

2010/6/2: Operational command and control

Operational command and control

Up-to-date approach and consequences for training

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In the latest years the operational command and control level and the tasks and terms involved have been subject to excessive changes in the perception within the military world, and they cannot only be derived from the altered mission scenarios of modern armed forces. In the course of the ending 20th century the term "operation", for instance, has changed massively not only in Austria. Today, however, the analysis of the interpretation of operation and operational command and control has become especially important, as at the moment Austria and its officers increasingly engage on this command and control level. With the help of the army regulation „Operational Command and Control“ (for trial) for the Austrian Armed Forces, which had been published in 2009, an essential landmark in the development of operational command and control could be achieved in the Austrian Armed Forces, because with it the fundamental theoretical basics for dealing with operational command and control could be further developed and updated. In connection with operational command and control the central competence of the general staff officer is called into question time and again. The developments of the last 20 years have not only changed the armed forces but the standard for the general staff officer as well. While before the essential task had to be carried out on the tactical and the operational level and only a small part on the military strategic level, the level of aspiration for general staff officers has shifted to the higher levels. Only a small part of the general staff officers' corps is still active on the tactical level, because the tasks on the military strategic level have increased exponentially, which is a direct consequence of the increasing international commitments and relations. The fundamental knowledge of planning procedures and routines on the international operational level is a prerequisite for understanding the processes on the national military strategic level, and this comprises the fields of mission preparation and planning, armed forces planning and development, and military politics. Altogether one can detect a shift of the central competence of general staff officers towards military strategy. For the future, the training of operational command and control will have to orient itself by international demands, using modern scenarios in a multinational and joint framework as a basis. The army regulation „Operational Command and Control“ (for trial) for the Austrian Armed Forces will have to be revised as soon as the final version of the Comprehensive Operational Planning Directive has become available, so that the state of the art can be guaranteed for the officers of the Austrian Armed Forces.

