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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

14 November 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Offensive Operations
of a Front to the Entire Depth of a Theater
of Military Operations

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. This article proceeds from a brief examination of NATO capabilities and intentions in the European theater in assessing front tasks and capabilities in offensive operations to a depth of 2,000 kilometers or more. The authors describe the role of strategic means, naval and air defense forces, long range aviation and ground forces elements in developing a single offensive operation to the depth of a theater. The requirements for nuclear warheads and other ammunition and materiel are examined within the context of a deep offensive. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (72) for 1964.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Mid-1964

DATE 14 November 1975

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Offensive Operations of a Front to the Entire Depth of a Theater of Military Operations

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (72) for 1964 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The authors of this article are Colonel General I. Glebov and General-Major V. Yemelin. This article proceeds from a brief examination of NATO capabilities and intentions in the European theater in assessing front tasks and capabilities in offensive operations to a depth of 2,000 kilometers or more. The authors describe the role of strategic means, naval and air defense forces, long range aviation and ground forces elements in developing a single offensive operation to the depth of a theater. Within that single front operation, there may be immediate, subsequent and further tasks which may be accomplished by successive army operations. The requirements for nuclear warheads and other ammunition and materiel are examined within the context of a deep offensive.

End of Summary

Headquarters Comment:

Ivan Semenovitch Glebov had been identified as a professor at the Academy of the General Staff since 1965. V. Yemelin was identified in Red Star in February 1968 as receiving the award of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Comments on this article by Colonel A. Volkov, who is opposed to the successive army operations favored by the authors, were contained in

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Offensive Operations of a Front to the Entire Depth of
a Theater of Military Operations

by

Colonel General I. Glebov
General-Mayor V. Yemelin

Soviet military art has always devoted much attention to the conduct of deep offensive operations, looking upon them as the most important form of decisively routing an enemy.

The theory of a deep operation, developed in the 1930's and employed brilliantly in World War II, was based on exploiting all the power and operating range of the means of destruction available to a front -- artillery, aircraft, and particularly the shock power and maneuverability of tanks, which were used primarily for exploitation of success. Under these conditions, when a front could count only on its own forces, the depth of a front offensive operation ranged from 200 to 300 kilometers.

After World War II (before our armed forces were equipped with nuclear weapons), as a result of the complete motorization of the army, the increased operating range of aircraft, the extended range of artillery, and the equipping of our forces with tanks having improved combat characteristics, it became possible to increase the depth of a front offensive operation up to 400 or 500 kilometers. But this depth, as formerly, was based on the use of only those means available to a front.

The adoption into service of missile/nuclear weapons and other modern military equipment when radical changes occurred in the building of armed forces and in the nature of armed combat established fundamentally new conditions for the conduct of front offensive operations whose depth now is not based solely on the combat capabilities of front troops. These conditions may be revealed most fully in a strategic operation in a theater of military operations where the tasks of routing an enemy are achieved by the joint efforts of all branches of the armed forces, with the strategic rocket forces having the decisive role.

The fundamental factors which determine the conditions for conducting a front offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater are: strikes by strategic means, operations by the navy (when the front is attacking on

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a coastal axis), combat actions by Air Defense Forces of the Country and the airborne troops, the combat capabilities of the front, the nature of enemy actions, and also the characteristics of the theater of military operations. All of these are closely interrelated and interdependent. This relationship is manifested most fully in the correlation between the nature of enemy actions and the other factors. Therefore we consider it expedient, when examining the influence of the aforementioned factors on the organization and conduct of a front offensive operation, to initiate it precisely with an analysis of probable enemy actions, and above all, of his "nuclear attack".

According to the experience of a number of exercises conducted by the NATO command in recent years concerned with the European Theater of Military Operations, during a nuclear attack in the zone of the front from 250 to 350 nuclear warheads may be employed. In so doing, three percent of the delivery means participating in the nuclear attack have a range from 140 to 320 kilometers, 76 percent have a range of 400 kilometers or more, and 21 percent have a range exceeding 700 kilometers. Aircraft, comprising 80 percent of all the means of employing nuclear weapons, are still the primary delivery means.

