.
4. By quality – by acting with new doctrinal principles or with novel technical assets.

The applicability of surprise can be defined in terms of the speed of the occurrence of actions, the format of forces and assets, structure, direction and place, credibility and selection of the appropriate moment. The secrecy, the difficult discovery and the speed are the key elements of surprise in the information age. In the 21st century, the information warfare poses a constant struggle between the concealment and the disappearance of data bases, between knowledge and ignorance, as well as between truth and deception. The achievement of surprise for the conventional force is getting more and more difficult to attain, because with the development of technology, the concealment and the camouflage of the movement of big formations is almost impossible in certain parameters of the battlefield.

Because of these reasons, instantaneity in actions must be the first approach to consider before the very outset of the planning for a given operation, when one seeks disorganisation, confusion and a devastating strike against the opponent.

17 It is connected with new ways for use of force and assets.

In war practice, we can hardly find combat actions which repeat in *the same* manner. Each situation is unique, it bears its specific features for the two opponents. That excludes the cliché in actions and gives an opportunity for achievement of surprise and, through creative use of the available military assets and the already known means and forms for conduct of the battle actions, the engagements and the operations. The application of this method for carrying out instantaneous actions is even more possible for present day troops, which are technically equipped, very agile, with big combat potential and capabilities for conduct of independent military actions. The creativity in the application of actions, operations and campaigns, previously used and already achieved the desired end state (known from history), does not cost much, but it is an effective method for surprise to the enemy.

In fact, the statement of the Indian military researcher ,Mallik, can be confirmed. He points out that surprise in itself is neither favourable nor unfavourable. [25] It can be deemed useful (successful) if the one who applies it succeeds in gaining certain advantages from its application.

The objective possibility for achievement of surprise can become reality only owing to the conscious activity of the commanders and the HQs and of the troops at all levels. The instantaneity is a result of the proactive attitude. It arises when we prepare commanding staff with thorough operative and tactical preparation, who know the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy, is confident in its power and capability, able to carry out a detailed evaluation of the concrete situation and able to be creative in the selection of the methods for preparation and carrying out instantaneous actions. That is why the skill to achieve instantaneity and, thus, to surprise the enemy and to defeat it has always been one of the indexes of the achieved level of development of military science.

After the implemented research and analysis, the following conclusions can be made:

First – Instantaneity can be defined as actions conscious and prepared in advance, caused as a result of the active and creative activity of the commanders and the HQs.

Second–instantaneity is reduced generally to the constant aspiration to prepare and conduct combat actions which are fast and unexpected for the enemy.

Third – any instantaneous action is aimed at causing surprise to the enemy.

Fourth – surprise is aimed at the enemy and can be defined as actions, information or circumstances, which are not foreseen by it and which can lead its troops into a certain state in which they will not be able to muster adequate resistance.

Fifth – surprise can also be achieved without use of fast, energetic and highly maneuverable actions.

Sixth – The instantaneity is, above all, for the active side (the side applying it) and the surprise – for the opposite force.

Seventh – One set of actions can not be simultaneously instantaneous and a surprise for one of the belligerents.

In military practice, the principles of war were changed and developed in accordance with many factors, some of which were discussed in the article. Threats and military conflicts nowadays show that revision of the meaning of each of the principles is required. Each country, nation, organisation or alliance has the right to establish and follow their own rules and principles.

In the system of principles for use in the armed forces and the doctrinal documents of Republic of Bulgaria, the concept of instantaneity should not disappear, because it is the guiding principle for the commanders and the HQs in the practical activity on the battlefield. Surprise is a state of the enemy, which is also the desired end state and is a consequence of the successful use of instantaneity. The merging of these two terms i.e. “instantaneity and surprise” in one principle has considerable advantages and fully and objectively reflects the contemporary requirements for conduct of military conflicts.

The foundation of the given proposals will be the subject of future research, with the entire formulation remaining pendent and open for discussion in the scientific community and bodies working on the development of the doctrinal base.

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