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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

29 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain
Problems of Modern Defense

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 comments on a previous article on problems of defense. The first comment examines the diverse conditions under which troops will go over to the defense, and discusses questions on which the decision for a defense should be based. The second deals with the organization and preparation of a prepared defense, a defense set up in short time limits, and a hastily occupied defense. The need for a unified fire system organizing the utilization of all fire means according to a single defensive operation plan is discussed, as well as the preparation and conduct of counterthrusts. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) 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 N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Early 1962

DATE 29 November 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems of Modern Defense

SOURCE Documentary Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article contains two comments, the first written by Colonel M. Fedulov and the second by Colonel K. Kushch-Zharko, on a previous article on problems of defense. The first comment examines the diverse conditions under which troops will go over to the defense, and discusses questions on which the decision for a defense should be based, including the concept of actions, the combat tasks of troops and support means, the procedure for their cooperation, and the organization of control. The second deals with the organization and preparation of a prepared defense, a defense set up in short time limits, and a hastily occupied defense. The need for a unified fire system organizing the utilization of all fire means according to a single defensive operation plan is discussed, as well as the preparation and conduct of counterthrusts.

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 article to which it refers was

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Certain Problems of Modern Defense

by

Colonel M. FEDULOV
Colonel K. KUSHCH-ZHARKO

The employment of nuclear weapons and other modern means of armed combat, and the full motorization and mechanization of the army have brought about fundamental changes in the methods of organizing and conducting combat actions, including defensive actions. Meanwhile, there are many contradictory opinions regarding matters of a defensive operation (battle). In connection with this, the article by General-Major V. PETRENKO,* in which the author examines a number of topical problems of modern defense, is of great interest.

At the same time, the article does not disclose conditions in which it is possible to go over to the defense, and without a proper presentation of these it is difficult to determine the role and place of defense in combat actions of troops and the procedure for organizing it.

It is impossible to examine problems of defense abstractly, in isolation from the main tenets of Soviet military doctrine, and from the importance of theaters of military operations and axes of operations.

We know that our military doctrine is based on offense; the nature of modern means of armed combat fully correspond to this.

In a critique of an operational exercise conducted with the staffs of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany and the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic in May 1961, Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. MALINOVSKIY pointed out: "All personnel must firmly learn that if the aggressor unleashes a war on us, then we will not elect to go on the defensive, but will destroy him with decisive offensive actions alone." Consequently, in the main theaters of military operations and

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1961, No. 6 (61).

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axes of operations, the troops, in a number of cases, will be forced to go over to the defense just in the course of an offensive.

At present, matters of organizing and conducting defense during an offensive are becoming important, but they have not yet been sufficiently worked out, and are not mentioned in the article.

The need for the troops to go over to the defense in the course of an offensive may arise when on separate axes the enemy succeeds in establishing superiority in nuclear weapons and other forces and means, and in delivering a powerful counterattack, or in going over to a counteroffensive. The timely going over of a part of the front (army) forces to the defense is intended here to repulse and rout the superior enemy and create advantageous conditions for the development of a rapid offensive on other axes. However, even in this situation the going over of troops to the defense is warranted only when it is impossible to destroy the counterattacking enemy grouping with nuclear weapons and with a meeting attack of troops on the offensive. Consequently, defense in the course of an offensive is forced, but, in this, it is always subordinate to the interests of the offensive of the main forces.

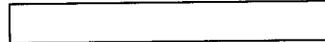
In the course of an offensive on a coastal axis when there are major enemy amphibious and airborne landing forces involved, the going over of a part of the forces to an antilanding defense is feasible for securing the flank of the main forces advancing along the coast.

Under all conditions of an offensive, the going over of troops to the defense is possible as a result of the unfavorable outcome of a meeting engagement (battle).

