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COUNTRY : USSR

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT: "Preparation and Conduct of a Front Offensive Operation on a Maritime Axis in the Initial Period of a War", by Colonel-General G. Khetagurov

DATE OF INFO : October 1961

APPRAISAL OF CONTENT : Documentary

SOURCE : A reliable source (B).

Following is a verbatim translation of an article titled "Preparation and Conduct of a Front Offensive Operation on a Maritime Axis in the Initial Period of a War", written by Colonel-General G. Khetagurov.

This article appeared in the 1961 Fourth Issue of a special version of the Soviet military journal Voyennaya Mysl (Military Thought). This journal is published irregularly and is classified TOP SECRET by the Soviets. The 1961 Fourth Issue went to press on 20 October 1961.

Headquarters Comment: The articles cited on page 2 were disseminated as (Gorbatov), (Babadzhanyan), (Gusakovskiy),

The Field Service Regulations cited on page 11 were disseminated as The Malvkhin article cited on page 14 was disseminated as ] and the M. Ivanov article on page 19 as ]

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Preparation and Conduct of a Front Offensive Operation on  
a Maritime Axis in the Initial Period of a War

by Colonel-General G. Khetagurov

The theoretical elaboration of the actual problems of preparation and conduct of front offensive operations on a maritime axis is not possible without thorough analysis of the general nature of the initial period of a nuclear/missile war. Without a clear-cut definition of the types of military operations to be conducted on the ground, in the air and on the sea, not taking into consideration the influence of the weapons of mass destruction on the utilization of the types of armed forces in the first days of a war, and many other factors of basic significance, it is impossible to carry out preparation of troops purposefully and understand the situation in which the initial operations of maritime fronts will be conducted.

As concerns the general nature of nuclear/missile war, we agree with the opinion given in the pages of the Collection in the articles of Generals Gorbатов, Gusakovskiy and Babadzhanyan\*. The strategic aspect of the initial period of a war will be determined above all by the nuclear/missile strikes delivered by both sides for strategic purposes. The elaboration of the theory and the implementation of such strikes, in practice, are not a function of operational preparation and a mission of the front. However it would be incorrect to be silent about this, because these strikes in particular will set the operational-strategic situation in theaters of military operations, and consequently, will also determine the nature of the tasks facing the maritime fronts.

In the operational-strategic activities of the missile troops, in our opinion, it is essential to differentiate between two types of nuclear/missile strikes: intercontinental delivered by large units of the missile troops of strategic designation, in the interests of the war as a whole, and strikes carried out by the missile troops, long-range missile-carrying aviation, and by the forces of the missile-carrying fleet, bringing in, in some cases, the missile weapons of

\* Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". Third Issue 1960 and First Issue 1961.  
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the fronts to assist in armed combat in a given theater of military operations. Apparently, the latter will be very closely tied in with the utilization of all types of armed forces. In actuality, they will be the basis of a strategic offensive on the TVD (theater of military operations - teatr voennykh deystviy). Therefore, the thorough consideration of all aspects of the concept according to which they are conducted, of their makeup, and of the results expected, will be the foremost condition for the correct and purposeful planning of the front operation on a maritime axis.

It should be assumed that, under the conditions of the Western Theater of Military Operations, the attainment of the basic strategic goals will depend on the destruction of the main missile, ground and air groupings of the enemy in the internal areas of the European continent, where a large part of the most important military-economic and administrative-political centers of NATO are located. However, as experience of many exercises shows, it is only possible to attain these goals by means of simultaneous destruction of the troop groupings operating on maritime axes, most of which lead to important industrial areas. A series of political centers, large cities, centers of communication, military-naval bases and ports, and considerable stocks of materiel means in the areas of the bases, are located on the maritime axes. The most important routes, that connect the armed forces of NATO with their main military-economic base and reserves across the ocean, pass through them.

The significance of maritime axes increases mainly because our probable enemies have a powerful naval fleet, supplied with the latest combat equipment. For this reason, it is not accidental that in a TVD the situation will depend, to a large extent, on the degree to which it was possible to disrupt the enemy's plan on the sea and in the coastal zone; to hamper his utilization of missile and air bases located in maritime areas; prevent strikes by carrier large units, missile-carrying vessels and submarines; disrupt naval communication routes and isolate the enemy troops located in the theater from the flow of additional forces and means from other continents.

In the fulfilment of these missions, an important role can be played by front formations operating on maritime axes.

