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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

30 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

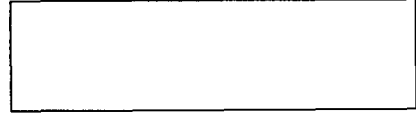
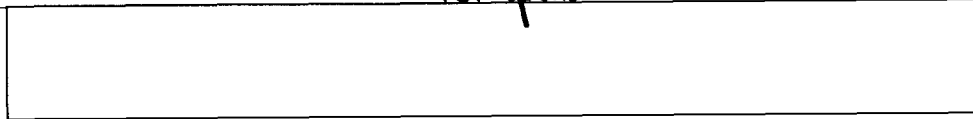
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Conduct of
Meeting Engagements by a Field Army
in the Initial Period of War

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article presents Soviet perceptions and interpretations of US intentions in regard to the conduct of meeting engagements by a field army in the initial period of a war. The scope and content of the BLUE LION, LIGHTING RESPONSE II and WINTER SHIELD II exercises are briefly mentioned by the author, and tables on the possible strength of a field army, means of delivering nuclear warheads which the attack groupings of a coalition field army may have at their disposal and the approximate time necessary for the deployment of an army corps from a march to a battle formation are also presented in the article. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (72) for 1964.

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

for
JOHN N. MCMAHON

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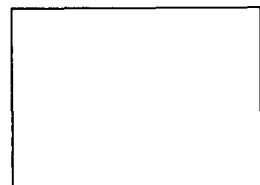
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 21 Pages

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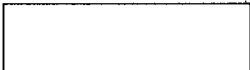
MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Conduct of Meeting Engagements by a Field Army in the Initial Period of War

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

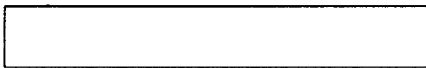
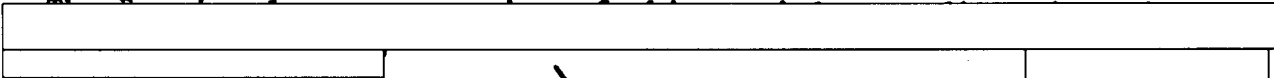
The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (72) for 1964 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel P. Simonok. This article presents Soviet perceptions and interpretations of US intentions in regard to the conduct of meeting engagements by a field army in the initial period of a war. The scope and content of the BLUE LION, LIGHTING RESPONSE II and WINTER SHIELD II exercises are briefly mentioned by the author, and tables on the possible strength of a field army, means of delivering nuclear warheads which the attack groupings of a coalition field army may have at their disposal and the approximate time necessary for the deployment of an army corps from a march to a battle formation are also presented in the article.

End of Summary



Comment:

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.



Conduct of Meeting Engagements
by a Field Army in the Initial Period of War

(According to American views)

by
Colonel P. SIMONOK

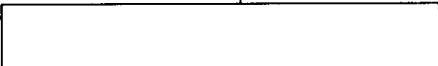
In the initial period of a missile/nuclear war, meeting engagements and battles can come about both in the beginning of the first offensive operation as well as during the course of exploitation or pursuit in the operational depth. Accordingly, in the time of conducting one and the same operation, a meeting engagement can come about repeatedly.

Meeting engagements in these operations, in the opinion of the American command, will be characterized by special intensity and rapidity, since both sides are pursuing the attainment of decisive objectives.

A meeting engagement in the beginning of the first offensive operation can come about in those cases where both sides begin an offensive simultaneously or nearly simultaneously.

The first offensive operation of a field army may begin in the most varied situations. Most often it will come about during a going over to the offensive with the beginning of or during the course of a so-called nuclear offensive, and also after a defensive engagement. In the first case, extremely favorable conditions are brought about for the field army to conduct an offensive operation. The combat actions of the large units of the army can be developed basically in conformity with the plans worked out in peacetime. The nuclear preparation for an offensive operation, as it is called by the Americans, will be a constituent part of a nuclear offensive in a theater of military operations.