In the initial period of a war, a situation has not been ruled out, where, on separate axes, the enemy preempts us in delivering the first nuclear strike and goes over to the offensive, while, at the same time, not all of the troops of the front succeed in fully deploying and preparing themselves for conducting an offensive operation. Under these conditions on separate axes, the going over of part of the forces of the front to the defense is possible in order to repulse the invasion of

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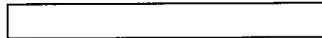
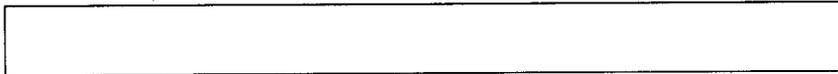
the enemy and to cover the deployment and going over of the main forces to the offensive. A similar situation occurred in a command-staff exercise conducted in the Leningrad Military District in June 1960, where troops of the Third Army were forced to go over to the defense temporarily in order to cover the state border and repulse the surprise attack and advance of the "Southerners". After disrupting the "enemy's" invasion, the army, reinforced with nuclear means and large units from the front reserve, went over to a decisive offensive. The defense of this army had a temporary nature, for the successful offensive of the main forces of the front influenced the outcome of the defensive engagement.

With all the diversity of conditions in which troops will be forced to go over to the defense during an offensive, defense will most often be organized and set up in short time limits, in the course of intense combat actions. On axes where the troops go over to the defense, the enemy, after having concentrated large forces, will deliver strikes with nuclear and chemical weapons, artillery and aviation, and will attack with ground troops, striving to successfully carry out a counterthrust (counterattack). In a number of cases he will even drop airborne landing forces. With this, not only the first operational echelon of the army on the offensive, as it was in the last war, but also its entire grouping, as well as control posts and rear installations will be exposed to fire action. Here, the going over to the defense can be carried out simultaneously with repulsing the enemy, destroying his airborne landing forces, and taking measures for eliminating the aftereffects of nuclear and chemical strikes.

Because of the uneven development of combat actions in the course of an offensive by axes, and the complexity of the situation, the going over of large units and units to the defense will not be simultaneous. Some large units, some of which will be separated from the main forces of the front (army), will continue the offensive, others will conduct a meeting engagement or repulse the counterattacks of the enemy, and possibly even withdraw temporarily, and a third part will have to bring themselves to order after nuclear strikes of the enemy.

Under the conditions being examined, defense in the course of an offensive, as a rule, will have a hastily occupied nature,

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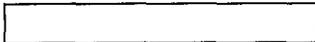
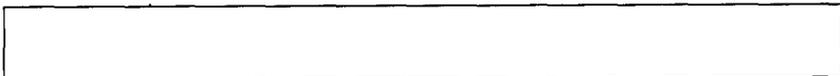
differing substantially from prepared defense, since all work on organizing it must be carried out in very short time limits.

The situation will be more complex in that the troops are forced to go over to the defense on terrain which has not had engineer preparation, and this will make antinuclear protection and camouflage difficult. In connection with this, it is necessary to strive to maximally exploit the lines (areas) which are advantageous for defense and the natural protective properties of the terrain.

All this requires great efficiency from the commander and staff in organizing defense. We cannot agree with the author's opinion regarding making the decision for a defense. In particular he says: "During a hasty going over to the defense in the course of combat actions, the situation in the area of our troops, and also in the adjacent area must be known; therefore, initially, the process of working out and making the decision for a defense will consist basically in inserting the necessary changes and additions in the previously adopted decision for the operation and battle." What changes can be in question, when the troops have been on the offensive and then are forced to go over to the defense in a complex and fluid situation? In this case a new decision for the defensive operation (battle) must be drawn up. Hence, the formation commander (commander) will have to simultaneously direct the combat actions and in the course of them establish a defensive grouping to carry out the new task, with a method of actions that is completely opposite to offense.

On secondary axes and theaters of military operations, where for one reason or another conducting offensive operations has not been stipulated with the initiation of a war, defense can be prepared in advance, in a number of cases, when not in contact with the enemy. Under these conditions a prepared defense will be set up, intended for conducting a prolonged defensive engagement.

