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Ways of More Effectively Combatting Enemy Means of Nuclear Attack in an Offensive Operation

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by

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At the present time nuclear weapons have penetrated into all types of armed forces and arms of troops. Our probable enemy has created a broadly ramified and technically equipped system of using nuclear weapons. Success in combatting these weapons cannot be achieved by haphazard fire effect against one or another objective, but by the systematic and well thought-out destruction of the most important centers of the whole system. For this purpose, it is essential to oppose to the enemy system for the use of nuclear weapons an efficient organization for combatting his means of nuclear attack; this will permit the preempting of his use of nuclear weapons, rather than merely the launching of counterstrikes. The timely destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack will ensure the maintenance over him of the fire superiority gained before the offensive, right up to the fulfilment of the tasks levied on the troops.

The analysis of a number of exercises has shown that the organization and implementation of combatting the enemy's means of nuclear attack have still not assumed the proper place in the work of commanders and staffs, and that the enemy's nuclear weapons have not become the main objective for destruction. Such means as cruise missiles, aviation, artillery, PVO weapons and tank large units operating separately from the main forces are hardly used at all for the destruction of the enemy's nuclear weapons, and the dispatch of special reconnaissance-diversionary groups for this purpose is of a sporadic nature.

Usually not more than 10 to 15 percent of the overall number of nuclear weapons are expended for the destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack, while

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up to 65 to 70 percent are expended for the destruction of tanks and infantry. Moreover, the weapons assigned are often those in the hands of the batteries on duty (dezhurnyye) at the particular moment. These are, as a rule, of lower yield, and the result is the non-fulfilment of the task of destroying the objectives.

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...carry out with the forces of that arm of troops which has been ordered to fulfil the given fire mission.

In order to avoid separation of the means of reconnaissance from the means of destruction, and also to prevent division of the process "reconnoiter the objective - destroy it at once", it is essential to organize and conduct reconnaissance to the entire depth of the range of fire of the means of destruction in the possession of the given troop echelon. Research has shown the following ranges to be necessary: for a division - about 100 km, for an army - about 400 to 450 km, for a front - about 1000 km. Together with this, the main efforts of reconnaissance must be concentrated at a depth of about 40 to 50 km from the main line of resistance, i.e., in the zone where more than 90 percent of all the enemy's means of nuclear attack are found.

In order to increase the capabilities of reconnaissance prior to the adoption of new technical means, it is advisable to incorporate into the TO&E of a division - a flight (zveno) of MI-4 helicopters; into the TO&E of the chief of missile troops and artillery of an army - a squadron of fire-adjustment aircraft with an operating radius of 400 to 500 km; and into the TO&E of the chief of missile troops and artillery of a front - one more separate fire-adjustment and reconnaissance aviation regiment (OKRAP) with an operating radius of about 1000 km.

The destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack as the main objective also requires a radical change in the approach to planning and conducting an operation. Right from the adoption of the decision for the operation, the main attention of the troop commander of a front (or army) must be devoted to the destruction of the

enemy's means of nuclear attack. The main problem for solution here is the correct assignment of tasks to missile large units (or units) and their procedure for the use of nuclear weapons. These theoretical propositions will not arouse doubt on the part of anyone, but in actual fact they have been put into practice quite differently in the exercises of the past years.

It is believed by some that the commander of a front (or army), together with his staff, solves all the basic problems of the combat use of nuclear weapons, including the determination of the coordinates of the centers of the bursts, the yield of the nuclear ammunition and the executor of each nuclear strike. Only the commander of a front (or army) gives the order (or permission) for the launching of each nuclear strike against each specific target.

There is also another opinion according to which the commander of a front (or army) makes the decision, distributes the nuclear weapons in accordance with the tasks of the operation, and also establishes for the subordinate formations (or large units) the procedure for using these weapons. The chief of missile troops and artillery of the front (or army) and the commander of the air army organize combat reconnaissance (dorazvedka) of the objectives intended for destruction, determine the yield of the nuclear weapons and designate the executors of the nuclear strikes.

The question arises as to which will contribute more to the successful combatting of the enemy's means of nuclear attack - strict centralization of the use of nuclear weapons or granting a certain amount of independence to those to whom the executors of nuclear strikes are immediately subordinate?

Since a basic principle of the use of nuclear weapons in an operation is their employment en masse, it follows that the planning of mass (group) nuclear strikes must be centralized in the hands of the troop commander of a front (or army).

With regard to single nuclear strikes against the enemy's means of nuclear attack, however, the principle of such strict centralization is not suitable; it would increase the time from the moment of discovering a target to the moment of its destruction by that period required for the front (or army) commander to reach a decision. Calculations show that for the destruction of tactical means of nuclear attack (or an absolute majority of them)a delay in launching the strike of even five to eight minutes will reduce the probability of their destruction from 80 percent to 50 percent.

