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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

5 October 1978

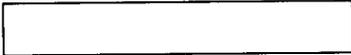
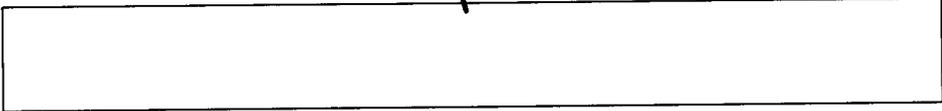
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John H. Stein
Acting Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Preparation and
Conduct of a Front Defensive Operation on a
Coastal Axis in the Initial Period of War

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 contains two critiques of a previous article on front defensive operations on a coastal axis. While the reviewers agree on the whole with the items covered, they do take issue with certain positions, which they feel are not substantiated and convincing enough. These include: the possible conditions and methods of organizing and conducting a front defensive operation, the layout of the defense, the composition of the grouping of troops of the front, and the method of carrying out counterpreparation and counterattacks. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (62) for 1962.

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

John H. Stein

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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 19 Pages

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Preparation and Conduct of a Front Defensive Operation on a Coastal Axis in the Initial Period of War

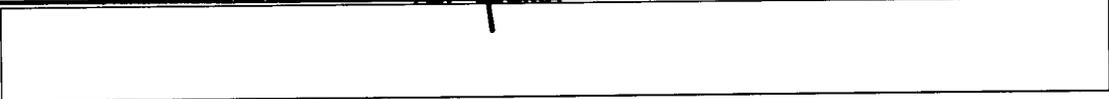
SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (62) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This two-part article, written by Colonel A. Plotnikov and Colonel N. Popov, respectively, contains two critiques of a previous article on front defensive operations on a coastal axis. While the reviewers agree on the whole with the items covered, they do take issue with certain positions, which they feel are not substantiated and convincing enough. These include: the possible conditions and methods of organizing and conducting a front defensive operation, the layout of the defense, the composition of the grouping of troops of the front, and the method of carrying out counterpreparation and counterattacks. End of Summary

Comment:

After 1962 the SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970. The Russian version of the article to which it refers is unavailable.



Preparation and Conduct of a Front Defensive Operation
on a Coastal Axis in the Initial Period of War

by
Colonel A. PLOTNIKOV
Colonel N. POPOV

The study of the conditions under which a defensive operation of a front may be conducted in the initial period of a war and the development of the principles of laying out and the methods of conducting defense have great theoretical and practical importance for the preparation of troops for a missile/nuclear war. However, in our military press this topic is not given enough attention.

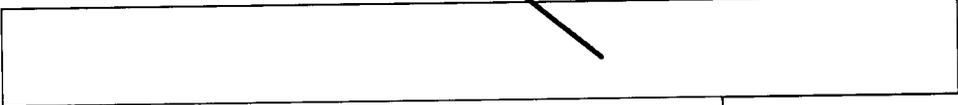
The most varied opinions are expressed on the questions of modern operational defense in the initial period of a war, and, in a number of cases, the use of defense on the front scale is rejected altogether.

Of interest in this connection is the article of Colonel General V. CHIZH, "The Defensive Operation of a Front on a Coastal Axis in the Initial Period of War."* The author has raised a number of very important questions of modern defense; however, some of his arguments are not, in our opinion, substantiated and convincing enough, for instance, those on the possible conditions and methods of organizing and conducting a front defensive operation, on the layout of the defense and the composition of the grouping of troops of the front, and on the methods of carrying out counterpreparation and counterattacks. On these questions we should like to express our point of view.

We share the opinion of the author that armed combat cannot be regarded as the continuous offensive of the troops of one of the warring sides with the start of war in all the theaters of military operations. Even an economically and militarily powerful state will not have at its disposal enough forces and means for this. Therefore, the offensive operations of our troops will be conducted, as a rule, in the most important theaters of military operations, where the fate of the war as a

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," No. 3 (58), 1961.