In coordination with the missile troops and the means of the fleet they will protect the strategic flank of the armed forces on the scale of the entire theater of military operations, to execute the deep envelopment of the basic groupings of the enemy, disrupting the forming up of his reserves in the maritime areas, and their transfer and forward movement to the main axis. The end result of the offensive operations carried out by the maritime fronts will be that more favorable conditions will be created for the rapid destruction of the most important enemy ground troop groupings and for the establishment of active operations by our fleet on the broad ocean.

The Anglo-American command, not without reason, supposes that the naval fleet, in comparison with the other types of armed forces, will suffer relatively smaller losses during the first days of a war and will retain its capability for immediate operations. This should be remembered constantly.

The NATO command will apparently use the strike forces of the fleet primarily to deliver strikes against groupings of troops and important operational-strategic objectives on the land sectors of the theater of military operations, where the fate of the war will be decided. The force and depth of the fire effect of the fleet in a case of this kind can be very significant. By using carrier strike large units, missile-carrying surface vessels, and submarines, the fleet is able to deliver strikes not only against coastal objectives, but also against those removed hundreds or thousands of kilometers from the coast.

In this respect the NATO exercise carried out in October 1960 was quite characteristic, during which, in the first 27 hours of military operations, 240 nuclear strikes were delivered by the means of one carrier strike large unit, including: 69-according to the plans of the high command, 96-for the counteratomic offensive, 47-to prevent the deployment of ground troops, and 15 strikes to prevent the deployment of naval forces. A total of more than nine-tenths of all the nuclear weapons were used to destroy ground targets removed up to 500 to 600 km from the coast.

Hence it becomes evident that under modern conditions the basis of an enemy nuclear grouping on a maritime axis may consist not only of the missile weapons of the ground

troops but basically of the weapons of the fleet. That is why the situation on the sea, to a greater degree than before, will influence the development of front offensive operations, and its influence will spread over a considerable zone, having widened the area boundaries of the maritime axes.

Of course, not all the maritime axes will be equal in importance. Their role will be determined in accordance with operational capacity, the composition of enemy forces, the presence of important operational objectives, and other factors. However, in all conditions, by dint of all the above-mentioned circumstances, in the initial period of a war, an extremely tense struggle will ensue within the borders of the maritime axes in order to fulfil extremely vital and complex operational-strategic missions.

As shown by the experience of exercises, the basic principles of conducting an offensive on an ordinary axis are retained in an offensive operation of a maritime front. However, the special conditions for developing combat operations also present special requirements for conducting operations: the need to take into consideration all aspects of the situation at sea; determining the concept of the operation according to the nature of the adjoining naval theater, the location of naval bases, ports and other coastal installations. The scope of the operation is influenced by the depth of the continental part of the TVD and the balance of the forces in the naval theater.

Under such conditions, first of all, the range of operational missions accomplished by the front troops is widened. In particular, the need arises to seize straits, islands and peninsulas, to organize combat operations with the goal of capturing ports and military-naval bases, to aid the fleet in the destruction of carrier strike large units, and to destroy coastal missile weapons of the enemy. The fulfilment of these missions requires special organization of control, joint utilization of the various types of armed forces, application of distinctive methods of operations of the troops, organization of landing operations, and, mainly — close operational and, to a certain degree, tactical cooperation between the ground troops and the naval fleet.

The nature of the cooperation will depend on the general conditions for conducting war at sea. For example, it is known that the decisive role in naval operations is passing to the submarine fleet, to missile-carrying vessels, and to missile-carrying aviation, operating in dispersed formations and delivering strikes from great distances with nuclear/missile warheads and homing (samonavodyashchiysya) torpedoes.

Of course, under such conditions there is no need to "attach" the fleet to the flanks of the ground troops. However it is completely apparent that together with the utilization of its basic forces on the open seas and oceans, on the sea communication routes of the enemy, as before, the direct cooperation of the fleet with the maritime front will have great significance in developing the offensive in the entire depth of the theater. The fleet must reliably cover the maritime flank of the front, to protect it from strikes from the sea, prevent the commitment of additional forces of the enemy fleet through straits into internal bodies of water, ensure the disruption of his sea transport, etc. Undoubtedly, the participation of the forces of the fleet will be essential in the neutralization by fire of enemy installations located on land, moreover, not only in the coastal zone, but also at a considerable distance from the sea.

