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Research Essay

The

CHARACTER of MANOEUVRE

at the

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

(FINAL VERSION)

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INTRODUCTION

A lot of changes after the end of the East-West-Confrontation have led to the consequence that military planning, training, and command is no longer based on a clear and one-dimensional threat but has to face a multi-dimensional and unstable risk situation. NATO has adapted to these new conditions. In November 1991, NATO decided upon a new strategy for the Alliance; based on that is the new military strategy of NATO, laid down in the document MC 400/1 (first version from 1991 and then modified in 1996).

During the period of the “Cold War” the military strategic concept was that of the Flexible Response in case of an aggression of the WARSAW PACT. On the Operational Level this would have meant the concept of Forward Defense as preplanned in the Grand Defense Plan (GDP). Within that planning the demand for large movements and the intensive use of space was not very strong and so the “Operational Art”, understood as “the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organisation, integration and conduct of theatre strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles.”¹ for leaders on the Operational Level was not a very challenging domain in the sense of Manoeuvre². With MC 400/1 NATO has developed a military strategy which fits to the new conditions. The ability for collective defense has remained unchanged. The core of this new military strategy is the concept of the “Counter Concentration” of the Alliance forces, wherever an aggression should happen in the NATO territory. Should this concept fail, that means that an aggressor does not refrain from his attack, then out of this Counter Concentration there will start a free operation

¹ NATO-document *AJP-01 Change 1* from June 1998; chapter 2, section IV, no. 0213.

² “...the long years of East-West confrontation are now Cold War history; gone is the era in which we spent too much time on the size of forces and not enough of the possible uses of them, and when our concept of forward defense of Western Europe did not encourage a maneuver outlook.” Gen. John R. Galvin, USA (Ret.) in *Maneuver Warfare, An Anthology*; p. vii. Richard D. Hooker Jr., ed.; Presidio 1993.

to beat him back. And this will demand in fact on the Operational Level the ability, among others, to use the space and to conduct large movements: MANOEUVRE!³

Just to complete the essentials of the MC 400/1 it is to be mentioned, that NATO has to face the additional tasks of

- Peace Support Operations (PSO)
- Partnership-for-Peace-Program
- Counter Proliferation.

In his article “The Myth of Manoeuvre Warfare: Attrition in Military History” Capt Paul Johnston discusses the – seeming – antagonism of “manoeuvrists” and “attritionists”⁴, and he points out: “With only rare exceptions, it has been attrition that ultimately decided the outcomes. ... Those rare non-attritional victories may be less costly, but they often seem to be less decisive.”⁵ In his conclusion then he says: “Major wars may be decided by attrition at the strategic level, but it does not necessarily follow that the battles and campaigns that make up the war at the tactical and operational levels need to be attritional. ...”⁶ This basic understanding of bi-polarity is not shared by Dr. Michael Evans in his essay “Strategic Manoeuvre: A Study in Military Method and Policy Technique”⁷: “Understanding ... operational art is sometimes hampered by confusing distinctions between manoeuvre and attrition, indirect and direct warfare. Some theorists believe that manoeuvre theory and attrition theory are two distinct and mutually exclusive schools of strategic thought.”⁸ And then he points out that in fact these two elements

³ NATO-document *AAP-6 (U)* modified version 2 from March 1997 defines manoeuvre as:

“... ”

4. Employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fire, or fire potential, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission. 1/8/82”

⁴ In Allan D. English, ed. *The Changing Face of War*. Montreal&Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press, 1998.

⁵ Ibid, p. 25.