The matter of concentrating the main efforts in defense is set forth vaguely in the article, and without any justification, the author introduces the new term "areas of destruction by fire." In our opinion, this term does not reflect the essence of concentrating the main efforts in defense. The fact of the matter is that, even with the increased importance of fire in



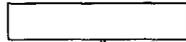
modern defense, fire strikes must be closely combined with troop actions. In connection with this, it is always necessary to realize that the concentration of the main efforts of troops in defense signifies not the establishment of compact groupings in selected areas, but rather the delivery of nuclear and chemical strikes and the conduct of fire with conventional means, in combination with maneuvering of troops from the depth and from unassaulted sectors, and the conduct of attacks by combined-arms large units for the purpose of destroying the enemy in specific areas. This is dictated by the sharply increased power of modern means of destruction and requirements for the increased aggressiveness and stability of defense. In addition to this, fire strikes and the aggressiveness of the troops must be closely combined with firmly holding the most important areas of defense on the axes of the enemy's offensive. The latter, in our opinion, is necessary for the purpose of setting up "pockets of fire," that is, advantageous conditions for the effective destruction of the enemy by fire, and also for supporting the movement of the defending troops and for conducting decisive counterattacks and counterthrusts.

It is impossible to agree with the content of the plan of actions, and also of the decision on defense on the whole, which is proposed in the article.

The decision for a defense, in our opinion, must include four main points: the concept of actions, the combat tasks of troops and supporting means, the procedure for their cooperation, and the organization of control.

The concept of actions, in essence, is a concise expression of the decision of the army commander (large unit commander) for the defense. Under conditions of employing missile/nuclear weapons, the basis of this, and also of the decision on the whole, is the determination not of areas of the terrain which must be held to maintain the stability of the defense, but of the procedure and methods of employing missile/nuclear and chemical weapons. In accordance with this, the remaining fire means and troops are employed in the defensive operation, and the defensive layout is implemented.

Depending on the situation, the concept of actions specifies: the axes of probable enemy attacks and advance, the



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sequence of his rout and the role in this of nuclear and chemical weapons, fire of conventional means of destruction and groupings of the defending troops, the nature of maneuvering, and the grouping of forces and means.

In our opinion, determining the sequence for routing the enemy, that is, where and when to destroy what enemy, is the most important matter of the concept. It is always necessary to strive to smash the enemy in detail, holding to the rule to destroy first the grouping, by whose rout the enemy's concept will fail, and the goal of the defensive operation (battle) will be achieved. The author feels that the sequence of routing the enemy should not be specified in the concept of actions.

We know that the enemy's tactical means of nuclear attack should be destroyed simultaneously with the delivery of strikes against his armored and infantry divisions. A somewhat different situation occurs when the troops go over to the defense in the course of an offensive under heavy fire action of the enemy, when his main grouping has already been deployed for a counterthrust (counterattack). In this situation the enemy's tactical means of nuclear attack and the control posts of combined-arms large units must be regarded as primary targets of destruction with the delivery of direct nuclear and air strikes against them.

The tasks of rocket troops for delivering nuclear strikes will depend each time on the actual conditions of the situation in which defense is organized and the defensive engagement is conducted. But, in all cases, in addition to aviation areas and the readiness of missile units, the main and alternate targets must be determined in a timely manner, and upon receipt of the command to open fire -- the time for delivering the strike, the yield of the nuclear warhead, the ground zero and the type of burst, and for chemical munitions, in addition, -- the type of toxic material, must be specified.

Tasks for the advance delivery of nuclear and chemical strikes with regard to the enemy's possible penetration into the defense are outlined only tentatively in advance, and then they are made specific in the course of the defensive engagement.

When determining the tasks of troops for the employment of nuclear weapons, it is necessary to keep in mind that the degree

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of destruction of the enemy will depend largely on the type of burst. In our opinion, especially under favorable meteorological conditions, ground nuclear bursts can be employed in defense more than in offense. Here, the areas of destruction will not be much smaller than with air bursts, but, at the same time, extensive zones of radioactive contamination of the terrain will be created, which will prevent the attacking enemy from conducting combat actions. In addition, ground nuclear bursts should not disrupt, but rather promote, the actions of the defending troops in conducting counterthrusts and in going over to the offensive.

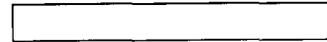
In organizing a defense and in the course of repelling the enemy's attack, it is necessary to determine the tasks for rocket troops and aviation with the employment of conventionally armed weapons, which are still underestimated in exercises and games.

Tasks for troops of the first and second echelons, reserves of artillery, and air defense, and the procedure for cooperation and the organization of control are also specified in the decision. In our opinion, this should roughly be the content of the decision for a defense.

