

2017/4/2: On the development of warfare of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation

On the development of warfare of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation in the 1980ies

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The perfection of Soviet warfare as the basis for warfare of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) originated in the principle of defending the sufficient. This means that the armoury of the armed forces as well as the quantity and quality of the means of armoured fight must be adapted to the level of military threat and to the character and intensity of war preparations of the military adversary. Besides, the armed forces have to guarantee the security of all member states of the Warsaw Treaty and the defence against an aggression with all necessary means. The essay in this volume deals with the concluding development of warfare of the WTO during the last decade of the East-West-Conflict as well as with the interplaying components strategy, operational art, and tactics, and additionally with aspects of military command and control. „Warfare“ is a specific term and subject matter of Soviet and/or Russian military science. Warfare as such consisted and still consists of the three components and/or levels strategy, operational art, and tactics. The priority of the NVA was to be able to produce a maximum possible array of military capabilities, in order to offer politics a multitude of courses of action, and to anticipate the challenges it had to face because of the security-political developments in the framework of its alliance. In the course of the East-West-Conflict different war pictures existed. In the 1980ies alone the war picture of the WVO had changed several times. Up to 1983 the armed forces of the WTO were prepared to repel attacks of the supposed adversary in the course of a defence operation, to carry out counter attacks, and to take the offensive in order to defeat the adversary destructively on his own territory. From 1985 onwards – long before the WTO military doctrine of 1987 – the operations were to be carried out with limited targets. Crossing the German-German border was not subject of operational planning any longer. In 1988, the Eastern Alliance reduced its offensive capability, with the new objective of merely re-establishing the „status quo ante“ in the course of a defence operation in case of a military conflict. Even if there are different perceptions of the danger of war at that time – nobody could preclude war. From the military potentials, established on both sides in order to deter each other existing since the 1980ies especially in Europe, resulted an equal amount of existential unsteadiness for both sides. Failure of deterrence, no matter if political, military or technological, could have caused a switch from the existing military confrontation to a war between NATO and WTO, which was possible at any time. For this reason it had become necessary to merge from peace which could not be guaranteed by the military into a system of de-militarized security. This, however, has remained a vision up to this day.