The large units making up the first operational echelon have the task of quickly moving up to the border and invading the enemy territory from the march after the nuclear strikes along separate axes. The field army, using nuclear weapons and



airborne landings extensively, will strive to penetrate as deeply as possible into the rear of our troops with mobile large units. It is considered that the mobile large units, taking advantage of the confusion of the enemy as the result of a nuclear attack, will be able, in cooperation with the airborne landing forces, to penetrate swiftly to a great depth on enemy territory.

A decisive means in an offensive at high speeds will be nuclear weapons. The most important role here may be played by tactical groups consisting of tanks and motorized infantry and also by airborne troops, whose strike will complete the rout of the enemy.

In the initial period of war, serious difficulties in conducting combat actions are possible. As a result of the bilateral use of a large number of nuclear weapons there may develop large zones of destruction and radioactive contamination on several axes, and areas on wooded terrain will be covered with fires. All this will undoubtedly lower the rate of advance.

Under such conditions, depending on the nature of the actions of the enemy troops, the first offensive operation of the field army may begin with a meeting engagement or the negotiation of a hastily occupied defense.

In the first offensive operation of the initial period of war, a field army will deliver an attack simultaneously with nearly all the forces available by the beginning of actions on three or four axes, one of which may be the main one. The intervals between these axes reach 20 to 60 kilometers and more. To deliver the first attack, as the experience of exercises testifies, more than 80 percent of the large units and units of the field army are called upon. An attack grouping in the strength of an army corps operates on each axis. All are charged with the task of crushing the first echelon and the immediate operational reserves of the enemy, thereby guaranteeing conditions for exploitation in depth. The strength of the groupings depends on the combat effectiveness of the enemy, the importance of the axis, and the personnel and means of reinforcing the field army.

According to the experience of exercises, the attack grouping designated for actions on the main axis of the army may





have three or four divisions in its composition and may receive up to 100 nuclear warheads for reinforcement. Thus, in the exercise BLUE LION, the 5th Army Corps, operating on the main axis of the 7th Field Army, consisted of three divisions, a tank group, an armored cavalry regiment, and a Luxembourg infantry regiment. As reinforcement means it had attached to it two battalions of Corporal guided missiles, three battalions of Honest John free rockets, two battalions of 280-mm guns, and four battalions of 203,2-mm howitzers. The exercises LIGHTNING RESPONSE II and WINTER SHIELD II were conducted at the same strength.

The attack groupings operating on secondary axes usually consist of two or three divisions and they are allocated 20 to 40 nuclear warheads each (not counting Davy Crocketts).

From what has been said, it follows that the meeting engagement of a field army in the beginning of a first offensive operation will be conducted by first-echelon army corps (attack groupings) on a broad front along separate independent axes simultaneously or successively at various depths.

Considering that participating in this engagement, as a rule, will be the main forces of the field army, on each axis may be operating a rather strong grouping in the strength of two or three divisions, and on the most important, in the strength of three or four divisions.

The possible strength of a field army (of coalition composition) and attack groupings (taking into consideration the new organization of large units) in the first offensive operation of the initial period of war is shown in Table 1.



Table 1

Attack Groupings	Divisions	Breakdown				Number of nuclear warheads	Number of launchers and nuclear guns	Number of Davy Crockett launchers	Number of tanks
		Mechanized or infantry divisions	Armored divisions	Separate tank groups	Armored cavalry regiments				
Army Corps	3	2	1	--	--	20	34	--	600
Army Corps	4	2	2	1	1	80	106	141	1300
Army Corps	2	1	1	1	1	40	79	72	700
Field Army Reserve	2	1	1	1	1	60	10	--	600
Total	11	6	5	3	3	200	229	213	3200

Inasmuch as the field army provides beforehand for the possibility of a meeting engagement in the beginning of an offensive operation, it can be conducted in a more organized manner than under other conditions.

The peculiarity of such an engagement consists in the fact that attack groupings fully deployed for the offensive may take part in it and the beginning of the encounter of the troops will be preceded by powerful fire strikes to the full depth of disposition of the groupings.

Under these conditions, in the opinion of the American command, victory can be gained by the side which first manages to deliver a powerful fire strike and rapidly go over to the offensive with mobile large units. Considered most suitable for conducting a meeting battle are the armored divisions. Their



high mobility, striking and fire power, and resistance to nuclear weapons ensures quick establishment of superiority of forces and means at the necessary moment and on the most favorable axis and achievement of success in a meeting engagement even with superior enemy forces.