It is impossible to agree with the determination of the fire system given in the article. In our opinion, we must understand the fire system in defense under present-day conditions to be the methods and procedure, coordinated according to target, time, and place, for delivering strikes with nuclear weapons and aviation and conducting fire of all types of weapons, directed toward breaking up or maximally weakening the enemy offensive and setting up favorable conditions for completing his rout by combined-arms large units (units). The author for no reason excludes nuclear and chemical strikes and air strikes with the employment of conventional means of destruction from the fire system. Undoubtedly, nuclear weapons are the main fire power of the defending troops, and therefore, nuclear strikes comprise the basis of the fire system. In accordance with this, the procedure for conducting fire and its density for all remaining types of weapons are determined.

According to the author, the fire system is set up only in subunits and units. But, taking into consideration that in modern defense the role of operational fire means has sharply increased, thereby influencing the outcome of a defensive

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engagement considerably more than in the past, organized employment of them is needed, and quite often with centralized control. Therefore, a fire system in a defense must be set up at all command levels, including in a division and army, with due regard for the employment of front means.

The author is also incorrect in maintaining that a fire system is primarily the establishment of a grouping of fire means. It hardly must be pointed out that a grouping of forces and means is the operational disposition (battle formation) of troops, set up for conducting an operation (battle), and it is not quite clear why [he put the] fire system here.

Finally, the author's proposal that in the staffs of an army and a division a new document -- a fire plan -- be worked out is questionable. Nuclear and chemical strikes, and also the main fire tasks carried out by conventional means of destruction, are reflected on the map of the division commander's decision and in the plan of the defensive operation of the army. This, in our opinion, is fully sufficient for troop control in the course of combat actions, and consequently, there is no need to increase the size of already unwieldy documents.

* * *

General-Mayor V. PETRENKO, in speaking about the trends in developing defense, examines a number of important and interesting matters. We would like to express our opinion on several of these.

We do not doubt the correctness of the author's conclusion about the necessity and possibility under present-day conditions of setting up a stable and active defense, most often in short time limits. However, in the article, in our opinion, the dependence of the nature of defense on the conditions and time for organizing it is insufficiently analyzed, and the difference between a hastily occupied defense and a defense set up in short time limits is not shown.

The author recognizes only prepared and hastily occupied defense. In this, he regards the latter as a defense set up in short time limits. It seems to us that, depending on the

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conditions for going over to the defense, and the time which the troops have at their disposal for its organizing and equipping, a defense may be prepared, set up in short time limits, or hastily occupied.

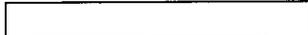
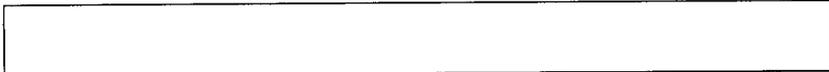
A prepared defense can be set up if the defending troops have sufficient time to fully and carefully carry out all of the organizational and preparatory measures, in particular, to set up a defensive grouping of troops and a fire system in advance, to comprehensively learn the terrain and do engineer preparation, to carefully organize cooperation between large units and units of branch arms, and to organize control, operational and rear services support, etc. Consequently, prepared defense is premeditated, with careful organization and equipping carried out long before the initiation of an enemy attack. This kind of defense was often set up in the past. We must assume that in a missile/nuclear war, including its initial period, prepared defense will be a rare phenomenon, especially on an operational scale. It may have a place only in secondary theaters of military operations, on coastal axes, islands, and also in cases where we have not planned an offensive in the near future, and an enemy offensive is not expected.

In the main theaters of military operations and axes of operations, as a rule, the troops will be forced to go over to the defense under the aggressive action of the enemy, when there is not time available to set up a prepared defense. The defense, consequently, will be organized in short time limits or will be occupied hastily. In this we feel that the concept "defense, set up in short time limits" and "hastily occupied defense" are not identical, but different.

A defense set up in short time limits is characterized by the fact that there will be insufficient time for setting up a prepared defense. There will only be enough time to conduct basic measures to ensure the stability and activeness of the defending troops.

