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COUNTRY:	USSR
SUBJECT:	MILITARY THOUGHT: "Certain Problems in the Organization and Conduct of Modern Operational Defense", by Lieutenant-General P. Igolkin and Major-General S. Buryak
DATE OF INFO:	January 1961
APPRAISAL OF CONTENT:	Documentary
SOURCE:	A reliable source (B).

Following is a verbatim translation of an article titled "Certain Problems in the Organization and Conduct of Modern Operational Defense", by Lieutenant-General P. Igolkin and Major-General S. Buryak.

This article appeared in the 1961 First Issue of a special version of the Soviet military journal Voyennaya Mysl (Military Thought). This journal is published irregularly and is classified TOP SECRET by the Soviets. This issue was consigned to the printer on 13 January 1961.

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Certain Problems in the Organization and Conduct of Modern Operational Defense

by

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Recently, our military press has given considerable space to an examination of the problems of modern operational defense. Many comrades who write about these problems attempt, in essence, to adapt the increased capabilities of nuclear/missile weapons to old methods of organizing and conducting defense. At the same time, the view is expressed that under conditions of the use of nuclear/missile weapons, operational defense loses its significance and that in a future war, and especially in its initial period, it will be limited within the framework of army defensive operations.

On the basis of an analysis of the probable conditions of military operations in a future war, we are coming to the conclusion that defense undoubtedly will take place on a tactical as well as an operational scale.

In examining the conditions of the origin and conduct of operational defense, especially in the initial period of a war, we take into account the fact that nuclear/missile weapons are offensive weapons, and that the urge to grasp the initiative in our hands from the very beginning of a war requires the conduct of decisive offensive operations on the most important axes. However, it must also not be forgotten that, under modern conditions, not even an economically powerful state can, in peacetime, maintain in readiness such armed forces, especially ground troops, as to permit it at the beginning of a war to initiate and conduct offensive operations in all possible theaters of military operations. Therefore, offensive operations will be conducted only in the

most important theaters of military operations, while our troops can carry out defensive actions on an operational scale in other theaters. The latter may take place specifically in secondary theaters of military operations, especially along our open ocean coastlines, where landings and operations of large enemy amphibious and airborne landing forces of operational significance are fully possible, if not in the first days of a war, at least during its initial period. In these theaters, antilanding defense can be prepared in peacetime, which, at the beginning of military operations, will be conducted not only by an army, but also by a front.

In our opinion, it is even possible to have a situation in which, during the war, a front may be forced to shift to the defensive in a situation which is developing unfavorably in order to wear out the enemy, inflict decisive destruction on him, and create conditions for a shift to the offensive. However, such a short-term defense on the scale of a front is only permissible as an extreme measure in those cases when during a war, due to some unforeseen circumstances, the enemy temporarily seizes the initiative in the use of nuclear weapons on a given axis and by his strikes puts out of commission a large part of the missile weapons of the front. In such an unfavorable situation, to save our own troops and avoid their final defeat, and also to receive new troops arriving from the reserve of the General Headquarters or transferred from other operational axes, the front obviously will be forced to conduct a defensive operation.

Defense, on the scale of an army, will take place most frequently during the conduct of front offensive operations, especially during the initial period of war, when on one or another axes, one of the armies of the first echelon of the front will be forced, temporarily, to shift to the defensive under the strikes of superior enemy forces. The necessity for shifting to the defensive may arise, for instance, when the army is providing cover for the deployment of troops of the front, when repelling an enemy counterstrike, or as a result of a meeting engagement which had an unsuccessful outcome for the troops of the army.

Of course, we take into consideration that under modern conditions, the imminent threat of an enemy counterstrike may be eliminated or significantly weakened by massed nuclear/missile strikes. However, under conditions of a difficult situation, when the basic missile weapons of the front are used for the support of troops successfully advancing on other axes, the army which is conducting combat with strong counterstrike groupings of the enemy, may not receive the necessary nuclear/missile support. Under such conditions, the army will be forced to conduct a defensive battle within the framework of the offensive operation of the front. This battle will be a part of the latter and will be of a short-term nature because, in the final analysis, the determining influence on its outcome will be the successful operations of the attacking troops of the front.

