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CPYRGHT

Every offensive operation has its limits as to depth and duration, determined by the missions and the material and psychological capabilities of the troops. To accomplish and complete the defeat of a large group of the enemy with one blow is possible only if he is weak or unprepared.

Analysis of the experience of past wars shows that the main factors resulting in lowering the tempo of offensive operations and in pauses in them, and consequently in the necessity of consolidating a gain achieved, were active counter-action by the enemy and a constant lowering of the combat capabilities of the attacking forces as they advanced in depth in the enemy's territory. The latter is caused by increasing losses of equipment, weapons and personnel, by psychological and physical exhaustion of troops, stretching out of lines of communication, a marked decrease in mobile reserves, lagging of supply bases behind the attacking troops, and slowness in restoration of roads.

Under modern conditions, losses of troops, especially from nuclear weapons, will incomparably increase, and continuous supply to troops will often be disrupted. At the same time the depth of the attack will greatly increase. As to the activeness and strength of counter-action by the defending enemy, they have a tendency constantly to increase. This is because of the increase of the nuclear weapons which can be allotted to the defensive operation, the increase in depth of the defense, and the number of highly mobile reserves of various composition and purpose.

The defenders, possessing powerful and long-range nuclear missiles and tank and air assault troops, will strive for sudden and decisive counter-action against the attackers, inflicting nuclear and air attacks on groups of the latter which have broken through, carrying out powerful counter-thrusts and counterattacks, and disorganizing the offensive forces' operational rear and communications. They will try in every way to break up the offensive and sometimes even go over to a counteroffensive. And troops which have not taken promptly effective measures to consolidate a gain may quickly lose it and find themselves in a difficult situation.

Thus timely and effective consolidation of a gain is essential to the successful development of an offensive, an inescapable necessity in carrying out offensive operations.

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There are those of the opinion that consolidation of a gain is an incidental measure, to be carried out in certain critical stages of an offensive only for covering a flank or repulsing counterattacks of the enemy; that troops should consolidate a gain only after the achievement of the final goal of an offensive operation.

PYRGHT

In our opinion, consolidation of a gain is an integrated undertaking, planned and accomplished throughout the whole operation, with the aim of maximum preservation of the striking force and combat capabilities of the groups of the troops on the offensive, of timely and most effective frustration of all the countermeasures of the enemy, and of creating the most favorable conditions for further development of the offensive.

There is much in common between measures for developing a gain and consolidating it. Both have the final goal of assuring success of the offensive. It must be remembered that the best method of consolidating a gain is its swift and uninterrupted development, since this in itself removes many of the tasks of consolidating a gain and makes unnecessary some measures which were planned in advance. Besides, many tasks involved in consolidating a gain and in developing it have common methods of operation. Thus, combatting means of nuclear attack in the sectors of operation of offensive striking groups are carried out with the aim of developing a gain, but the accomplishment of these same measures in the sector of operations of counter-attacking groups of the enemy is already consolidation of a gain.

Consolidation of a gain is accomplished by specific methods of operation, such as protecting threatened flanks, repulsing counterattacks, destruction of armed groups of the enemy, combatting his landing forces (desanti), shifting part of the forces over to defense, protection and defense of important targets, etc.

Let us examine the content of the measures and the methods of operation in consolidating a gain in offensive operations. Some of them, practiced in the past war, such as combat with the enemy's reserves, repulse of his counterattacks, and protection of threatened flanks, will have to be carried out in modern operations, too, especially in operations without the use of nuclear weapons. But the conditions of nuclear warfare require fairly substantial modifications in them. Therefore an attempt is made in this article to reveal those features which will be characteristic of consolidation of a gain in the qualitatively new conditions.

The most important feature is that now the activity of the counteraction of the defending enemy and the depth of its destruction of the offensive troops has greatly increased. Essentially, it encompasses almost the whole depth of the operational formation of the two sides.

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Therefore measures for consolidating a gain will require much more forces and means, and they will be carried out on a much wider scale. At the same time operations for consolidating a gain and parrying the thrusts of the enemy will take place in a dynamic, rapidly-changing situation, when making the necessary decisions and carrying them out must be done in extremely limited periods of time.

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Furthermore, while previously one of the main measures for consolidating a gain was combatting infantry reserves, now the primary task is combatting the enemy's means of nuclear attack. For this purpose, part of the nuclear ammunition and other means of destruction will be used against those nuclear forces of the enemy which he is using in the interests of preparing counter-attacks and launching (parachute drop) of landings (desanti), and which are aimed against troops of the offensive side assigned to parrying counter-measures of the enemy.

Nuclear weapons can very quickly and dependably rout approaching reserves intended for attacks on the flanks of the offensive forces, and can destroy the dangerous rocket units of the enemy and his air and sea landings. However, it must be borne in mind that the supplies of nuclear ammunition may be limited, and it must be used first of all for development of a gain in the main directions. Therefore a gain will often have to be consolidated by combined-arms forces and conventional weapons, with the use of only a small amount of nuclear weapons. In connection with this, sometimes part of the combined arms forces and artillery and special troops should be designated in advance for timely and successful countering of the counterattacks of the enemy.