We are convinced that the reduction of the forces of the fleet, the contraction of its missions, especially in closed seas, may place the maritime front in an extremely difficult position. In such a case, the enemy will derive major advantages. Any possibility of carrying out landing operations or sea transport to assist the front will be almost completely eliminated. The wiping out of enemy groupings pressed up against the sea will be made more difficult. The front must be constantly aware of a possible enemy intrusion from the sea, because it may be obliged to commit considerable forces to cover the maritime flank, and to organize along the coast a powerful system of antilanding and anti-air defense, radio counter-measures, and intelligence, which will undoubtedly influence the tempo of development of the operation into the depth.

Therefore, in our opinion, the fleet of a closed sea, even in modern times, must be strong enough. Its qualitative composition is another matter. We do not

attempt to make any recommendations on this score, but consider that the conclusions made on this subject in the article of Admiral V. Kasatonov deserve serious attention.\*

The mission of securing the maritime flank will have to be fulfilled by means of a broad maneuver of nuclear/missile strikes in combination with the swift movement of troops by air and the creation of operational barriers (including the placement of nuclear mines) on the threatened axes. The pivotal element of the system of cover of a maritime flank, obviously, must be the mobile coastal missile units of the fleet, armed with short-range cruise missile systems and reinforced as necessary by motorized rifle subunits, as well as by air obstacle detachments (vozdushnyy otryad zagrazhdeniya) and separate anti-aircraft missile (ZURS) units.

The most important condition for ensuring the stability of the maritime flank is maximum exertion in combat not only with the ground enemy, but also with the sea enemy, striving to inflict destruction on the carrier strike large units before they reach the line of launch of the carrier aviation, and also the disruption of landing operations being prepared, at the moment the landing force embarks on the ships or during their sea passage.

The framework of the operation and the actions of the front troops will be greatly influenced not only by the open maritime flank but by the shore line, the location of inlets, islands, and the nature of the operational objectives located in the coastal zone. In many cases these factors may greatly influence the choice of the form of operational maneuver, the utilization of nuclear/missile weapons, and the assigning of missions to the troops with the purpose of splitting up and liquidating enemy groupings pressed up against the sea.

Inasmuch as the ultimate goal of the front operation, in most cases, will be related to the completion of the

\*Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", Second Issue, 1960

destruction of the maritime groupings of the enemy, the capture of harbor areas, supply bases, and the movement of troops to the coast, it is expedient to plan and conduct an offensive on a maritime axis in the entire depth of the theater of military operations - under the conditions of the Western TVD, to 1000 to 1200 km. Here it is extremely important, utilizing the results of strategic nuclear/missile strikes, to reach the Atlantic coast on the 9th or 10th day of the war, i.e., before the main reserves of the enemy begin to arrive from the American continent.

The arrival of strike groupings on the coast during this time period will be realistic with adequate effectiveness of massed strategic nuclear strikes against the enemy; the preservation of the forces of the front and their immediate transition to vigorous operations from the very beginning of the war, that deny the enemy access to our territory; the serious weakening of the enemy fleet, after which it will not be able to give effective support to its troops on the continent and the latter will not be reinforced at this time from bases across the ocean.

On a maritime axis the missile weapons, ground troops, aviation, and naval fleet can be utilized in various ways. However, in all cases, it is extremely important to prevent the enemy from deploying forces on the ground and at sea, and to start vigorous offensive operations as soon as possible. As experience of exercises shows, the maritime front is extremely interested in having the forces and weapons of the fleet that are cooperating with it used vigorously, offensively, and that successive strikes be delivered against the enemy at sea and at bases.

On the whole, joint operations of a front and a fleet must, in our opinion, be examined as a single operation conducted under a joint command with the purpose of simultaneously destroying the enemy on the ground axes and in the adjoining areas of the naval theater. Moreover, it is expedient to have the fleet of a closed sea, before it captures the straits area and exits its main forces into the ocean, under the direct operational subordination of the front. In the future, most often it will be utilized independently, but in this case it is essential that the commander of the front be able to assign missions to the fleet for supporting the offensive and to coordinate the



operations of the forces on the ground and at sea.

The unified plan of the offensive operation, conducted jointly with the fleet, must determine the methods for destroying missile, ground, and air groupings and groupings of the naval forces of the enemy. In accordance with the plan, the system of the front operation provides for the delivery of a series of successive joint massed nuclear/missile strikes by the means of the front and fleet; the conduct of a swift offensive by small operational groupings of the ground troops on isolated axes toward vitally important areas and installations of operational significance on the coast; the systematic landing of tactical air and combined amphibious landings; fire support for the ground troop offensive by the weapons of missile units, aviation, and the fleet; the organization of combat with the naval forces of the enemy that are harassing the front troops; screening the maritime flank and the naval communication routes, and finally, the disruption of enemy sea transport.