The decisive role in a meeting engagement belongs to nuclear weapons, which it is considered advisable to use to preempt the enemy in seizing the initiative and deploying troops, to frustrate a maneuver, and also to prevent the approach of reserves. For this purpose, it is anticipated to use army and corps means for the neutralization and destruction of missiles in launching positions, control posts, reserves, and rear installations, for the delivery of concentrated strikes on the lines of deployment of enemy large units, and also for the setting up of fire barriers on the paths of movement of his troops, especially in defiles, road junctions, population centers, and crossings.

To deliver concentrated nuclear strikes on lines of deployment, according to the "Staff Officer's Handbook of the US Army" and the experience of exercises, it is considered advantageous to employ five to nine nuclear warheads with a yield of 28 to 47 kilotons each per division. This number is fully adequate to cause massive losses of personnel and combat equipment.

With division means, nuclear strikes are directed mainly against the battle formations of troops. In case of necessity, divisions can take part in the delivery of massed strikes on the lines of deployment of enemy large units.

It is necessary to note that until recently the Americans considered it inadvisable to employ nuclear weapons against enemy columns on the march, since strikes on extended columns of troops were not recognized as very effective. At the present time they hold a different opinion. It is considered that the employment of nuclear weapons against columns will inevitably cause obstructions and forced bunchings of troops against which it is extremely advantageous to deliver nuclear strikes, especially with a yield of 28 to 47 kilotons and greater.





Chemical weapons may be used in a meeting battle and engagement to contaminate sectors of the terrain, defiles, road junctions, and launching position and control post areas.

As has already been said, each attack grouping operates on an independent axis. Therefore, the capabilities for employment of nuclear weapons by these groupings in a meeting engagement offer special interest.

Analysis of the current condition of the US ground forces in Europe permits drawing the conclusion that the attack groupings designated for actions on independent axes may possess great capabilities for employing nuclear weapons.

The means of delivering nuclear warheads which the attack groupings of a coalition field army may have at their disposal are listed in Table 2.

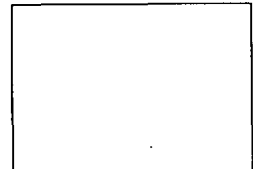
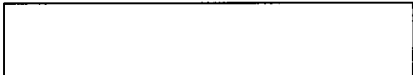
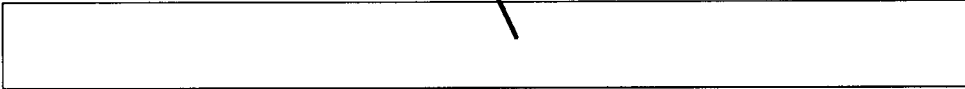


Table 2

Designation	Number of delivery means for nuclear warheads in attack groupings			Characteristics of delivery means for nuclear warheads				Nuclear warheads	
	Army Corps Motorized inf. div. - 2 Tank divisions - 1	Army Corps Mechanized div. (inf. div.) - 2 Armored divisions - 2	Army Corps Mechanized div. (inf. div.) - 3 Armored divisions - 1	Range in km			Maximum rate of fire	Yield in kilotons	Percentage of total number of warheads allocated for operation
				Maximum	Minimum	Practical			
Sergeant guided missiles	2	6	4	140	47	110	7-8 per day	2.5, 9, 28, 47	} 37-60
Lacrosse* guided missiles	--	4-8	4	30	8	20	2 in first hour	2, 10	
Honest John free rockets	16	24-28	16	25-40	5	17-34	--	2.5, 9, 28, 47	
203.2-mm Howitzer	24	64	56	14.5	--	6.5-10.5	18 in first 30 min	1, 1.5	} 20-33
Davy Crockett Recoilless Gun	--	141	72	2.4	0.7-1	1.2	--	To 0.5	
Total	42	239-247	152						

* There is evidence that all Lacrosse guided missile battalions in the US Army are going to be disbanded in 1964.