⁶ Ibid, p. 30

⁷ In J. Mohan Malik, ed. *The Future Battlefield*. Geelong:Deakin Univ. Press,1997

⁸ Ibid, p. 106.

are not strictly separated but can/must be regarded as complementary. This latter interpretation seems to be more useful and realistic and so it will be the basis for this essay.⁹

It seems to be unavoidable for an essay on a military topic to argue on a historical basis, to quote from Clausewitz, to draw conclusions from the “Blitzkrieg” or to find any other source in the rich treasury of military history! But what is all this for? Would it really help the military planners at SHAPE when preparing “Limited Air Response” (against FRY in the Kosovo conflict) to refer to the air battles in WW I or II?¹⁰ And what could Moltke them say? No, the military problems of today and tomorrow must be solved with the logic/knowledge of today plus a vision of the future and therefore this essay will not go into any historical case (except in some quotations), despite the statement of Churchill: “The longer you look back, the farther you can look forward.”¹¹ This may be an approach on the purely political scene!

It is the intention of this essay, first to develop a clear understanding of the operational level and in combination with that an interpretation of operational art. This seems to be necessary because of some misleading using of these terms. Having done so the next step will be the analysis of the influencing factors of campaign planning with a special regard to manoeuvre. Finally a deduction of consequences, additionally under the aspects of jointness, multinationality and peacekeeping shall close this consideration.

The thesis for this essay is as follows:

Manoeuvre, the dynamic combination of forces, space, time and information, orientated on strategic objectives, is the most adequate answer to the politico-military requirements on the Operational Level!

⁹ This interpretation is also in line with Colonel W. Semianiw *The Theory of Maneuver Warfare. We Can Learn from History*. Royal Military College of Canada, March 1998 (not yet published).

¹⁰ What really influence them are personal experiences and subjective perceptions!

¹¹ Quoted according to Steven F. Hayward *Churchill on Leadership*, p. 9. Prima Publishing, CA 1997.

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

To start with a consideration of the Operational Level it is necessary to look into the official NATO-documents:

AAP-6 says: “The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or area of operations. 1/7/93”¹² This is a very broad definition and in fact it explains the term by using other terms which need to be clarified, such as for example “Campaigns” and “Major Operations”.

The AJP-01 is somewhat clearer when describing: “At the operational level, armed forces are deployed and employed to attain strategic and/or campaign objectives within a designated area of responsibility. Normally this will require sustained operations with simultaneous and/or sequential actions by the committed forces. It is at the operational level that tactical successes achieved in engagements and major operations are combined to achieve strategic objectives. To that end an operational level commander will refine a campaign within a designated area of responsibility; create an operation plan and direct operations. He will be responsible for:

- (1) Deciding what operational objectives are necessary to achieve strategic objectives. These decisions will be taken with due regard to political considerations.
- (2) Deciding in what sequence these operational objectives should be achieved.
- (3) Allocating forces and resources as necessary for subordinate commanders to be able to achieve their operational missions.
- (4) Setting priorities for the provision of logistic support to sustain operations.

¹² See NATO-document *AAP-6(U)*, ..., p. 2-O-5.

- (5) Directing the activities of those formations or units not delegated to subordinate commanders, especially those earmarked as operational reserves.”¹³

Before going more into the details a few remarks on the misleading use of the word “operational” shall be made. This word appears in a large variety of combinations such as “operational control”, “operational command”, “operational readiness” and so on. All this has nothing to do with the specific subject of the Operational Level. Also the word “operation” does not indicate at all only the activities on the Operational Level, but it is a general term for any military engagement. So the use of the attribute “operational” must be carried out very carefully and has to be understood in the given context.

Let’s now have a look at the nature of the Operational Level.

The first character is the function. This level is often described as a link between the strategic and the tactical level. But this must be explained more precisely because to be a link is only typical for any military level. So the question is whether the Operational Level has a specific task to fulfil. A further look into the AJP-01, concerning the term “Operational Art”, gives the direction: “...‘operational art’ is defined as: ‘the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organisation, integration and conduct of theatre strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles’. Operational art transfers strategic objectives into an operational design that links and integrates tactical battles and engagements to achieve the strategic aims. No specific level of command is solely concerned with operational art. In its simplest expression, operational art determines when, where and for what purpose forces will conduct operations.”¹⁴

¹³ See NATO-document *AJP-01* ..., p. 2-2.

¹⁴ Ibid p. 2-15.

