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“Plans are nothing, but planning is everything”,

Did Moltke go far enough?

A critical reflection on requirements for plans and planning processes at the operational level.

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ABSTRACT

Planning processes and plans are the prerequisites for the preparation and the conduct of campaigns and even tactical battles. Moreover they are the basic means for decision-making. Moltke's saying, "plans are nothing, but planning is everything", relates to the necessity for being oriented towards future events. But did Moltke go far enough?

Therefore the following thesis, "Only the steady interaction and interdependence of both plans and planning will meet the requirements for conducting a campaign", will be examined throughout the paper. Based on the historic example, The Austro-Prussian War in 1866, the paper examines basic principles of planning processes and plans. Different outcomes of Moltke's way to wage a war are examined regarding to their value in modern conflicts. Further on various facts that influence the planning process itself, the processes within a staff, and the relationship between commanders and their staffs are described. The paper concludes that there should be a steady interaction and interdependence between planning processes and plans.

Only the consideration of these principles leads to a proper environment for decision-making.

*Every great revolution brings ruin to
the old army.*

-Leon Trotsky

Introduction

War has changed dramatically over the last three centuries.

The reason for this change was on one hand the invention of modern weapons, means of communication, and means of transportation and on the other hand the use of improved warfare methods. Above all, attention to these factors was the reason for success, and their neglect the reason for defeat. Many personages, as Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Moltke gave their undivided attention to studies of principles of warfare. Many circumstances have changed since these days, but the principles of warfare concerning the processes for war planning and conducting a war have remained the same.

Therefore it is essential, especially for commanders and their staffs, to seek a proper balance between ends, means, and principles. It is not the intent of this paper to describe the operational planning process in detail, because the process as well as its outcomes can be looked up in different national and international publications. On the example of the operational planning process, the paper examines fields of possible problems within the process.

1. The Austro-Prussian War in 1866

Warfare until the eighteenth century was bound to small armies, mainly consisting of well-trained mercenaries.¹ The equipment of these days, such as the flintlock musket was hopelessly inaccurate at ranges beyond 100 meters and artillery that needed a huge amount of labor to be moved, did not allow quick reactions on the battlefield.

War changed dramatically in the nineteenth century, when Napoleon Bonaparte introduced lightweight batteries, which could be limbered up and moved quickly by horse teams. Napoleon also invented the idea of using concentrated cannon fire as a force multiplier. The number of troops increased in the course of the French Revolutionary Wars. Napoleon increasingly used massed batteries of artillery to compensate for his shrinking numbers of men throughout his campaigns.² Although rival states were initially reluctant to adopt the French system, in the end, they had to embrace all or parts of it because of attrition during the campaigns. Therefore, in 1814 the Prussians introduced universal conscription and the Austrians created a reserve army, called the Landwehr. But new circumstances caused by the flexible use of weapon systems, the increased number of soldiers and the new recruiting system, meant that these bigger armies needed new tactics. The French made a giant step towards modern warfare when they used “shock tactics”.³ Nevertheless, even if it was Napoleon who was the first to approach modern warfare, it was Helmut Karl Bernhard von Moltke the later Prussian General Staff chief, to whom the credit of inventing modern warfare is given.

¹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 6-9.

² Van Creveld, *Technology*, pp. 94-6.

³ Gunther E. Rothenberg, “T A

1.1. Strategic environment

“The war of 1866 was entered on not because the existence of Prussia was threatened, nor was it caused by public opinion and the voice of the people: it was a struggle long foreseen and calmly prepared for, recognized as a necessity by the cabinet, not for territorial aggrandizement, but for an ideal end - the establishment of power”.⁴ In the end this struggle for power was derived from the circumstance that Prussia was flanked by much larger empires and had become a kingdom of border strips. At this time Prussia was obviously the most vulnerable of all the European Great Powers. Therefore Moltke was driven by the fear that Prussia could all too easily be overrun by any of its larger neighbors. “Moltke understood that the only way for Prussia to break from its dependency on Austria and its subordination to England, France, and Russia, was to make Prussia what it had briefly been under Frederick the Great: the premier military state of Europe”⁵. Therefore he developed, prepared, and in the end used new doctrines and tactical principles. The main reason why they were successful was the coordinated, quick development and usage of these principles to gain a lead in what is now termed the “operational art”. In these days Austria was ruled over by Emperor Franz Joseph I, a well-meaning Emperor who dreaded conflict. He tended to preempt every possible source of discord with a compromise. Therefore as the emperor’s politics went, so went his military affairs. So in the early 1860s, under public pressure the emperor replaced his General Staff chief of ten years, seventy-two-year-old Field Marshal Heinrich Hess, with a younger more popular one.

⁴ Gordon A. Craig, *The Battle of Koeniggraetz*, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1964, p. 1.

⁵ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 17.