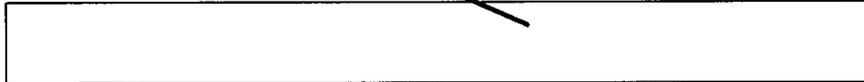
Therefore, if the enemy succeeds in carrying out a surprise nuclear attack, estimates show that up to 50 percent of the front's troops may be subjected to his strikes and will find themselves isolated from the interior of the country in the very first hours of a war. Consequently, so that a front may successfully conduct an operation, the enemy's nuclear attack must be disrupted at the very inception of war. But obviously a front is not in a position to accomplish such a task solely with its own forces.

Based on the ground forces groupings of NATO, the enemy is capable in the first days of a war of opposing an attacking front with 17 to 25 divisions, that is, with approximately as many as there will be in the front's composition, and subsequently could augment with as many again by transferring large units from national commands and from other continents. Therefore it is necessary, at the initiation of military actions, to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy's ground forces groupings and achieve superiority over them, and then prevent him from reinforcing. As for the second task, its accomplishment requires actions by the strategic rocket forces and the navy.

At present, and to a greater degree than in the past, the actions of an enemy fleet can affect the conduct of a front offensive operation. As

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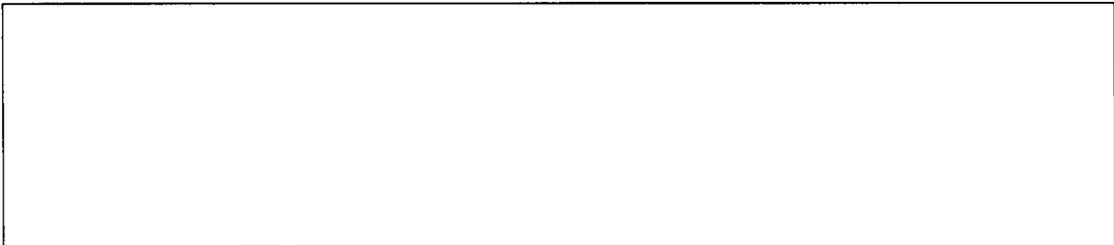
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In fulfilling specific tasks, naval strike forces will apparently be used to a wide extent to deliver strikes against troop groupings and important operational-strategic targets in land sectors. This has been corroborated by the FALLEX-60 exercise, where more than nine-tenths of all nuclear warheads were used by carrier strike large units to destroy targets in the land portion of the theater at distances of 500 to 600 kilometers from the coast. Thus, unless these strike forces are destroyed or at least decisively hit, the offensive of the fronts may be gravely impaired.



~~It is very difficult for a front to overcome by itself the countermeasures of such a deep enemy air defense system in a theater of military operations.~~ It is very difficult for a front to overcome by itself the countermeasures of such a deep enemy air defense system in a theater of military operations.

As a result of this brief examination of the possible composition of the enemy and the nature of his actions, we may conclude that the offensive of a front to the entire depth of a theater of military operations will be successful only if the enemy is decisively struck in the theater by strategic means with the participation of naval forces and front-area formations of the Air Defense Forces of the Country.

Strikes by strategic means must: destroy the enemy's strategic as well as operational-tactical means of nuclear attack located beyond the range of front missiles and aircraft; strike his principal groupings of armed forces and reserves in the interior of the theater; destroy governmental and military control organs, major naval and rear area bases, and military-economic targets; and disrupt all types of transportation; i.e., accomplish the main tasks of routing the enemy.