Joint, massed nuclear/missile strikes are planned jointly by the commanders and staffs of the front and the fleet. As a rule, it is advisable to conduct a large part of the strikes on behalf of the front from the calculation of the use of their results by the ground troops. Moreover, the means of the fleet can be brought in to destroy the most important coastal installations, airfields, and maritime groupings of the enemy. However, sometimes the situation will require the organization of joint mass nuclear/missile strikes on behalf of the fleet. In such a case, the aviation and missile weapons of the front will be utilized, for example, for the annihilation of enemy naval bases, for destroying his coastal defense units, for supporting the penetration of missile-carrying aviation of the fleet, and for facilitating the creation of a favorable situation at sea.

The basis of ground troop operations is made up of swift, deep strikes on separate axes with the simultaneous delivery of enveloping strikes from areas distant from the sea against important maritime objectives. It is possible to create 3 to 5 independent tank strike groupings in the front, consisting of 2 or 3 divisions each, and also a grouping of forces for utilization as a combined amphibious landing. In a number of cases, one of these groupings will advance right along the coast. The main forces, because

of the indentations in the coastline and the difficulty of forcing numerous rivers in the estuary sectors. will, as a rule, operate at a certain distance from the sea. The maneuver to the sea is possible with limited forces, because the action of the troops in a solid front along the entire coast is not expedient at the present time. In the coastal zone it is only necessary to capture the most important areas (ports, supply bases, and main road junctions), first breaking up the enemy groupings covering them, pressing them up against the sea and destroying them piecemeal. The basic objectives in the other areas should be suppressed or destroyed by nuclear/missile strikes, creating zones with high radioactive contamination.

It is expedient to combine systematically the envelopment of enemy maritime groupings from the ground with the sudden landing, on the flank and in the rear of the enemy, of combined (naval, air, and tank) landing forces. Some consider that in a modern war amphibious landing forces, because of their great vulnerability, lose their significance. But this conclusion is correct only if it is based on the old principles of organizing amphibious landing operations. Obviously, the dispersed formation of the landing detachments during the sea passage, and the higher tempo of the landing will make their viability no lower than the viability of regular troop groupings.

It should not be forgotten that the utilization of nuclear weapons will greatly facilitate the overcoming of the antilanding defense and will permit landings with limited forces and in a short time, to fulfil missions to a great depth and with decisive goals. Therefore, we propose that combined landings (if the fleet gets the fast landing craft for their landing) can and must be used widely in the initial operations of a future war. They will permit the holding down of enemy reserves on a broad front, will make it difficult to utilize missile weapons deployed in the maritime areas, will permit more rapid transfer of ground troop efforts into the depth and will eliminate the need to pull in forces of the front from the main axes to capture coastal objectives.

In planning a front offensive operation being conducted on a maritime axis, special attention should be given to

the correct assignment of the missions. The recommendations of the existing Field Service Regulations (Corps-Division) concerning this, in our opinion, are outdated. In keeping with the requirement of the Minister of Defense to carry out an offensive with an average speed of up to 100 km per 24-hour period, the depth of the tasks of the formations and large units, in comparison with the norms given in the Regulations, should be sharply increased. In our opinion, it is expedient to coordinate the immediate tasks of the troops with the range of fire of the missile weapons which are correspondingly available to the division, army and front. For example, for the tank division the immediate task can now be assigned for a depth of 25 to 30 km, the follow-up task for 50 to 60 km, and the task of the day for 100 km or more. A combined-arms (tank) army, conducting an offensive on a maritime axis, usually will get an immediate task to a depth of up to 200 to 250 km, and its fulfilment is calculated to take 2 to 3 calendar days. Tasks for groupings conducting an offensive along the coast should be assigned, and the method of operation should be pointed out, in the greatest detail, especially if they have to capture a strait zone in order to achieve maximum coordination of their efforts with the utilization of the forces and means of the naval fleet.

The great depth of the tasks and the necessity of continuous development of the offensive of the maritime fleet require constant concern regarding the preservation of the combat effectiveness of the strike groupings of the troops.