The main purpose of the Operational Level is the transfer of a political input (strategic objectives) into a military output (campaigns/major operations). And this is unique for the Operational Level: the input is political, the output is military! Having this in mind it is quite clear, that “No specific level of command is solely concerned with operational art.”¹⁵ It is only important, that the Operational Level is responsible to achieve the military strategic end state. The second character is that of the “Freedom of Action”. While on the tactical level the question is only “how”, on the Operational Level “when, where and for what purpose” has to be answered. That means in fact a decision for the offensive or defensive or the avoidance of a battle. It is this wide field of options in the interface between politics and military, that demands from the leader on the Operational Level the development of a specific “Operational Idea”. And this is the third characteristic of the Operational Level:

“...the commander articulates a vision or concept of operational design, a statement of intent for the campaign plan and a command structure for executing the plan.”¹⁶ To do so he has to answer the following questions:

“What military conditions will achieve the strategic objectives in the area of operations?

What sequence of actions is most likely to produce those conditions?

How should military resources be applied, within established limitations(e.g. political constraints) to accomplish that sequence of actions?

What risks are involved?”¹⁷

In the next chapter, the elements of this Operational Design will be analyzed.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

OPERATIONAL DESIGN

Considering the basic elements for the operational design, one has to start of course with the well-known and classical factors of “Forces, Space and Time”. These factors are interdependent. They are of importance at each military level and the knowledge about them belongs to the basic military skills. On the Operational Level these elements are limiting factors for the Freedom of Action in the sense, that perhaps some options must be excluded because of a lack of preconditions.

If for example the training is incomplete, the mobility of forces is limited or the equipment is insufficient this has an impact on the selection of an option. On the other hand, it must be taken into consideration to develop already in peacetime a concept to - positively – influence these factors.

Information has been for a long time a strategic element (espionage, propaganda). On the operational and tactical level it was – and is – represented in the form of intelligence and reconnaissance. However, this has changed! The influence of the media (“CNN-Factor”!) has grown enormously and so the public and the published opinion become a considerable factor.

This has or could have an impact on the Operational Level

Further on the technical means in the information systems have run through an incredible development and offer broad opportunities. This includes the possibilities to undermine other systems: “Information Warfare”. The operational commander has to take all this into his considerations.

The next elements focus on the enemy’s side. The first aspect is his will. It is quite clear that it is also his intention to find out the best solution for his action. If both sides choose the direct striking direction then the main forces of each party will encounter. The result will be high

costs and a low probability of success. Therefore, the operational commander has to look for a more favorable way, to lower his “costs” by improving the result. Hereto he must find an indirect approach. (This will lead us to “Manoeuvre” a little bit later.)

Another important point is the “Center of Gravity”: ”characteristic(s), capability(ies), or locality(ies) from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight. (AJODWP 97)”¹⁸. Such a Center of Gravity could be of various types: decision making bodies, economic/logistic resources or information systems. It must be the major aim to hit this center and so to weaken the power of the enemy. That makes the military strategic objective achievable.

The final term is the “Decisive Point”: “... Decisive point is defined as a point from which a hostile or friendly centre of gravity can be threatened. This point may exist in time, space or in the information environment. Decisive points are often geographical in nature, such as a hill, a town, base of operations, command post, etc. Decisive points are the keys to unlocking CoGs and can be attacked directly as appropriate. The commander designates the most important decisive points as objectives and allocates resources to protect, control, destroy or neutralise them.”¹⁹

A remark must be made. The Center of Gravity on the enemy’s side will normally be strongly protected (as it will be – hopefully – on the own side!) and so a direct attack will be again a costly undertaking. But between the Center of Gravity and the projection of this force (“Power Projection”) there happens a power transmission and here the Decisive Point should be searched (if for example a charismatic leader of a nation depends on his effect in radio and television emissions, an interruption of these communication systems could be appropriate).

¹⁸ Ibid, Glossary.

¹⁹ Ibid,p. 3-3.

