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The Organizational Structure

of

Field Command of a Front

by

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The very great changes which have been taking place in the postwar period in the means and methods of armed conflict and, under the influence of these, in the organizational structure of troops have not, in fact, affected command elements (organ upravleniya). The organization of field command of an army and of a front has remained essentially the same as it was in the years of World War II. Certain additions and changes which have taken place in recent years have brought nothing basically new to the organization of field commands.

The organizational structure and equipment of operational staffs (shtab) which exist at the present time have resulted in a certain contradiction with modern requirements. They limit the combat capabilities of troops, and they are in fact a brake on the achievement by the troops of high speeds in the conduct of operations. This is evident if only from the following.

The presence of nuclear-missile weapons in a front permits the fulfillment of operational tasks, not to mention tactical tasks, in a matter of minutes. Yet to collect and collate the facts of the situation in the headquarters of the front takes several hours, and is even then an excessive strain on its officers.

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At the present time, combined-arms large units (soyedineniye) are at constant combat readiness, determined by the time necessary for the assembly of a large unit when the alert is received and for its movement out from its permanent disposition (dislokatsiya) points. Army headquarters (shtab) however do not possess such a degree of readiness and, in general, are insufficiently adapted to work under field conditions, which, naturally, limits the combat capabilities of army formations (obyedineniye).

The most important conditions for ensuring firm control of troops are high mobility, the maneuverability of headquarters (shtab), and their effective anti-atomic protection. But how can there be talk of anti-atomic protection, of mobility, or of the maneuverability of the headquarters (shtab) of a front and an army if they are billeted in a tent camp on exercise? This situation is considered normal, for during critiques of exercises one can hear observations and objections only to the fact that there are very many tents and that they are not in the right order.

A broad discussion of the questions of organization and equipping of the elements for the control of troops and of the organization and equipping of control points (punkty upravleniya) is necessary. It seems to us that without the correct solution of these questions it is impossible to achieve a significant increase of the combat readiness of troops.

In our article we deal with several questions of the organizational structure of a field of a front. First of all, we will attempt to define the basic principles upon which this structure must be based.

In our view, the organizational structure of a field command of a front must proceed from the release of the commander of troops of a front, to the maximum extent, from the decision of questions which are not directly connected with the combat activity of the troops.

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The commander must have sufficient time for study and for the choice of the best methods of deciding the basic current and future (perspektivnyy) tasks of the operation.

With the existing organization, this requirement is not met. In the front field command there are 18 independent directorates, staffs (shtab), and departments (otdel) subordinated directly to the troop commander. Under such an organization, the troop commander is compelled to cut himself off systematically from the immediate direction of operations and to decide a mass of questions of secondary importance. It is completely understandable that he is not in a position to listen to all those making reports and to give them exhaustive and concrete instructions. Besides this, with the existence of such a quantity of departments in the front field command, the solution of any question by one of the departments requires its coordination with numerous other departments, which leads to a great waste of time and effort. In consequence, the front field command works for a considerable time not for the troops but for itself, which does not help the operational efficiency of the direction in any way.

In order to ensure stable and continuous control of troops, given the present means and methods of combat, the front field command must be streamlined to the maximum. The large and unwieldy headquarters (shtab), with the complements we use at present, would be unequal to the tasks of firm control of troops in the first serious test. Clumsy and immobile, they provide a system of no more than superficial and seeming control of troops, to say nothing of their vulnerability, and of their consequent short tenure of life. How can one talk of the operational efficiency and mobility of the front field command, if its composition, not counting servicing personnel, considerably exceeds 1000 men? In our view, the strength of the command of a front should be reduced by at least 3-4 times. However, this will be possible only if the maximum use is made in the

front field command of the various means of automation. Without this, under present conditions, it is, in general, difficult to achieve real operational efficiency in the work of headquarters and to eliminate multiplicity in the control of troops.

In speaking of the means of automation, we have in view, first of all, those means whose introduction is already entirely possible at the present time; selector communications (selektornaya svyaz), portable recording equipment, facsimile telegraphy, television communications, speech secrecy apparatus, duplicating apparatus, the simplest computing apparatus, etc.