At the moment it is hard to count on the ability of the motorized rifle division to conduct continuous combat operations for more than two, and a tank division for more than three to four, calendar days. Under such conditions great skill is necessary to prevent the premature weakening of troop efforts. The commanders of the front and the armies must take the most energetic steps for the constant maintenance of the most important strike groupings at the minimum necessary combat strength. This pertains especially to the troops operating apart from the main forces, on islands, or those being used for amphibious landings. The maintenance of their combat effectiveness, obviously may be attained not only by committing to combat the reserves coming up from the zone of interior, but first of all by having friendly large units that have lost their combat

effectiveness, put back into service quickly. For this the time limits for bringing a division to full strength must be drastically reduced: for a motorized rifle division, up to three, and for a tank division, up to four, calendar days.

The restoration of troop combat effectiveness must be executed according to the unified plan of the front in accordance with the actual concept of the operation. Moreover, in some cases it is expedient to give the salvaged materiel and personnel of the large units taken out of combat to the other troops in the first echelon, and to utilize the staffs that have been relieved thereby as reserve organs of control temporarily. In other cases, it is possible to create from a division a composite detachment-regiment designated for the continuation of combat actions, and to conduct the remaining units to the rear area to bring them up to strength as fast as possible by centralized maneuver of the stock of rehabilitated vehicles in routine maintenance and the bringing up of personnel brought in by aircraft from the depth of the country.

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The conduct of the first front offensive operation on the maritime axes demands all-round training of troops, great combat efficiency and deep insight in the work of all the organs of control, the ability of the commanders and staffs to resolve complex problems, that constantly arise for the troops, in a short period of time. Exceptional mobility in operations is necessary during the period when the forces are brought to increased combat readiness and at the moment the troops are withdrawn from under a nuclear/missile strike being prepared by the enemy.

In short periods of time the location of the anti-aircraft missile troops, radiotechnical equipment, and missile units of the front and army must be completely changed, aviation has to be dispersed, control points have to be moved, pontoon-bridge cover of the most important crossings must be organized; the dispersal of materiel reserves is carried out, etc. At the same time, in coordination with the fleet, screening measures should be carried out for antiair and antilanding screening of the

maritime flank, and also aerial reconnaissance of the enemy should be organized in the direction of the sea. Subsequently, every 10 to 12 hours it is necessary to move not less than half, and after a 24-hour period, all units and fire means, without exception, to new areas, taking into consideration that in the maritime zone the enemy reconnaissance may be most active.

In our opinion, the dispersal of the rear services will present the greatest difficulty because of the lack of time and transport. Therefore, so as not to take on too much work, it is expedient to plan the fulfillment of this task in certain phases: the first - in 2 or 3 hours, the second - in 10 to 15 hours and the third - 1 to 1.5 calendar days. First of all, missile warheads and supplies of aircraft fuel stored in the open at airfields should be dispersed. Then begins the dispersal of the other types of ammunition and fuel, i.e., to unload part of them on the ground and keep the rest in the motor vehicle transport of divisions, armies, districts (groups of forces), on ships at sea and at railroad freight relays (zheleznodorozhnaya "letuchka") at small stations and runs (peregon). It is advisable in the beginning to leave materiel maintained in underground storage areas in place, because its destruction with the first strike is unlikely.

The development of the first front offensive operation on a maritime axis will usually be tied in with the moving out of forces from the depth. As a rule, this process begins with the initiation of military operations and will include the concentration of troops with their being brought out to a line 200 to 300 km from the border and the deployment of troops with the immediate creation of operational groupings. During concentration the large units and units, in most cases, will have to be brought out in extremely dispersed formations, in a broad zone and over a large number of routes, utilizing all types of transport. In the process of deploying, the troops must move out to the axis designated to them mainly under their own power, in a specific grouping and in full readiness to go into battle precipitately. The maximum increase of the speeds of march in order to approach the enemy attains great significance here because this will sharply reduce troop losses.

It should be expected that on a maritime axis the enemy, using the capabilities of his fleet, will apply the maximum efforts to disrupt the moving out of our troops. For this purpose, on a number of lines and at large water barriers he can create "nuclear fire barriers", extensive zones of radioactive contamination, and also destroy permanent bridges over rivers such as The Western Bug, Vistula, and Oder.

As shown by the experience of many exercises for the timely creation of strike groupings it is essential that, under such circumstances, the troops moving out from the depth not be dependent on bridge crossings. In tank divisions, to be exact, for each tank regiment it is expedient to have a company of tracked, self-propelled ferries, to switch the motorized infantry to amphibious armored troop carriers; and in the combat-engineer battalion of the division, to have a landing-crossing company instead of one of the combat-engineer companies.