Having all this in mind, it is quite clear, that the own Main Effort must be constructed in a manner to aim at the Decisive Point but with a massive impact on the Center of Gravity. This is, of course, easily written, but it requires from the responsible commander – and his HQ (!) – a “broad vision, the ability to anticipate, a careful understanding of the relationship of means to ends, an understanding of the inherent, and effective allied joint co-operation.”²⁰

When using the Freedom of Action to its largest extent this will lead to a point that is called “Culmination”: “Culmination has both offensive and defensive applications.. In the offence, the culminating point is that point in time and location when the attacker’s combat power no longer exceeds that of the defender. A defender reaches his culminating point when he no longer has the capability to mount a counter offensive or defend successfully. Every effort should be made to avoid the AJF reaching its culminating point, while influencing the adversary in such a way that he reaches his culmination.”²¹ It is obvious, that the aim must be to force the enemy to enter in his Culmination – and to recognize this moment!

At the end of all these considerations, the term “Manoeuvre” must be introduced. What does it mean? “To manoeuvre is to seek to get into a position of advantage in respect to the opposition from which force can be threatened or applied. Manoeuvre will directed either towards a decisive point or directly at the opposition's CoG.”²²

Another definition is to be found in the UK Doctrine for Joint and Combined Operations (JWP 0-10, 3rd Study Draft): “Operational manoeuvre seeks to place the enemy at a disadvantage in such a way as to affect the campaign as a whole. Manoeuvre may be physical or conceptual in nature. In the physical sense the psychological effect may be so great as to render fighting unnecessary,

²⁰ Ibid, p. 2-15.

²¹ Ibid, p. 3-3. (AJF stands for Allied Joint Force.)

²² Ibid, p. 3-3. (CoG stands for Center of Gravity.)

as at Ulm, where the Austrians were placed at such an overwhelming disadvantage by Napoleon's opening manoeuvre that they surrendered without a battle. If the threat of force, as a result of manoeuvre, does not bring about the required effect on the enemy, then manoeuvre may be accompanied by firepower to produce an operational level effect. This occurred in the Normandy breakout in 1944, where allied air power was used to assist allied ground forces to break through St Lo, after which allied ground manoeuvre set up the Germans for destruction from the air in the Falaise Pocket. In the conceptual sense, manoeuvre pressure may be applied in such a way to present the enemy with a choice of unattractive options that force him to concede. For example, an insurgent may manoeuvre to destroy a government's legitimacy by provoking over-reaction to terrorist activities.”²³

And finally the US approach: “The principal purpose of maneuver is to gain positional advantage relative to enemy centers of gravity in order to control or destroy those centers of gravity. The focus of both land and naval maneuver is to render opponents incapable of resisting by shattering their morale and physical cohesion (their ability to fight as an effective, coordinated whole) rather than to destroy them physically through attrition. This condition may be achieved by attacking enemy forces and controlling territory, populations, key waters, and LOCs (in all dimensions). Land and naval maneuver (which includes the action of air assets organic to the surface force) is required to control population, territory, and key waters”²⁴

The basic idea in each of the three - nearly similar - definitions is clear: the aim is to paralyze the hostile Center of Gravity either by indirect or direct thrust. And the best outcome would be that a battle is unnecessary. But how to achieve this goal? “In the term <maneuver warfare,> maneuver refers to an entire style of warfare, one characterized not only by moving in relation to the enemy

²³ See *UK Doctrine for Joint and Combined Operations JWP 0-10*. 3rd Study Draft, p. 2-7.

