COMPARISON OF PLANNING PROCESSES AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL IN BRITISH ARMY AND THE SLOVAK ARMED FORCES

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Abstract: The article deals with differences and compares planning processes at the tactical level in British army and the Slovak Armed Forces. Each NATO country handles problems of Military decision planning process at the tactical level by their own national doctrines, due to this fact there are minor differences. The overall comparison will highlight strengths and weaknesses.

Keywords: Planning Processes, Tactical Level, the Slovak Armed Forces

1. Introduction

Planning of operations at the strategic and operational level in the international environment of NATO countries is directed by COPD (Allied Command Operations Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive - COPD Interim V2.0). Predecessor of COPD was GOP (Guidelines for Operational Planning) and all national planning doctrines of NATO countries outgoing from them. The situation concerning doctrine is different at the tactical level. Each country has their own doctrine at the tactical level to deal with planning and decision making process. In Slovak armed forces we have ISOC (the International Staff Officers’ Course) and national course where we teach planning process at the tactical level. The ISOC is based on the previous course – the JSOC (or Junior Staff Officers’ Course) which was held at the Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš from 2002 to 2007 as a trilateral project between The United Kingdom, The Kingdom of the Netherlands and Slovak Republic. Since 2004 until 2007 there were 10 JSOC courses in total of more than 400 students from 22 countries. When JSOC closed in 2007 Slovak Republic was eminently interested in effective PTC membership and a new project was established – the ISOC. The Aim of the ISOC is to teach Staff procedures used in international environment for different military operations under NATO command, and apply the knowledge of the military decision making process at the tactical level. And because that British history and know-how they left, in ISOC we use British doctrines specifically AFM - Army Field Manual – Volume 1, Combined Arms Operations - Part 8, Command And Staff Procedures. The Slovak national courses use Slovak doctrines which are based on FM 5-0 The Operations Process, MDMP - The Military Decision Making Process). The Czech Armed Forces also uses the same sources. Purpose of this article is to compare British planning process and planning process which is used in Slovak Armed Forces at the tactical level. Author of the Article wants to demonstrate the difference between both processes and expect from readers to get general knowledge of planning process.
2. **Comparison Criteria**

The comparison Criteria are number of briefings what is right clear from the first two pictures. (Fig.1, Fig.2), where are the schemes of both processes. But the main criterion is the quality of briefings’ outputs. Firstly we deal with main differences between both procedures.

They are both based on NATO doctrines therefore the basis is the same and they consist of these equal phases:
- Initiation,
- Orientation,
- Concept of Operation (CONOPS),
- Operation Orders (OPLAN),
- Revision and a part of planning procedures is IPB (Intelligence preparation of Battle space).

3. **Briefings**

Differences rise from composition of these phases and their partial outputs known as Briefings. British planning process consist of two output (Briefings) CD 1, CD 2, (Commanders’ Direction) and next two called (Commanders’ Decision and Orders) that means all together four Briefings. Slovak planning process at tactical level consists of six outputs (Briefings) named Briefing one to six:
- Briefing 1 Receipt of mission,
- Briefing 2 Mission analysis,
- Briefing 3 COA introduction,
- Briefing 4 Commanders Decision,
- Briefing 5 Orders issuing,
- Briefing 6 Revision.

Figure below we can see British and Slovak planning process at tactical level.

Taking a closer look in details we can see differences in overall approach. British battalion commander is managing the whole planning process as described it in AFM - Army Field Manual - Combined Arms Operations - Command And Staff Procedures / part 8, chapter 3 page 3-1, write that : „In the British Army the command and staff estimate process has been traditionally led by the commander, not driven by the staff.“

By contrast Slovak planning process is a staff lead process guided by Chief of Staff. It is best illustrated in the Slovak Armed Forces Guidance SPG 3-45/Oper, page 17 article 7, letter c: „The Aim of the Briefing is: to Acquire Commanders approval for staff proposed battalion’s restated mission.“ This means that Commander will approve the staff proposal after the briefing.

British AFM -Army Field Manual - Combined Arms Operations - Command And Staff Procedures / part 8, chapter 3 section - Planning Responsibilities page 3-2/ write that : „The staff is responsible for completing the bulk of estimate under direction off the commander, or his principal general staff officer. And page 3-7, step 2A Output, letter a, writes: „Planning guidance to the staff, to keep the staff in the commander’s mind. “