The considerations expressed above provide a basis for concluding that our ground troops must be prepared to conduct operational defense on various scales, for which it is very important to develop further the theory of preparing and conducting not only army but also front defensive operations. Proceeding from this conclusion, we shall examine a series of fundamental principles pertaining to the goals, tasks, nature of the formation, and methods of conduct of modern operational defense.

In the past, as is known, the destruction of an advancing enemy was begun and completed by the forces of combined-arms large units and formations which defended, as a rule, on a solid front, and were supported by artillery and aviation. The basic means of achieving the goals of a defensive operation were the fire of artillery, mortars, and small arms, strikes by aircraft, and the counterattacks and counterstrikes of second echelons and reserves. The combat operations of combined-arms large units and formations, at the beginning of an enemy offensive, were developed in sequence for holding solid zones, first in tactical and then in operational depth. To hold the tactical zone of defense, the basic forces and weapons of armies, and in certain instances, of a front, were used. To breach it, the enemy needed a considerable amount of time during which the defender was able to effect the necessary increase of forces and weapons.

Defending troops conducted combat operations until they exhausted the strong enemy grouping, which advanced, as a rule, on one of the decisive axes, in compact formations, having close lateral contact between large units. Due to the fact that the defending forces, especially those in the zone of interior, remained undefeated, the defender could use them systematically to form a new front in the zone of interior, or to create a strong grouping designated to deliver a counterstrike which was usually executed with a limited goal, that of reconstructing the defense on the same or new lines.

The methods which we have examined, of combat operations of troops on the defensive in the recent past, fully corresponded to the weapons of destruction and the nature of offensive operations of the enemy which were used at that time. With the appearance of nuclear weapons in the armament of troops, these methods, in essence, began to adapt themselves to them, but retaining, on the whole, the principles of the organization of defense which were used in the past. Thus, it was considered possible to achieve the goal of a defensive operation by inflicting destruction upon the enemy by all types of fire, including missile weapons, and also sustained defense by the main forces of the armies of the first echelon in first or second defense zones which had been prepared in advance along a continuous front, by conducting counterstrikes (in their former meaning) with the aim of routing enemy groupings which had broken through, and re-establishing the lost position or with an even more limited aim. The basic forces and weapons were usually concentrated to hold a specific defense zone and a larger part of the combined arms large units were deployed in the zones in advance.

Certain tendencies to increase the depth of defense zones and areas of troop disposition in them, to create and increase the intervals between battalion defense areas, and also to transfer the main efforts from one zone to another, did not introduce any radical changes in the nature of the formation and methods of conduct of operational defense in comparison with the past.

Of course, when the capabilities of nuclear weapons were limited, only single units of nuclear warheads were allotted for conducting a defensive operation, and the only means of delivering them was aircraft, the measures pointed out above helped somewhat to ensure the stability of operational defense because combined arms large units continued to be the main means of destroying the enemy. However, these measures are obviously inadequate under conditions when the basic means of delivering nuclear weapons to their targets have become missiles of various designations which are available to ground troops in sufficient quantity. As a result of being equipped with missiles, the firepower of the ground troops has increased so much that they have acquired the capability of accomplishing the main tasks with nuclear/missile weapons, and of completing the enemy's rout with powerful counterstrikes by combined arms large units, delivered, as a rule, right after the nuclear strikes. This requires a new approach to the solution of the problems of operational defense.

The methods of preparation and conduct of defensive operations which have existed up to the present time and the creation of solid defense zones do not permit troops to exploit to the maximum their sharply increased fire and strike capabilities, to execute, in a timely manner, a broad maneuver on threatened axes during a defensive battle, and, in essence, condemn a significant part of the troops to passive operations. In addition, it is necessary to consider that modern operational defense must withstand methods of operations of the attacker which are fundamentally different from the past.

Now, with the mass use of nuclear weapons in the entire depth of the operational defense, the attacker will have no particular difficulty in neutralizing solid defense zones in short periods of time, and creating significant breakthroughs (breaches) in them. Exploiting these breaches, the enemy's groupings, especially his tank troops, will drive through them on several of the most important axes into the depth of the defense, splitting the formation of the defending troops with the goal of destroying them piecemeal. Simultaneously, nuclear/missile strikes and strikes by

strong airborne groupings will be carried out against the depth of the defense. Under such conditions, the large units and formations which are defending on a solid front will scarcely be able to maneuver quickly to threatened axes, and without active and mobile operations, which depend on the possibility of using nuclear/missile weapons, we cannot count on successful combat with an attacking enemy during a defensive battle.