²⁴ US Joint Chiefs of Staff *Doctrine for Joint Operations Joint Pub 3-0*. February 1995, p.IV-8/9.

to gain positional advantage, but also - and even more – to moving faster than the enemy, to defeating him through superior tempo.”²⁵ Some pages later Lind points out: “But is speed the only principle of war in maneuver warfare? No. There is one another: focus. It lies at the heart of a central maneuver warfare concept,... .While a specific unit ... is designated the focus of effort, the <focus> is much more than that unit. At root, it is the commander’s bid to attain a decision. ... Designation of the *Schwerpunkt* is one of the commander’s main responsibilities. ... Along with the intent and the mission, the focus of effort expresses the commander’s conceptualization of the battle;... .”²⁶ This “Focus” must be the result of a careful and thorough examination of all relevant elements for campaign planning as mentioned above with a constant look to the strategic objectives. Again it is to underline, that the three classical factors “forces, space, time” have won a fourth partner named “information” (in a very wide sense).

“Maneuver warfare is a thinking activity, an art, based on scientific foundations. ... In the offense, maneuver warfare bases movement on active reconnaissance. During what are often called <reconnaissance-pull> operations, the maneuver-oriented commander supports success by driving his forces into areas that his reconnaissance has proven are weakly defended. General MacArthur’s invasion at Inchon is a classical example of operational maneuver to <hit the enemy where they ain’t> and cause their strategic dislocation. ... In the defense, maneuver warfare bases the response on the enemy. At the operational level the maneuverist seeks to defeat, rather than just destroy, the enemy by attacking the enemy’s plan. Active measures are used to preempt the enemy attack and disrupt the enemy’s operational timetable. Again, every attempt is made to trap the enemy rather than merely push him back.”²⁷

²⁵ William S. Lind *The Theory and Practice of Maneuver Warfare*. In Richard D. Hooker, Jr., ed. *Maneuver Warfare. An Anthology*. p.4, Presidio 1993.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 13.

²⁷ John F. Antal *Thoughts About Maneuver Warfare*. In Richard D. Hooker, Jr., ed, ... p.64/65.

Let's summarize. On the Operational Level the aim is to design a Campaign Plan which is likely to achieve the strategic objectives. These strategic objectives are to be seen in an overarching political framework which means in fact, that the political influence on this level is important. The political side will always prefer - for different reasons - to keep the costs of a military engagement as low as possible. Manoeuvre is a mean to support this approach. The search for the Center(s) of Gravity and the Decisive Point(s), the tempo and the setting of focus, all this together are the ingredients for an efficient and presumable successful power projection.

“The triumph of maneuver is, it seems, complete. Not only do the military academies of the West echo to the vocabulary of maneuver, but the doctrine also has achieved its apotheosis in the flawless victory of the Gulf War. ... A self-congratulatory glance at the military landscape would suggest we have discovered a military doctrine that exactly fits our flair for exploiting technology, the native wit of our commanders, and an inherent capacity for thinking faster than any prospective enemy. If so-and to paraphrase Wavell-we are in the enviable position of having discovered the military philosopher's stone. If, however, there is a crack somewhere in this apparently seamless facade, we could be guilty of gross self-delusion, and a hubris that will be revealed only by the salutary lessons of future conflict. ...

Many maneuverist nostrums are, of course, selfevident statements of tactical good sense. Given a rational choice, few would attack strengths and avoid weaknesses; most would exploit gaps rather than confront surfaces. Successful maneuver is seductively cheap in blood and treasure, and there is an elegant economy of effort in destroying the enemy's will rather than engaging in the exhausting business of destroying his physical resources. More illustrations could be found, but these serve to show that the maneuverist view derives as much from atavistic wisdom as it

does from novel thought.”²⁸

It seems, that not everyone is happy with the maneuver approach. Is it perhaps the loss of the classical picture of war: tanks against tanks, artillery power, air and sea battles, close air support, submarine operations? Is Manoeuvre only a chess game in the terrain and attrition the “true style” of war? “Attrition is not a strategy. It is, in fact, irrefutable proof of the absence of any strategy. A commander who resorts to attrition admits his failure to conceive of an alternative. He rejects warfare as an art and accepts it on the most non-professional terms imaginable. He uses blood in lieu of brains. To be sure, political considerations left military commanders no choice other than attrition warfare, but that does not alter the hard truth that the United States was strategically bankrupt in Vietnam in 1966.”²⁹

CONSEQUENCES

After having analyzed the elements of the Campaign Planning on the Operational Level and found out the intellectual and practical predominance of Manoeuvre when creating an operational design it is now to consider the implications under the aspects of jointness, multinationality and PSO.