Let us take one of the duties of the headquarters of a front - the collection and collation of facts about a situation. How many channels do one and the same set of facts pass through before they reach the troop commander of the front, and how much effort does the gathering of these facts cost? The troop commander of the front hears the reports of the army commanders (komandarm) or of the commanding officers of large units by high-frequency (VCh) telephone or other communications means. The chief of staff of the front hears the reports of the respective chiefs of staff by telephone (normally also by VCh) or, more rarely, by radio. The operational department (otdel) collects the facts of the situation through chiefs of directions (nachalnik napravleniya) and their assistants by telephone, radio, and telegraph, with the help of the communications officers. Commanders and officers of troop arms are engaged in the collection of the facts of the situation through their channels of communication. All these people receive the data at various times, in varying completeness, and with varying authenticity; the obtaining of the complete facts wastes too much time. It goes without saying that such methods of operation do not correspond to present-day requirements. The facts of the situation should pass from the troops to the front headquarters by the shortest possible route, and all work on collection and collation of these facts should occupy a minimum of time.

The organizational structure of a front field command should reflect the specific nature of the functions of this control link (zveno). As is known, the front troop commander, the army commander, and the corps commander decide questions which are essentially different from one another.

The corps commander is interested in the progress of combat operations directly on the field of battle; he is concerned primarily with changes in the progress of these operations. The army commander is interested in the ways in which combat operations are likely to develop over several days. Using the resources of operational intelligence (razvedka), he follows the movement of the enemy's reserves and means for nuclear attack and thus comes to understand the situation more deeply.

The front troop commander has available intelligence resources which allow him to follow the situation in the entire depth of a strategic direction or of a theater of military operations. His fundamental efforts are directed to the solution of long-term questions which will ensure the successful development of the whole operation. In conjunction with this, in the command of the front, the questions of the use of nuclear-missile weapons and of rear support of the operation are decided in their full scope, demanding of the staff and command of the front, as a whole, long-term planning, foresight, and, consequently, work of a completely different scope and content from that of an army headquarters.

At the same time a front headquarters cannot limit itself to a purely general knowledge of the operational situation. It should ensure that the front troop commander is constantly provided with facts about the entire current situation in the area of the front, because the front commander has at his disposal nuclear-missile resources which enable him to influence vigorously the successful decision not

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only of operational but also of tactical problems at any time.

The organizational structure of a front field command must reflect completely the decisive role of nuclear-missile weapons in the achievement of the aim of an operation. The front troop commander should have an element which concerns itself both with the solution of questions of the use of missile troops in an operation and with the assurance of direct control or command of units and large units of these troops.

Besides this, since nuclear warheads (bovepripas) are at present delivered to the target not only by missiles but also by aircraft and by other means, and also in view of the fact that the radiation situation will exercise a considerable influence on the progress of combat operations, the front field command should include an element which is concerned with the general and specific planning of the use of nuclear weapons, with careful study of the radiation situation in the area of the front and of its influence on the progress of the operation.

In the interests of stability of control of troops, the organizational structure of the front field command should ensure its division into several echelons (echelon), the real independence of each echelon in the control of troops, rear units, and establishments, and the ability of the second echelon if necessary to take upon itself the control of the troops of the front and to exercise this control, even if only for a short time.

The front field command should be able to detach a small operational group of officers with means of control, which could ensure control for the troop commander during his movement to an advanced or auxiliary control point. This operational group should be constantly welding itself together even while performing its district (okrug) command functions,

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and should have special field headquarters equipment and corresponding means of communication.

It is clear to everyone that the existing structure of the front field command does not fully meet the requirements enumerated above and needs considerable improvement. Which are the main changes which need to be introduced into this structure?