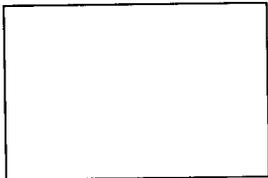
whole may be decided. And defensive operations on various scales may occur in secondary theaters of military operations and axes, where our offensive is not contemplated with the start of war, but one is not out of the question on the enemy's part, on seacoasts where the landing and actions of large enemy amphibious and airborne landing forces are possible, as well as during front offensive operations on the axes of counterattacks and during an enemy counteroffensive.

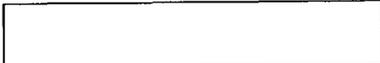
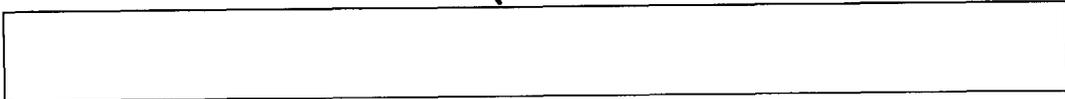
We cannot agree with the author about the possibility of preparing and then also conducting a defensive operation of a front in one of the main theaters, especially when an offensive operation has been planned in it already in peacetime.

In such cases, defensive actions of troops must be regarded as the exception, as forced and temporary combat actions which are conducted by part of the forces of the front already during the first offensive operation -- when warding off enemy counterattacks or upon the unsuccessful outcome of a border meeting engagement.

As for defense by previous intent, its use under the conditions of the initial period of war, especially on the most important axes and more so on the scale of a front is becoming uncharacteristic. Only in individual cases where the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command has previously decided not to conduct an offensive operation on a given axis will the front be assigned the task of defense. Serving as an example of this may be defense with the forces of a front on a coastal axis.

The preparation of such a defensive operation must be conducted according to the instructions of the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command already in peacetime. We do not consider sufficiently convincing the arguments of the author that, under the conditions being examined, making a decision to defend is possible only immediately before the start of combat actions or already during a meeting border engagement. The author for some reason makes the adoption of the decision to defend dependent on the time when it has been established that the balance of forces is disadvantageous for an offensive of the front.

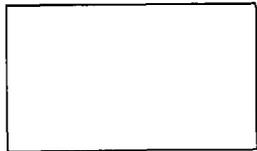


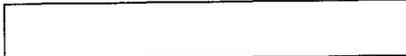
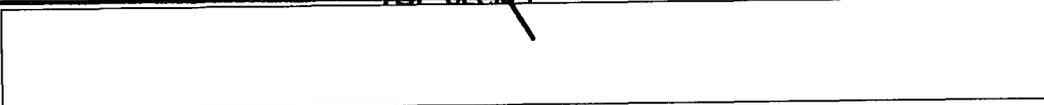


First of all, if on a given coastal axis it is decided to conduct an offensive operation, then it is necessary in advance to determine and know the balance of forces. Without this, the operation will be conducted "blindly"; and it is hardly advisable to begin it, inasmuch as it will soon become clear that it is necessary to go over to the defense. In our opinion, this is not only excessively risky, but it borders on operational blundering of the command.

Second, it is doubtful that a front on a coastal axis would go over to the defense merely because of a disadvantageous balance of forces, especially if it can be changed to the advantage of our troops. And there is such a possibility in connection with the availability of missile/nuclear weapons in the composition of the front, armies, and divisions and with the employment, in support of the front, of strategic rocket forces and aviation and the fleet operating on the given axis. There is no argument but that all these means will, with their mass use, have a decisive effect on changing the balance of forces and on the successful conduct of the prepared offensive operation by the troops of the front. The main thing is to deliver the first strikes against the enemy in good time and to seize the initiative in the use of nuclear weapons from the very beginning of the war. And for this it is necessary already in peacetime to plan specific and effective measures to disrupt the first nuclear attack and invasion of the ground forces of the enemy and to support the offensive operation of our own troops.

