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Transition to the Use of Nuclear Weapons in  
the Course of an Offensive Operation

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The foundations for successful transition to the use of nuclear weapons are laid down during the preparation for the operation. During this period the decision is made on participation of the army in the initial nuclear strike of the front, and on troop action to exploit the results of the strike. Tasks are assigned to those who will carry them out. Coordinated action, reconnaissance, and final reconnaissance are organized for the initial nuclear strike; a reliable control system is established with first priority for the nuclear weapons; constant readiness is ensured for using these weapons; steps are taken to defend the troops and rear services facilities in the event of surprise use of nuclear weapons by the enemy; and finally, operational camouflage--particularly for nuclear weapons--and the radioelectronic struggle are organized for the delivery of the initial nuclear strike, and nuclear warhead reserves are echeloned.

From the beginning of an operation using conventional weapons, work continues without interruption to maintain constant troop readiness for the use of nuclear weapons. The reason for this is to make it possible to deliver the initial strike in the shortest possible time after the signal is received. To this end reconnaissance and final reconnaissance are carried out on enemy targets slated for destruction in the initial nuclear strike; the mission of the nuclear weapons which will be used in the initial strike is refined in good time; steps are taken to prevent the loss of launchers and nuclear warheads and to preserve reliable control over the means planned for delivering the initial nuclear strike; a constant struggle is carried out against the enemy's nuclear weapons; and checks are made on the readiness of the troops for action under conditions of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

On the basis of the experience of command and staff exercises and war games conducted at the M. V. Frunze Military Academy, this article sets forth a number of considerations on the procedures for transition from non-nuclear combat action to nuclear in an army offensive operation, as applicable to the Western Theater of Military Operations.

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