He was Ludwig Benedek, the only Austrian hero to have emerged from the Habsburg defeat at Solferino, where Benedek's corps had bravely covered the Austrian army's retreat to safety over the Mincio river bridges. Because of this single event, which was seen as a prodigious achievement by the whole empire, Emperor Franz Joseph I made Benedek a Lieutenant General by promoting him over a half dozen more capable officers. Later on the emperor putted him simultaneously in charge of Austria's largest army, the Army of Italy in Verona, as well as the Imperial General Staff in Vienna. On behalf of Benedek, the emperor made a second mistake by deciding to make Benedek's friend Heinikstein, an officer equally unqualified concerning strategy and operations, imperial staff chief, after having relieving Benedek of the post in 1864 on his own request. It was well founded in the emperor's decision that between 1864 and 1866 nothing had been done to prepare Austria for the two-front war with Prussia and Italy. Austria therefore failed to fashion effective responses to Moltke's new strategic and tactical concepts. "For want of anything better, Austrian strategists of the 1860s fell back upon the Restoration prescriptions of Jomini and Archduke Karl Habsburg. Karl, who had defeated Napoleon in battle at Aspern in 1809, had written prolifically on war until his death in 1847. The archduke's strategic thoughts set down in the 1830s and 1840s, were not actually published in Austria until 1862, when, rather unwisely, they were seized upon by Austrian staff officers as a home-grown basis for Austrian strategy"⁶.

⁶ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 29.

1.2. Operational environment and planning on operational level

“The art of war is a simple art: everything is in the performance”⁷.

Since Napoleon, war has undergone fundamental transitions in scale and scope.

So war and within war the conduct of campaigns and operations has often proven more difficult than Napoleon said. So what is the character of an operation as a proceeding for decision-making? Carl von Clausewitz, referred in his “On War” only to tactics and strategy. He defined tactics as the use of armed forces in the engagement and strategy as the use of engagement for the object of war.⁸ Moltke was the first who frequently used the term “operational” but in the sense of the movement of bodies of troops for the purpose of combining forces for decisive battle. Was Moltke thus the inventor of the operational art or was he just a well-educated officer with the right flair for tactics and the usage of modern weapons and equipment? Moltke also adopted intensive shooting practice and also a small-unit tactics. Because of this decentralization even small Prussian units were able to outflank massed enemy formations and destroy them with crossfire. Moltke’s emphasis on fire and the small units was, in sum, a smaller tactical version of his larger, strategic doctrine of envelopment⁹. But Moltke did more than improving the tactical reaction of subordinate units on the battlefield. Moreover he developed an overarching concept for preparing and conducting operations by using new, but not

⁷ Comments made on St. Helena, cited in Cyril Falls, “The Art of War From the Age of Napoleon to the Present Day”, *Oxford*, 1961, p. 231.

⁸ B.J.C. McKercher and Michael A. Hennessy *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War*, Praeger Publisher, Westport, 1996, p.7.

⁹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 24.
Annotation: According to the author’s view the designation “strategic” referring to Moltke’s doctrine of envelopment should be understood as an operational means to conduct campaigns and operations.
See: Definition “Operation” and “Strategic level of war”, Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning, Joint Publication 5-00.1, 25 January 2002, GL-9, GL-10.

unknown, means of communication and transportation. In particular, the coordinated and well-prepared use of these means was the reason for Prussia's exceptional victory in the Battle of Koeniggraetz during the Austro-Prussian war. For an example, in the Battle of Koeniggraetz, the side that emerged victorious was the side whose army had used five railways to deploy (compared to only one used by its opponent), and who's front, consequently, spread over two hundred miles¹⁰. Although Moltke used, in contrast to the Austrians, new approaches to conduct a campaign, in short the victory was based on suitable organizational structures, detailed preparations, and above all clear and precise staff work. Therefore the question now arises is a phenomenon called the operational art, in the sense of "the fine arts"? And what is about the other levels of war? Is there an art for conducting tactical battles? This problem will be discussed later in this paper.

Doubtless, anyone who has ever conducted planning, especially military planning, is aware of the fact that the higher the level, the more complexity increases. Moltke's way to success was to avoid imbalance between comprehensive and detailed staff work and his own visions. Above all, this balance between comprehensive staff work and the ideas of a military leader well aware of the principles of the "operational art" was missing through the Austrian's preparation and conduct of the campaign.

"Austria in the 1860s had no Moltke"¹¹.

This was not for lack of native talent, but was rather a consequence of the peculiar culture of Habsburg Vienna, described above. Though a good fighting soldier, neither Benedek nor Henikstein had a grasp of strategy. Benedek, while comfortable with a corps, was lost

¹⁰ Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*, Harvard College, 1985, p. 106.

¹¹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 25.

with an army. The Austrians had many disadvantages, as shown in the table at the end of this section but most of them arose from not enough precision in the preparation and conduct of the campaign.

1.3. Plans, planning, command, and staff work

Although the Prussians had advantage in numbers, the Austrians had the advantage of internal lines, because in order to subdue the western German states and accelerate an invasion of Saxony and Austria, Moltke was forced to break the Prussian army into four groups small enough to be transported quickly by railway.

In order to recoup time, which had been lost to the Prussian's king vacillation, Moltke was forced to spread out his army because the Prussian rail lines towards the Austrian border were widely spread. The wide gaps between the Prussian forces, caused by their way of deployment, offered General Benedek, now commandant of the Austrian North Army, opportunities a danger Moltke fully appreciated. Although Moltke adopted his plans, caused by the possible Austrian advantage, his main concept was to overrun Saxony and the other German states, penetrate Bohemia, and there envelop Benedek's North Army with three mobile columns, remained unchanged¹². To invade Austria and the German states, Moltke deployed four armies in a broad arc from west to east.