The use by the enemy of nuclear/missile weapons under conditions where he has gained fire superiority is so serious in its consequences that we must adopt all measures to prevent him from seizing this superiority, by the launching of preemptive nuclear strikes by our missile troops against his means of nuclear attack. One of the measures which will facilitate this is assigning the right to launch a single nuclear strike against the enemy's means of nuclear attack to the chief of missile troops and artillery of a front (or army) and to the commander of a division of the first echelon, with subsequent notification to the troop commander of the front (or army).

On the decision of the troop commander of a front (or army), provision must be made for putting a certain number of nuclear weapons of operational-tactical designation at the disposal of the chief of missile troops and artillery of the front (or army), and of tactical designation at the disposal of the commanders of the divisions of the first echelon.

Such an approach will, in our opinion, increase the responsibility of the chief of missile troops and artillery of a front (or army) for the success of the operation (or battle), will aid him in developing sound initiative, make him the principal organizer of combat with the means of nuclear attack and, most important, will speed up the destruction of the enemy's nuclear weapons.

The question of how many nuclear weapons to allot for this purpose has great bearing on the conduct of successful combat with the enemy's nuclear means. It has already been stated above that in exercises the greater part of nuclear weapons has been expended up to the present time on the destruction of the enemy's troop groupings. This has led to such paradoxical situations as when even means of nuclear attack which have been discovered have not been destroyed. Thus, in one of the exercises a front discovered 28 missile troop objectives on the enemy side, but inflicted nuclear strikes on only 5, while at the same time not one discovered troop concentration failed to be fired on.

The enemy's means of nuclear attack must become the main objectives of the use of nuclear weapons. The expenditure of nuclear weapons for the destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack will depend in each specific instance on the situation, and most of all on the availability of nuclear weapons within a front and the number of the enemy's means of nuclear attack which have been reconnoitered. As a first approximation, the calculation of the required number of nuclear weapons must be made in accordance with the number of launchers designated for combat, taking account of their uninterrupted readiness throughout the entire operation. Let us examine this problem in more detail.

The necessity for the immediate destruction of the enemy's discovered means of nuclear attack and the relatively long time for preparing a missile for launching have foreordained the use of on-duty missile subunits, which will be at the maximum degree of readiness. If it were possible for all missile subunits to open fire immediately on receipt of their mission, then obviously it would not be necessary to designate on-duty subunits. Consequently, the striving to fulfill a fire mission in the shortest time has become the determining factor in the creation of a net of on-duty missile subunits with various ranges of fire.

The number of on-duty missile subunits in a front depends on the nature, targets and tasks of the impending operation, the composition of the front missile troops, the

availability of nuclear weapons and the expected quantity of the enemy's means of nuclear attack. The specific number of on-duty subunits of operational-tactical missiles is determined by the decision of the front troop commander, and of subunits of tactical missiles by the decision of the army commander. The criterion for this must be security from destruction of various objectives in any area of the assigned zone of responsibility, and security of continuity of combat, with respect to displacement and maneuver in the course of the operation.

The breadth of the zone of responsibility should be larger than the front (or army) zone, taking in the zones of the adjacent units to the left and right by a magnitude equal to one-half the range of fire of the missile for which the calculation is being made. Within an assigned zone, with the goal of guaranteeing the fulfilment of a given fire mission, the sectors of fire must overlap by a distance equal to approximately one-half the range of fire of the adjacent launchers, thereby achieving double coverage of each sector of fire.

Let us examine a specific example of these propositions. Let us suppose that a front, having in the first echelon of its operational formation three combined-arms armies, is advancing in a zone of about 500 km. Each army is operating on an independent axis in a zone of 120 to 150 km. The decision has been made for a gradual increase in the direction of the adjacent unit, amounting to 100 km for operational-tactical missiles and 20 km for tactical missiles. Calculations show that under these conditions at every given moment there must be at the peak degree of readiness in the front no less than three operational-tactical missiles and in each army four or five tactical missiles. The front will have a total of 15 to 18 on-duty launchers.

The question arises as to the reestablishment of on-duty batteries which have expended their missiles, which is essential to the maintenance of the continued readiness of each siting area.

In our view it is advisable to organize the operations of the on-duty batteries as follows. In a battalion, one battery must be at the maximum (15 to 20 minutes) degree of readiness, the second battery must be at 35 to 40 minute readiness and the third must be receiving a missile at the unloading point or completing its maneuver within the siting area. On receipt of the command to launch a missile, the commanding officer of the battalion will pass it on to the on-duty battery which is at the maximum degree of readiness (15 to 20 minutes) and he also gives the order to the second battery to put itself into 15 to 20 minute readiness. The third battery, having received a missile, assumes 35 to 40 minute readiness, and the second battery, after 15 to 20 minutes, i.e., the time necessary for launching the nuclear-missile strike by the first battery, assumes 15 to 20 minute readiness. A battery which has launched a nuclear-missile strike against a target goes to get another missile.

We have lingered in detail over the problem of reorganizing the on-duty battery in order to show that in each siting area, for the one launcher at the maximum degree of readiness, there must be no less than two other launchers at a lesser degree of readiness. It follows from this that in a front, at each siting area, the number of launchers intended for combatting the enemy's means of nuclear attack must be three times the number of launchers ready for firing at any given moment. In our example it should be equal to 45 to 54 launchers.