Under modern conditions there has been a substantial change in the nature, content and methods of combatting the operational reserves of the enemy which, along with nuclear weapons, he will direct toward frustrating an offensive. During the past war, counterattacks by reserves in the main sectors were primarily repulsed by tank and motorized infantry troops with the support of air power, and, as a rule, from a position of close contact; the depth of fire action against the reserves was not great. Now the fight with these reserves has been shifted far into the depth of the enemy's defense and begins with preventive nuclear attack with missiles and air power long before their approach to the dispositions of the attacking forces. This means that disrupting the counterattack of the reserves, in other words, consolidation of a success, may take place in many cases without participation of large land forces. In addition, this mission may be accomplished in exceptionally short periods of time and thereby avoid operational pauses in the conduct of an operation. The main part of the forces, in essence, can be freed from combat with the reserves of the enemy. And this increases the capabilities of the striking force of the attacking troops in the development of an offensive.

RGHT

in a future war there may be used not only tactical, but also large-scale air and sea landings against the offensive forces. In this, as the experience of foreign armies shows, their landing and operations will be closely linked with the launching of counter-blows and the carrying out of counter-attacks. The existence of tactical nuclear weapons and a trend toward sudden, bold actions increases the danger of attacks launched by landings. Thus, timely destruction of the various landings is an active and very important measure in the consolidation of a gain.

To destroy large landings it will be necessary to use nuclear weapons, and bring into action forces from the second echelon and the reserves. Here the greatest results can be achieved if it is possible to accomplish this before the landing is able to assemble and begin to operate. It must be remembered that even small landings may be able to launch sudden and powerful blows against the flank and rear of the offensive forces. In coastal sectors, suitable for sea landings, it is expedient for part of the forces to be assigned to anti-landing defense, having second echelons and reserves ready to move.

It should be kept in mind that powerful air attacks will most often be one of the first measures of the enemy against the offensive forces. Therefore timely creation of a reliable air defense must be considered as a necessary condition for consolidation of a gain throughout the whole operation. To accomplish this, it is necessary already during the planning of an operation to think out carefully the procedure for shifting anti-aircraft missile units, rebasing of fighter planes, and their maneuver for the purpose of timely strengthening of the system of air-defense in the sectors threatened. In the course of an operation it is necessary to strive to shift air defense missile troops and to create new groups of them in such a way as to organize a constantly dependable zonal cover for the troops, especially in the area of the main attack and in those sectors where counterattacks of the enemy are developing.

In offensive operations of the past a very characteristic feature of consolidating a gain was protection of threatened flanks. Under modern conditions, troops will encounter this problem still more often, since the flanks in advance by sectors (po napravleniyam) will be more vulnerable because of being greatly extended.

Protection of such flanks by dense covering detachments of tanks, infantry and anti-tank weapons, such as used to be used, is now impossible, since it would require an unjustifiedly large allotment of forces. Obviously this mission will be accomplished by separate forces at the most-threatened sectors, and by maneuver in these sectors of tanks and anti-tank units, the fire of tactical and operational missiles, long-range rocket artillery, and air strikes. The sharply

CPYRGHT

increased mobility of counter-attacking forces will require timely measures for protection of the flanks, since the slightest delay will result in the enemy penetrating the dispositions of the offensive forces. As a result the development of the operation may be brought to a halt, and localization of the breach of the flank will require far more forces and time.

One of the possible methods of consolidating a gain even under modern conditions will be shifting of part of the attacking forces to the defense. It is very important to determine correctly the most favorable moment for this, for doing it too soon or too late may result in equally unfavorable consequences.

Shifting over to the defensive, it seems, is necessary when there are not enough forces to break up the counterattack of the enemy. To determine the most suitable moment for shifting to the defensive requires effective reconnaissance, ability correctly to discover the plans of the enemy, and swiftness and decisiveness of action.

The defense will be set up not completely, but in the sectors of the most probable attacks of the enemy. In the gaps between these sectors there may be planned blows by nuclear weapons, artillery (especially rocket artillery), and aviation; obstacles will have to be set up by mobile methods. The depth of the defense, as compared with the past war as a whole, may be somewhat less, since the operational disposition usually will be single-echelon. But a feature of it will be the existence of highly mobile reserves. The success of such a defense will greatly depend on the ability to determine ahead of time the most favorable directions, regions and boundaries of the defense, and to organize the fire system and use of weapons and equipment so as to inflict, with forestalling fire attacks, maximum destruction on the approaching forces of the enemy at the greatest possible distance from the line of defense.

