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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

50X1-HUM

The Question of the Organization of the Organs of Troop Control

by

Major-General N. Reut

The necessity has long been apparent for discussing the problems involved in improving the system of troop control (upravleniye voyskami) and the administrative-organizational structure of the control organs. It is known that the existing organs of control are unwieldy, insufficiently flexible, and do not ensure the mobility necessary for control of troops during abrupt changes in the situation and in keeping with the highly maneuverable nature of combat operations.

The articles of Generals M. Ivanov, A. Morozov, V. Arkhipov, and Colonel K. Pashuk, basically, correctly uncover the flaws in the existing organizational structure of control organs, and the inability of the latter to ensure firm control of troops. However, a significant portion of these authors' proposals for improving the organization of the control organs is directed, actually, toward slightly modernizing the organizational structure and adapting it to modern requirements. In our opinion, such an approach cannot lead to the eradication of the flaws in the organization of troop control uncovered by the authors.

In the existing structure, as well as in the structure of the control organs proposed by the authors, there are still a few organs, acting parallel to one another, and directly subordinate to the combined-arms commander, among which the functions of troop control are divided. The combined-arms staff and the numerous commanders of arms of troops (special troops) and services are such organs now. In General M. Ivanov's proposals, the control functions are divided between a main planning center, operations, intelligence, and nuclear/missile centers, and a PVO control center. The other authors are for maintaining the apparatus of the commanders of arms of troops (special troops) and services, and by so doing, concur in the existence of numerous control organs.

Indeed, this "overgrowth" of the combined-arms commanders by control organs operating along parallel lines is the very thing which brought about loss of flexibility, since it has forced them to spend much time and

50X1-HUM

energy directing the activities of a large number of directly subordinate officials heading the specific control organs.

In our opinion, in order to eradicate the flaw noted, it is necessary to have only one organ of troop control, directly subordinate to the combined-arms commander. Such an organ should be a staff, since only the latter is capable of evaluating a situation thoroughly and objectively, determining the combat capabilities of friendly troops and the troops of the enemy, proposing to the combined-arms commander an expedient solution to the problem posed, determining the forces and weapons needed for it, and also, quickly coordinating the efforts of the large units and units. This will permit the combined-arms commander to spend a minimum of time adopting well-founded decisions. The other organs -- commanders of arms of troops (special troops) and services, and their apparatus, can be abolished, because they only complicate the process of troop control by their autonomous existence, and have actually lost the role which they played in the years of World War II and after its termination. During the course of training, many commanders of arms of troops (special troops) are found to be hostile to troop control and, to a certain extent, are a burden to the control points.

50X1-HUM

It is known that in order to perform operational tasks in the course of a modern operation, the combined-arms commander allots a specific quantity of forces and weapons, including combined-arms large units (units) and units of arms of troops (special troops). Each one of such groupings is headed by a subordinate combined-arms commander and is designated for operating on a separate axis and for making independent decisions regarding the tasks confronting him (using, of course, the results of strikes by weapons of mass destruction, if they are delivered by the senior commander).

Each combined-arms commander who leads such a grouping of troops is given the right of independent command of the forces and means assigned to his jurisdiction, and is charged with most effective use of them in performing the assigned tasks. In this case, it becomes superfluous to have supervision from above; this often arises because of the tendency of the commanders of arms of troops (special troops) and services to plan operations and issue orders about the manner of using the units and subunits which are within their competence, but which are subordinate to the lower-ranking combined-arms commander.

50X1-HUM

It is the removal of this supervision which creates favorable conditions for the combined-arms commander to practice intelligent initiative and make best use of forces and means in a situation which arises.

50X1-HUM

It is also known that each combined-arms commander keeps a certain quantity of the means of destruction under direct subordination to him (large units and units of missile troops, aviation, and anti-aircraft missile units); these allow him to exert decisive influence on the course and outcome of combat operations, creates reserves for reinforcing the main troop groupings, and for performing unexpected or suddenly arising tasks; finally, he also has units (large units) of special troops, which he designates for the execution of the most vital measures in the interests of supporting the operations of all the troops in the formation.

Thus, during the course of the operation, the combined-arms commander must direct the lower-ranking combined-arms commanding officers who head up the groupings of troops designated to execute independent tasks on separate axes; he also directs the above-mentioned means of destruction, reserves, and units (large units) of special troops left under his direct subordination. What role, in troop control, then, in these circumstances, will be played by the commanders of the arms of troops and special troops?