Third, on a coastal axis, making a decision to defend immediately before the start of combat actions, and the more so during the course of an engagement, is not at all realistic. The fact is that the front will have to combat not merely the ground forces of the enemy advancing along the coast but chiefly his large amphibious landing forces and ships of the navy. And an offensive operation of the front here will provide for the allocation of naval forces and for the landing and actions of our own amphibious landing forces on enemy territory. Therefore, on coastal axes, prior determination of the method of combat actions is unavoidable. And if the front has to conduct a defensive operation, one should not wait for the landing of an enemy landing force but must take steps to disrupt his offensive by destroying his nuclear means, aviation, and ground forces in





the areas of basing and while the fleet with the landing force is at sea.

Thus, making the decision to defend and preparing the defensive operation of a front on a coastal axis must be done already in peacetime. Advance preparation of the operation, no doubt, will have a whole series of advantages in comparison with the hasty organization of defense, especially if there is a brief period of threat, which is characteristic of the initial period of a missile/nuclear war.

It hardly needs to be demonstrated that, with time available, the operation will be carefully and thoroughly prepared in all respects. With the start of war, it will only be necessary to refine a number of matters connected with the conduct of a defensive engagement.

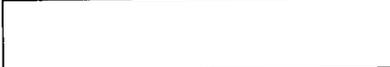
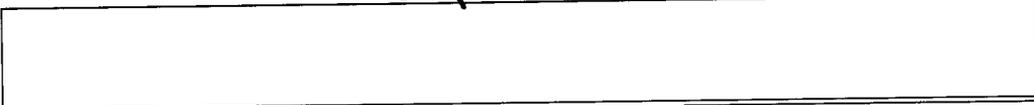
From the positions cited by the author (pages 37-38), it is hard to tell under what conditions counterpreparation may be conducted.

If, for instance, the front is preparing an offensive operation, then the first nuclear strike for the purpose of disrupting the enemy offensive can by no means be considered nuclear counterpreparation. This will be nothing other than nuclear preparation of the offensive, an integral part of the first front offensive operation.

And if the front is conducting a forced defensive engagement when the enemy preempts it in the delivery of missile/nuclear strikes and the deployment of troops, then this engagement, as the author asserts, may be made up of the first nuclear strike, cover of the state border, and destruction of the attacking enemy groupings with nuclear weapons and counterattacks. This means that also under these conditions there can be no question of conducting counterpreparation. The tasks to disrupt the enemy offensive here will be accomplished under more difficult conditions of the situation, already during the course of a defensive engagement. Consequently, counterpreparation can be conducted only when defense is organized beforehand.

However, the author is silent about the conduct of counterpreparation in respect to the defensive operation of a





front on a coastal axis.

It is absolutely unclear under what conditions, with what means, and against what targets it will be conducted, and whether the delivery of nuclear strikes against naval targets can be considered counterpreparation.

So one can conclude that, in defense in the initial period of war, disruption of an enemy offensive being prepared cannot be achieved solely by conducting counterpreparation; under modern conditions, in our opinion, it loses its importance.

The term "counterpreparation" also raises doubt, for there have occurred radical changes in the very concept of combat to disrupt an enemy offensive, in the content of the tasks of the troops of the front allocated for these purposes, and in the methods of fulfilling them.

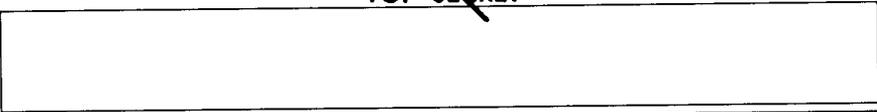
Under modern conditions one cannot count on the fact that the enemy before the start of war will concentrate his groupings in areas of limited size in immediate proximity to the border, especially on coastal axes. He can deliver surprise nuclear strikes at any time, without waiting for the full concentration of his troops and without bringing them up to the border (coast).

However, in the practice of operational training when studying and working out the problems of conducting counterpreparation, there are still cases when the defending side awaits the full concentration of the enemy troops and then delivers strikes against them. Consequently, the principle of employing the powerful new means of destruction here would be the same as it was with the use of artillery and aviation in the counterpreparation of the past. And this can in no way be acknowledged as correct.