First of all, the organization of a front headquarters as the basic nucleus of field command must be changed. The new organization of the headquarters should ensure anew the solution of such problems as the collection, collation, and recording of all data on the operational situation. In our view, a special element should be set up for this, which would be free from all other commitments. This can be the operational center of the operational directorate of the front headquarters. Only this center must be concerned with collection and collation of all the facts on the situation and with their uninterrupted transmission to the commander, to the chief of staff of the front and also to other interested persons and establishments, about which we will speak later. All remaining directorates, departments, and services are freed from carrying out this function and concern themselves with their particular questions. The operational center should be equipped with modern means of communication, with radio speech-secrecy apparatus, facsimile telegraphy sets, receiving and transmitting sets (teleustanovka), sound-recording apparatus, and selector communications. In the future it must have electronic computing machines which would automate such processes as:

- the collection and storage of facts on the position, state, and actions of enemy troops, and about the enemy's nuclear resources and their capabilities;
- the collection and storage of facts on the position and state of friendly troops;



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- the systemization and collation of information on the operational situation for reports to the command and the higher staff;

- the processing of data on the radiation situation, the determination of areas contaminated by radiation, and of the levels of radiation for a given time.

The facts received by the operational center about the position of the troops (friendly and enemy) should be disseminated continuously by television sets or by telephones with visual presentation (videotelefonnaya svyaz) to the troop commander, chief of staff, and the department of operational planning. If necessary, the front troop commander or the front chief of staff can be at the operational center personally for the detailed solution of the most important questions of control of the troops.

Regular information about the position of the troops in the detail necessary for the solution of questions by the arms of troops must be passed by a special relay network for the remaining directorates (departments).

The operational center must have at its disposal several shifts (smena) of trained officer-operators. Each shift should also include an officer of engineer troops, one from the chemical troops, one from the hydrometeorological service, and representatives of the VVS and PVO control points. The shift should be headed by a responsible officer-operator (chief of the operational department) who can make an evaluation of the operational situation and pass it on at the proper time to the chief of staff or to the commander so that a decision can be made. With three working shifts and one reserve (for the forward command post-PKP, or auxiliary control point-VPU) there may be no more than 25 officers on the staff of the operational center.

The operational center cannot concern itself with questions of planning an operation; for this a special element is necessary - an operational planning department. Receiving systematic data about the current position of the troops from the operational center, the operational planning department analyzes and checks the fulfillment of tasks by the troops of the front, prepares suggestions for the command on the conduct of combat operations, and passes on the necessary operational tasks to the troops. In the future, the department of operational planning should also be equipped with an electronic computer, which would lighten the performance of such tasks as:

- the production of estimates related to determining the relative balance of forces and the regrouping of troops;
- the determination of the requirements for combat means either for a complete operation or for part of one and the distribution of these means to directions;
- the distribution of nuclear means by targets, the determination of the best alternatives for destroying enemy targets with the means available, and others.

When modern means of control are available, the execution of the functions entrusted to the department does not call for a large number of officer-operators. The staff of the department can be within the limits of 10-12 men.

The operational center and the department of operational planning should be united in a single element - the operational directorate, which would ensure unity in the work of these two bodies.

The intelligence directorate does not lose its significance, but remains a component part of the headquarters of the front. But since a part of its functions (the collection, collation, recording, and storage of data about the enemy which comes from the troops) is carried out by the operational center,



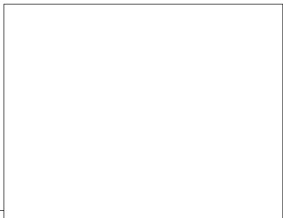
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the complement of the intelligence directorate may be reduced and its structure changed. At the same time it is necessary to bear in mind that data about the enemy reaches the front headquarters not only from the troops but also from other sources: from the Chief Intelligence Directorate, from the intelligence directorates of neighboring fronts, from agent intelligence, from special diversionary-reconnaissance groups, from front radio and radio-technical intelligence, etc. This data should be checked, compared, and evaluated by the intelligence directorate before being passed on to the operational center, and for this it is expedient to have a special element - a control point for operational intelligence.

