

# 2019/6/1 (EN): Pleiner

## The great manoeuvres of 2017 and 2018 - a series

*„A contemplation“*

**Horst Pleiner**

The article examines the manoeuvres in 2017 and 2018 of especially the superpowers in the European-Arctic Northern North and Baltic Sea region, in South-East Europe (Balkans) and in the Black Sea periphery, in the Pacific Ocean as well as the Far East and South-east-Asian region. Manoeuvres have had a special importance in the framework activities of armed forces for already 150 years. The term is defined as an exercise of large formations on terrain, under realistic conditions, with an operational background, as a segment or a phase of the sequence of operational events (a campaign, an operation). Decisive for the allocation of this term in any case is the strategic and/or operational dimension existing in the particular military activity. The large-scale purposes of such manoeuvres are improvement, live tests and development of action procedures, command and control procedures, and command and control systems (technologically speaking, of command and control tools as well), of logistic and/or supply systems, of the training state, of interoperability and of the interoperation of the services. On the other hand, it is also possible that the getting familiar with a certain operation area or its general conditions in the course of the different seasons are essential. Usually, great manoeuvres serve a political-strategic purpose, although all assurances are contrary. Officially, all kinds of manoeuvres are directed against "nobody", which always is emphasized in appropriate declarations. The conception and execution of manoeuvres, however, mostly show "what is the matter", and some of the manoeuvres of both 2017 and 2018 remind of the manoeuvres of the last 15 years of the "Cold War". They appear to be repeated, in an updated form, with more modern equipment, and revised procedures, which had been more or less "usual" in Europe before 1991. On the other hand, the course of history becomes apparent in the fact that now the focus is not on the region of the former Federal Republic of Germany any longer, but rather on those areas, which up to 1990 had been parts of the periphery of the USSR in the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, or which, due to a shift in kind and intensity of interests, slowly but significantly have developed into new regions of potential confrontations.

These are, among others, the Baltic Sea and the Baltic States as well as the bordering states of the Black Sea. In the European northern area, however, nothing has changed, and on the southern flank of Europe, the developments since 2003 in the Near East and in Northern Africa have caused changes. A repeated establishment of a strong rapid reaction component has been started within NATO, and the deduced procedures and scenarios have influenced the arrangement of manoeuvres.