Moltke conducted the campaign by seizing different objectives with different troops, but always aware of the fact that only a well synchronized movement of his troops and with each body able to support each of the others was the way to success. Although there were, of course, potentially great risks in the Prussian plan, it had been prepared by

¹² Albrecht von Blumenthal, *Jopurnals of Field Marshal Count von Blumenthal for 1866 and 1870-71*, pp. 17-30.

intensive and precise staff work. Moltke, who always insisted that no plan of operations survives the first clash with an enemy force, would have been the first to admit that his plan, like any other, was based upon hopeful assumptions about his subordinates and their ability to march and supply themselves at the fast pace set by Berlin¹³.

Therefore Moltke's remark, "plans are nothing, but planning is everything", needs to be examined in greater depth. Obviously no commander, no matter which special military training and education he has, would be able to prepare and especially to conduct planning in an ongoing campaign, without being assisted by a staff. Plans and the processes of planning are dependant on each other. Sometimes plans are the prerequisites for being able to conduct planning in a coordinated way, sometimes it is vice versa.

Therefore, before starting any attempt on preparing or conducting a campaign, it is above all important to get a general idea about the interaction and interdependence between plans and the processes of planning. Moltke's remark should not be seen as an irrefutable rule, for operational and for tactical commanders, but as a guide. A guide that should ensure commanders and their staffs not only to rely on plans, no matter how perfect they might be, but to uphold steady and precise staff work to adapt plans and procedures, when necessary. So what made Moltke and his staff that successful?

"Like other organizations of its kind, the Prussian General Staff had its origins in the eighteenth-century quartermaster staff"¹⁴. The business of the General Staff in peacetime was to gather all information about possible opponents, and theaters of war.

Further on they had to draft and redraft plans for mobilization and deployment.

¹³ Hajo Holborn, *The Prusso-German School, Makers of Modern Strategy*, p. 300.

¹⁴ P. Bronsart von Schellendorf, *Der Dienst des Generalstabs*, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1893), pp. 111-117, in: Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 109.

A main advantage of the Prussian General Staff was to conduct war games and thus to improve already prepared plans. The Austrians refused to learn this method of planning, because of a lack of money. Also the annual Prussian staff rides, lasting three weeks, used to familiarize staff officers with one another and with the terrain over which they were likely to operate, in the end to the creation of a body of officers who were thoroughly familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses and who could be relied upon to carry out their duties very quickly. Although the Prussian General Staff conducted all these preparations mentioned above, many officers disputed the importance of the General Staff¹⁵. Nevertheless Moltke's General Staff had just begun to emerge; the greatest virtues of it appear to have been in its compactness, reached through peacetime training and all its organizational aspects. Fully as important as any of these, however, was the calm atmosphere at headquarters, which was the product of both of Moltke's own personality and of the fact that he and his staff traveled only slowly and infrequently and did not strive to be everywhere at the same time. Relying on the telegraph, an instrument far superior to anything previously in existence to communicate with the armies far away, the staff was able to take a detached view of events. Moltke's General Staff was not a soulless machine carrying out its chief's orders with blind efficiency. It was not a body of men so carefully educated and trained as to be capable of divining their commander's intentions from afar, without failure, and consequently of always making the right decision in carrying out them. It was instead a staff, once taken to the field, whose operation was based on no fixed division of labor, and the separation between staff and line duties was not strict. This last mentioned point, which by modern standards might be

¹⁵ K. von Blumenthal, *Tagebuecher*, Stuttgart, 1902, in: Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 112.

considered a serious weakness, was in fact one of the staff's greatest advantage. In Moltke's time, overspecialization, which today wouldn't allow most staff officers to step into each other's shoes at a moment's notice, had not been reached. Therefore Moltke's staff had a certain amount of staying power, which allowed carrying out almost any task at any time that might come to hand. Moltke's General Staff had additional advantages, as the officers who conducted detailed staff work at all levels, and the orderlies who carried the messages, were fully experts, carefully selected and trained in peace. So throughout the 1866 campaign, staff work became a well-settled instrument of command. Because staff work was routinely carried out on the basis of established secretarial practices. "To make this reliability possible, a certain stability in organization was as necessary to the Prussian General Staff as it had been with the Roman centurions, who often spent their entire active lives in a single legion and moved slowly upward through the ladder of ranks... With the Prussian staff officers spending much of their careers in a single institution... serving long tours of duty in Berlin and on the staff of major formations... an organization came into being in which every officer knew all the others well and which was thoroughly "run in"¹⁶.

Comparison of the Prussian and Austrian situation in 1866		
Aspects	Prussia	Austria
Strategic environment	Idea to establish power; Political and military will; Long foreseen; Calmly preparation;	No strategic visions; Attempt to maintain the present situation; Dread conflicts;
Operational environment	Development of the most efficient and rapidly deployable army;	No operational planning to prepare for possible threats;

¹⁶ Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 143.