Providing stability for modern operational defense must be based primarily on the utilization of weapons which are capable of using nuclear warheads, i. e., missiles. Only they are capable of dependable destruction of the main striking weapons of the attacker--nuclear weapons--and also of routing his troops and frustrating the offensive. Routing of the enemy will now be initiated, and in most cases carried out, even during the course of established combat operations, by missile troops.

In connection with this, there is no longer any need to create a solid "zonal" defense and even less to utilize a larger portion of the motorized rifle and tank large units in the first echelon for holding the zones. In organizing defense by the system of zones occupied by troops, one can hardly count on successful combat with an enemy, which is advancing on unconnected axes in a large area and with the simultaneous use of airborne forces against the depth of the defense. At the present time, defense can be successful when it is based not on sitting in place, even in prepared positions, but on delivering strikes against the enemy precipitately, even though it be with limited aims. Creating a solid front under these conditions is not only inadvisable but also harmful, because this condemns a considerable amount of forces to passive operations. Now, only a part of the combined arms large units will be used for covering the most important axes and for supporting the combat disposition of the missile troops. It is advisable to designate a large part of them for completing the rout of the enemy by delivering strikes against him and to have a part dispersed in the depth of the defense.

Thus, the goals of operational defense must now be attained by the mass and skillful use of nuclear/missile weapons and the

utilization of the basic forces and weapons of the armies, not in combat for holding defense zones, but, as a rule, for maneuvering operations based on the execution of a series of strikes by combined arms large units against those enemy groupings which have broken through on various axes, in combination with the holding by a comparatively small part of the forces of certain important areas of terrain on the basic axes of his offensive. In this, the holding of certain areas of terrain must serve to exhaust the enemy, slow down the speed of his advance, and force him to deploy into combat formations and to set up compact groupings of troops within a limited area in order to destroy them subsequently by nuclear weapons.

Modern operational defense cannot be stable in the former interpretation of this term, i. e., based on holding at any cost a definite line prepared in advance. We consider stability in modern operational defense to be a capability to slow down the speed of an enemy offensive, exhaust his groupings in maneuvering battles, delay his forward movement into the depth of an area being defended, and create conditions to inflict decisive destruction on him by nuclear weapons, followed by final routing of the enemy by strikes of the combined arms large units.

Slowing down the speed of an enemy offensive must be based on holding only certain important areas of terrain, on counterattacks and counterstrikes delivered precipitately and from various directions, on the extensive use of obstacles, primarily antitank ones, and the utilization of natural barriers until such time as the possibility of routing the enemy with nuclear weapons presents itself.

Based on the above, we feel that it is necessary to reject defense zones (as a system of engineer preparation of the terrain), and to construct defense on the principle of creating the defense zone of an army and a front (within their boundaries), individual defense areas with a capacity of not more than a division, intercepting the most probable axes of an enemy offensive, and ensuring the execution of a broad maneuver by the troops. In this, the disposition of forces and weapons in defense, the organization of the system of fire, and the

engineer preparation of the terrain in the defense areas of large units, must not so much ensure the holding of the most important key points in the paths of the enemy offensive by repelling his strikes with fire from the halt, as permit maneuvering of forces, especially of the tank subunits and units, in order to conduct counterattacks against an enemy which has effected a breakthrough.

In a number of instances a defense area can be designated not only for a large unit but also for an army as a whole, especially when it shifts to the defensive during a front offensive operation. Thus, often an army will be forced to shift to the defensive under conditions when part of its forces (individual large units) are continuing offensive operations up to a definite line, certain large units under enemy strikes shift to the defensive, a part of the reserves are thrown into combat with his airborne forces, and on the whole the troops of the army are carrying out combat operations over a wide area, with exposed flanks and having large gaps in the operational formation. Under these conditions, the efforts of the troops of the army in repelling enemy strikes will be directed not only toward the front, but also toward the flanks, and in a number of cases, toward the rear area as well. Therefore, it may not be always advisable to determine a defense zone for an army which is shifting to a forced defensive during an offensive operation, as was done in the past, but sometimes it will be more advantageous to assign it a defense area in which it must halt the advance of the counterattacking enemy groupings, inflict decisive destruction on them, and in this way support the offensive of the main forces of the front on other axes.