Recently it has been recognized that there is need for wide use of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction in an operation; the firing capabilities of the units (subunits) having these means have been increased, as have the ranges of fire, and the need has arisen to increase the speed of delivery or retargeting of fire strikes against the enemy. All this substantially influences the use of means of destruction in a modern operation. In our opinion, it is necessary to change the organization of the control of these means, because it no longer ensures fast delivery of fire strikes, and does not correspond with the new principles of assignment of missions by the combined-arms commander.

Actually during World War II and after its termination, the combined-arms commander designated only tactical tasks for the means of destruction, and in this connection there was need for control organs for these means. These organs were occupied with determining the fire tasks and distributing them among the numerous artillery groups (units, subunits), planned

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the execution of these tasks, and also organized the control of the most effective massed artillery fire, which called for bringing in many artillery units which were subordinate to various levels of command. This justified the interference of the commander of artillery of the operational formation (combined-arms large unit) with the operations of the lower-ranking combined-arms commanders, and the bringing in of the artillery units subordinate to them for carrying out massed fire on behalf of the operational formation (combined-arms large unit) as a whole.

50X1-HUM

In addition, these organs of control were charged with organizing reconnaissance of the enemy's system of fire and carrying out combat with his main means of destruction -- artillery and mortars. All this taken together permitted the commander and staff of the artillery of the operational formation (combined-arms large unit) to resolve independently the particular sphere of problems connected with the combat activities of the artillery and, as a result, the above-mentioned control organs were quite necessary.

In modern operations the combined-arms commander assigns not tactical, but actual fire tasks to the missile troops, indicating the objectives to be destroyed by nuclear (chemical) warheads, the yield and quantity of the latter, the time for delivering nuclear strikes, and the type of burst. In other words, at present the combined-arms commander is charged with the planning of fire, which is closely related to planning the operations of troops. It therefore follows that the combined-arms commander no longer has any need for those organs which would be occupied specifically with the planning of fire, and there is no need to duplicate his work and the work of the combined-arms staff.

At the same time, under modern conditions, the basis of the combat formation of the enemy -- his nuclear means -- can be discovered only by the combined efforts of all types of intelligence. In turn, the destruction (limiting the operations) of nuclear means of the enemy is also attained by the coordinated efforts of missile troops, aviation, PVO troops, and radio countermeasures, in conjunction with a swift offensive by the combined-arms large units and units. As a result, the organization of intelligence and combat with the nuclear means of the enemy can only be in the hands of the combined-arms commander. It follows, therefore, that the combined-arms commander has now become the organizer of combat with the enemy's principal means of destruction, and not the commander of missile troops and artillery, as many think.

50X1-HUM

Everything which has been said, in our opinion, deprives the commander of missile troops and artillery of independence of action, and turns him into a direct executor of fire tasks, which are specified by the combined-arms commander, and limits his activity to the control of the units of missile troops and artillery left directly subordinate to the combined-arms commander.

50X1-HUM

In connection with this there arises the question of whether it is advisable to remove the commanders of missile troops and artillery and their staffs from the commands of operational formations, and to turn over to them the command of the missile and artillery units which are directly subordinate to the combined-arms commander. This will increase their responsibility for the status of the units directly subordinate to them, and will permit them to exercise full command of the latter; it will also eliminate the possibility of interference with the operations of the lower-ranking combined-arms commanders.

The fast-moving nature of combat operations, and the need for rapidly delivered strikes by nuclear and chemical weapons require immediate transmission of the fire tasks to the executors. This can be attained to the best degree by direct communications between the combined-arms commander and the executor, i.e., the commanding officer of the missile or aviation unit (subunit) directly delivering these strikes. However, an excessive number of such executors complicates the activity of the combined-arms commander in controlling them, and necessitates intermediate organs capable of ensuring firm control.

Under the existing administrative-organizational structure of the control organs, there are, between the combined-arms commander and the executor -- the commanding officer of the missile or aviation subunit -- three intervening relay organs. In the missile troops, these include the commanding officer of the missile troops and artillery, the commanding officer of the missile brigade, and the commanders of battalions; in aviation, there are the commander of the air army and the commanders of aviation divisions and regiments. In our opinion, it would be advisable to abolish the brigade level in the missile troops and the divisional level in aviation, because there is no independent use for them during the course of combat operations. This step will significantly speed up the process of troop control, cut down on the quantity of documents to be processed, and lower expenditures on the maintenance of the control organs.

50X1-HUM

The conditions under which a modern operation is conducted, and control of troops during its course evoke the need for review of the organization of control of the means designated for combating the air enemy, because the current subordination of these means to two commanders -- the commander of the air army and the commander of PVO troops -- does not ensure unity of command, nor their effective utilization. The need arises for the combined-arms commander to coordinate directly the operations of these two levels, which leads to an unwarranted waste of time, which is so precious during the course of combat with the highly mobile air enemy.