	<p>Invention of an overarching new concept for the conduct of operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maneuver warfare • Suitable organizational structures • Detailed preparations • Training of all levels • Use of new means • Clear and precise staff work 	<p>Rely on a old home-grown basis for the conduct of operations; No awareness and use of possible advantages; Military stagnation caused by the acting high ranking commanders with influence on command structure, staff work, staff organization, and staff and/or commanders training</p>
Command		
Combatant Commanders	<p>Strong personality but familiar with his staff; Put up with risks, but based on detailed evaluation; Invention and use of new methods (“operational art”); Stay initiative in time and ways</p>	<p>Less qualification of leading commanders; Steady change of main commanders; No initiative</p>
Command Structure	<p>Adoption of HQ structures to new concepts; Staying power; Use of new means</p>	<p>Inefficient command structure at army-level and through the subordinate commands</p>
Staff		
Staff organization	<p>No fixed division of labor; (best match to situation) Well settled instrument of command, because of established secretarial practices; Stability</p>	<p>Disadvantage caused by military stagnation over many years</p>
Staff work	<p>No panic reactions; Awareness of the working level; No micromanagement</p>	<p>Disadvantage caused by military stagnation over many years</p>
Training and education	<p>Precise training through peacetimes; (wargaming...) Compactness; Familiarized staffs; (Awareness of strengths and weaknesses) Calm atmosphere</p>	<p>No precise preparation; Refuse to use new training methods (wargaming); No compactness; No familiarization within the staff</p>
Plans and Planning	<p>Steady interaction of plans and planning Adoption of plans when necessary; Accepted risks;</p>	<p>No steady and precise gather of information about possible opponents and theaters of war</p>

	Unchanged strategic objective;	
Means and equipment	Use of different railway tracks to conduct maneuver warfare; Use of new means of communication (telegraph); Use of new weapons (rifles)	Rely on foot marches and a single railway; No or only limited use of new means; Prevention of the insertion of new weapons (rifles)

2. Lessons learned about the 1866 campaign

- A strategic End-State has to be defined prior to any kind of planning.
- Strategic and operational goals and plans have to rely on each other.
Conducting or planning for a campaign it is a prerequisite to identify strength and weaknesses of possible opponents far ahead of the actual campaign.
- Plans have to be drafted and redrafted, even in peace, to be prepared in the best way possible for waging a war.
- Organizational structures of headquarters and services have to be adapted to new operational and tactical concepts.
- A determinant factor for success is to establish new or adapted organizations and concepts in time, so that the whole organization is able to reach a “run in” (eingespielt)¹⁷ level by steady and precise training and education.
- The use of modern, or even newly invented, means of warfare can contribute to success, if all levels of command and all troops are trained to use them, and above all if they are aware of their advantages and possible disadvantages.

¹⁷ In this case it makes sense to use a German term that has no exact equivalent in English and refers to steady and precise training either in staff work or combat training over a long time.

- All levels of command have to focus on their main tasks and should avoid any kind of micromanagement, even if new methods or equipment would allow doing so.
- All staff members have to consider, that different levels have different tasks, concerning the preparation and the conduct of campaigns and battles. Therefore micromanagement has to be avoided.
- Commanders of all levels should be as familiar with their staffs and procedures, as the staffs should be familiar with their commander's way of thinking.
- Staff structures and procedures have to be designed to solve all possible problems that may occur. Sometimes these structures have to be rearranged in time as a prerequisite for solving unusual problems or tasks.
- Commanders and their staffs have to act flexibly and should be able to switch between specialization and staying power, according to changing situations and/or tasks.

3. Questions for modern conflicts

By following operational principles, inventing new methods of warfare, and using modern means, Moltke conducted a very successful campaign.

But in his days military forces were limited to a single service and the need for coordination was limited. Therefore the following questions arise:

- Is it possible to use these lessons learned for the planning and the conduct of nowadays campaigns?
- Are operational principles out of all proportion to the use of technical means?

- Is there a necessity to use operational principles in a time where the stronger party is able to win by using overwhelming firepower and overwhelming technical means?
- Is there any longer a necessity for a proper relationship between commanders and their staffs, because of the increasing overspecialization of staff members and their steadily growing number?
- Is there any longer a necessity for using flexible planning and execution methods within a staff because of steadily increasing technology?

4. Planning on operational level

As it is stated in the CFC “Staff Officers Handbook”, “Conclusion: Campaign design employs a number of tools and concepts to help produce a coherent plan. In the end, though, the variables are too numerous and too shifting, the possibilities too many and the importance of professional judgment too important to make it a scientific process. It is therefore destined to remain in the realm of the OPERATIONAL ART”¹⁸.

Sun Tzu, Napoleon, Clausewitz, and especially Moltke were they only lucky?

If they had not had luck, would there have been a flicker of hope for these to succeed in their campaigns? Comparing all these different definitions of the operational level¹⁹, the question arises how operational art is defined. Further on there is a lack of consensus about the meaning of the term “operational art”, especially when it is used to describe different levels of war. Part of the problem is that the word “operational” as used in the

¹⁸ Combined and Joint Staff Officers Handbook, *Canadian Forces College*, p. 41.

¹⁹ See Joint Publications 3-0, 3-60, 5-00, part terms and definitions.