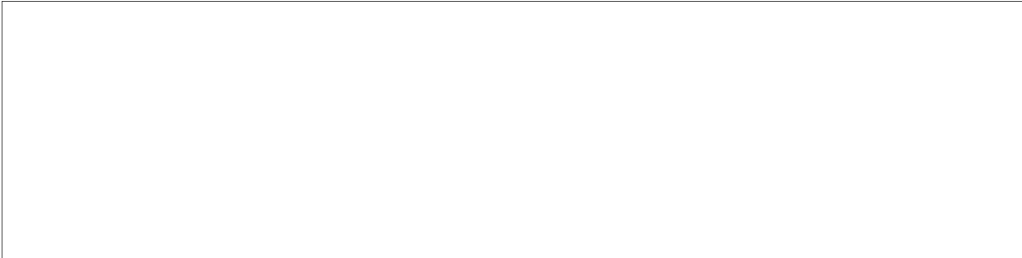
This control point, like the operational center, should work round the clock, and should therefore have three duty shifts and one reserve shift. Each operational shift should include two operational intelligence officers, concerned with the collation and analysis of all intelligence data, one officer from agent intelligence, one officer of radiotechnical intelligence, one aerial-reconnaissance officer, and one special communications officer.

To direct combined-arms reconnaissance and the planning and control of all types of intelligence activity in the intelligence directorate, besides the control point for operational intelligence, it is necessary to have another department for planning and control, with a staff of officers of combined-arms and operational intelligence, agent-intelligence officers, and radiotechnical intelligence officers.

We see no need for basic changes in the structure of the other departments of a front headquarters (replacement, communications, or topographical). However, the strength of each can be reduced considerably in connection with the possibility of automating and mechanizing their work. The role of the cipher department obviously will decrease with the introduction



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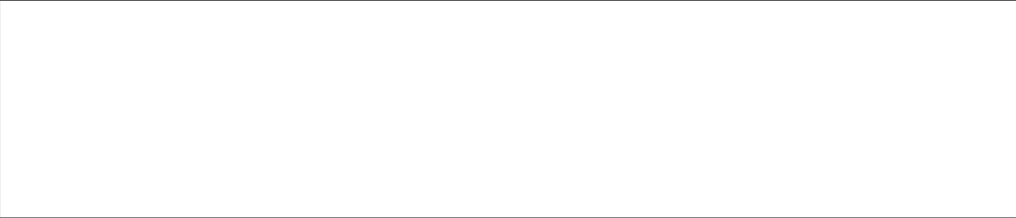
of apparatus for ensuring the secrecy of radio, telephone, and telegraph conversations and, consequently, its strength, too, can be reduced.

The questions of the control of artillery in a front should be decided anew. The trend of development of combat means shows that the role of artillery in the solution of operational tasks is decreasing. Clearly, artillery will perform only tactical tasks. As a consequence, the need for the presence in the front field command of an element which would concern itself specially with the operational use of artillery is disappearing. Questions of the combat use of artillery can be settled successfully at the tactical level (zveno). Clearly these questions will be decided in exceptional cases in the front command.

At the same time, the ever-increasing role of missile troops in the resolution of operational tasks requires the presence in the front field command of a special element, which would concern itself with their direct command, not only operational, but also tactical control. Furthermore, we believe that this element must concern itself with the direct command of missile large units and units. Such an element can be the control point of the missile troops of the front. It should have direct radio, telephone, and telegraph communications with all missile large units and units of the front, and also selector and visual telephonic communication with the operational center and the operational intelligence control point.

The personnel of the control point of missile troops must ensure its unbroken work round the clock and also the detachment, when necessary, of a small but harmonious group of officers for the control of the missile troops during trips by the chief (nachalnik) of the missile troops to the PKP or VPU with the front troop commander. Hence, the control point of the missile troops can consist of three duty and one reserve operational shift. Each shift would consist of two

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operators for the preparation of data and two control officers. The work of each shift can be headed either simultaneously or in turn by the chief of missile troops, the chief of staff of the missile troops, and by the deputy chief of staff of the missile troops (he is the chief of the control point and chief of the operational department).

The operational department of the staff of the missile troops has the functions of planning the utilization of the missile troops, of supporting them, of organizing reconnaissance, and of overseeing their combat activity. In view of this, besides the chief of the department, the operational department needs a deputy chief of department (he is the chief of reconnaissance), three senior planning and control officers, two senior intelligence officers, the chief of communications, and his deputy.