Perfecting the ground means of combat with the air enemy, and increasing the combat capabilities of antiaircraft missile units, allow for creating zones of continuous destruction along the entire area of operations of the troops of a front. In their turn, such zones ensure centralized use, on the scope of a front, not only of the fighter aviation, but of antiaircraft missile units, as well as the means for reconnaissance of the air enemy, and radio countermeasures, all under the direction of a single control organ.

In this connection, we suggest that antiaircraft missile units be taken out of the makeup of combined-arms large units and the primary operational formations, in order that they may be used in a centralized and more effective manner on the scope of a front. In this way there will be no need for coordinating the combat operations of aviation with the numerous levels of command to which antiaircraft missile units are subordinate, and it will become possible to use them more effectively for destroying the air enemy.

As suggested by us, shifting antiaircraft missile units to subordination to a single control organ of the front will permit painless elimination of the intervening control organs -- the chiefs of PVO of the combined-arms large units and the primary operational formations, which, at these levels, have almost no bearing on the course of combat in the air; it will also eliminate preparation of unnecessary documents.

Such a measure will free the commanders of troops of the primary operational formations (commanding officers of combined-arms large units) from organizing the combat with the air enemy, a subject to which they actually attach little significance, since the main thing to them is the defeat of the enemy's ground troops.

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50X1-HUM

It is advisable to assign the control of all the means designated for the destruction of the air enemy to the commander who controls the means of air attack. Such a situation is conditioned by the fact that, in the first place, this commander can organize the combat with the air enemy more easily, not only in the air, but on the ground, and in the second place, he can coordinate more promptly the operations of fighter aviation and antiaircraft missile units with the operations of his own means of air attack.

Taking all this into consideration, it occurs to us that it would be beneficial to combine the means of PVO and aviation under the unified leadership of the commander of the air army. This will do away with duplication in the work of the chief of PVO troops of a front and the commander of the air army, and with unnecessary coordination, and will free the combined-arms commander from still another artificially created organ of control -- the PVO command post; the use of the latter in the course of an operation, in the light of the control system suggested by us, is highly questionable.

For combat with low-flying aircraft and cruise missiles, as well as for the destruction of the enemy's army aviation aircraft, it would be expedient for combined-arms large units and units to have appropriate antiaircraft weapons, which would be equally suitable for combat with the ground enemy. It is the versatility of these weapons which will permit effective employment of personnel in the course of a battle to combat the air or ground enemy, depending on the actual situation which has developed. The combined-arms commander can control such units (subunits) directly, without the help of the chief of PVO troops and his apparatus.

Uniting the missile and aviation means of destruction under a single organ -- a missile/nuclear center -- as is suggested by Major-General M. Ivanov, considering the clear-cut technical isolation which exists between the types of armament, is hardly advisable, because such an organ will be incapable of directing simultaneously the operations of the missile units and aviation, and especially of supporting them from the technical aspect.

The use of units (large units) of special troops and the organization of their control differ somewhat at the present time from the analogous situation during World War II. Specifically, the increased independence in operations of the combined-arms commanding officers has made superfluous the interference of the chiefs of the special troops attached to the higher

██████████ 50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

combined-arms chief in the use of units within their competence which have been resubordinated to the command of lower-ranking combined-arms commanders. In this connection there is no need to accomplish, at the higher level, the planning of various measures of support for operations of subordinate troops, to be executed by special units directly subordinate to the lower-ranking combined-arms commanders, since this problem can best be handled by the troops themselves. Freeing the chiefs of the special troops from these functions will allow them to spend more time on measures which the combined-arms commander expects to accomplish by the units of special troops left under his direct subordination, on behalf of all the troops subordinate to the formation (large unit).

Under these conditions, the combined-arms commander needs organs for controlling the units of special troops which were left under his direct subordination. In our opinion, this role will be filled best by the chiefs of special troops, which have become commanding officers of composite large units of special troops; they will gain independence of action, will have their own control points, and will be able to make decisions in order to perform the tasks assigned by the combined-arms commander. There will be no need for the chiefs of special troops to remain at the control point of the combined-arms commanding officer, and this will greatly increase the flexibility of this point.