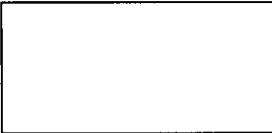
Judging by the data in this table, the attack groupings of a field army in the first offensive operation of the initial period of war will be able to have at their disposal a considerable number of means of delivering nuclear warheads. With this, in the large units of the US Army all command levels from battalion commander and up, as we know, have at their disposal means of delivering nuclear warheads, which gives them the capability of accomplishing fire tasks with nuclear weapons in short times. However, the effective depth of nuclear weapons with the available means of delivery in the attack groupings is at the present time still insufficient.

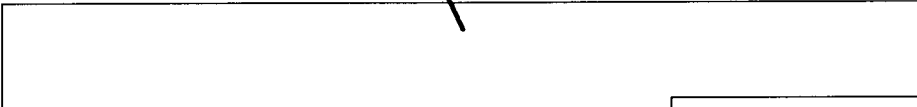
For instance, of the 247 guns and launchers of the strongest attack grouping, six launchers ensure delivery of nuclear warheads up to 110 kilometers away, 24 to 28 launchers, from 17 to 30 kilometers away, and the remaining 213 launchers and guns -- from six to ten kilometers away. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that, upon replacement of the Honest John free rocket with Lance missiles with a range of up to 70 kilometers, the capabilities of attack groupings to deliver nuclear strikes will grow considerably.

Besides that, a field army may have one or two battalions of Pershing guided missiles capable of delivering nuclear and thermonuclear warheads to a distance of 185 to 740 kilometers.

At the same time, one must not fail to note that the availability in large units and units of a large number of guns and launchers for missiles of the Honest John and Lacrosse types, of 203.2-mm and 155-mm guns for small caliber nuclear systems, increases the fire capabilities of these large units and units considerably, especially in close combat.

Much attention in a meeting engagement and battle is given to reconnaissance, especially aerial reconnaissance. In this engagement, large units may operate in dispersed battle formations. One of the difficult and most important tasks of reconnaissance will be the timely detection of targets against which it is advisable to deliver nuclear strikes. The complexity of accomplishing this task is explained by the fact that many important targets either will be on the move or will remain in one place for a relatively short time. This is why reconnaissance must be in a condition of readiness to continually





keep enemy targets under observation. The constant conduct of reconnaissance permits delivering a strike against an enemy who has had no time to get deployed and where he does not expect it. Therefore, it is considered that every commander, having at his disposal powerful means of neutralization, must also have the corresponding means of reconnaissance capable of detecting and fixing targets, and also of evaluating the results of his own fire strikes.

In the first offensive operation, a US field army may have at its disposal a rather large number of reconnaissance subunits and aircraft and technical means of reconnaissance and may conduct reconnaissance on the enemy side to a depth of 500 kilometers.

The most effective means of reconnaissance of nuclear weapons and targets for the delivery of nuclear strikes in the first offensive operation are the means of aerial, radio, and radiotechnical reconnaissance, and also sabotage subunits which are to be dropped in enemy territory with the first nuclear strike four hours and more before the crossing of the national border by the divisions making up the first operational echelon.

Aerial reconnaissance is carried out by both tactical and army aviation. For this, the field army may be allocated up to one tactical air reconnaissance wing (72 aircraft). Reconnaissance by the army aviation may be conducted by the organic subunits of this aviation of the field army, army corps and divisions who have in service radio controlled reconnaissance aircraft and also light aircraft and helicopters equipped with television, infrared, and radar equipment. The use of these means will ensure the conduct of reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of targets for the delivery of nuclear strikes.

In view of the fact that a field army may have about 160 aircraft and up to 300 helicopters of army aviation designated for conducting reconnaissance, it becomes necessary to organize combat with them well in all large units, units, and subunits.

The capabilities of a field army and the large units composing it for dropping sabotage subunits in the rear of the enemy are rather great. Divisions can drop from four to six groups of three to 12 men each. Army corps have the capability





of dropping up to 24 groups by using the long-range reconnaissance companies.

A field army, having received a long-range reconnaissance company as reinforcement, can send out up to 24 groups to a depth up to 450 kilometers.