Although it was already stated, that “No specific level of command is solely concerned with operational art” (AJP-01), there can be no doubt, that “At the operational level, forces will

²⁸ Robert A. Fry *Myth of Maneuver* United States Naval Institute. Proceedings. Annapolis, Nov 1997.

²⁹ Col Dave R. Palmer *Summons of the Trumpet* p. 148, New York: Ballantine Books, 1984; quoted according to John F. Antal, *ibid*, p.63.

usually conduct joint operations.”³⁰ As Air Vice-Marshal Brian Weston said: “In my view, the Gulf War gave us only a brief insight into a new vision of truly seamless joint operations. It may be true that in some circumstances sequenced and coordinated single service activities are the best way to go, but the inability or lack of confidence to conduct truly seamless joint undertakings could well deny a commander a wider range of military options in the battlespace. I lean towards the conclusion that the joint application of force can be taken much further than was demonstrated in the Gulf War.”³¹ What does this mean for the Joint Force Commander on the Operational Level, concerning the development of an Operational Design on Manoeuvre basis? First of all he (she???) must have a very broad knowledge of the capabilities of all services, including their restrictions and limitations. But beyond this the Operational Commander cannot take the decision(s) in splendid isolation but he must see himself as the head of a team. The perception of what the Centers of Gravity are may vary from service to service as well as the identification of the Decisive Points depends on a certain perspective. Also the availability of forces, for example the range of air assets or the possible projection of sea power, influences the Operational Design, the Manoeuvre. Only in a broad discussion with his Component Commanders he can find out the best way(s) to manoeuvre against the enemy’s Center(s) of Gravity, directly or indirectly, perhaps with an element of attrition. The aim must be in any case to employ the service who best meets the requirements in relation to the strategic objectives. The guideline is always “Unity of Effort”, “Economy of Effort” and “Flexibility”, not to forget “Simplicity”!

As well as jointness, multi-nationality (“combinedness”) will be the character of the Operational Level. “Combined command may lead to slower response times than purely national

³⁰ NATO-document *AJP-01 Change 1* from June 1998, p. 2-7

³¹ In J. Mohan Malik ed *The Future Battlefield* ... p. 132.

command arrangements, and the speed and quality of decision making may become adversely affected. Such detrimental effects can be counter-acted through the adaption of common doctrine and procedures plus realistic training. Combined command requires an attitude of mind that is international in perspective.”³²

This result of multinationality is obviously a heavy burden for Manoeuvre, because the tempo is one of its major criteria. So the question then is, whether this disadvantage can be balanced by other advantages of a combined engagement: “... Nations participating in multinational operations do so for reasons that are viewed as nationally advantageous in political and military terms, and so contributions must be judged not only on the capability of the forces provided but also by the full range of political and military benefits they bring to the multinational alliance or coalition operation. The political advantages of multinational co-operation include sharing political risks, demonstrating economic, diplomatic, military or political support to other regions and influencing national and international opinion. The military advantages are that co-operation adds both depth (strength in numbers) and breadth (additional capabilities) to a force as well as providing access to national or regional logistic infrastructures and in certain circumstances, access to high value information and intelligence products.”³³

This is rather a clear statement and need no further comment. A possible loss of the quality of Manoeuvre will at least be compensated by the gain of political determination on the one hand and by enlarged military capabilities on the other hand.

What does Manoeuvre mean in a peacekeeping operation? Often this is a very static mission with only controlling, patrolling, monitoring and so on. However, this is not always the case. An example from SFOR shall illustrate, that even in a peacekeeping mission Manoeuvre

³² NATO-document *AJP-01* ... p. 2-5.