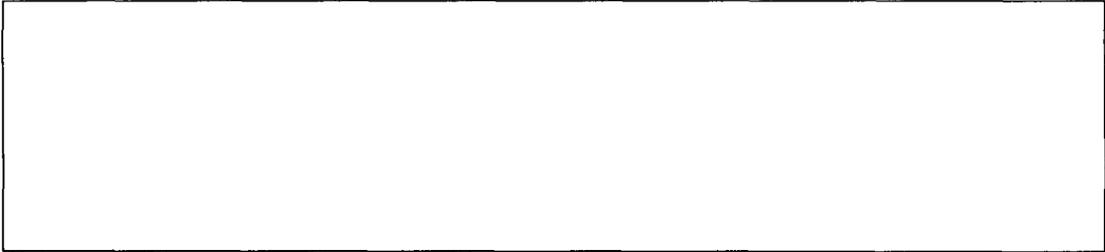


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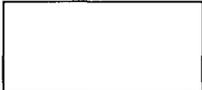
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The next important condition for a successful front offensive into the entire depth of a theater of military operations will be the timely destruction by strategic means of the enemy's main ground forces groupings and his new contingents and reserves located in the central areas and main part of the theater beyond the range of front means. We believe that putting out of action at least half of the complement of these groupings will be sufficient for a front to successfully develop its attack in the depth of a theater. It is also important for strategic means to destroy the enemy's governmental and military control posts in a theater of military operations, which deprives him of the opportunity of carrying out organized nuclear strikes with his remaining means of attack against forces of the attacking front and also of using his surviving troop groupings, including air defense troops, to counteract the offensive. Destroying and demolishing the enemy's principal air defense installations, naval bases, ports, and rear installations will give rise to a corresponding freedom of action for front and naval aviation, it will lead to a disruption of the enemy's measures to reinforce his troops at the expense of other theaters of military operations and continents, and furthermore, it will disrupt the organized supplying of his forces with all necessities.

Strikes against the enemy's military-economic centers naturally will result in colossal casualties among the population. Estimates indicate that small countries having an area slightly greater than 30 thousand square kilometers with an average population density of 150 to 500 persons per square kilometer, and in some areas of 1,000 to 3,000 persons per square kilometer, may lose an average of 25 percent of their population as the result of a strike by approximately five one-megaton warheads. Consequently, right after the first strikes by strategic means, several countries in the enemy camp may be forced to withdraw from the war.

Thus, the successful fulfilment of tasks by the strategic means will be the decisive condition for a front to conduct an offensive operation to the entire depth of the theater. So that a front may fulfil its task of routing an opposing enemy grouping in a short period of time, it will be



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advisable to deliver the nuclear strikes of strategic means as near as possible to its own troops.

For the navy, the most important task will be to destroy the enemy's carrier large units and his missile-carrying submarines and surface ships. Destroying even 50 percent of the forces of the carrier strike large units may cause the enemy to give up striking at front troops or at least may make him use an extremely limited number of nuclear warheads for this purpose. The navy must also cut off the theater of military operations from the influx of fresh forces and means from other theaters and continents, and especially from the bringing in of nuclear weapons.

The Air Defense Forces of the Country can exert immediate effect on a front offensive by the actions of their front-area large units and formations; as these accomplish the task of covering installations in the interior of the country, they can, at the same time and in cooperation with the field air defense, fulfil the tasks of covering troop groupings and rear installations of the attacking front. Estimates indicate that a front-area formation of the Air Defense Forces of the Country will approximately double the capabilities of a front to repel enemy air attacks.

The combat capabilities of the troops of a front of present-day organization are characterized first of all by the presence of powerful missile/nuclear weapons and the high mobility of the combined-arms and tank armies, by the ability to inflict heavy losses on the enemy with chemical and conventional means of destruction employed by aircraft, artillery, and tanks, and also by the increased capabilities for supporting an operation.

In the front rocket troops, including the organic missile large units and units of the three combined-arms armies and one tank army, with a total of 20 to 25 divisions, there are up to 100 launchers which are capable of simultaneously employing 100 nuclear warheads with a total yield of 2,650 to 3,100 kilotons to a depth of 400 to 500 kilometers. With such a nuclear strike we can destroy 20 to 25 batteries (battalions) of enemy operational-tactical missile launchers, 65 to 70 percent of the personnel of eight to ten divisions, and destroy or demolish the principal control posts and rear installations of an army group.