The grouping of forces and weapons of a front and army to carry out a defensive operation (operational formation) will now include: a grouping of the missile troops, the first echelon, a strong combined arms reserve (and in certain cases also a second echelon, especially in an army), a grouping of forces and weapons of the antiaircraft defense, special reserves, and in a front, even a grouping of combat, special, and transport aviation. In addition, the operational formation of the troops of a front and of an army

should also include, in our opinion, their rear services, i. e., large units, units and establishments designated for uninterrupted materiel, technical, and medical support of troop operations and also forces and weapons for their protection and for defense of the rear services.

A qualitatively new element in the operational formation of the troops of a front (army) is the grouping of missile troops, which will perform the main tasks in the destruction of the enemy. Strikes by missile troops using nuclear weapons combined with strikes by aircraft will now make up the basis of a system of fire which will ensure quick destruction of the enemy on any axis.

The grouping of missile troops of operational-tactical designation must, in all cases, ensure the delivery of massed nuclear/missile strikes in short periods of time against the enemy's weapons of nuclear attack and against his main groupings, primarily of armored troops, in order to rout them by nuclear strikes and frustrate an offensive, and also ensure the capability of rapid retargeting of the main nuclear/missile weapons to fulfill newly arising tasks during the operation.

In shifting to the defensive, the most important task of the command and the staffs is to ensure the timely movement and deployment of missile large units and units in siting areas. In selecting siting areas, both primary and alternate preference must be given to the missile troops over the other large units. The movement of missile large units and units to siting areas is calculated in such a way as to give them the necessary time for deployment of combat formations, preparation (oborudovaniye) of positions, and preparation (podgotovka) of missiles for launching.

The grouping of combined arms large units and formations, its composition, tasks, and designation will be determined by the composition of the grouping of the missile troops and its capability to perform the basic tasks in destroying the enemy.

In creating a grouping of combined arms large units and formations the following two circumstances must be taken into consideration.

Firstly, to accomplish tasks of completing the rout of an enemy who has broken through to the depth of the defense, on whom the missile troops have inflicted heavy destruction, and who is sustaining systematic nuclear/missile strikes, there will be no need to have the same number of combined arms large units and formations in the composition of a front, as was the case, for instance, in the past war. These tasks can be fulfilled successfully with an even smaller number of large units (formations).

Secondly, success in combat with enemy groupings whose breakthrough into the depth of the defense is possible on several axes, and with his airborne forces deep in the rear area, can be expected only when the greater part of the motorized rifle and tank divisions are located in the depth at various distances from the line of the front, in constant readiness to deliver strikes against an enemy who has broken through, deploying for this precipitately, or to hold, with a part of them, advantageous areas of terrain on the most probable axes of the enemy's offensive. Under favorable conditions, these large units can also be utilized for a subsequent shift to the offensive. In the first echelon of armies, it is advisable to have a small number of divisions to organize the defense of the most important areas on the probable axes of the enemy's offensive.

A system of engineer preparation of the terrain is set up to correspond to the grouping of forces and weapons which is created to conduct a defensive operation. It will include: the siting areas of the missile troops, the defense areas of the large units of the first echelon, the areas of disposition of the large units of the second echelons and reserves, their routes of movement for maneuver and lines of deployment, the areas where aircraft are based, sectors of obstacles and demolition, areas which have been prepared for the location of control points and rear area installations, the road network, and also dummy positions (areas) and other installations.

The positions of the missile troops are selected on terrain having natural concealment, a developed geodetic grid, and convenient routes for supply and maneuver. In size, the siting areas of the

missile troops must ensure the capability of preparing primary and alternate launch sites, containing all the defensive structures needed for concealed and dispersed disposition of units and subunits and stockpiles of missiles, nuclear charges, and fuel components.

In the defense areas of large units of the first echelon, a system of centers of resistance (strong points) is created, in which positions for fire weapons, shelters for personnel and combat equipment, observation posts, and communication trenches are prepared. The centers of resistance (strong points) are linked with the system of artillery fire and are protected by obstacles.