English-speaking militaries of the world has a number of meanings. According to Bruce Menning, the term “operation” has been used since at least the 17th century to describe what European armies did in the field, and the conduct of operations in that context was an integral part of strategy. During the first half of the 20th century “operational” came to mean: “engaged in or connected with active military operations as distinct from being under training or in reserve” or “in a condition of readiness to perform some intended function. The more recent use of the term “operational” in expression such as “operational level of war” and “operational art” has given another meaning to the word in a new context. There is some consensus about the meaning of “operational level of war” in the main Canadian and US joint publications²⁰.

On one hand operational art can be defined²¹ as a complex planning and execution process to transform strategic objectives into military acts, conducted by different forces.

On the other hand operational art can be defined as the incomprehensible and not explainable ability of commanders to define goals. If operational art derives from the personal abilities of a commander, then the question arises to which amount planning procedures, based on mathematical schemes, determine military missions. Further on it has to be examined when and to which amount a commander has to influence the preparation as well as the ongoing planning process.

The interaction of a commander with his staff is a vital aspect of planning procedures.

But there is also a lack of consensus in using different terms of the operational level. “As a result of popular use of the word “campaign” when referring to air, land, and sea

²⁰ Allan English, *THE OPERATIONAL ART: THEORY, PRACTICE, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE*, 15 March 2003, p. 4.

²¹ See definition (JP 1-02)

operations during Operation Desert Storm, confusion exists concerning how many campaigns actually were planned and conducted. Adding to the confusion are the titles used for campaign Phases I (Strategic Air Campaign) and IV (Ground Offensive Campaign) in the combined OPLAN. In fact, there was only one overall theater campaign, divided into four distinct phases...However, throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the term “campaign” frequently was used informally and generically to describe various aspects of the overall effort...”²².

In the same way, confusion can occur about the aim, size and content of major operations and operations. Comparing the two definitions, there is no real difference referring to size, command level, or aim. Further more the term “operation” is used in diverse meanings²³ by different national forces. This may result in confusion throughout different command levels, and different services during the preparation and the conduct of military actions. Therefore, sometimes misunderstanding occurs between the services about their tasks and military command levels on which they act. The problems in the field of jointness will be discussed later in this paper.

²² *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, Final Report to Congress*, Department of Defense, Chapters I through VIII, April 1992, p. 88.

²³ Whereas the operational level of war is used as the connection between strategy and tactics in every force, the designation for military actions as an operation differs widely (see : Merkblatt operative Fuehrung, Austrian armed Forces, 2001, Draft, p.36-45; Operative Leitlinie fuer Einsatz der Streitkraefte, Deutsche Bundeswehr, 1999, p. 2-4)

5. The aim of planning

To understand the aim of planning, the term “planning”²⁴ has to be defined.

Planning, in general, is a combination of systematic thoughts directed to the future and the definition of measures. Planning itself is determined by a specific goal.

The starting point for planning should always be the latest finding. The purpose of planning, on all levels, is to gain superiority in command and control²⁵. The superiority in command and control is based on several facts, which are:

Attributes of Headquarters and Command Posts:

- Survivability
- Sustainability
- Command Control Effectiveness

The attributes, mentioned above, are prerequisites to reach positive achievements in the command and control process. The total of these achievements is equivalent to the outcome of the staff work on a certain command level.

This means, the better staff work is organized and the more it is based on synergetic effects in the relationship between commander and staff and within the staff, the easier it should be to gain superiority in command and control, and superiority in command and

²⁴ Planung (HDv 100/900)-1. Allgemein: In die Zukunft gerichtetes systematisches Denken und Festlegen von Massnahmen. Die Planung wird durch die Zielvorstellung bestimmt und geht vom derzeitigen Erkenntnisstand aus, translated by the author, *Militaerisches Studienglosar Englisch, Teil I*, Bundessprachenamt, Deutsche Bundeswehr, 1996, p. 771.

²⁵The terms “command” and “control” are closely related and regularly used together; however, they are not synonymous (Ref L). Command is authority vested in an individual. It can be described (but not defined) as the process by which a commander impresses his will and intentions on the subordinates and encompasses the authority and responsibility for deploying and assigning forces to fulfil their missions. Control is the authority exercised by a commander. It can be described (but not defined) as the process through which a commander, assisted by the staff, organizes, directs and coordinates the activities of the forces assigned, BI-SC Dir 80-80 Joint Command and Control, C2 Directive, p. 13.

control is the key to success. This key to success is not only limited to a certain command level, but also a prerequisite for all command levels to carry out their tasks. Only in the conviction that superiority in command and control is of great importance on every command level, proper prerequisites for planning procedures, the draw up of plans, and the conduct of missions itself can be created.

6. Interaction and interdependence of planning processes and plans

There is a huge amount of different plans, such as campaign plans, operation plans, branches²⁶, sequels²⁷, and the plan for the staff work²⁸. Plans can either be the outcomes of planning processes, or they can be used as a means for the coordination of processes. Plans, as the products of processes, are outcomes of different main and subordinate processes within the overall decision cycle. Plans as a means to coordinate processes are flow charts, instructions, or even listed information for control and coordination purposes, which enable staffs to communicate and coordinate their work in the best way possible. So, they are means for creating a high level of synergy within a staff, and even within the relationship of commanders with their staffs.