All this leads to where the enemy preempts in delivering nuclear strikes and his deep targets remain unhit, as a result of which the troops of the front lose the initiative and are forced to conduct a hard defensive engagement.

When the front goes over to the defense on a coastal axis, if such a defense is provided for already in peacetime, there are realistic possibilities for disrupting a surprise enemy attack





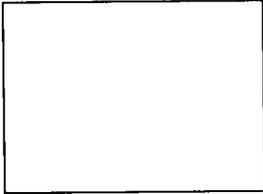
and inflicting serious damage on his nuclear means, ground forces, and navy with the first nuclear strikes already on the distant approaches to the coast. This especially is characteristic in the case when war has already begun and the enemy on a given axis has not yet gone over to aggressive actions.

It should be taken into account that the capabilities of the front for disrupting an enemy offensive under these conditions will depend on the available forces and, above all, on the availability of nuclear means, their timely deployment and preparation for actions, the importance of the axes being defended, as well as on the intentions and composition of the enemy groupings.

The front, in the defense of a coastal axis in the initial period of war, will conduct the defensive operation, as a rule, with the available forces and means that are in its composition by the start of military actions. There may not be enough of them to fulfil the tasks of a defensive operation.

For instance, to disrupt an enemy offensive, as the author points out, in the zone of a front it is necessary to neutralize and destroy no fewer than 75 important targets of a varied nature belonging to the main grouping of the enemy, to say nothing of naval and air targets. Moreover, the majority of the enemy targets will be at a considerable distance from the border (coast). Therefore, their destruction in the first strike is possible only with front rocket troops and aviation and partly with army missile means -- against targets located closer. As far as the division (tactical) missiles and artillery of the front are concerned, their use in the first strikes is almost completely out of the question because of their relatively short range.

Naturally, under these conditions the front means evidently will not be enough to disrupt the enemy offensive. To inflict decisive damage on the enemy as a result of which he will be forced to abandon the offensive, the front will require support by the forces of the navy operating on this axis and, in many cases, also reinforcement by the means of the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.





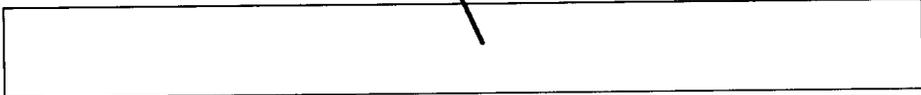
To disrupt the enemy offensive, the most advantageous method is that of simultaneously smashing his nuclear means, aviation, navy, and groupings of ground forces with a massed nuclear strike. But with limited forces and means in the composition of the front, it will be more characteristic to deliver a series of successive nuclear strikes, at first against the most important targets, primarily the nuclear means of the enemy, and then against the ships of the navy and airfields, and finally, against the groupings of ground forces. Besides that, in all cases individual and grouped nuclear strikes will be widely used against separate targets as they are detected and draw near to the border (coast).

We completely agree with the author that, in forming the grouping of troops to conduct a defensive operation on a coastal axis, the main forces should be kept in the reserve of the front in the depth, dispersed and camouflaged, in readiness for maneuver to the threatened axes. This is especially advisable for the defense in the initial period of war, since the conduct of powerful counterattacks is ensured and the advancing enemy will require more forces and time to overcome the resistance and action of the defending troops.

The defense should be set up on the principle of creating, on the most important axes, separate defense areas calculated for no more than a division. The distance of these areas from the border (coast) will depend each time on terrain conditions. Here it is advisable that a few large units or units be defending immediately on the coast. The defense areas of the first-echelon large units of the armies will make up the tactical zone of defense; and those of the second echelons of the armies and the reserves of the front, the operational zone of defense. With such a disposition of the defense, the presence of a tactical and an operational zone will not lead to the former linear character of battle formations. At the same time, the most advantageous conditions are created for the concealed disposition of groupings of troops, the execution of extensive maneuvering, as well as for engineer preparation of the terrain.

One cannot agree with the opinion of the author that, in defense on a coastal axis, the front counterattack will most often be conducted in the period of fighting to hold the defense area of the second echelon of an army or the front defense area.