The engineer preparation of the areas of disposition of large units in the second echelon and in the reserve is calculated not only to ensure cover for the personnel and combat equipment of units and subunits, dispersal of them, and repelling by them of an attacking enemy by fire from the halt, but mainly to execute rapid maneuver in any direction. These areas should be selected with consideration for the most probable directions of enemy breakthrough into the depth and for the conditions of the terrain, and whenever possible should be tied in with the system of fire of the missile troops and artillery and, when needed, with obstacles. In the areas, centers of resistance, positions for fire weapons, and cover for personnel and combat equipment can be created and routes of maneuver can be prepared or staked out. For large units of the second echelon and for the reserve, alternate areas must also be designated, for which it is advisable to accomplish engineer preparation in the same manner as for primary ones, if time is available.

Under conditions when the attacking enemy strives to create zones of radioactive contamination and destruction, primarily on the routes of troop movement, advance preparation of the routes (cross-country routes) for the maneuver of troops acquires paramount significance. Engineer troops which have been previously allotted to the complement of traffic support detachments (otryad obespecheniya dvizheniya) are usually used to provide roads and river crossings for maneuvering troops.

The system of obstacles, contamination, and destruction is prepared in strict accordance with the disposition of groupings of friendly troops and the planned maneuver, taking into account the terrain and the need to cover the most important axes as well as the intervals and gaps in the defense. In many cases, it may prove advisable to create solid zones of contamination and destruction ahead of the front of the attacking enemy by nuclear weapons for the purpose of halting his forward movement, inflicting losses, and gaining time for the transfer of forces to this axis.

The obstacles created by the engineer troops must be set up quickly, and, when possible, be controlled from a distance, although it is not mandatory to cover them with small arms and artillery fire; on the contrary, it is more advantageous to prepare obstacles on those axes where there is insufficient firepower and personnel. To ensure speedy setting up of obstacles, it is desirable to equip the engineer troops with helicopters. Mobile obstacle detachments, in helicopters, can be widely employed during a defensive operation.

The main element in the engineer preparation of terrain is the concealment of personnel and combat equipment in their dispersed disposition over a large area — by carrying out various deceptive measures, including the creation of dummy installations and by wide maneuver, preventing the enemy from detecting one or another grouping of troops, especially missile troops. Today, the weak spot in defense will be that grouping of troops which the enemy detects and against which he delivers a strike by nuclear weapons, and conversely, the strong spot in defense will be the grouping which is not discovered by the enemy, and therefore is able to launch surprise strikes against him, primarily nuclear/missile.

The fire system in defense is based on strikes by nuclear/missile weapons, which are combined with fire from tube and rocket artillery, strikes by aircraft, and the system of obstacles. The fire system should ensure a capability of concentrating nuclear/missile and aircraft strikes in a short period of time on any threatened

axis with the aim of destroying the enemy's nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and destroying his troops in their areas of disposition during their move forward and at the beginning of their offensive.

Tank fire is of great importance in defense. Tank units, conducting fire from concealed firing positions, can perform several fire missions to destroy and neutralize an enemy which is located within their range of fire, which is very important under conditions when there is a limited amount of tube and rocket artillery in the armies and divisions.

The system of fire in defense is organized in such a way as to increase continually the fire effect on the enemy in proportion to his concentration and deployment, and to make possible the rout of his groupings and frustration of the offensive. In organizing a fire system, primary attention should be given to ensuring the readiness of the missile troops and aviation to deliver nuclear strikes first of all against the enemy's weapons of nuclear attack and basic groupings before the beginning of his offensive. In connection with this, the readiness of the operational defense as a whole will be determined first of all, by the readiness of the missile troops to deliver strikes against the enemy and, if necessary, to retarget them to any threatened axis during an operation.

In our opinion, the greatest attention in problems of conducting modern operational defense should be given to the carrying out of counterpreparation and counterstrikes.

It is known that in the past, counterpreparation, as an active fire countermeasure, directed at frustrating an enemy offensive, was carried out immediately before the enemy shifted to the offensive when his strike grouping was already concentrated in compact formations, usually on one of the decisive axes in direct contact with the defending troops.

To carry out counterpreparation against such a grouping, the defender, in turn, concentrated the greater part of the artillery from the complement of the first and second echelons on the axis of the probable main strike of the enemy, brought in artillery from adjacent sectors, and utilized aviation.