Upon the initiation of military actions, front rocket troops may be used entirely (excluding the tactical missiles of reserve and second-echelon divisions) to rout an opposing enemy grouping to the entire depth of its disposition. However, taking into consideration that only a

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minor portion of a front's missiles have a range greater than 250 kilometers, it is advisable to entrust strategic means with the responsibility of destroying targets at such a depth.

The capabilities of a front air army permit it to use up to 50 nuclear warheads with a total yield of over 5,000 kilotons in a single sortie. With conventional warheads it is capable of delivering a bomb strike of 250 to 650 tons, and by using chemical weapons, it can destroy enemy personnel in an area of approximately 200 square kilometers. In doing so, its depth of action ranges up to 300 kilometers for fighter-bomber aircraft and up to 800 kilometers for bomber aircraft. The relatively limited penetration capabilities of front aviation can be compensated for by including TU-16 aircraft in its composition.

The maneuver actions of front troops acquire special importance for a front offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater.

These maneuver actions are based on the timely and full use of all the power and long range of nuclear, chemical, and conventional means of destruction, and also on the high mobility of rocket troop large units (units), aviation large units (units), combined-arms large units, air defense troops, and other branch arms and services. The nature of highly maneuverable actions under present-day conditions is: the organization and conduct of nuclear strikes in the shortest permissible periods of time to accomplish the principal tasks; the conduct of an offensive by troops in the wake of these strikes at the highest possible rates of speed; the timely advance and shifting of all other forces and means, exploiting their march capabilities to the limit when necessary; and also the rapid deployment and shifting of troops from certain dispositions to others in conformity with the situation that has developed.

Maneuver is an integral part of the essence of an offensive operation. Precisely because of this, an offensive operation is defined as the sum total of the nuclear strikes of rocket troops and front aviation to the entire depth of the enemy's operational disposition, and of the actions of forces exploiting the results of the nuclear strikes by strategic and operational-tactical means with the aim of rapidly completing the destruction of the opposing enemy and speedily developing the offensive to a great depth. In an offensive operation, maneuver is a means of fulfilling tasks more rapidly. Maneuver is used to concentrate efforts on routing the enemy's main groupings and on advancing front troops rapidly to the entire depth of the theater of military operations.

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In accordance with requirements of the Ministry of Defense, 90 percent of the tanks of motorized rifle and tank large units are kept with a minimum mileage reserve of 2,000 kilometers. This will permit a front to conduct an offensive operation to a depth of 1,000 kilometers or more, but does not ensure that it will be able to develop it to the entire depth of a theater of military operations when this depth ranges from 2,000 to 2,500 kilometers.

The capability of conducting an operation to such depths can be achieved by carrying out a number of measures, with the following being fundamental, in our view: firstly, by fully equipping the large units designated to develop success to the entire depth of the theater of military operations with latest model tanks having the appropriate mileage reserve; secondly, [by organizing in a timely manner during the operation the delivery and replacement of tank tracks for the large units which have been designated to develop the offensive and which have been fully equipped with tanks having a 2,000-kilometer mileage reserve (true, this measure requires involving a large number of transport vehicles to haul the tracks, which will not always be possible, and therefore there is no guarantee that these latter will be delivered to the troops in a timely manner); and thirdly, by redesigning and modernizing tracks to provide tanks with an increased mileage reserve of from [3,500 to 4,500 kilometers.]

If the air defense troops of the front have in their complement up to eight medium-range ("S") surface-to-air missile regiments, approximately twenty short-range ("M") surface-to-air missile battalions, more than ten separate antiaircraft artillery regiments (57-mm), and the corresponding radiotechnical units, in a single firing cycle of the surface-to-air missile units employing nuclear warheads and one firing of the antiaircraft artillery expending 1.5 units of fire, they can destroy up to 230 enemy aircraft and cruise missiles. These capabilities are increased when the ZSU-23-4 and ZSU-57-2 gun mounts available in large units participate in repelling enemy air attacks. By using 50 percent of these mounts, an additional 50 to 60 air targets can be destroyed.