Besides, on the estuary sectors of the most important rivers that intersect the maritime axes, already in peacetime, we must carry out advance preparation of components for the construction of underwater bridge crossings, and mainly, for setting up 3 or 4 underground tunnel crossings for through railroad and motor vehicle traffic. With this purpose in mind, Colonel-General F. Malykhin proposes the construction of duplicate bridges (mostly-dubler) \*. However, such bridges are no less vulnerable than the basic crossings, while the destruction of tunnels entails great difficulties.

One of the special features of moving the troops out will be the utilization of sea transport. The use of sea transport may play an important role in closed seas, and also when land communication routes of the maritime front are disrupted. Unfortunately, because of the lack of transport ships and the inability to concentrate them in advance at loading points, the movement of large units of ground and missile troops at full strength by sea is improbable in the first operation. The transport of materiel, combat equipment, and replacements may be carried out on quite large scales.

\*Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", Second issue, 1960.

The capture of the straits zone will be a very important mission of a maritime front in the operation of the initial period of a war. This will permit the fleet to exit swiftly into the open sea, to put into effect operations on enemy sea communication routes, and mainly, to assure more effective support of the advancing groupings of the ground troops over the entire depth of the theater.

The capture of the straits zone must be preceded by powerful nuclear/missile suppression of the enemy system of defense in the maritime zone, on islands and peninsulas, and also the weakening of the enemy fleet by strikes against his vessels at bases and on the sea. It is also very important to prevent the planned withdrawal of enemy troops from land axes, for which it is necessary, in the shortest possible time, to break through to the approaches of the straits, at least with separate tank large units.

The basic method for capturing the straits zone will be a determined offensive by the tank grouping of the combined-arms army combined with the landing of joint air and amphibious landings in the areas that ensure control over the straits. It is expedient to carry out the special landing operation taking into account the simultaneous capture of all islands and peninsulas in the zone of the straits. However, with a shortage of forces it is possible to use the method of their subsequent capture.

Experience shows that for the successful execution of a landing operation it is necessary to increase to the maximum the rate of embarkation, of the sea passage, and especially the debarkation, of troops on the shore, ensure effective fire support for the landing troops by the means of the front or army missile units, aviation and vessels of the fleet, and also their constant reinforcement by the forces and weapons subsequently delivered by air or sea.

In our opinion, the basis of a combined landing, when landing at considerable distances, must consist mainly of an amphibious landing, and in closed seas over limited distances (up to 25-30 km)—of a tank landing with individual means of flotation (type P:STU). It is true that at the present time the execution of a tank landing entails great difficulties because amphibious tanks, and even more: so

T-54 and T-55 tanks, do not have navigational instruments, are not sufficiently seaworthy, and require a considerable amount of time for demagnetization. But these deficiencies can be remedied.

It is expedient to execute tactical and, even more so amphibious landings over a broad front in several (at least 4-5) points at the highest possible speed, avoiding the gradual buildup of forces on the shore. For this, simultaneously with the start of the amphibious landing, it is necessary to disembark a helicopter landing force at a distance of 3 to 5 km, and an airborne landing force 25 to 30 km, from the shore. With the support of the missile units of the front and the fleet, the subunits that have landed must develop the offensive swiftly on the designated axes, or they will be wiped out.

In the course of an offensive operation on a maritime front, the main efforts must be concentrated on the destruction of the means of nuclear attack, and also the ground and air groupings of the enemy, with missile/nuclear and chemical strikes, operations of the aviation, and of missile-carrying vessels. Together with this it is necessary to organize the swift movement of tank troops to the siting areas of enemy missile weapons.

In the initial operation of a maritime front, combat with the groupings of enemy ground forces will most often take the form of large meeting engagements that will arise simultaneously on various axes and at various depths. Success achieved in these engagements must be utilized decisively. Enemy forces that were able to survive must be split up, pressed back to the coast, forced into zones of radioactive contamination and, by blockade from the sea, be destroyed with joint strikes by nuclear weapons, aviation, and the fleet.

For the decisive destruction of enemy maritime groupings, the high tempos of troop offensives will have special significance. In the maritime zone, the achievement of this, in the light of the complexity of the military-geographic conditions, entails great difficulties. But nevertheless, even here, it is completely realistic to bring up the question



of speeds of up to 100 km per 24-hour period. This requires a further increase in the effectiveness of nuclear-fire support and the use of more expedient methods of operation of the ground troops, including increasing of the speed of the attack, reducing the time for deploying large units, the decisive utilization of intervals and gaps in the combat formations of the enemy.