Thus, a field army of the accepted strength is capable of dropping in the rear of the enemy to a depth up to 450 kilometers (taking into consideration the necessary reserve left in the army, corps, and divisions) 80 to 120 groups.

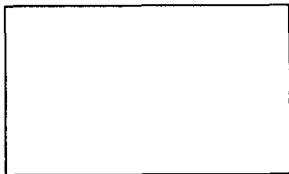
The possible reconnaissance-and-sabotage actions of these groups must not be underestimated. For commanders of all levels it is necessary to organize the reconnaissance in their own rear and the security of control posts, bridges, and depots well and to combat enemy sabotage subunits in every possible way.

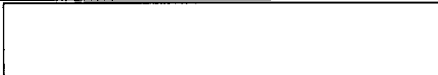
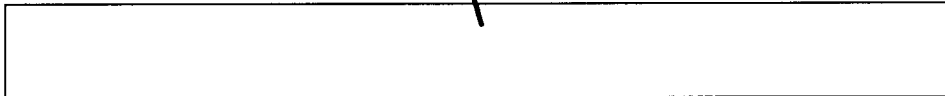
According to incomplete data, a field army is able to deploy, in the zone of an offensive, up to 380 radar sets for reconnaissance of air targets with a detection range from 22 to 300 kilometers, around 70 radar sets to detect fire positions of mortar and artillery batteries at a distance up to 18 kilometers, and over 300 radar sets to detect moving ground targets with a detection range of five to 12 kilometers, and to utilize no less than 150 aircraft radar systems.

In a field army there are supposed to be 132 shortwave and 100 ultra-shortwave communications posts. Such a number of posts permits the army to conduct surveillance of 864 to 1,152 enemy radio nets.

The availability of a large number of radio and radiotechnical means among the troops of the field army can ensure the conduct of reconnaissance of air and ground targets both night and day under conditions of poor visibility.

Consequently, for the successful conduct by our troops of a meeting engagement and battles, as in the conduct of other engagements, it is necessary to continually combat enemy reconnaissance. Our reconnaissance activities against the enemy must be centralized. This will contribute greatly to the successful conduct of combat actions.





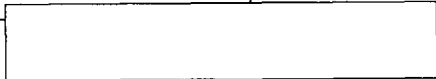
According to the views of the military command of the US Army, simultaneous delivery of a strike on three or four axes with nuclear weapons and strong groupings, each in the strength of a reinforced army corps, can ensure decisive success in the beginning of the first offensive operation, as a result of which the attack groupings of the field army will be able to get to the flanks and the rear of enemy units and thereby separate his grouping into isolated elements. However, under these conditions, the conduct of a meeting engagement will become complicated and the possibility will present itself to smash the advancing attack groupings separately, since, operating on independent axes (the distance between attack groupings may reach 20 to 60 kilometers and more), they will not always be able to offer one another the necessary assistance.

Meeting engagements during the exploitation of success in the operational depth may develop in the meeting of the attack groupings of the field army designated for the exploitation of success with the operational reserves of the enemy moving up for a counterattack or to occupy defensive lines. In a favorable situation, taking part in a meeting engagement in the operational depth, besides the attack grouping mentioned, may be army corps that are operating on secondary axes.

For the exploitation of success, in a field army an attack grouping (army corps) is created, in whose composition there may be two or three armored and one or two mechanized (motorized infantry) divisions (30 to 80 nuclear warheads, 800 to 1,500 tanks, 50 to 140 or more launchers and guns of nuclear artillery, 400 to 900 guns and mortars).

The movement of the large units of the attack grouping of the field army to the line of probable meeting with the enemy is carried out on a broad front. It is considered that such a movement reduces the danger of enemy envelopment of the flanks, increases the maneuver capabilities of the troops, and ensures the deployment of the divisions for commitment to battle still during the approach. It is most advantageous to complete closing in when each first-echelon division is travelling by two or three routes. On the condition of observing this requirement (considering the road network of the Central European Theater of Military Operations), the divisions will be able to complete the approach in zones of 20 to 30 kilometers, and an army corps, of





60 to 80 kilometers and more.