Thus, if we assume that the enemy nuclear attack will not prove to have been broken up and that from 800 to 1,300 of his aircraft will be operating in the front's zone, then front air defense troops, jointly with the front-area formations of the Air Defense Forces of the Country, will be able to destroy up to 65 to 70 percent of the aforementioned aircraft. But if approximately 50 percent of the enemy's aircraft are destroyed by the strikes of strategic means, then an attack by the remaining forces of our air enemy can be repelled successfully. Therefore, to prevent the serious

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effects of enemy air power against front troops, we must inflict a decisive defeat on his tactical, carrier-based, and strategic aircraft by the strikes of our strategic rocket forces, naval forces, and long range aviation.

To exploit the results of the nuclear strikes delivered deep in the enemy defense, to develop combat actions in this depth, and to develop an attack at high rates of speed in the zone of advance of the front, we can use tactical and multi-force operational airborne landings, with the latter type of landings often used by order of the Supreme High Command.

Tactical landing forces will be landed according to the front troop commander's decision at the depth of the task of the day. Operational landing forces may be dropped in areas to be possibly arrived at within two to three days by attacking forces, and major landing forces may be dropped in those areas which will be arrived at within three to four days by the forward large units of a front's first echelon. It is most expedient to use these airborne landings while completing an immediate task or after fulfilling it, when the enemy will have been disorganized and his air defenses demolished.

The means of destruction available to fronts and their combat capabilities as a whole allow us at present to conduct offensive operations to depths of up to 1,000 kilometers or more. However, in this circumstance, fronts will not be exploiting fully the results of the combat actions of other forces and means, and primarily the results of nuclear strikes by the strategic rocket forces and long range aviation. To exploit the results of strikes of the strategic rocket forces on axes where the depth of the theater of military operations amounts to 2,000 kilometers or more, that is, which considerably exceeds our accepted depth for a front offensive operation (1,000 kilometers), our theory of operational art envisions that fronts will conduct two, and possibly three, successive offensive operations without pause, as occurred frequently in World War II, or that reserve fronts will be used to develop an offensive to the entire depth of the theater. It is also assumed that under certain aspects of the situation, the entry of front troops into the central areas of a theater, that is, the conduct of a single offensive operation to a depth of 1,000 kilometers, may predetermine the outcome of an entire operation in a theater of military operations. However, it is obvious that it is hardly possible to accept these factors as being the rule in modern war.

Examining the basic recommendations of our theory on developing an offensive to the entire depth of a theater (conducting successive

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operations and using fronts which are moving forward from the interior), we cannot help noticing, first, that in their essence, these recommendations do not orient fronts -- from the very inception of combat actions by a first echelon -- toward the full utilization of their combat capabilities to carry out an offensive to the entire depth of a theater. These recommendations mechanically transfer World War II experience to present-day conditions and establish grounds for having fronts conduct successive methodical actions, rather than highly mobile actions pushing forward to the maximum possible depth. Secondly, there is no assurance whatsoever that under conditions of a mutual use of nuclear weapons, front troops will be able to proceed to fulfil successive operations without any delays or pauses whatever. This is aggravated by the fact that the transition to a successive operation is linked to the necessity of incorporating fresh forces into the composition of the front.

While we do not reject the possibility of having a front conduct a successive operation, at the same time we believe that such operations do not fully ensure the timely and complete exploitation of the results of nuclear strikes by strategic means, nor the achievement of objectives in short periods of time.