The experience of exercises with troops of military districts shows that an army needs six to seven hours, and a division about four hours, to set up this defense. This is enough time to make a decision on defense in accordance with the situation, to relay the task to the troops, to carry out only the

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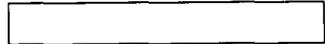
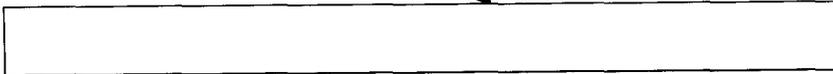


most necessary change of formation by setting up a defensive grouping and fire system, to organize cooperation and also to partially carry out engineer preparation of the terrain with very simple structures. Consequently, a defense set up in short time limits signifies the minimum necessary readiness of troops for repulsing an attack of the enemy. Nevertheless, to some extent it will be set up differently from a prepared defense mainly by the less careful preparation of defensive measures and the insufficient engineer preparation of the terrain.

A hastily occupied defense is characterized by the fact that troops do not have the minimum necessary time available for setting up a defense. This may be, for example, during the going over to the defense as a result of the unsuccessful beginning or outcome of a meeting engagement (battle) and in other cases, when large units and units virtually all of a sudden are forced to begin defending in the heat of combat actions with the enemy. Therefore, a hastily occupied defense differs from a defense which is set up in short time limits by the absence of a clearly expressed defensive grouping of troops, an undeveloped fire system, hurriedly organized cooperation, control, and operational and rear services support, poor knowledge of the terrain and almost complete inability to carry out engineer preparation of the terrain. The serious lack of time predetermines the incomplete readiness of the defense to repulse an enemy attack, and primarily its lack of stability. As an example, part of the forces of an army (division) going over to the defense, especially second echelons and fire means at the beginning of the enemy offensive, will still be moving to occupy the defense and launch and fire positions, and will not participate immediately in repulsing the initial attack of the enemy. Under these conditions defense cannot be considered set up at first, even if it is in the minimum necessary amount. Here, the delivery of missile/nuclear strikes and aviation strikes are first and foremost, and also the conduct of concentrated fire with all fire means of motorized rifle and tank large units (units) against the attacking enemy in order to repulse him. Organizing, laying out, and equipping the defense under these conditions will be continued and completed in the course of the defensive engagement (battle).

While sharing the author's opinion about the need for the organized and purposeful employment of all fire means,

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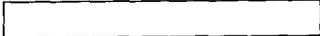
coordinated by target, place, and time, we do not feel that his proposal to refrain from setting up a unified fire system in a defense, and, in general, from using the term "fire system" in its former meaning, is sufficiently substantiated. In particular, the article recommends, instead of a unified fire system in operational formations and large units, to have fire plans, and in units and subunits, fire systems of types of weapons, as integral parts of the fire plan of the large unit.

The immense fire power of modern defense, the sharp increase of the depth of simultaneous destruction of the enemy, and the considerable amount of diverse fire means require, not the rejection of a unified fire system, but rather, a more thought-out and organized utilization of all fire means in close cooperation, according to a unified concept of the defensive operation (battle).

The fire system at present is based on grouped and individual nuclear strikes in combination with strikes of aviation and organized fire of tanks, artillery, small arms, and other fire means. Consequently, in modern defense the fire system acquires new content. Previously it was based on the establishment of zones of continuous fire in front of the forward edge and in the depth. This met the nature of a defense which consisted of areas and positions arranged in a continuous line. Under present-day conditions there should not be zones, but areas of destruction by fire, set up for the purpose of destroying nuclear means and routing the enemy attack groupings which have been prepared, have gone over to the offensive, or have already penetrated the defense.

The presence of a unified fire system provides the capability of better coordinating powerful fire action against the enemy by concentrating fire with extensive maneuvering of forces and means and the conduct of decisive counterattacks and counterthrusts by the defending troops. At the same time, in modern defense, we have not ruled out the decentralized employment of fire means, and initiative and independence of commanders at all levels in making the decision to open fire for the rapid destruction of known enemy installations, nor have we rejected the fire system of types of weapons.