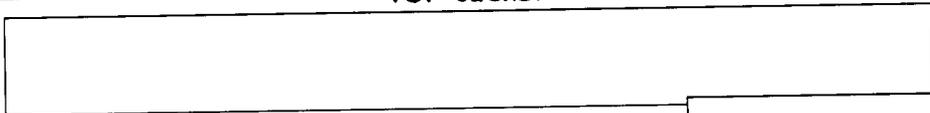




In a defensive operation of the initial period of war the first-echelon large units of the armies may incur considerable losses as the result of the massed employment of nuclear weapons by the enemy, and they will not be able with their own forces to repel the invasion of large amphibious landing forces. Therefore, in a number of cases the front is forced to commit its reserves to the engagement in the fight for the tactical zone of defense. It is also necessary to keep in mind that, with the effective delivery of missile/nuclear and air strikes on the main enemy groupings which have invaded our territory, decisive damage can be inflicted on him even within the limits of the tactical zone of defense. And in this case one cannot rule out army and front counterattacks conducted simultaneously or at different times for the purpose of completing the defeat of the enemy and creating favorable conditions for the troops of the front to go over to a counteroffensive.

It should, unfortunately, be noted that in the practice of some exercises there are still cases where the study and solution of the problems of conducting counterattacks are approached from the old positions. For instance, to conduct a counterattack a strong grouping of troops (in the strength of four or five divisions) is moved up, which goes over to the offensive on one axis after the delivery of nuclear and air strikes against the enemy. In the process, before beginning the counterattack, they make sure to wait for the concentration of all the large units and units allocated for this. This leads to a loss of time and passivity of actions of the troops of the front. And the enemy is capable in this time of getting himself in order and delivering a nuclear strike against the large units of the front that are preparing for the counterattack. It is necessary to take into account that under modern conditions, especially during an offensive on a coastal axis, the enemy will be operating on separate axes in dispersed dispositions. His offensive groupings may be at considerable distances from one another and their penetration into the defense, as a rule, will be uneven. Therefore, counterattacks should be delivered simultaneously or successively, but on several axes, possibly with the deployment of troops at different depths, committing not more than one or two divisions to the engagement on each axis. However, counterattacks, like all actions of the troops, must be united by the common objective of the defensive operation and by a single concept of the command.





* * *

Defensive operations of a front in the initial period of war apparently will most often be conducted in secondary theaters of military operations. At the same time, one cannot rule out the temporary conduct of defensive actions with part of the forces on important operational axes as the consequence of a disadvantageous operational position and enemy superiority in missile/nuclear weapons.

A modern front defensive operation is characterized by decisiveness of objectives and the massed employment by both sides of missile/nuclear weapons, unmanned means and aviation, armored and airborne troops, and, on coastal axes, of amphibious landing forces and naval forces. The large scope of the operation along the front and in depth predetermines the conduct of a defensive engagement simultaneously or successively on several operational axes with exceptional intensity and rapidity of combat actions, aggressiveness of the defending troops, their conduct of extensive maneuvering of forces and means and especially the fire of missile/nuclear weapons, as well as with their constant readiness to go over from the defense to the offensive.

These features also fully apply to the defensive operation of a front on a coastal axis, which forces us to approach its organization and conduct in a new way...

The article of Colonel General V. CHIZH treats a number of problems of the defensive operation of a front on a coastal axis in the initial period of war. Several of them require further research and working out.

Thus, in examining the layout of the defense, the author indicates that under modern conditions it is inadvisable to prepare a system of defensive lines consisting of continuous trenches and positions, and he proposes preparing in the zone of the front three defense areas (that of the first echelon of armies, that of the second echelon of armies, and that of the reserve or second echelon of the front).