The use of fronts moving forward from the interior to develop an offensive to the entire depth of a theater of military operations also does not fully correspond to the nature of a present-day strategic operation. This use requires fronts to advance from the interior of the country over long distances by organic means under conditions of enemy actions from the air and of having to negotiate extensive zones of radioactive contamination and destruction. In such a situation, there are no guarantees at all that troops will arrive in time at the designated areas and engage in battle. Hence, the continuity of an offensive may be disrupted. Furthermore, by executing an advance over a long distance, fronts may expend to a considerable extent the mileage reserve of motors and tracks and suspension of tanks and armored personnel carriers. In this connection, there arises the apprehension that a portion of their forces will prove to be in no condition to develop the offensive to the entire depth of the theater unless provisions are made to carry out special measures.

Thus, our theoretical propositions on the conduct of successive offensive operations by fronts and on the use of fronts advancing from the interior to develop an offensive do not completely solve the problems of conducting an offensive to the entire depth of a theater of military operations and of exploiting the results of nuclear strikes made by strategic missiles and long range aviation. There has arisen the need to

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search for a way in which a front can conduct a single offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater of military operations.

Obviously, the given problem can be solved most effectively by a further and considerable increase of the fire power of troops, by decisively increasing the mobility and maneuverability of large units and the protection of personnel against weapons of mass destruction, and by improving the table of organization structure. But all of this requires a relatively extended period of time.

However, even with the existing organization of a front, the capability of conducting a front offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater can be sought, in our opinion, by exploiting to the maximum the forces and means of a front with the present-day organization. The practicability of conducting such operations resides in the presence of strategic rocket forces and long range aviation whose strikes can establish the conditions for routing the enemy in a theater of military operations in the course of a single offensive operation.

An important question in conducting a front offensive operation within the entire depth of a theater of military operations is its support. Of all types of support, let us consider only materiel support.

As shown by tentative estimates, the following are required to conduct a front operation to a depth of 2,000 kilometers or more: more than 230 to 270 thousand tons of fuels and lubricants; over 115 to 125 thousand tons of all types of ammunition; 12 thousand tons of rations; and over 60 thousand tons of other cargo. The total amount of materiel and technical means has been determined to be within the range of 400 to 500 thousand tons. The primary problems in the work of the rear services will be those of providing troops with nuclear warheads, fuels and lubricants, and conventional ammunition. A problem which has become particularly acute is that of organizing the supply to troops during an offensive when they become separated by great distances from their bases.

The problems of preparing and conducting a front offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater of military operations naturally will have a number of specific aspects. Let us examine some of them.

The priority task of a front in such an operation, as also in an operation conducted to a lesser depth, must be to destroy the operational-tactical means and opposing groupings of the enemy, including his immediate operational reserves. This will comprise the essence of a

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front's immediate task.

In developing a rapid offensive, a front must seize or destroy the enemy's remaining nuclear attack means and rout his deep reserves or complete their rout in the central portion of the theater. This may be the substance of a front's subsequent task, which we believe must be defined.

Front troops which continue the offensive to the depth of the theater of military operations must also rout surviving strategic reserves, or those approaching from other theaters and continents, and seize the areas or installations which constitute the objective of the operation. This may become the substance of a front's further task.

Under familiar conditions (we have in mind first of all the successful massed use of nuclear weapons by strategic means), routing opposing groupings and completing the rout of deep reserves in the central portion of the theater of military operations may constitute the essence of the immediate task, and developing the offensive to the entire depth of the theater of military operations may be the essence of the further task. Thus, it may be possible to attain the objective of a front offensive operation to the entire depth of a theater of military operations by accomplishing two or three intermediate tasks.

Taking into account the fact that initially a front must by itself rout opposing enemy groupings in the immediate depth and then complete the rout of surviving troops and advance rapidly to the entire depth of the theater, it must accordingly have two types of groupings in its operational disposition: one to rout the opposing enemy and the other capable of developing the offensive rapidly to the entire depth of the theater of military operations.

In this case, the operational disposition of front troops must not only conform to the chosen axes of the main strike and the methods of troop actions, but must also have groupings capable of fulfilling the immediate, the subsequent (if there are such), and most importantly, further tasks. It is advisable to have in the first echelon tank and motorized rifle troops capable of fulfilling the immediate and subsequent tasks. To accomplish these tasks, the composition of this echelon should include those tank and motorized rifle divisions whose mileage reserve on tracks and mileage reserve on motors before the next scheduled overhaul will ensure they can operate to a depth of 1,000 kilometers or more.