Outfitting units of special troops with new combat equipment, increasing their combat capabilities, and the mechanization of work processes are conducive to decreasing the number of such units and the number of personnel therein. Thanks to new machines, many units (subunits) of special troops can perform the same work considerably faster than entire large units, using manual labor, could accomplish it during World War II. This makes it advisable to reduce the numerous intervening control organs and units of special troops for which no combat use can be found in the course of an operation.

Thus the headquarters of front and army engineer-sapper brigades and headquarters of sapper battalions in large units are becoming superfluous, since the direct control of units (subunits) within their makeup is really already exercised by the chiefs of engineer troops. The same applies to the headquarters of front and army communications regiments and headquarters of communications battalions of large units, since their subunits are under the direct control of the chief of communications.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

At the same time, in our opinion, it is better to unite separate units of chemical troops under a single control organ, headed by the chief of chemical troops. This will eliminate the lack of control for these units which is presently felt by the chief of chemical troops, who has no communications means of his own.

After the suggested changes are carried out it will be superfluous to work out plans for the use of special troops in an operation, because these plans will actually duplicate combined-arms documents.

Summing up the foregoing, it can be concluded that the changed functions of the chiefs of arms of troops (special troops) make it possible to remove them from the system of control of the operational formations and shift them from consultants attached to the combined-arms commander into the actual executors of the tasks carried out by the forces and means left directly subordinate to the combined-arms commander. This will permit the removal of supervision of the lower-ranking combined-arms commander; also, by decreasing considerably the number of control organs directly subordinate to the senior commander, it will permit having one headquarters -- a single, highly flexible and numerically small organ for controlling the combat activity of all troops within the makeup of an operational formation.

In these conditions, staffs will be charged with the following functions: preparing information which will allow the combined-arms commander to make decisions, and drafting the necessary memoranda; planning combat operations and detailed support of the latter; collecting and collating of information on the situation and reporting it to the combined-arms commander and higher headquarters, and informing lower headquarters; transmitting tasks to the troops, directing and supervising their daily combat activities; directing restoration of combat effectiveness of troops and preparing them for performing impending tasks; and organizing points of control and communications.

The work of the staff will be most effective if the basis of its structure is the principle of independent execution, by each department (directorate) of a specific type of work for control of troops, without bringing in other departments. This will result in less time being spent in coordinating the efforts of the combined-arms large units (units), units of the arms of troops (special troops), and aviation, because all this work will be carried out by one department (directorate). At the same time, each department (directorate) will present the chief of staff and the commander an information summary on all the troops, forces, and means making up the operational formation.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

In our opinion, a staff should have the following departments (directorates):

-- the first -- which will take up the questions of organizing impending operations taking into consideration the situation as it takes shape; prepare recommendations for the combined-arms commander; carry out the planning of combat operations and their all-round support, and inform the troops of their tasks.

-- the second -- to direct the current combat activities of the troops in the course of performing the tasks assigned to them for collecting and collating information on the situation and presenting it to the combined-arms commander, and higher and lower headquarters, and also to transmit all current orders to the troops and undertake supervision of their execution; this department must have within its subordination all means of intelligence and traffic control.


-- the third -- to develop and carry out measures for restoring combat effectiveness and increasing the viability of troops, as well as their combat preparation for impending operations; units implementing activation of troops, and the training base should be subordinate to this department.

-- the fourth -- to organize troop control, that is, be in charge of establishment and movement of control points, and of their protection and defense of apparatus for communications between the points, and of control of troops by secure communications, and to supply them with topographic maps and charts; this department directs communications large units (units), and commandant's and topographic subunits.

-- the fifth -- to carry out the administrative and supply functions.

The makeup of each department (directorate) should include highly qualified combined-arms generals and officers, and generals and officers of the arms of troops (special troops) of various specialties. A combined-arms general (officer) should be at the head of a department (directorate). The organization of work in the departments (directorates) and coordination between them should be set up in the manner suggested by General M. Ivanov and Colonel K. Pashuk in their articles.

Such an organizational structure of a staff will eliminate another

 50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

important deficiency of control organs -- simultaneous execution by the very same departments (services) of work relating to preparation of information for making a decision, the planning of combat operations and their support, and also in regard to the collection of information on the situation and the immediate direction of the current combat activities of the troops. At the same time there will no longer be the need to involve a large number of officers in controlling the troops; duplication of work, lengthy coordinating processes and the basis of numerous documents, duplicating each other, will all be done away with.

A staff so constructed will have two vital departments -- the first concerned with matters of planning impending operations, the second, directing the current combat activity of the troops. This will permit more purposeful distribution of the efforts of the staff personnel in the control of the current activity of the troops and, at the same time, in the organization of impending operations.