This is also shown by the experience of exercises of the American troops. Thus, in the experimental exercise GOLDEN AUTUMN conducted on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, the 20th Army Corps moved forward in a zone of about 80 kilometers, and the 12th Army Corps in a zone of 70 kilometers. Each American corps completed the approach by four to seven routes. The divisions, as a rule, were assigned two to three routes each.

Great significance in the achievement of success in a meeting engagement is attached to preempting the enemy in seizing advantageous lines for the deployment of the main forces of the attack groupings. Accomplishment of this task is assigned to covering troops, for which the allocation of large mobile forces is planned.

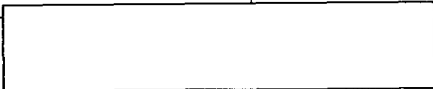
In particular, from an attack grouping (army corps) three or four divisions in strength that is closing in over level terrain which lacks large obstacles and has a developed road network, it is considered advisable to send out as covering troops an armored division. This latter may be reinforced with 10 to 20 nuclear warheads, an armored cavalry regiment, a field artillery group (two or three artillery battalions), an antiaircraft battalion, one or two combat engineer battalions, and necessary crossing means.

The allocation of an armored division as covering troops is conditioned by the necessity during the start of battle of delivering a powerful surprise attack against the enemy, of seizing and holding the key line for deployment of the main forces, or of containing large enemy forces.

It is considered that the success of a meeting engagement depends to a considerable degree on the strength of the initial strike.

During actions on mountainous, extremely rugged, and wooded terrain, in case of the absence of a developed road network or when there are a large number of obstacles, a mechanized or infantry division is, as a rule, sent out as covering troops. The reinforcement of the mechanized division may be the same as





that of the armored division.

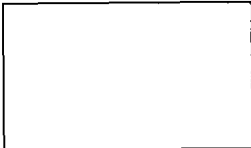
With such reinforcement, the division sent out as covering troops will make up over one-third of all the forces of the attack groupings.

An armored (mechanized) division acting as covering troops, depending on the condition of the road network and the nature of the terrain, may move over two or three routes in a zone of 20 to 40 kilometers. The armored cavalry regiment attached to it, as a rule, is sent out ahead to conduct reconnaissance to a distance up to 50 kilometers.

For quick seizure of key lines to limit the enemy's freedom of maneuver, units of airborne troops may be used. It is considered that skilful use in a meeting engagement of even numerically small airborne landing forces in cooperation with the covering troops and the troops on the movement routes can give good results.

The main forces of the attack grouping follow behind the covering troops at a distance of 20 to 50 kilometers (in some cases up to 70 kilometers). In so doing, it is considered mandatory that behind the armored division acting as covering troops should follow a mechanized division with the task of reinforcing the covering troops at the start of the meeting engagement. The remaining divisions, taking security measures, echelon right and left in readiness to enter into battle.

In the regulations of the US Army and in the American military press are indicated cases when covering troops may not even be sent out. For instance, if there is precise information that the enemy will not preempt in the seizure of an advantageous line of deployment or data are known about the forces and grouping of the enemy and the distance to his main forces is not great. Under these conditions, instead of covering troops, strong advance guards are sent out. The latter, according to the regulations of the US Army, must act the same as covering troops. The distance of the advance guards from the main forces must be such as to ensure their organized entry into battle. However, it must not be so great that the advance guard is threatened with destruction before it can be offered assistance.





According to the experience of exercises, the distance of the advance guards from the main forces may be up to 25 kilometers. During the movement of troops by night, on close terrain, and under conditions of limited visibility, the distance by which the advance guards are separated from the main forces is reduced.

The march formation of the divisions travelling in the body of the main forces of the attack grouping is drawn up in such a way that it is not required to re-form upon encountering the enemy.

The subunits and units of the nuclear artillery, Honest John free rockets, and Lacrosse guided missiles travel either with the advance guards or at the head of the main forces so as to ensure the deployment and entry into battle of the latter.

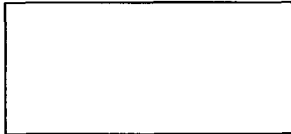
A meeting engagement begins with the encounter of the reconnaissance subunits and the security units.