²⁶ **Branch.**

The contingency options built into the basic plan. A branch is used for changing the mission, orientation, or direction of movement of a force to aid success of the operation based on anticipated events, opportunities, or disruptions caused by enemy actions and reactions, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0, 10 September 200 Tm74 1

“At the tactical level...American forces seem to have performed in the traditional manner. US soldiers were well trained and fought courageously. Their leaders proved themselves masters of the art of coordinating fire support, movement, and logistics.... But while US forces may have carried traditional methods, techniques, and doctrine to new heights, they have not absorbed maneuver warfare...Command and control remain rigidly centralized...much was planned in advance...Units moved primarily to mass fire systems against enemy forces and expressed a clear preference for the use of fires over maneuver...”²⁹.

Although there is a large number of “Joint Publications” in use, problems exist to reach adequate synergetic effects within staffs and joint missions. Moreover, modern armies often prefer to plan for attrition warfare instead of concentrating on operational design. But where are the reasons for problems within the joint environment, and the planning for campaigns? One reason may be the not yet completely changed understanding for a necessary transformation of planning procedures for the Cold War into flexible, visionary, and quick planning procedures. A few years ago war plans were structured to meet the now defunct Soviet threat. Plans were made to move large forces to forward theaters. Nowadays, forces are deployed on short notice, on unanticipated missions, anywhere in the world, and even for operations other than war. So confusion might arise about the proper way of planning for a various number of possible military missions, different in purpose, aim, and scale and how to conduct them. Another reason may be a different interpretation of “jointness” within the services.

²⁹ Richard D. Hooker, Jr., “The Mythology Surrounding Maneuver Warfare”, *Parameters*, 23 (Spring 1993), p. 36.

“Cooperation like apple pie is rarely if ever questioned as a desirable thing.

Unfortunately, while everyone knows what an apple pie is, fixing a military definition of cooperation is much harder”.³⁰ An easy response to problems within inter-service missions is jointness, but trying to define this quality produces surprisingly varied answers. Sometimes jointness is seen as a diminution of the power of the individual services, sometimes it is seen as the elimination of redundant weapon systems or overlapping roles and missions. One reason for the interservice problems may be, that service visions about how to fight are based on service cultures, themselves derived from the defining experiences of World War II. That conflict-the greatest in history-created doctrinal and organizational foundations within the services. They gave the services institutionalized visions of warfare that decisively shaped how they looked at war.³¹ In 1996 “Joint Vision 2010”, a framework of joint operational concepts, intended to harmonize service visions and doctrines was published. But jointness is not a new concept, as C. P. Ankersen states in his article.³² He states, that some form of interservice cooperation has existed at least since Wellington’s day. Two reasons are synergy and streamlining. As stated in Unified Action Armed Forces, “The ability to integrate and exploit the various capabilities of a joint force can disorient an enemy who is weak in one or more dimensions of warfare”. Another reason for “disjointness” might be given in a uniquely human and very old problem, the propensity of commanders to command and staffs to staff. Therefore an outcome of this problem is the improper handling of

³⁰ Seth Cropsey, “The limits of Jointness”, Out of Joint, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Summer 1993, p. 72.

³¹ Richard D. Hooker, Jr., “Joint Campaigning in 2010”, *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 1998-99, p. 40-42.

³² C. P. Ankersen, “A little bit joint”, Out of joint, *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1998, p. 117.

information within headquarters and between command levels. “Systems evolved over decades and centuries to filter out “noise” and reinterpret, analyze, and summarize—that is, to staff-incoming information to help commanders make decisions. While necessary, the staffing process changed the meaning and content of information in unpredictable ways...When refined, amplified, and summarized, informational inputs emerged as outputs in altered form...Where information moved between command echelons within a service, some distortion was accepted as necessary and unavoidable friction. There, at least, units belonging to the same service spoke the same language...But when data and firepower crossed service boundaries, the problem increased exponentially...Commanders played a special role in this process...Because commanders were directly accountable for results they stressed centralizing command...³³. Processing and handling of information is one of the essential tasks of commanders and staffs. Therefore it is very important, especially in modern armies, to evaluate and reduce information on different command levels. The reduction of all information available to a certain amount, useful for subordinate levels, supports their decision making process. Therefore the question arises, if there is a way out of “disjointness”. Having a closer look on jointness, levels of command, and synergy a few possibilities to solve the problem of “disjointness can be proposed, by using varying forms of combinations between Services and command levels. For an example, combining the various military services into single organizations (that is functioning under one commander) compensation for each arm’s

³³ Richard D. Hooker, Jr., “Joint Campaigning in 2010”, *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 1998-99, p. 44.

weakness through another arm's strength can be reached. In such a manner, each arm serves to complement the others.³⁴

Thus the Navy makes up for the shortage of strategic mobility by transporting land forces across the sea, Army dominance of the rear area meets the Air Force need to operate airpower from secure bases, and so forth. Ankersen states in his article the following:

”The glue that binds such capabilities is trust-in both doctrine and the other services.

Trust begins with understanding the commander's intent; for if one is not sure of one's own purpose it is unlikely one will believe anyone else has a purpose firmly in mind.

