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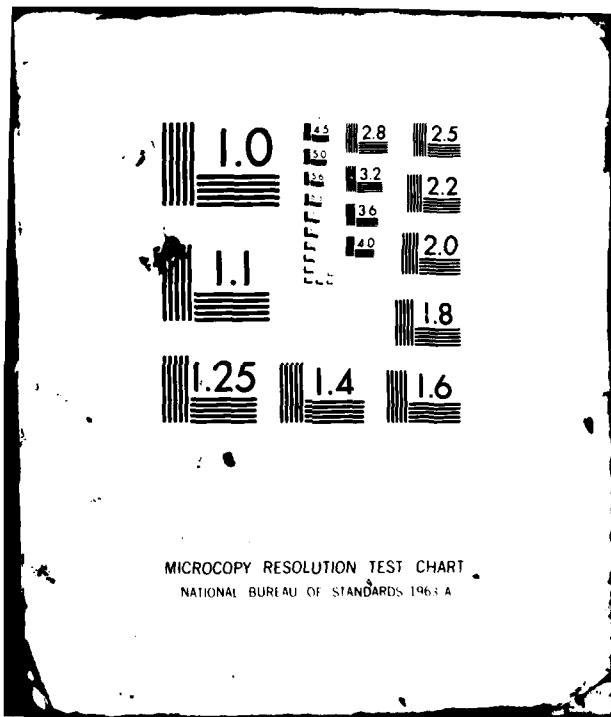
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## STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

THE TEMPO OF THE OFFENSIVE--  
KEY TO VICTORY

MAJ KELLEY E. BENNETT  
1981

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

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THE TEMPO OF THE OFFENSIVE--

KEY TO VICTORY

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June 1981

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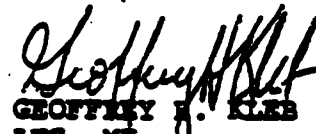
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## FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

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GEOFFREY E. KLEB  
LTC, MI  
Commanding

#### SUMMARY

In this article the author presents a discussion primarily based on a series of articles in Voyenny Vestnik, a Soviet military publication detailing the importance of the tempo of the offensive in Soviet operational art and tactics. The predominant tenet of Soviet tactical doctrine is that decisive results are achieved only through offensive action of which the tempo of the attack is of vital importance. In addition to the discussion of these articles, the author offers some methods by which the tempo of the attack can be impeded or interrupted in order to create conditions for the failure of the high rate of advance of Soviet forces, and hence, hopefully, a Soviet defeat.

### THE TEMPO OF THE OFFENSIVE — KEY TO VICTORY

During 1977, a series of ten articles appeared in the Soviet monthly military journal Voyenny Vestnik. The theme throughout these articles is the tempo of the attack (temp nastupleniya) and its importance in Soviet offensive operations. The major purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze this series of articles. However, it is also deemed appropriate and necessary to examine methods and offer suggestions during the discussion of the articles and in the final part of the paper on how NATO forces, and particularly U.S. forces, might disrupt or impede the tempo of the attack, thereby creating conditions for the failure of the Soviet offensive. An understanding of Soviet operational art and tactics is necessary for a fuller understanding of the accepted western views on the nature of contemporary Soviet warfare. In this regard, to provide depth and better understanding, the initial portion of the paper contains a limited explanation of Soviet tactics and terminology.

The predominant tenet of Soviet tactical doctrine is that decisive results are achieved only through offensive action. "The offensive is the basic form of combat action. Only by a resolute offensive conducted at a high tempo and to a great depth is total destruction of the enemy attained."<sup>1</sup> The offensive against a defending enemy usually is waged in three distinct but overlapping stages. The first is the meeting engagement (vstrachnyy boy), or what American military writers more



commonly refer to as movement to contact, except that the Soviets seem to give it more meaning and greater depth. It also encompasses the initial engagement. The second stage is the breakthrough which is characterized by the concentration of combat power at a chosen point to rupture the enemy defenses. In the third stage, the attack is intensified by the rapid exploitation of the success achieved in the second stage.

The Soviets rely on the echelon concept to achieve and maintain a rapid rate of advance. Basically, the first echelon ruptures the defense and seals the shoulders of the penetration while the second echelon exploits this success by advancing through the penetration to seize objectives deep in the enemy's rear. The distinction between a second echelon and a reserve is that the second echelon is given a precisely defined mission before the operation, namely to attack from a specified position to intensify the force of the first echelon's attack and exploit success in depth.