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The second echelon of a front must have tank and motorized rifle troops capable of developing the offensive to the entire depth of the theater and reserve large units must have in their complement motorized rifle and tank large units with varying mileage reserve on motors before the next scheduled overhaul and on tracks and suspension so that some of them can be used to reinforce the troops or replace large units that have lost their combat effectiveness while accomplishing the immediate and subsequent tasks, and others can be used when carrying out the further task.

To fulfil the tasks of a front offensive operation, armies of the first operational echelon, it seems to us, will conduct two and sometimes three successive offensive operations. They will have to conduct one operation at the beginning of military actions to accomplish the immediate and subsequent (if there is one) tasks of the front to a depth of approximately 1,000 kilometers. This depth is considered an exception for an army offensive operation under present-day conditions and is assigned only under certain conditions, but in operations to the entire depth of a theater of military operations it will become a standard feature.

However, to fulfil the immediate and subsequent tasks of a front, an army may also conduct two operations. In this case the depth of the initial army operation will correspond to the depth of the front's immediate task.

The subsequent offensive operation by the first-echelon armies should be carried out without any delays or pauses whatsoever. In this case, the depth of such operations can vary greatly for each army and may be governed by the results of strikes by strategic means, by the importance and depth of the operational axis, by the army's combat capabilities at the end of the preceding operation, by the nature of enemy actions on the given axis, and also by the intended use of the front's second echelon and reserves.

When an army successfully fulfils the tasks of the preceding operation, it can be assumed the enemy will be completely demoralized and will prove to be hardly able to conduct organized actions, as he could at the beginning of the operation. Therefore, the task of an army may be to destroy isolated enemy groupings and to seize important areas and installations in the depth of the theater; and in a different instance-- to advance rapidly and occupy specific areas. Finally, we cannot rule out the fact that an army may be given the task of destroying the surviving enemy groupings and of ensuring the rapid advance of the front's second echelons and reserves committed to action so that they may quickly enter those areas

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and installations whose capture achieves the objective of the front operation.

An army (corps) of a front second echelon, intended to develop an offensive to the entire depth of a theater, should be assigned an immediate task and a further task. When allocating the immediate task, we must contemplate seizing areas and installations which ensure the rapid advance of army troops to the entire depth of the theater. The essence of the further task will often consist of seizing those areas and installations whose capture completes the front offensive operation to the entire depth of the theater of military operations.

In the operation we have considered, the requirements for nuclear warheads will be increased considerably. They may amount to 500 warheads or more. The major portion of them will have to be used to achieve the immediate and subsequent tasks. Estimates reveal that when fulfilling these tasks, it will be necessary to use at least 250 to 300 nuclear warheads, i.e., approximately 60 percent or more of the total number of them allocated to the operation, in order to destroy the enemy's operational-tactical nuclear means and inflict destruction on 70 to 80 percent of his troops. In this case, it is important to inflict decisive damage on the enemy in the initial massed nuclear strike of the front so that troops may advance rapidly in the first hours of a war and not get involved in protracted battles and engagements. To this end, we should not allow nuclear warheads to be scattered among numerous targets in the front's initial nuclear strike, as has occurred in a number of instances in actual operational training. It is advisable to consider that the main task of the strike is to destroy the operational-tactical nuclear means and main groupings of the enemy.

Worthy of special attention is the delivery, during the operation, of preemptive nuclear strikes by strategic and operational-tactical means, as these strikes will allow us to achieve maximum destructive results against the enemy's groupings, to disrupt his troop control and air defense system, to deprive him of the opportunity of using nuclear weapons, and to restrict and impose our initiative on him.

Fulfilling the tasks of the initial nuclear strike and the advisability of delivering preemptive nuclear strikes during an operation require the use of nuclear warheads on a large scale by operational-tactical means. Consequently, this category of nuclear warheads should take up the greater relative proportion of the total number of nuclear warheads allocated to a front.