In our opinion, such a distribution of functions will attain the best results, since a definite number of staff personnel, headed by a combined-arms general (officer), are dedicated beforehand to the execution of each task. Under the existing system, however, the decision in these matters is arrived at with the participation of the very same officers. The experience of numerous operational exercises indicates that the basic reason for unsatisfactory functioning of staffs in the matter of troop control, during the course of highly maneuvering and swift-moving combat operations, is the inability of the same persons to perform both functions equally well.

The suggested staff structure allows the combined-arms commander to receive simultaneously collated information on the situation regarding the enemy and all troops of the operational formation, and to work out measures which will reflect the combined activity of all arms of troops (special troops). It will become feasible to reduce considerably the quantity of documents processed in the staffs regarding troop control, mainly those dealing with plans for utilization of arms of troops (special troops), as well as types of support, since these documents actually only summarize the basic measures which are spelled out in documents of the combined-arms staff. It will be possible to bring in considerably fewer personnel for the purpose of troop control than under the existing system, by bringing in, in turn, the first four departments, depending on the actual situation, and also by concentrating the basic work for control of the current activities of the troops in one -- the second -- department (directorate).

██████████ 50X1-HUM

The chief of staff is given the best conditions for performing his functions, because he is relieved of the necessity of coordinating the activity of officers not under his subordination, and at the same time he is given a greater opportunity to study the situation and to organize combat operations, and the all-round support of the latter.


In our opinion, such an organizational structure of the staff is more convenient for work at the control points, because only the first, second and fourth departments (directorates) may be located with the combined-arms commander, and the efforts of these would be quite sufficient for performing the main functions of troop control. This will make it possible to decrease the personnel at the control points, increase their flexibility, significantly ease the work of communications equipment, and decrease its quantity, because it abolishes joint location of the combined-arms headquarters and the control organs of the chiefs of arms of troops (special troops) and services in one area (point), as it was in the past. It will be possible to disperse the points of troop control more, which undoubtedly will increase their viability.

The new organizational structure of the control organs is, in many ways, conducive to reducing the expense of their maintenance, and allows more effective use of the work of personnel and employment of the means of complex automation and mechanization of control processes. In addition, there will be need of only one system of automation for the combined-arms commander, capable of receiving and transmitting collated information on the situation.

And finally, the organizational structure of control organs suggested by us will avoid piecemeal control of operations of the arms of troops (special troops) and services, and point them, to a large degree, to the performance of tasks by combined efforts, that is, make the organization of troop control conform with their activities in the course of an operation.

It is known that an important place in the work of the combined-arms commander is occupied by the problems of materiel-technical and medical support. For directing materiel-technical and medical support, the combined-arms chief, in our opinion, also should have one control organ. This stems from the fact that in modern conditions the troops will be equally incapable of combat whether they lack materiel supplies or whether their equipment is not serviced and put into combat-effective condition. In turn, if the troops have a great amount of various combat equipment, and its performance depends on the supply of materiel on one hand, and on technical servicing

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and repair on the other, then these types of activity are made into one process. This is the reason for the need to unite the direction of materiel, equipment, and other types of rear support under the chief of the rear, directly subordinated to the combined-arms commanding officer.

In this, centralization of control of the rear must be carried out not only in matters of the organization of the rear, transport of materiel and technical equipment, and medical service, which are now the responsibilities of the chief of the rear, but also in matters of technical support as a second inherent part of modern rear services, which at present is under the jurisdiction of the various chiefs of arms of troops and special troops (services) not subordinate to the chief of the rear.

Thus, it seems to us that an administrative-organizational structure of control organs more suitable than the existing one, or the one suggested by Generals M. Ivanov, V. Arkhipov, and Colonel K. Pashuk, will be one in which the headquarters and the chief of the rear with his apparatus will be under the direct subordination of the combined-arms commander. Each of them will be concerned with a specific sphere of problems which require independent decisions on the part of the combined-arms commander. In our opinion, in conformity with modern principles of the use of troops in an operation, an operational formation must have within its makeup: combined-arms (tank) armies and combined-arms large units, an air army, including PVO troops, a large unit of missile troops and artillery, large units of engineer, chemical and communications troops, as well as units and subunits of intelligence, commandant's service, traffic control, and others.

~ With such a structure of the operational formation, the combined-arms commander can charge the lower combined-arms commanders with the fulfilment of tasks stemming from the goal and plan of the operation, and also will have means under his direct subordination with which he will be able to influence the course of the operation as a whole. At the same time, the organization of troop control is considerably simplified, and many intervening and, in our opinion, needless, control organs are eliminated.

50X1-HUM