The Urban Individual
Unassailable source of power in 21st century armed conflicts

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Jun 16

Scope

- Cities and warfare
- Urbanisation
- Oppidum versus Urbs
- Urban Warfare
- «правила войны» существенно изменились
- The protest potential of the population
- Implications for capability development
Urbanization

- Population of the world’s 100 largest cities:
  - Number of megacities (>1 Mio population):
    - 1800: 200,000 (1 Beijing)
    - 1900: 700,000
    - 2000: 5,000,000 (X250) 450 (X450)

- Percentage of the world’s urban population:
  - Number of urban dwellers:
    - 1800: 3% 30 Mio
    - 1900: 10% 160 Mio
    - 2000: 50% 2,800 Mio (X100)

The scope of this evolution raises the question as to whether the relative importance of armed forces and cities as sources of power has remained unchanged.

Oppidum Vs Urbs

- **Oppidum**
  - Small but densely populated area governed by a rudimentary administration and protected by a fortified perimeter

- **Urbs**
  - Large area with a high population density where life depends on administration.

Urbanization

- Expansion (An URBS is not an enlarged OPPIDUM)
- Turns the urban character of the environment into the defining parameter of life itself.
  - Creates an insatiable demand for collective services.
  - Provides meaningful context for individual skills.
- Severs the link between military superiority and administrative authority.
  - Modifies the source of power
• Urbs
  - Large area with a high population density where life depends on administration.
  - Aqueduct
  - Cloaca
  - Ostia
  - Panem
  - Circenses
  - Praetorii

• Modern Megacities
  - Idem plus
    - Electricity and gas
    - Telecommunication (un)hindered by bandwidth, cost, range, censorship

Urbs

Modern Megacities

The urban individual

The essence of decisive urban warfare is the management of political (in)stability at high population density.

With all available means, including – but not limited to – armed force.

While avoiding significant decreases in population density.
Urban Warfare

WEAPON SYSTEM
- Deny Stand-Off advantage to the enemy
- Maximize violence to inflict prohibitive losses
- Depopulates the city

POWER SOURCE
- Render military superiority irrelevant
- Tune violence to an optimum level
- Swamp the enemy inside the city without scaring the citizens out: conflictual coexistence

- Population size
  - Force requirements for urban population control measures now exceed those for major combat operations
- Contention level
  - Megacities are strategic power sources rather than advantageous tactical battlegrounds

After 34 days of war, Hizbullah turns its attention to rebuilding southern Lebanon

- 5,000 families promised year’s rent and furniture
- Due to flood continued 50% reconstruction

Urban Warfare focused on the urban individual
The “rules of war” have changed substantially.

**Source of power**

- Clausewitz: “It is evident that destruction of the enemy forces is always the superior, more effective means, with which others cannot compete.”
- Gerasimov: “The role of nonmilitary methods to achieve political and strategic objectives increased, and their effectiveness, in some cases, exceeded that of armed force.”

**Russian military doctrine (Dec 2014)**

- Modern war is an integrated application of military force and political, economic, informational and other non-military measures to be implemented in synergy with the exploitation of the protest potential of the population, and special forces operations.
Decisive operation

In modern conflicts, gaining the support of the mega-urban population is the decisive operation because it provides access to its protest potential. The power of this protest potential manifests itself not as the culmination or destruction of armed forces, but as the unsustainable force requirements to contain it. (population-centric, not force-centric)

Eﬀorts to gain the support of the mega-urban population are often not recognized as being part of an enemy campaign plan.

Protest potential of the population

Emergence

Communication unhindered by bandwidth, cost, range, censorship combined with resonating narratives.
Roots in diasporas
Access to international money transfer systems
Extra-governmental administrative infrastructure

Irreducibility

The ability to be a continuous, amorphous, and regenerative nuisance to the opponent
No center of gravity
Tuning the level of violence

In 1985, Yitzak Rabin—then Israeli Defense Minister—observed that:

"...among the many surprises, and most of them not for the good, that came out of the war in Lebanon, the most dangerous is that the war let the Shi'ites out of the bottle. No one predicted it; I couldn't find it in any intelligence report. ...If as a result of the war in Lebanon, we replace PLO terrorism in southern Lebanon with Shi'ite terrorism, we have done the worst [thing] in our struggle against terrorism."
Capabilities to deal with urban based belligerents

- Understanding
- Inform & influence activities
- Humanitarian assistance
- Provision of urban essential services

Because popular support – as a source of power – is not exposed to destruction or capture, the only way to deny it to the enemy is to acquire it for oneself.

Administration in Exile

- 2000: 900,000 refugees return to Kosovo
- 2002: 1,834,000 refugees return to Afghanistan
- Lots of work, lots of unemployment (e.g. 57% in Kosovo)

Idea:
- Refugees are as much part of the solution as of the problem.
- Legitimacy through urban administration
  - Elections do not generate electricity
  - Nor do they collect garbage

Administration in Exile

- Create a modular capability:
  - To provide urban administration in a conflict area
  - By recruiting refugees from that area
  - And giving them:
    - Proper training in their country of current residence
    - Prospect of access to capital when the opportunity to return arises

- As such, refugees will be:
  - Ready, not only to return, but also to rebuild society
  - Imbued with a sense of democracy and free market
  - Providers iso consumers of reconstruction efforts
  - Investors iso receivers of financial aid