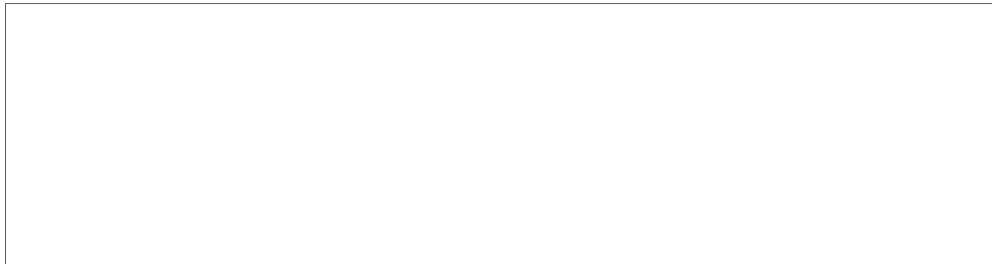
It is clear that no one will doubt the need for the presence in the front field command of an element which is concerned with questions of antiaircraft defense. However, its organizational structure must also be changed somewhat. The development in the capabilities of antiaircraft missiles and of radio-technical troops and the use of nuclear weapons to combat means of air attack, call for still more centralization of the control of the forces and means of PVO at front level. The need is growing continuously for their direct command by the front PVO commander. Hence, we consider it expedient to have a PVO control point in the front field command, equipped with modern means of control, which performs all tasks, beginning with the planning of air defense and ending with the direct control of PVO troops in battle. This point must be commanded by the chief of PVO troops of the front or by his deputy and should be set up on the principle of continuous operation by three shifts and should have a reserve shift for the control of PVO troops during trips to the PKP or VPU.



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The controlling bodies of the engineer and chemical troops must, in our view, remain in the front field command. Their numerical strength can be reduced considerably since a part of the functions which previously belonged to these departments will be performed by the operational center, and also because of the possibility of equipping these departments with means of automation. However, there is no need to have these departments in direct subordination to the front troop commander. They decide questions of support of the combat operations of the troops, and their work should be more closely linked with that of the operational and intelligence directorates of the front headquarters. The operational center will concern itself with the collection, collation, and recording of data on the position, bringing up to strength, and condition of the engineer and chemical troops and of engineering and chemical equipment, and the front headquarters will also deal with the preparation and delivery to the troops of orders concerned with the combat use of engineer and chemical troops. All this points to the expediency of including engineer and chemical departments in the make-up of the front headquarters.

It is expedient that the unification in a single directorate of the elements dealing with questions of automotive servicing and of tank armament which has now taken place in the command of a district (okrug) should also be retained in the front field command with direct subordination to the troop commander.

It is expedient to concentrate all questions of the organization and structure of the rear, and of the material and medical support of the combat operations of the troops in one body - the directorate of the front rear services, headed by the deputy commander of troops for the rear services. The organizational structure and numerical composition of the directorate of the rear services should be examined with a view to cutting them down considerably. The nucleus of the directorate of the front rear services should be the rear-services operational center organized in

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a manner similar to the operational center of the front headquarters. The rear operational center must decide all questions of collection, collation, and recording of data on the position and state of rear units and establishments, supplies of equipment, support to the troops, the structure of the operational and troop rear areas, and others.

It should be constantly ready to pass this data to the chief of the rear services and also to the operational center and to the chief of staff of the front. The chief of the front rear services is the person who reports to the front troop commander on questions about the rear services. In the future the rear-services operational center should be equipped with means of automation, which would facilitate the solution of such questions as:

- recording the availability and movement of material-technical means and the compilation of estimates of the requirements of the troops for these;
- planning supply and evacuation of all types, using the various types of transport present in the front, armies, and large units;
- recording medical losses, the degree of fullness of the medical establishments, the movements of wounded and sick, and others.

The strength of the political directorate of a front, whose subordination should remain as before, can be reduced because of the transfer of the functions of supply to the chief of the front rear services and of the functions of recording, appointing, and moving Party-political worker cadres to the chief of the directorate of cadres of the front. The strength of the directorate of cadres can also be reduced considerably because of the availability of computers which allow the automation of work on the registration of the cadres by the officer complement.