Trust in other services only can arise from sound joint strategy and holistically developed doctrine. It becomes easier with the mastery of core capabilities as a starting point but can be fully achieved solely through experience. Jointness is only maximized when

synergy³⁵, and thus trust, is present.³⁶ As stated earlier, if component commands do not

foster trust, but in the adversary try to guard service requirements, capabilities, and

traditions, jointness will decrease. Therefore a possible solution might be to establish

only one command level for a joint force, thus the level of only one joint commander. But

can making the component commanders to staff functions in one single and enlarged

headquarter solve the problem of disjointness? One advantage of different (joint)

command levels could be, that the commanders and their staffs would act in the sense of

jointness, without any attempt to guard single service requirements.

Possible further advantages could be:

³⁴ See Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991), pp. 92-94.

³⁶ Ankerson, “A Little Bit Joint”, *Out of joint, Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1998, p. 118.

- Economy of force: Joint warfare without components may reduce unnecessary redundancy, thereby maximizing the return on effort and resources expended.
- Unity of command: The absence of component commanders improves unity of command by avoiding the dilution of the joint commander's intent by serving interpretations.
- Simplicity: Components add an unnecessary level of command, leading to problems in command and control, such as in communications.

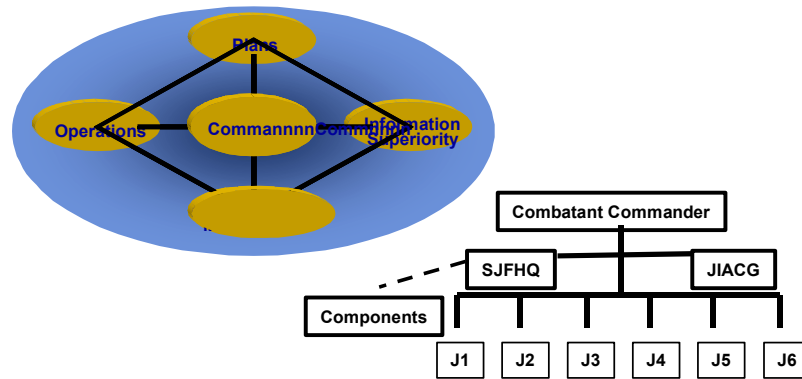
Looking at the different possibilities for changing the structure of headquarters would either increase the span of control in one single HQ to an amount that would not be manageable, or a system of subordinate (joint) commanders has to be established.

Another possibility to solve the problems within joint forces might be to integrate a "Standing Joint Forces Headquarter (SJFHQ)".³⁷ The main idea of a SJFHQ is to support the commander and the processes of staff work, by establishing an element directly attached to the commander. But investigating the structure and the composition of this "control-element", possibilities for further problems within (joint) forces arise.

The quality of staff work emerges from the combination of various facts, including processes, plans, and above all human abilities. Trying to suppress possible problems by establishing an additional control element might be the wrong way. Especially, when there is the possibility of rivalry between major staff functions.

³⁷ LCol Battista, *US Transformation*, Keynote Speaker, AMSC 6, 2 October, 2003.

One possibility to use an attached control-element is to use it as a means to process the



huge amount of information.

Using the concept of a SJFHQ³⁸, as shown in figure I, could lead to a working environment, based on Moltke's principles as they were:

- Familiarization within a staff, at least within the main staff functions.

³⁸ LCol Battista, *US Transformation*, Keynote Speaker, AMSC 6, 2 October, 2003

- “Run in”-situation, caused by peacetime training in a standing headquarter.
- Avoiding micromanagement by using control elements to process and distribute relevant information, according to specific levels of command.
- Being able to use flexible and varying planning methods, without relying only to modern technical means, caused by intensive training during peacetime.

Further evidence that planners have difficulty staying focused on effects-based thinking came to light during the chief of staff of the Air Force’s Title X Global Engagement IV war game, executed in October 1999 to explore EBO.³⁹ After the game, key players and overseers said that EBO had worked fine as long as the players focused on the mechanics of operational planning rather than the outcomes desired by senior leadership involved in the game.⁴⁰ But targeting is only one small example for the steady interaction and interdependence of processes and plans within the decision making process. Therefore the more technical means and technical supported processes forces use to accomplish their missions, the more commanders and their staffs have to be aware of the fact that only a well-balanced procedure, including technical means and the obedience of operational principles, will lead to success.

³⁹ **Effects-based operations (EBO)**

Military actions and operations designed to produce distinctive and desired effects through the application of appropriate movement, supply, attack, defense, and maneuvers. EBO focuses on functional, systemic, and psychological effects well beyond the immediate physical result of a tactical or operational event. Furthermore, EBO is equally concerned with military actions and operations that trigger additional effects beyond those desired. *Joint Doctrine for Strategic Attack*, 16 March 2000.

Quoted by Benjamin S. Lambeth, “Control of the Air: The Future of Air Dominance and Offensive Strike”, speech delivered at the Rydges Canberra Hotel, Canberra, Australia, 15-16 November 1999, available from http://idun.itsc.adfa.edu.au/ADSC/Air/Air_paper_Lambeth.htm.