It is known that in the past the average speed of a tank attack was approximately 8 to 12 km/hour. This was conditioned by the possibilities of conducting aimed fire from the old type tanks, and also by the need to maintain constant fire coordination between the NPP (close infantry support-neposredstvennaya podderzhka pekhoty) tanks and the infantry following them. At the present time this method of operation becomes unacceptable. The attack should not be carried out on a solid front but on axes, wherein the speed of the attack should attain up to 15 to 18 km/hour, because only in this way is it possible to avoid the destruction of troops at the lines of deployment by nuclear weapons and the fire of guided missiles of the enemy antitank means.

In practice the possibility of conducting an attack at a speed of 15 to 18 km/hour is predetermined by the presence of two-plane stabilizing devices for tank armament and the feasibility of operations of the motorized infantry when precipitately breaking through the hastily assumed defense in armored personnel carriers without dismounting. In any case, as shown by the experience of two divisional exercises with field firing that were conducted by the Northern Group of Forces, it is now possible to ensure fairly high effectiveness of destroying targets when moving. For example, at the autumn divisional tactical exercises of 1960, at an attack speed of up to 18 km/hour the tank battalions, operating in the first echelon, successfully fulfilled all fire tasks, having ensured the destruction of 83 to 92 percent of the gun and 81 to 86 percent of the machine gun targets.

The decisive utilization of gaps and breaches in the combat formations of the enemy may play a big role in increasing the speed of the offensive. However, such a method of operations cannot be stereotyped. The strike groupings or large units that have entered the breach may often find themselves in a "pocket" (v "meshke") and will

be subjected to a mass enemy nuclear strike. Therefore, the offensive in the gaps of combat formations should be conducted in more dispersed formations, and mainly - with maximum speed.

The correct organization of fire support, and mainly constant coordination of the missile weapons of the front and fleet at their full range, attain primary significance. In particular, we consider that the fleet, using its high maneuverability, must give effective fire support to the strike groupings of the maritime front, not only the ones advancing along the coast, but also those operating at a distance from the sea. In our opinion, the basis of such support must consist of destroying the missile weapons of the enemy fleet with the forces of the navy, and also to destroy important ground objectives and reserves with nuclear warheads from great distances, in the entire depth of the maritime axes.

The complex nature of modern offensive operations requires fundamental improvement of the entire system of troop control of a maritime front. The principle of simultaneous direction of the combat operations of troops on the ground, in the air, and at sea from great distances, by technical means, electronic-computing and automatic devices, should be incorporated in the basis of control. It is also necessary to increase sharply the operational efficiency of the work of commanders and staffs, and to assure the possibility of their immediate reaction to the slightest changes of the operational and radiation, air, and naval situation.

Unfortunately, the existing system of control, as has been pointed out in print several times, does not fulfil the indicated requirements in many ways. Even before complex automatic systems of control are created, it is necessary to carry out a reorganization of the control points, put in order the collection, processing, and routing of operations and intelligence information at the operational and tactical levels, work out the system of "flash (tranzitnaya) information", create calculating-analytical and computing centers in the staffs, and ensure the quick assignment of tasks, and monitoring of the results of the strikes inflicted.

In the light of what has been said, let us examine the proposals given by Major-General M. Ivanov in his article.\* The idea of creating centers (command, operations-intelligence, nuclear/missile, and VVS and PVO control), as elements of the command post (KP) and the forward command post (PKP) of the front, was already worked out in the Northern Group of Forces in 1959, and was carried out in practice in three front operational command-staff exercises locally which were described in the Information Bulletin SGV. No. 1 (Northern Group of Forces - Severnaya Gruppya Voysk) in the beginning of 1960. The recommendations of General M. Ivanov resemble this system in form, but in substance distort its meaning and are inapplicable. The proposal "... to unite all the directorates and departments, all the services and staffs of the arms of troops which are concerned with the direction of troops into unified control centers" in practice means the elimination of staffs, which is unrealistic and wrong. No centers can assume the full volume of the functions of staffs, directorates and departments. In our opinion, it is impossible to replace the staffs with any kind of centers, either now or in the future. Centers should be created, not as replacements, but based on the staffs, as their organic elements, as combat teams called in to perform tasks of immediate direction of an engagement and the utilization of the means of the front.

It is also impossible to agree with the proposal to create a main command-planning center where, as General Ivanov maintains, "the entire planning of the operation" must "take place". The operational planning will be carried out, not by the center, but by the staff of the front and all the directorates of the arms of troops. Therefore a command center is necessary, and not a command-planning center, as the working area of the front troop commander for simultaneous unified direction of all means of combat, where, in the decisive moments of the operation, the chiefs of the missile troops and PVO troops, the commander of the air army and a representative of the fleet may be located, connected to their operating apparatus by selector and television communications.