Under modern conditions, consolidation of a gain upon forcing water barriers must be accomplished in a different way. In crossing the water barrier it is necessary to achieve ceaseless movement of the troops forward. There is required mobile means of expanding the tactical bridgehead into an operational one without any pause. Such actions are the best guarantee not only of developing the gain, but of consolidating it. No delay, or concentration of troops in small bridgeheads is permissible, since this creates for the defense more favorable conditions for the use of atomic weapons and elimination of the bridgehead.

Armed and cut-off groups of the enemy may remain in the rear of the advancing forces. Combat against them also will be one of the important tasks in consolidation of a gain. It is necessary to take into consideration that surrounded groups of the enemy may be extensively

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operational rocket units. Their active operations in the rear of the attacking forces can result in the most undesirable consequences. Under certain conditions they may destroy the nuclear missile weapons of the attacking forces, strike blows at important targets of the operational rear, disrupt regular supply to troops of the first echelon, draw off against themselves part of the reserves and forces of the second echelon, and slow down the speed of development of the offensive as a whole in certain sectors. Consequently, for the sake of consolidating a gain it is necessary that the surrounded forces of the enemy, or those which have broken out of encirclement, be destroyed as quickly and surely as possible. For this nuclear weapons and tank and motorized infantry may be used.

YRGHT

In the system of measures for consolidation of a gain, of great importance is the defense and protection of operational objectives (ob'yekty) of the attacking troops from the actions of landing forces and sabotage (diversionnyye) detachments and groups of the enemy. How important this is is shown by the fact that in the US army the development of special forces is being accelerated; their number in recent years has increased eight-fold. It should also be taken into account that it is planned to include certain units of regular troops, especially paratroopers, in sabotage (diversionnoye) activity. In the opinion of foreign military specialists, diversionnaya warfare will no longer be limited to spontaneous, unrehearsed actions. Special warfare, including diversionnyye aspects, is being transformed from its previous occasional tactical support of local operations into a strategic activity.

In the zone of the front, to a shallow depth, troops of the first echelons and their reserves will have to be used to combat these diversionnyye landing forces and detachments. Deep in the rear this mission can be carried out by units moving up to the front as replacements, and also by those being moved back to be brought up to strength, and for rest. It must not be forgotten that success in combatting these detachments, whose targets will be mainly nuclear missile weapons and major headquarters and installations of the rear, largely depends on the timely receipt of information and swiftness of action of the forces designated for this mission.

One of the most important and constant measures, without which it is impossible to accomplish dependably the tasks of consolidating a gain, is the timely augmentation and restoration of routes of transport and evacuation. War has shown that losing sight of this may be enough for an achieved gain to be lost. Thus, one of the principle reasons for the unsuccessful offensive of the Southwest Front in the Donbass in February 1943 was the extremely slow restoration of the railroads. As a result the supply bases lagged behind, and the mobile reserves of the troops were reduced to 0.5 - 0.75 of fuel and 0.3 - 0.5 of ammunition

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supply. The scope of the operation is limited as to materiel, could not effectively withstand the counterattacking forces of the Germans.

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A modern offensive operation requires a still greater expenditure of materiel than formerly, while the conditions for its transport in a nuclear war will be exceptionally difficult. As a result of massive nuclear strikes by the defense, great destruction on lines of communication, creation of vast zones of radioactive contamination, and destruction and flooding are inevitable. Foreign military specialists even recommend the creation of special nuclear barriers and nuclear mine fields in order not only to block the timely arrival of operational reserves, but also the bringing up of nuclear missile and ordinary ammunition, fuel, and provisions. Railroads are especially vulnerable. In addition, in the West they are paying great attention to the organization of all possible sabotage actions (diversiya) against communications and are actively preparing special forces for this, attaching great importance to their technical equipment.

All this demands very much attention to the organization of uninterrupted supply of the troops, without which consolidation of an achieved gain will be impossible. In order to cope with this task, it is necessary to involve in it all kinds of transport and efficient use of repair and restoration agencies. During an operation, along with railway and motor transport, it is necessary to utilize the capabilities of pipe-line and, especially, air transport. With the offensive forces moving out into the depth of the enemy territory, on account of stretching out of the lines of communication and activation of the enemy's sabotage (diversionnoye) activity, there will inevitably be necessary a great many measures for strengthening the protection of the lines of communication.

Analysis of the questions raised by us shows that this problem under modern conditions becomes especially difficult and acute. The conditions of conducting offensive operations in depth in a nuclear war are such that the total amount and relative importance of measures for consolidating a gain are steadily increasing, while the time in which they can be carried out is decreasing. This makes the work of commanders, staffs and troops much more difficult. Now many measures can be carried out in the course of an operation only if they have been carefully planned ahead of time on the basis of foresight as to the probably counter-actions of the enemy. At the same time, a great many measures will have to be worked out precisely in the course of the operation; some will have to be abandoned, other outlined and carried out. Thus the work of commanders and staffs in the consolidation of a gain in an offensive operation must be regarded as a constant creative process, inseparably involving deep analysis of the activity of the enemy and the course of the development of the whole operation.

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