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Unfortunately, counterthrusts were not given the necessary attention in the article. Their nature and the conditions for preparing and conducting them in modern defense were not disclosed. Meanwhile, a counterthrust is one of the main measures directed toward conducting decisive actions for the purpose of routing an attacking enemy, for reversing the situation in a defensive operation and establishing favorable conditions for the defending troops to go over to the offensive.

Preparing and conducting counterthrusts now will be done under complex situational conditions. When combat actions are being developed on separate axes with the employment of nuclear weapons, a counterthrust must be viewed as the combination of fire strikes, including nuclear strikes, and a number of simultaneous or successive strikes by tank and motorized rifle large units, delivered from various axes against several advancing groupings of the enemy. In this, the enemy will not be stopped on all axes before the initiation of the counterthrust. This predetermines that meeting engagements will be conducted more frequently than in the past.

We should mention that a counterthrust represents the aggressive action of the defending side, not only against an enemy grouping which has broken through or penetrated into the depth of defense. An analysis of operational exercises and war games shows that in conducting a counterthrust, the defending troops are not limited to strikes with nuclear or other means against areas of destruction by fire, but they expand the sphere of fire action beyond these bounds for the purpose of destroying not only the penetrating grouping, but also the approaching reserves, nuclear means, control posts, and other important targets of the enemy, as well as his forces and means advancing outside the areas of destruction by fire. For example, for supporting army counterthrusts, the depth of fire action of a defense, primarily by nuclear weapons, can reach 100 kilometers and more along the front line.

We feel that in a defense massed nuclear strikes by army means, and moreover division means, are not ruled out. To support counterthrusts, grouped and individual nuclear strikes usually will be delivered against the most important enemy installations in such a way that the troops can effectively exploit their results. Chemical weapons and conventional means

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-- artillery, aviation, tanks (with the delivery of fire from indirect fire positions and direct fire), antitank and other means -- should be widely employed to destroy the enemy troops who are in direct contact with our troops and also to destroy his installations which have been destroyed by nuclear weapons.

In a modern defense strong second echelons are quite necessary. We should mention that recently the opinion has often been expressed that troops deployed in the depth of the defense of an army (division), regardless of their strength, must be considered reserves, and not the second echelon. This is motivated by the fact that, in the first place, it is difficult in advance to set a task for troops deployed in the depth which they will have to fulfil in the course of a defensive operation. Carrying out suddenly arising tasks is characteristic not for the second echelons but for reserves. In the second place, troops in the depth of the defense are not deployed compactly, as before, but are dispersed, and they will enter an engagement (battle) not on one, but on several axes, at different times, that is, according to the principle of the actions of reserves. Finally, it is maintained that, in a modern defense, second echelons, especially units and subunits, will quite often participate with their means in combating the attacking enemy simultaneously with troops of the first echelon and therefore, the distinction between echelons in effect disappears.

It is completely apparent that new conditions of organizing and conducting a defensive operation and battle have changed the nature of utilizing second echelons, which are allocated now to fulfil very diverse tasks. However, this does not provide the bases for rejecting the second echelons.

Second echelons have always differed from reserves, primarily by the strength of troops in them. The reserve, as a rule, includes rather small forces, while the second echelon, in a number of cases, can even consist of a large part of the forces of an army (division), and it will hardly be correct to call it a reserve. Therefore, we agree with the author that under present-day conditions it is necessary to establish strong second echelons in a defense, and when there is a single-echelon troop disposition -- reserves should be established.

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Of course, it is impossible to establish strong second echelons in an army defensive operation at all levels simultaneously when there are limited forces and means available. It is most advisable to have a second echelon in the army, then the front of the defense can be widened for certain divisions, regiments, and battalions when there is a single-echelon disposition of their battle formations. Only when there is a sufficient number of nuclear means in a strong second echelon can we achieve the decisive goal of a counterthrust. And, concerning counterattacks, their conduct in these conditions is possible only on secondary axes of the enemy attack. On the axes of actions of his main attack groupings, where the density of destruction of a defense can be up to six and more nuclear strikes per division, the main tasks of the defending units and subunits will consist in repulsing and harassing the attacking enemy by means of inflicting losses on him by fire, with the establishment of favorable conditions for conducting a decisive counterthrust.

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