It seems to us that all those basic positions which are reflected in forming a defense on the most important axes of a





land theater of military operations will be inherent in the layout of the defense on a coastal axis. Among the special features of such a defense should be classed, first of all, participation in the defensive operation of the front by the naval forces operating on the given axis, and second, the lack in coastal sectors of immediate contact with the enemy, whose invasion is possible not only by an offensive of ground forces along the coast, but also by the landing of large amphibious and airborne landing forces. In such a situation, the enemy will endeavor to maximally neutralize the defense of the front with nuclear and other means of the ground forces, aviation, and navy from great distances. In connection with this, the defense on a coastal axis must be well prepared in the engineer aspect.

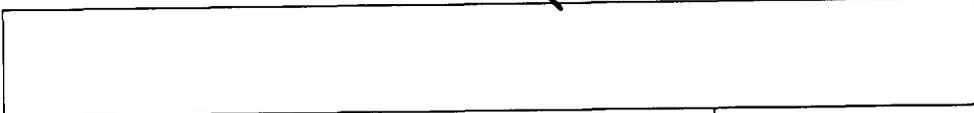
Underlying the solution of the problems connected with the layout of the defense on a coastal axis must be the endeavor not to permit the landing (drop) of amphibious and airborne landing forces of the enemy on the coast and in the immediate depth of defense of the front. Also taken into consideration should be the maneuver capabilities of the troops, which may be limited as a consequence of the physical geographic features of the theater of military operations and the creation of zones of radioactive contamination by the enemy for the purpose of preventing the timely approach of the reserves of the front from the depth.

The system of defense of the front will include the siting areas of the rocket and surface-to-air missile troops, the defense zones of the first-echelon armies, the defense areas prepared in the operational depth, areas of destruction by fire, the lines of deployment and movement routes for the second echelons and reserves, the basing areas of the combat and military transport aviation, the system of obstacles, and the road network.

Because of the lack of time for organizing the defense when the enemy manages to preempt us in the delivery of massed missile/nuclear strikes, on the most important axes, instead of the forward security zone recommended by the author, there can be created areas or a zone of all possible obstacles for the purpose of hindering the landing of enemy forces on the coast.

In the defense zones of the first- and second-echelon armies of the front on the main axes separate defensive areas (zones)





are prepared, calculated basically for a division. The same kind of areas are prepared on advantageous lines by the divisions in the reserve of the front.

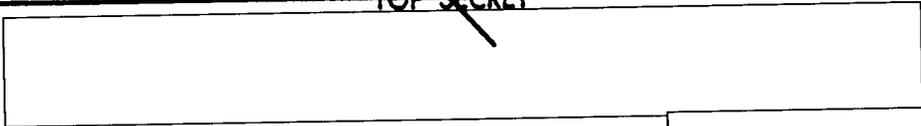
The distribution of defensive areas in the zone of the front must favor the cover of our own rocket troops and of the axes of the probable actions of the attack groupings of the enemy, forcing them to operate on the axes of previously prepared areas of destruction by fire so as to create favorable conditions for destroying these groupings with missile/nuclear and chemical weapons and other means.

Such a layout of the defense rules out dividing it into an operational and a tactical zone and most fully corresponds to the nature of combat actions, which, under the conditions being examined, will be conducted on a wide front along separate axes.

The echeloning, proposed by Colonel General CHIZH, of the defense of an army (excluding the forward security zone) to a depth of 150 to 200 kilometers, and of a front to a depth of 500 to 600 kilometers, taking into account the basing of aviation to a depth of 800 to 900 kilometers and more does not, in our opinion, correspond to the modern nature of conducting combat actions. With such an excessively deep echeloning of the troops of the army and the front in a defense, the timeliness of the maneuver of forces and means to the most important axes is hindered. If, for instance, one assumes that the second echelon of an army is located at a distance of 180 kilometers, then, to deliver a counterattack in the immediate fight for the coast, it will be necessary to make more than a 12-hour march. In this time the enemy will be able repeatedly to subject the large units of the second echelon of the army to strikes of missile/nuclear weapons and aviation, which will lead to considerable losses and even to disruption of the army counterattack. Besides that, it is necessary to take into account that the enemy will endeavor to hinder the conduct of timely maneuvering by the second echelons and reserves of the army and front by dropping airborne landing forces, and by placing obstructing nuclear barriers, etc.