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Such, in our opinion, are the changes which it is necessary to introduce into the organizational structure of the front field command.

Proceeding from this structure, it is by now already possible to define in its general outlines the composition of the command post of a front. It, obviously, will consist of two basic groups and one reserve group.

The first group: the commander of troops and the chief of staff of the front, the operational center, the department of operational planning of the operational directorate, the operational intelligence control point, the department of planning and control of intelligence, and the 8th department.

The second group: the headquarters of the missile troops, the control point of the PVO, the department of engineer troops, the chemical department, and the signals department.

The reserve group of the command post includes - the reserve shift from the operational center, the reserve shift from the control point of missile troops, the reserve shift from the intelligence control point, and the reserve shift from the PVO control point.


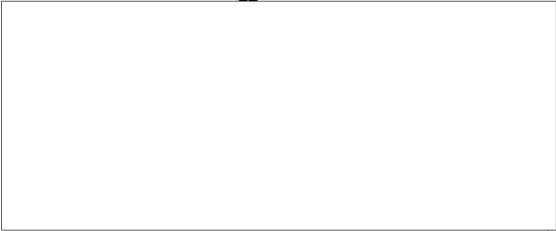
The reserve group serves to man the PKP or VPU. It can serve as the nucleus for a new front field command, if the command post goes out of action as the result of a nuclear strike by the enemy.

In conclusion, we shall dwell briefly on the organization and movement of the control points.

The organization, disposition, and movement of the control points must meet the requirements for stable and uninterrupted control of the troops under any enemy coercion. However, the present material base of our operational headquarters does not allow these requirements to be met. The experience of

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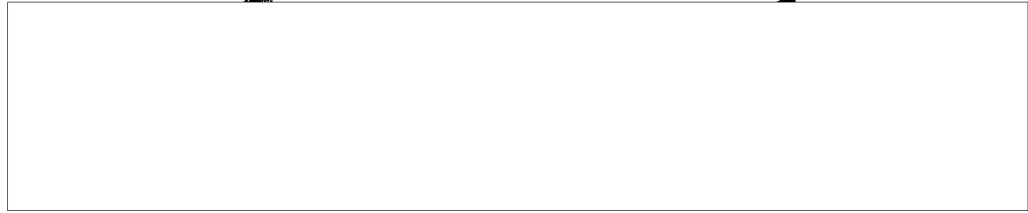
exercises shows that even if the control of troops is maintained on a sufficiently high level in the period of preparation of an operation, it very often breaks down during the course of the operation. As soon as the troops of the front are set in motion, control over them becomes insufficiently stable and the control points become helpless.

The relief of control points is carried out by old methods, by the dispatch forward of operational groups to organize control points in a new place, because, since they are on the move, operational headquarters are not in a position to control the troops. Consequently, when an operation is moving at high speed, headquarters fall behind the troops already by the second day.

In modern operations, the headquarters of a front should assure the commander reliable control of the troops irrespective of whether it is stationary or on the move. The control resources of a front headquarters must ensure reliable communications and the conditions necessary for the work of officers on the move, and its staff and material base should ensure the rapid establishing, closing down, and movement of control points.

Unfortunately, questions of working convenience and of rest for the officers of the operational headquarters have not yet been solved by us. Even the experimental models of radio trucks which are being developed for operational headquarters at present do not allow officers to work in them with a map. In consequence, there can be no talk of any control on the move or during a short halt. We have not one acceptable production model of a staff vehicle for operational headquarters. Attempts by the headquarters of districts and armies to get out of this situation by their own efforts and resources lead to the unreasonable waste of considerable sums and to the weakening of other links of the military machine.

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In our opinion it is advisable to perform the task of developing a staff vehicle in a centralized way. The design bureau of any automobile plant could do this successfully within a few months. The establishment of normal conditions for the work of officers of operational headquarters will raise the quality and operational efficiency of their work and, consequently, will improve the control of troops as a whole.

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