During the counterpreparation, only the large units of the enemy's first echelon were subjected to more or less heavy fire effect, and even these quickly reorganized themselves, and after an insignificant period of time, calculated in hours, shifted to the offensive. In regard to the reserves and second echelons of the enemy, on the whole they were not subjected to any serious fire effect and in all cases were utilized according to plan, the defending troops accomplished their destruction during the actual defensive battle.

Now the task of frustrating an enemy offensive can be fulfilled with incomparably greater effect by missile troops who, within short periods of time and without changing firing positions, are capable of concentrating nuclear strikes on any area of disposition of the enemy. Under modern conditions, we cannot count on the enemy to concentrate his groupings in area limited in size, in compact formations, and in direct contact with the defending troops. To wait while the enemy prepares his own offensive groupings for operations, and moreover, to give him the opportunity to deliver pre-emptive strikes by nuclear weapons, means to give up the initiative to the enemy without a struggle and to place our own troops under the threat of defeat in advance. To prevent this, it is necessary to make maximum use of the capabilities of the missile troops.

Combat with the enemy with the aim of frustrating his offensive must be carried on for the duration of the entire period of his preparation for an offensive. This combat will be initiated by the delivery of nuclear/missile strikes, supplemented by aircraft strikes immediately as the enemy's groupings are successfully detected and must continue without interruption. In all cases, it is imperative to strive to deliver strikes, first of all, against the

enemy's weapons of nuclear attack, whose destruction will deprive him of the capability of utilizing his ground forces with the greatest effect.

Taking the above into account, we consider the use of the very term "counterpreparation" to be inadvisable because this may lead to adapting the old methods of its organization and execution to the new powerful weapons of destruction.

Modern defensive operations will begin with combat operations, primarily of the missile troops, who can successfully wage combat with the enemy even on distant approaches to the defense. In addition to the missile troops, aircraft using nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction and, on the nearest approaches to the defense, tube and rocket artillery, and some of the tanks, are used in operations to frustrate an offensive which is being prepared.

The decisive role in frustrating an enemy offensive belongs to the missile troops of operational-tactical designation. The objectives of their strikes will be weapons of nuclear attack, groupings of ground troops (mainly armored), depots and workshops for assembling nuclear warheads, control points, and radiotechnical means located in the entire depth of the operational formation of the enemy's troops. To destroy the indicated objectives, the missile troops can deliver individual, group, and sometimes even massed nuclear/missile strikes, supplemented by aircraft strikes against these objectives.

With the sharply increased capabilities of the front and army to frustrate an enemy offensive by nuclear/missile strikes, the task of delivering a strike ahead of the front of the defense by the forces of the combined arms large units, has become more realistic. If the situation permits, it may be advisable, following the successful delivery of massed nuclear/missile strikes, to deliver a strike before the front of the defense by the forces of the large units located in the second echelons of the armies and in the reserve of the front with the aim of completing the rout of the strike groupings of the enemy and the capture of important areas.

In many cases, this strike may develop into a general offensive.

In examining the methods of conducting counterstrikes during a defensive battle, it is necessary to proceed, first of all, from the changed nature of the offensive operations of the enemy, who has great capabilities for using nuclear/missile weapons and for conducting large-scale offensive operations. Under conditions when the enemy is making decisive use of nuclear weapons in the entire depth of the defense and is shifting to the offensive on several axes while simultaneously making several landings of airborne forces in the operational rear, deep breakthroughs by his strong groupings of armored troops are possible. We can no longer count on successful combat with these groupings by conducting counterstrikes in their former sense, when large groupings of troops were concentrated on one axis to carry them out.

This was possible before because the enemy also operated with a strong grouping of his troops usually on one decisive axis. By concentrating the main forces and weapons on this axis the defender forced the attacker to gnaw through the defense at a relatively slow pace, as a result of which he had more or less considerable time available for planned preparation and concentration of the counterstrike grouping, without fear that the enemy would decisively disrupt its combat effectiveness before the beginning of operations. At the present time, the situation has undergone a marked change. Despite this, in the practice of major troop exercises, it is possible, even now, to encounter cases when a strong grouping of troops is moved up to carry out a counterstrike on one of the axes and after fire preparation simultaneously /several words missing/ one or another combined arms large unit, being used to carry out the counterstrike is late in moving up to the line of deployment, other large units usually bide their time, thus condemning themselves to passiveness. The enemy, on the other hand, is enabled to reorganize himself and to deal with the counterstrike grouping which has been readied with nuclear weapons. Similar activities were observed even at the last major command-staff exercise which was conducted in July 1960.