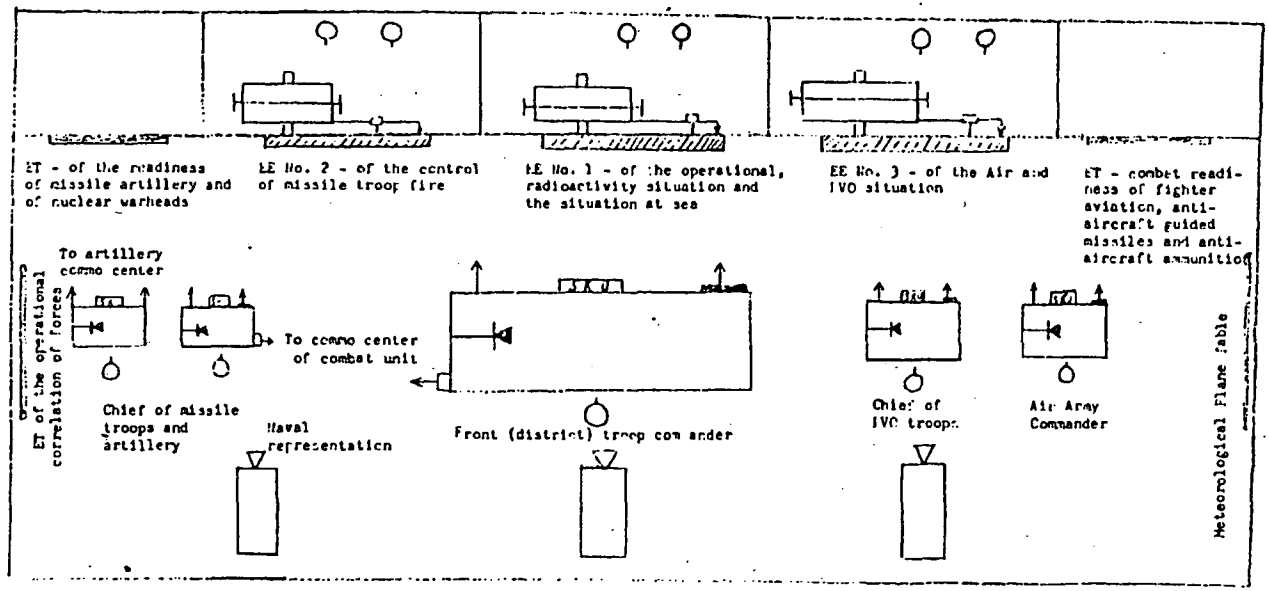
\* Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", First Issue, 1961.

Finally, it is necessary to note that the centers justify themselves only in the event they are properly equipped. For example, in the command center created in the Northern Group of Forces there are electrified registers (tablo) of the readiness of missile weapons and nuclear warheads, of fighter aviation and antiaircraft means; a signal-code device for transmitting commands, and also a screen of the operational situation and radiation situation and of the situation at sea, the air and PVO situation and the situation of the control of missile troop fire. In a semi-automatic manner the screen gives the data about the situation of friendly and enemy troops. Moreover these screens are not used for observation, as General M. Ivanov recommends, but for making specific decisions based on them and for giving orders to the troops. The principle of organizing and equipping the command center is shown on the diagram.

One of the most important questions of control is the organization of coordination with the naval fleet. Under the conditions of the Western TVD, this coordination, in our opinion, must be organized mainly on behalf of the troops of the maritime front. Moreover, the joint operations of the fleet and front for the nuclear-fire suppression of the enemy on land and at sea, the conduct of joint, massed nuclear/missile strikes, support of the amphibious landings, and also all questions of intelligence, PVO, radio countermeasures, and operational camouflage must be coordinated with special thoroughness.





A strict method of mutual exchange of operations and intelligence information must be established between the staff of the front and the staff of the fleet. An orderly system for directing operations is also necessary, to ensure the fastest possible resolution of all matters concerning joint operations of the ground troops and the naval fleet during their simultaneous fulfillment of overall operational tasks.






Fundamental Scheme of the Organization and Equipping of the Command Center



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Key

-  - signal - code device
-  - Selector communications
-  - Television equipment
-  - to commo center

-  - to radio switchboard
-  - remote copying device for the semi-automatic entering of the situation
-  - Plane table operators (planshetist)
-  - ET - Electrified register
-  - EE - Electrified screen