We believe that the depth of defense of an army may reach not more than 100 to 150 kilometers; and of a front, not more than 400 to 500 kilometers. The front aviation should be positioned at a maximum distance of 400 to 500 kilometers from





the forward edge of the defense.

Acquiring great importance in modern defense, especially on a coastal axis, is advance preparation of the areas of destruction by fire. In the front zone there may be several of them in order to ensure the possibility of destroying the nuclear means, ships, and attack groupings of the ground forces of the enemy during the landing of his landing force as well as during the course of the defensive engagement.

Forming the basis of fire on these troops must be the nuclear strikes of the rocket troops of the front and of aviation, with the inclusion in a number of cases also of naval forces.

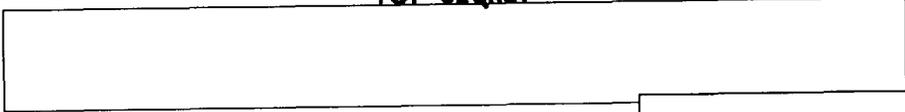
In view of the fact that the enemy troops are spread out and operate on axes, the areas of destruction by fire should not be larger in dimensions than the dispersal areas of the armored (infantry) divisions or their area of action in battle formations.

In determining the dimensions of the areas of destruction by fire, one should proceed on the necessity of destroying the enemy with a simultaneous strike or several successive strikes of different means of combat during the time that his troops are located in these areas.

To each front (army) missile brigade it is advisable to assign two to three or more areas of destruction by fire on one axis. This will afford the opportunity of continually acting upon the advancing enemy, weakening the strength of his attack.

Effective destruction of the enemy requires the continuous conduct of reconnaissance of these areas, the advance preparation of the initial data for the conduct of fire with various means of combat, as well as the carrying out of all possible measures which would force the enemy to concentrate his forces and operate in precisely these areas. It is advisable, for instance, to set up various engineer obstacles between the areas of destruction by fire, and to create a zone of radioactive contamination of the terrain, etc. As for hitting the navy and the ground forces of the enemy in areas of basing (concentration) during the loading of the landing force and its transit by sea (on the distant and





near approaches to the coast), here are needed massed strikes by the means of the front and the navy, as well as single and grouped nuclear strikes against separate land and sea targets as they are detected. And to hit enemy targets located at a considerable distance from the coast will obviously require the delivery of nuclear strikes by the strategic rocket forces and aviation.

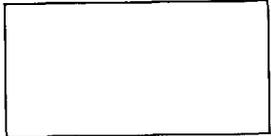
The operational disposition of the troops of the front in the defense of a seacoast may be varied, but it must always fit the concept of the defensive operation and ensure the decisive engagement and defeat of the ground and naval forces of the invading enemy. The variant of the operational disposition proposed by the author of the article with the availability of a cover echelon, a first echelon, and a reserve or second echelon has substantial defects.

In the first place, in the operational disposition, as it were, are created three echelons, which considerably dissipates the efforts of the army; second, such a disposition hinders the cooperation and control of troops; third, the availability in the cover echelon of one division cannot ensure the deployment of the missile means and large units of the army when its zone of defense is 150 to 200 kilometers.

It seems to us that the operational disposition of an army in defense of a seacoast will be characterized by the availability of two groupings (echelons) of motorized rifle (tank) divisions.

One of them, being the first echelon, is used to cover the most important axes for the purpose of not permitting a landing of the amphibious landing forces of the enemy and creating favorable conditions for his defeat with missile/nuclear weapons; the other -- the second echelon of the army -- is intended to deliver the army counterattack and combat the airborne landing forces of the enemy. The first grouping will include two or three divisions; the second, not less than two or three, predominantly tank divisions, belonging to the army.

If creation of an obstacle (forward security) zone is required, it is advisable to allocate part of the forces of the divisions of the first echelon for its defense. If there is in



the zone of the army an especially important axis, for defense of the forward security zone, a whole division can be allocated, with subsequent use of it in the complement of the troops of the first operational echelon.