⁴⁰ Gen John Shaud, USAF, retired, Rosslyn, Va., interviewed by authors, 15 June 2000; and Sam Clovis, Montgomery, Ala., interviewed by authors, 4 May 2000, Col Edward Mann, USAF, Retired Lt Col Gary Endersby, USAF, Retired Tom Searle, “Dominant Effects: Effects-Based Joint Operations”, *Aerospace Power Journal*, Fall 2001, p. 2.

But the most important means of control is the one, which derives from human interaction. Therefore the relationship of a commander with his staff - the higher the command level, the more important becomes the synergy within a staff - should be based on trust, a calm atmosphere, loyalty, and the conviction in their ability to solve problems. Acting on these principles the chief of staff should represent the commander's opponent in the sense of closely scrutinizing his intents. This way of acting requests a high grade of mutual trust and of course loyalty to the commander. Once, the commander makes his final decision, however the whole staff has to carry it out. But also during the realization-phase the synergy within the staff and a permanent attempt to seek for new and better possibilities has to be upheld.

10. Conclusion

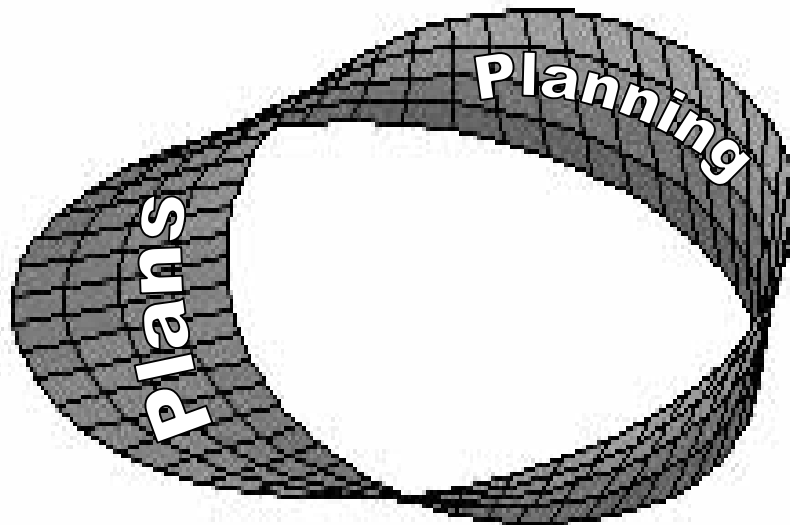
In principle Moltke was right by saying: "Plans are nothing, but planning is everything", and "No plan of operation survive the first clash with an enemy force". But this saying has not to be taken literally, but in a broader sense. It has to be seen in a sense, that plans are valuable outcomes of planning processes, which build the basis for further planning, as sequels and/or branches. But having finished a plan it should not lead the responsible persons to rely on it without adapting it constantly, according to the changing situation. Moltke obviously meant, that every military leader has to decide whether to focus either on plan-design or on the planning process itself. But to make the right decision whether it is more important to design and distribute plans or to focus on the process, a commander and his staff has to obey the interaction and interdependence of "products" and "processes". It is impossible to prepare solutions in the form of plans for every scenario

possible. The variables are too many. But planning for the probable scenarios, based on specific steps, means to prepare the best starting point possible for establishing superiority in command. There are three facts whose steady dependence has to be respected:

- Processes, for example planning processes
- Results, for example plans
- Control, for example measures to observe processes and their outcomes.

It has to be realized that even control measures are based on processes (procedure) and results (plans for procedures, and instructions).

Therefore they are integral parts of the planning-plan-cycle. The interaction and interdependence can be described by using a “Moebius strip”⁴¹.



⁴¹ A Moebius strip is a two-dimensional surface with only one side. It was invented by the German scientist August Ferdinand Moebius (17 Nov 1790-26 Sept 1868).

Although someone might obey all these principles, there is always a certain amount of residual risk, which can not be eliminated. This residual risk may be based on a lack of information, time pressure, new procedures, and technical means. But being aware of that fact, residual risks can be identified, and it is possible to react on them as soon as possible. The 1866 campaign shows that it is of great importance to consider all aspects of a campaign. To trust in only overwhelming technical means and therefore neglecting principles of staff work and operational design might lead to severe disadvantages, which in the end can cause too many casualties or even might endanger the whole campaign. Especially the “human” factor has to be considered during the preparation of a campaign, as well as during an ongoing campaign. The “human” factor (genius, trust, care, will, conviction) in combination with the use of modern and adequate means should provide the best prerequisites for the conduct of any process.

But it is the commander’s task to establish a situation where he and his staff are able to communicate in the sense of knowing which processes and means are the adequate ones and in the sense of thrust in their doing. So in the end it can be said, that Moltke was right to point out the importance of being oriented towards the future.

But to understand the whole meaning of Moltke’s saying, everyone who is in charge of planning and/or conducting campaigns and major operations has to reflect on it in a very broad sense, even in modern conflicts. Only a very broad approach, based on social, historic, and cultural information, and a well-defined end-state will meet the requirements for conducting a campaign. Otherwise even the use of modern means, such as precision guided munitions, computer-networks, and simulation-procedures, cannot produce the best quality possible.

So using Moltke's principle in the sense of "think-big", and in the sense of being aware of the steady interaction and interdependence of processes, products, control measures, and the "human" factor, a commander and his staff, provide the first step towards success.

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