This implies that after CD 1 Commandant orders next activities. Such Aspect is logical because when we look at the structure of both battalions we can see that Slovak battalion staff structure includes the position of a Chief of staff but British battalion has only the position 2IC (deputy commander) and that is why the planning management goes with the Commander.
Figure 1 Military decision making process in Armed Forces of Slovakia
Source: SPG 3-14/Všeob
4. Planning Management
The following table (Table 1), from AFM -Army Field Manual - Combined Arms Operations - Command and Staff Procedures / part 8, the page 3-E-1 Annex E to Chapter 3, entitled the "Example Battle group Planning Timeline Matrix", the responsibility for each output is shown in the left column, and the top row is showing the planning time sequence, where we can see the total length of planning time. Important difference is that the commander of the British Battalion in CD1 issues Commander's Effects Schematic (Figure 3), which shall determine the intent - vision of a commander, graphically by using of effects. Vision, that the battalion staff will follow in developing the courses of action. Battalion commander in Slovakia does not provide such a scheme. Although the SPG- 3-45 / Oper on page 34, in Article 5, part12 writes in box "fulfilled by the Commander: Determination of the basic tactical tasks to achieve the objective." What in practice can be done graphically and/or in writing form. We can also refer to the guidance SPG-3-44 / Oper, where in the Brigade staff plan for operations planning on page 42 in the column processing Commanders' initial guidance is in one of the bullets the task: "Commanders' visualization in the form of the desired end state." But there is nothing more about how this should look like.

Figure 2 Decision making process in British Army
Source: own production
Overall, we can summarize that the first and second phases of planning in Slovakia (briefings No.1, 2) nearly matches the British CD1, which is practically receipt of Mission phase, but only a partial mission analysis performed by commander and is also being issued the initial guidance for staff analysis of the factors affecting the operation.

EXAMPLE COMMANDER’S EFFECTS SCHEMATIC

Figure 3 Effect schematic – commander’s graphical visualization.
Source: Army Field Manual - Combined Arms Operations - Command and Staff Procedures / part 8
## Example BattleGroup Planning TimeLine Matrix

### Table 1: Battle Group TimeLine

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Notes: 1/2 – 2/3 PoC. 12 hours from the end of day. Ongoing with HTH. Where are my orders and complete within 20 min?```
By the transition to the next stage of planning in Armed Forces of Slovakia the Phase No. 3 Concept of operations development, there should be noted that the complete mission analysis was not finalized after the British briefing CD1, because as mentioned above the staff continues the analysis of factors after CD1 (such as enemy and environment factors, friendly forces factors, factors affecting the effects of surprise and security etc). CD2 briefing follows after complete analysis. CD2 consists of two parts. The first part is the staff back brief - the results of the analysis of the factors. The second part is the actual introduction of potential courses of action. (This second part partially replaced briefing no. 3 in the planning process of Armed Forces of Slovakia.) During CD2 commander formulates potential friendly forces courses of action based on the results of the analysis of factors, he specifies their number and gives a broad outline in a graphical form. Overall, we can conclude that after briefing No. 2 in Slovakia and CD2 using British procedures we have reached approximately the same stage of planning and outputs and outcomes of the two briefings (briefing No. 2 and CD 2) are very similar.

In the British planning processes further follows:
- COA development,
- COA analysis,
- Commanders' decision and plan development.

The outputs of these activities are presented in a briefing entitled Commanders' Decision followed by completion of the plan and the last briefing Orders brief.

If there is enough time after issuing the Commanders’ order, commander may decide to carry out further war-game with the participation of subordinate commanders, as a part of battalion rehearsals.

In the Slovak planning process the COA development follows after briefing No.2 and this leads to the briefing No. 3 COAs introduction.

Further continues:
- COA analysis,
- War-game (the War-game rules are very similar to the British planning procedures) briefing No. 4 follows,
- Commanders' decision,
- Concept of operation development,
- Development of a plan,
- Briefing No. 5 - Order issuing,
- Briefing No. 6 - Order revision.

5. Conclusion
From the comparison of British and Slovak planning procedures at the tactical level of command, taking in consideration the amount and quality of briefing outcomes as criteria, we can conclude that:

British planning process has four outputs - briefings, but after the order release can still carry out a war-game.

Slovak planning process includes six briefings while briefing No. 6 - orders revision, aims to clarify the role of the subunit commanders resulting from the battalion operational order, to assist them in mission planning and influence them so that the intent of a battalion commander is respected.

When comparing the outputs overlapping of different phases can be seen between the two procedures, where in British CD 1 first phase (initiation) understanding of a role and in second phase (orientation) one of its part - mission analysis is performed by the commander himself. The Slovak process starts first briefing after the first phase (initiation) and briefing two after completing of the second phase (orientation).
When performing CD 2, British commander formulate various COAs in graphical form (broad outline), which are then developed by staff. This part is in Slovak procedures briefing No.3 itself, where the groups designated by Chief of Staff after briefing No.2 are introducing the proposed courses of action of own forces and the enemy.

Next steps of the planning process are practically identical. There are partial differences in outcomes existing but they are not as notable.

The most important finding of the comparison is that while Slovak planning the burden lies on the battalion staff in British planning the commander plays the major role, he leads subordinates during the whole planning process. Battalion commander in Armed forces of Slovakia practically decides when the friendly forces course of action has to be chosen.

To the issue of quality the level of training of the battalion staff should be taken into account, their experience in planning and implementing new knowledge and also the experience of a battalion commander and in Slovak conditions the experiences of a battalion chief of staff.

**References**

[1] Služobná pomôčka: *Vedenie operácií práporom*, SPG-3-14/Všeob (B).