In a defensive operation on a coastal axis a new way to solve a number of problems connected with the preparation and delivery of army and front counterattacks is required. Deserving attention, for instance, are such questions as selecting the moment for delivering the counterattack, the axis of conducting it, and the methods of committing large units to the engagement.

We cannot agree with the opinion of the author that a counterattack must be carried out only when the advancing enemy is in disorder as a result of the delivery of missile/nuclear strikes against him, his offensive has been slowed down, his immediate reserves used up and the movement of his deep reserves held up. In the article it is stated that a front counterattack can most often be carried out in the period of fighting to hold the defense area of the second echelon of an army or the front defense area, i.e., with an enemy penetration into the defense to a depth of from 150-180 to 250-300 kilometers.

Such recommendations will hardly be acceptable. The fact is that an enemy penetration to such a depth will afford him the possibility of taking a large beachhead on the coast, allowing not only the concentration of large groupings of ground forces, but also the execution of maneuver of forces and means and above all -- the effective delivery of nuclear strikes with missiles, aviation, and naval forces both on the previous as well as on the new axes. As a result, the stability of the whole operational defense will be drastically reduced -- first of all, the system of fire of the missile/nuclear weapons will be inevitably disrupted, and so will the work of the missile rear services not only of the first-echelon armies, but also of the front as a whole.

Army counterattacks must, in our opinion, also be delivered under such conditions when the system of fire of the army and division missile means is not yet disrupted, i.e., when fighting directly for beachheads which the enemy may take on the coast after the landing of his troops.

But if the army and front counterattacks do not produce the desired results and the enemy, by delivering new strikes with missile/nuclear weapons, armored groupings, and naval forces with the employment of large airborne landing forces, manages to penetrate into the defense of the front to a depth of more than 100 to 150 kilometers, then in this case the front must continue delivering missile/nuclear strikes against the enemy and carry out repeated counterattacks. For this it is necessary already during the offensive engagement to form counterattack groupings by regrouping the troops of the first-echelon armies and by committing to the engagement individual reserve divisions which are in the complement of the front.

The methods of committing troops to the engagement when conducting a front counterattack may vary. In one case, it will be advisable to commit the second echelon of the front to the engagement simultaneously on the axes selected for the counterattack. In another case, this will not be required, and the large units of the second echelon of the front will be committed to the engagement successively as they move up and deploy for the counterattack. Such a method is especially characteristic under conditions of the dispersed positioning of the second-echelon troops, as well as in the case of some large units being held up in moving up from the depth of defense or when the enemy takes several separate beachheads on the coast.

In the defense of a seacoast, a meeting engagement may occur during the conduct of a counterattack. In those cases when the enemy is effectively neutralized by missile/nuclear weapons, the actions of the troops delivering the counterattack will take the form of an offensive against an enemy who has hastily gone over to the defense. In this case, the front counterattack may precede the attacks of the troops of the first-echelon armies of the front.

We should also like to express a few remarks about the conduct of counterpreparation. We support the opinion of the author that it is necessary to keep the term "counterpreparation" under modern conditions, since it correctly reflects the actions of defending troops directed towards the disruption of the enemy offensive by hitting him with a simultaneous massed strike of missile/nuclear and chemical weapons. Moreover, we consider that the role of the army command in organizing and conducting

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counterpreparation has now grown considerably. This is due to the following. The defense zone of the front can, as we know, reach 500 to 700 kilometers in width. In such a zone the enemy is capable of delivering several strikes of equal strength on axes considerably removed from one another. On each axis there will develop a different, drastically and rapidly changing situation. Under these conditions, the conduct of counterpreparation on the front scale on several axes simultaneously is hindered and will often be altogether impossible. And what is more, the means of the front will not be adequate to conduct such counterpreparation. At best, the front will be able to conduct counterpreparation on one of the axes for the purpose of hitting the missile/nuclear means and the main offensive grouping of the enemy. To destroy the enemy and disrupt his offensive on other axes, counterpreparation must be planned and conducted by the forces of the first-echelon armies on the basis of the instructions of the front commander.

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