³³ NATO-document *AJP-01* ...p. 2-6.

can take place. Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, had his “HQ” in Pale. In this village was also a TV station, used by Karadzic and his hardliners to send propaganda against SFOR and the western community. A real Center of Gravity! It would have been possible – and legitimized by the Dayton Agreement – to storm Pale and to capture Karadzic. Of course this would have been risky, not at least because of a considerable bodyguard of Mr.K.! Another approach was chosen: permanent control of all roads to Pale and constant overflying by helicopters, namely by night (noise!) impaired the population and gave them the feeling, that without Mr. K. things would be better. In addition to that the TV-transmitters outside of Pale were occupied and so for a while the rest of the Republica Serpska had no TV programmes. All this together led to the effect, that Mr. K. was more and more isolated from his people and so he lost his influence. This was a classical Manoeuvre: identify the Center of Gravity, find out the Decisive Point and act with psychological attrition, to achieve the strategic objective without any casualties! Of course the world would like to see Mr. K. at the International Court in The Hague – and one day this will happen – but under the actual circumstances this procedure of indirect Manoeuvre is the best solution.

So, all in all, peacekeeping does not necessarily mean the total absence of Operational Art. The challenge exists even in such operations, although this is not the case every day.

CONCLUSION

The character of the Operational Level is to be a linking element between a political orientated input and a military power orientated output. To achieve the given strategic objectives – in synchronization with other non-military initiatives – it is on that level to design a campaign, which both fits to effectiveness and efficiency.

Manoeuvre on the Operational Level is not only “mobility and tempo” (Walter Semianiw³⁴). First it is the combination of all classical elements: forces, time, space and information. But this alone would not be very originally, because this is in fact the essence of any military operation. The quality of Manoeuvre on the Operational Level manifests in the identification of the Center of Gravity and the related Decisive Point(s) on the opposite side, in the use of tempo to be in a favorable position but also in the patience to wait for the culmination of the opponent. Intelligence/reconnaissance at that level is more than just only to find out the positions and strengths of the opposing troops and the assessment includes more than only to count and compare the weapon systems on both sides. The commander – and his staff (!) – on the Operational Level must develop a comprehensive imagination of the enemy’s situation, hereby taking into account any relevant aspects and its correlations (not at least the implications of the strategic/military-strategic objectives). Doing so he then will have to decide upon an campaign plan on the basis of Manoeuvre warfare, which is the most possible intelligent answer to the challenge. And “intelligent” means to achieve the own military-strategic objective(s) with minimum “costs”.

The “Yom Kippur War” on the SINAI peninsula in 1973, starting on the 6th is a good example for this approach. In the first phase of this war EGYPT – in close co-operation with

³⁴ He also considers the “destructive effects of firepower to gain freedom of maneuver ...” to be an important element of maneuver warfare. See p. 21 in his essay.

SYRIA – was successful by using surprise (date and time of attack, deception in the preparation and seeing the Israelian overestimation of its superiority), by attacking on a very broad front in order to avoid an Israelian counter concentration (CANAL crossing on 82 different points), by forcing ISRAEL to split its forces (GOLAN + SINAI). The Israelian counter attack nine days later was so extremely successful (Dayan/Sharon), because it started right after the culmination of the Egyptian effort (and not two days earlier as originally planned: patience instead of tempo!), because it focused clearly and consequently on the gap between the Egyptian 2nd and 3rd Army (and gaining so the possibility for a CANAL crossing in the back of the Egyptian troops), because it saw the soon coming engagement of the world powers to impose a cease fire and so it was the attempt to win the encircled Egyptian troops as a pledge (instead of pulling them out of the SINAI directly with the risk of remarkable own losses). All in all this is really a good example for the use of Manoeuvre in modern warfare. It shows also, that attrition is not necessarily complete out of the game: the Egyptian planning for the second phase of the attack was a clear element of attrition by using a strong defense position in order to wear out the attacking Israelian forces. (The reasons for the failure of this planning are various.)

The education and training of qualified officers for postings on the Operational Level should intensively use the analysis of such contemporary examples to provide them with a solid basis of knowledge and imagination.

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