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The great spatial scope of an offensive operation conducted to the entire depth of a theater of military operations and the somewhat different approach to the employment of forces and means in it will naturally give rise to unique conditions and require the appropriate use of familiar, or possibly even new, methods of conducting an operation.

In such a operation, the immediate task of the front troops will obviously be accomplished by the same methods as are used in operations conducted to a depth of up to 1,000 kilometers.

In our opinion, to fulfil the immediate task in short periods of time, a significant role can and must be played by the tank army, the tank divisions of the combined-arms armies, and the tank regiments of first-echelon motorized rifle divisions. They are the ones most capable of operating rapidly in the wake of the nuclear strikes to speedily complete routing the enemy and penetrate deeply into his rear. They are more resistant to nuclear strikes and their good radiation protection allows them to conduct highly mobile actions in zones of radioactive contamination and destruction.

Therefore, in a situation when the enemy may employ nuclear weapons on a large scale and oppose our offensive with his groupings -- which will be most likely while front troops are accomplishing their immediate task -- the tank army, the tank divisions of the combined-arms armies, and the tank regiments of the motorized rifle divisions will be the leading force on the respective main axes of the front, armies, and divisions when splitting (breaking up) the opposing groupings of the enemy in the wake of the nuclear strikes in order to enter his deep rear.

When accomplishing a subsequent task, if one should evolve from the content of the immediate task, the actions of the troops of the front first echelon will more and more acquire those characteristics which are typical of developing an offensive involving the overcoming of centers of resistance on certain axes. In this situation, motorized rifle troops become more important since they possess greater mobility over roads than tank troops and can advance rapidly on those axes where there are no centers of resistance or bypass these to seize important installations and areas in the central part of the theater of military operations.

Obviously, the fulfilment of the further task will occur under a situation differing completely from the one when fulfilling the immediate task and even subsequent task. It is to be supposed that when troops of the front first echelon enter the central areas of the theater, it will be

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found that the enemy's centralized control over those troops which retain their combat effectiveness has been disrupted, that his nuclear power and air defense system have been demolished or seriously weakened, and that his rear has been thoroughly disorganized. While exploiting the offensive to the depth of the theater, front troops may encounter resistance from individual enemy groupings hastily organized from reserves or shifted over from other theaters of military operations. In such a situation, the leading role in rapidly pressing home the operation will pertain to the second-echelon troops committed to battle and also to those motorized rifle divisions of combined-arms armies which formerly had been active in the first echelon of the front. What will be of decisive importance will be precisely their rapid advance to those installations and areas whose seizure achieves the objective of the operation. Also, the second-echelon troops committed to battle and operating on axes should not get themselves involved in battles and engagements, but should bypass surviving groupings of enemy troops and break through rapidly to the assigned areas.

Motorized rifle troops of the armies previously operating in the complement of the first echelon will move forward and concentrate their efforts on completing the rout of enemy groupings and of surviving and bypassed troops, and developing the offensive to the depth of the theater of military operations.

In several cases, motorized rifle troops may seize important areas and installations in the depth of the theater without the participation of tanks. First-echelon tank troops, having expended the mileage reserve of their tracks and suspension and motors, will remain in the areas seized to consolidate the success and in the coastal sectors of the front to establish an antilanding defense.

Forward detachments consisting entirely of motorized rifle troops may be of great importance when an offensive is being developed rapidly to the depth of a theater. The presence of such highly mobile detachments will allow us to accomplish the tasks of capturing road junctions, bridges, crossing sites, passes, and other types of defiles in order to ensure the rapid advance of the main forces of the front second echelon and their entry into the depth of the theater of military operations.



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Working out the problems of organizing and conducting an offensive operation by a front to the entire depth of a theater of military operations is an exceedingly urgent and, at the same time, complex task. Therefore, it is to be fully understood that this article does not exhaust the entire substance of the topic raised.



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