In order to ensure uninterrupted combat with the enemy's means of nuclear attack in the course of an operation, it is essential that the number of launchers in motion be no less than the number in the forward siting area. Proceeding from here, the overall number of launchers in a front and of missiles for them, with nuclear charges, must be doubled, and in our example would consist of no less than 90 to 108 launchers, of which no less than 18 would be operational-tactical and 72 to 90 would be tactical.

In order to make possible the allotment of such a number of launchers for combat with the enemy's means of

nuclear attack, it is necessary to sharply increase their number within a front, and in connection with this, even to alter the organizational structure of the missile troops.

The particular complexity and importance of combatting the enemy's nuclear means require that it be carried out with a definite system, including missile units (or subunits) constantly ready for action with nuclear charges of a definite yield, a reliable system of communications, and the latest methods of combat reconnaissance (reconnaissance) (dorazvedka /razvedka/). All this must be united in the same hands, under a single command, with sole personal responsibility. The full scale of such unity can be realized in missile divisions, the creation of which, it seems to us, is already an urgent necessity. The organization of missile divisions in a front and army will sharply increase the effectiveness of combat with the enemy's means of nuclear attack, facilitate the introduction of electronic computing machines (EVM) into missile troop control, reduce the gap in the number of means of delivering nuclear weapons to the target, which exists in our army and in the US Army, and permit the accomplishment of maneuver by nuclear weapons without maneuver of the launchers.

In order to ensure the destruction of the enemy's means of nuclear attack which directly influence the conduct of battle by a motorized rifle (or tank) division, it is desirable to increase the number of tactical missiles in these divisions by two or three times, and at the same time to increase their range of fire to 50 to 60 km.

The fulfilment of a fire mission of destroying the enemy's means of nuclear attack is possible only when the yields of the nuclear charges on hand correspond to those required. In connection with this it is highly advisable to create standard nuclear ammunition, the use of which in all cases will ensure destruction of an objective. As shown by calculations, such standard yields are: for tactical missiles - 25 kt, and for operational-tactical missiles - 100 kt. For special assignments it is necessary to supply the units (or subunits) designated for combatting the enemy's nuclear means with the

above-mentioned standard nuclear ammunition from the front missile-technical battalion (FRTB). The standard yields of nuclear ammunition will decrease in ratio with improvements in the missiles, and most of all with the decrease of dispersion (errors of shot).

Analysis of the status of the enemy's means of nuclear attack and research into problems of organizing combat with them permit the conclusion that it is not advisable to use only nuclear strikes for the destruction of all of the enemy's tactical means of nuclear attack. It is essential in combatting them to draw on other means as well, and most of all on tube artillery.

Simultaneous with the assignment to the artillery of a task of destroying a discovered enemy nuclear target, or immediately after opening fire on it, it is essential to begin the task of preparing a nuclear strike by the tactical missile nearest to the objective. The launching of this missile will be carried out according to the results of the artillery fire, which must be controlled.

These are the basic ways of increasing the effectiveness of the use of missile troops and artillery to combat the enemy's means of nuclear attack. An important role in this combat is played by aviation, chemical weapons, PVO troops, airborne troops and tank large units operating separately from the main forces. The correct apportionment of tasks among all these forces and means will greatly enhance the success of combat against the enemy's means of nuclear attack. Let us therefore dwell briefly on the planning of this.

Combat with the enemy's operational-tactical means must be planned on the scale of a front, and with his tactical means on the scale of an army. Proceeding from the importance of combat with the enemy's means of nuclear attack and the variety of means drawn upon for this, we consider it advisable to work out a separate "Plan for Combat with the Enemy's Means of Nuclear Attack" both in front and army headquarters. This plan, which would be one of the basic

documents in the planning of an operation, would reflect:

--the organization of reconnaissance of the enemy's means of nuclear attack and the procedure for the use of intelligence data;

--the basic apportionment of tasks to armies, missile troops, aviation, PVO troops, airborne troops and other arms of troops;

--the number of nuclear weapons allotted for combat and their approximate apportionment to the tasks of the operation;

--the procedure for carrying out combat reconnaissance;

--the tasks of the radio units of special designation;

--the organization of communications with the weapons at the maximum degree of readiness;

--the procedure for launching single nuclear strikes against the enemy's means of nuclear attack (if this should be required by the situation).

A front headquarters must coordinate the problems of combatting the enemy's means of nuclear attack with the adjacent fronts and with the missile large units of strategic designation which are accomplishing tasks in the zone of the front.

The chief of missile troops and artillery of the front, the commander of the air army, the chiefs of the operations and intelligence directorates of the front headquarters and the chief of the communications troops of the front must directly participate in the working out of the plan.

On the basis of an extract from the overall plan, the staff of the missile troops and artillery of the front works out the "Plan for the Use of the Front Missile Troops and Artillery", in which the tasks of the missile troops and artillery in combatting the enemy's means of nuclear attack are separately laid out.

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