Entering into an encounter with smaller or equal enemy forces, the covering troops (advance guards) strive to rout them with decisive actions and continue moving.

In meeting with large enemy forces, the covering troops, having occupied an advantageous line, contain the enemy's main forces and ensure favorable conditions for the entry into battle of their own main forces.

The main forces of the attack grouping are usually committed to the engagement piecemeal. They are charged with the task of quickly and decisively going over to the offensive before the main forces of the enemy can deploy. The main attention in this case is devoted to the delivery of a powerful fire strike and attacks on the flanks and rear of the enemy before he can take countermeasures against the enveloping maneuver.

To conduct a meeting battle, the battle formation of the attack grouping is, as a rule, drawn up in two echelons so that there is a possibility of increasing the force of the attack during the battle. Calculations show that to deploy the main forces of an attack grouping (army corps) requires, under favorable conditions, from four to six hours, depending on the





disposition of its initial formation. In the process, the heads of the columns of the main forces of the grouping may approach the line seized by the covering troops in 1.5 to three hours and enter into battle in five to nine hours. Consequently, the covering troops must independently conduct combat actions for five to nine hours.

Approximate mean norms of the time necessary for the deployment of an army corps from a march to a battle formation are shown in Table 3.



Table 3

Designation	Approach possible after meeting with reconnaissance subunits, in hours	Approach possible from moment of meeting with covering troops, in hours	Time necessary for deployment, in hours	
			in two echelons	in one echelon
Advance guard of covering troops	1-1.5	--	0.5	0.5
Covering troops (armored, mechanized division)				
by two routes	1.5-2	--	1.5-2	3-5
by three routes	1.5-2	--	1.5-2	1.5-2
Main forces of army corps (2-3 div.)				
by three routes	3-5	1.5-3	5-6	8-10
by four routes	3-5	1.5-3	3.5-5	8-10
by five routes	3-5	1.5-3	3-5	6-8
by six routes	3-5	1.5-3	3-4	6-7
Mechanized division				
by one route	--	--	3.5-4	5.5-6
by two routes	--	--	1.5-2	3-5
by three routes	--	--	1.5-2	1.5-2
Armored division				
by one route	--	--	3.5-4	5.5-6
by two routes	--	--	1.5-2	3-5
by three routes	--	--	1.5-2	1.5-2

In conclusion, it is necessary to note that the strongest aspects of the conduct of a meeting engagement are the methods of employing nuclear weapons and armored large units.

By setting up "fire barriers" with nuclear means in defiles, on road junctions, and on crossings, it is planned to delay the approach of reserves to the line of the meeting engagement. For the same purpose, persistent toxic agents can also be used.

It is planned to carry out the destruction of the large units deploying for battle by delivering massed nuclear strikes against troops on lines of deployment with simultaneous neutralization of launching and fire positions, control posts, and reserves. Here the use of low-yield nuclear warheads by field artillery and Davy Crockett launchers may favor the quick fulfilment of combat tasks by the divisions during the start and conduct of a meeting battle.

Following the delivery of nuclear strikes, a swift offensive of the armored divisions on the flank and rear of the enemy is planned. The mechanized divisions are used for securing the flanks of the attack grouping or for joint actions with the armored divisions.

Availability in corps and divisions of a large number of aircraft and helicopters of the army aviation, and also of sabotage subunits ensures the commanders of these large units timely detection of targets for the delivery of nuclear strikes both during the start of the meeting engagement and during its conduct. Finally, wide use of airborne landing forces in the meeting engagement allows seizing advantageous lines and key crossings in short times.

However, the unacceptability of certain situations is obvious. Thus for instance, the excessively wide zones of forward movement of the divisions and corps and the considerable dispersal of the main forces of the field army allow delivering strikes on the flanks and smashing the divisions separately.

Sending out reinforced armored divisions as covering troops to a considerable distance from the main forces of the attack groupings (corps), in case of skilful enemy actions, dooms these divisions to passive actions and may lead to the destruction of



the attack groupings in detail.

The width of the offensive zones of the large units in a meeting engagement is too large. Therefore, the densities of the conventional means of combat will, as a rule, be low, which it does not always seem possible to make up for with nuclear weapons.