At the present time, it is very dangerous to concentrate a grouping of troops consisting of three or four divisions on one axis. This only plays into the hands of the enemy, who, in all cases, will be striving to compel the defender to concentrate such groupings within a more or less limited area and to finish them off with nuclear weapon strikes.

Under conditions when, from the very beginning, combat operations develop in great depth and over a wide front, assume a highly mobile nature, and proceed very irregularly, when several strong centers of combat are formed in the defense zone of an operational formation simultaneously on a number of axes and at varying depths, the methods of conducting counterstrikes must be changed.

At the beginning of a defensive battle, the missile troops will deliver nuclear strikes against the enemy to inflict maximum losses on the enemy's defensive groupings and to prevent their breaking through to the depth. A portion of the combined arms large units will conduct sustained combat operations to hold the most important areas, repelling the enemy's offensive by all types of fire and by counterattacks; the other portion of the large units is thrown into combat with the enemy's airborne forces. A large part of the motorized rifle and tank divisions will be used to deliver strikes against enemy groupings which have effected breakthroughs on various axes into the depth of the defense. It is advisable to deliver these strikes precipitately on several axes at various depths, and possibly at various times, especially in the front. However, all the strikes must be united by a single concept to complete the rout of that enemy grouping which at the given time represents the greatest danger with the use of the main forces.

To effect rapid elimination of destruction on the routes of troop movement, it is advisable to set up in each large unit several small, but highly productive and mobile traffic support detachments which are now becoming a necessary part of the march formation of large units and units. The delivery of strikes against an enemy who is making a breakthrough by the combined arms large units on various axes and at varying depths leads to dispersion of the enemy's efforts.

With the systematic use against the enemy of nuclear/missile weapons and aircraft, he will hardly be capable of delivering effective strikes on all axes against large units which are moving. Even if the enemy succeeds in disrupting the combat effectiveness of certain divisions, other divisions nevertheless will still be able to deliver strikes against him that will have considerable influence on completing the rout of an enemy who has broken through into the depth.

During a defensive battle, strikes (counterstrikes) will be delivered not only on the enemy's flank, but also from the front because the situation will not always allow the execution of a maneuver to reach the flanks of the groupings which have broken through. Moreover with the timely and successful delivery of nuclear/missile strikes against the enemy groupings which have broken through, it is possible to achieve decisive destruction of them, and, in a short period of time, to create favorable conditions for the execution of frontal counterstrikes.

Taking this into consideration, and also the fact that the basis of the combat operations of the troops in a defensive operation as well as in an offensive, is nuclear strikes, rapid maneuver, and swift attacks by tank and motorized rifle units and large units, with the aim of rapid exploitation of the results of nuclear bursts, then meeting engagements and battles become very typical in operational defense. They will arise and be conducted simultaneously or successively, on a number of the most important axes, over a large area along the front and in the depth when there are large breakthroughs in the operational formations of the troops, and also under conditions when there are numerous zones of contaminated terrain and destruction of the most important routes of movement.

Meeting battles and engagements occurring during a defensive operation will be characterized by: the brevity of the time for their organization; the intensity of the combat to seize the initiative, mainly in delivering nuclear strikes against the troops moving up to meet each other; the deployment of large units on dissociated

axes at various times and in varying depth, and also their entry into battle rapidly after the nuclear strikes; the speed of the combat operations; the wide use of maneuver by forces and weapons.

A striving to forestall one another in the use of nuclear weapons may lead to a situation by the time of the encounter, where neither of the opposing sides will have a clearly evident advantage in number of combined arms large units. Therefore, pre-emption in the use of nuclear weapons will be the main condition determining success in a meeting engagement.

The simultaneous inflicting of decisive destruction on several or a large part of the combined arms units which are moving up or being deployed may force one of the sides to shift to the defensive in a short period of time or to withdraw in the face of the evident threat of a rout of its troops. In this case, the outcome of a meeting engagement may be predetermined even before the encounter of the main forces of the sides, and the meeting engagement will quickly develop into an offensive or pursuit for one of the sides and defense or withdrawal for the other.

Such, in brief, are our views on certain problems in the formation and conduct of modern operational defense, which urgently require further investigation.