The second echelon has no comparable U.S. equivalent. Its primary use is to maintain the momentum of the attack, especially on the main axis of attack. In his initial attack order, the commander plans for second echelon commitment, assigns a tentative employment line, and designates artillery and other support. The second echelon is initially tasked to reach the same objectives as the first echelon, should this assistance be required. Modifications of planned employment can be made as the battle develops. The second echelon may be directed to exploit the success of the first, or it may be directed to attack in a new direction. Other missions may be:

- to destroy bypassed enemy elements
- to defeat counterattacks

- to defeat airborne or airbome attacks
- to replace units of the first echelon that have lost combat effectiveness.

The reserve in the echelon method is small by U.S. standards, approximately 1/9 of the attacking force in size. Such reserves are not usually assigned a specific mission in the attack order, but are assigned their mission during the course of the battle. They are formed to be ready for unanticipated requirements and usually move with the first echelon. By contrast, the second echelon, as opposed to the reserve, has more time to prepare plans and orders and to effect necessary coordination.

One must also understand that echelonment is not a series of waves to finally break the enemy's defense. The first echelon is allocated sufficient combat power to quickly overwhelm the enemy. For instance, a Soviet army commander in the critical sector is likely to place more than half of his divisions in the first echelon and use all artillery, including artillery organic to second-echelon divisions, army artillery, and attached artillery from front, in the preparation preceding the first echelon's assault. The army's goal would be to destroy enemy forces in the assigned sector and advance so quickly into the depths of the enemy's defense so as to preclude the enemy from being able to seal off the penetration or to regroup.

In order to effect a penetration, forces must be massed. In past wars, the numerical relationship in a particular sector could only be changed by a slow process of providing more men and equipment. However, weapons of mass destruction can now bring a sudden change of great magnitude to the balance. The Soviets classify nuclear, chemical

and biological armaments as weapons of mass destruction. Their use can change the ratio of forces on any axis of advance and to the entire depth. Potential nuclear strikes by the enemy make prolonged concentration inadvisable. The Soviets intend to mass at the critical point by means of mobility and high rates (tempo) of offensive operations (vysokiy temp nastupleniya). Greatly improved troop mobility permits both the rapid concentration and quick dispersion essential to complementary warfare. (The term complementary warfare is used to describe the situation in which both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction are employed.)

This mobility and high tempo of combat operations is extremely important in achieving success. Colonel General G. Salmenov, formerly Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces for Combat Training and now Commander of the Transbaikalian Military District, states, "the attack at a high tempo has truly become a demand of the times."<sup>3</sup> The principle includes the battlefield mobility of maneuver forces, fire support and logistical elements. High tempo is the relentless prosecution of an operation, without pause.<sup>4</sup> It is particularly critical on the nuclear battlefield. Keeping the enemy off balance and under constant pressure will prevent his forming an effective defense. It will, additionally, allow maximum effectiveness in exploiting the effects of one's own nuclear strikes. The desirability of attacking at a high tempo is a consistent thread in Soviet writings. The relation of mobility to firepower must be emphasized. High tempo does not equate simply to fast movement; it concerns the rapid attainment of combat objectives. In the offense this means achieving destruction of the enemy's defense. Continuity of attack is another contributor. This means continuing to attack, night and day, until decisive results are achieved.

The series of articles on the tempo of the attack was initiated by Colonel G. Lobachev, Commander of the Guards Motorized Rifle Taman Red Banner Division, who was shortly thereafter promoted to one star rank, general major. This article was of a general nature and then the editors of Voyenny Vestnik requested other officers to express their opinions on the important issues raised by Col. Lobachev. The next eight articles in the series were replies to the original article; however, they all dealt with a specific subject, such as maneuver, air defense, surprise, reconnaissance, etc., which would insure the success of the tempo of the offensive, ultimately leading to victory. The last article in the series was an analysis and summary of the previous articles, written by Colonel General G. Salmenov, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces for Combat Training, and it reinforced all of the positive aspects of the previous articles.<sup>5</sup>

Col. Lobachev states that the high rate of tempo is not in itself a goal (ne samotsel') but is a means of achieving victory in offensive operations. He describes, as we do in our own armor-mechanized shock action doctrine, the dynamic nature of the high tempo in that it deprives the enemy of the opportunity to maneuver his forces freely, to take the initiative, to utilize his reserves effectively, and to neutralize many of the strong points of the enemy, while at the same time minimizing one's own losses of personnel and equipment.<sup>6</sup> Col. Gen. Salmenov adds that the rapid advance into the depths of the enemy's defense prevents the enemy from preparing and occupying favorable positions in time, from laying minefields, and other countermaneuvers.<sup>7</sup>

Several of the articles discuss at length the importance of reconnaissance in order to insure the maintenance of the initiative and

to avoid various unanticipated difficulties. Reconnaissance must be active and continuous under any conditions, day and night, in order to insure that commanders do not make unsubstantiated decisions. A high tempo in the attack is inconceivable without well-organized reconnaissance.<sup>8</sup> To give significance to the importance of reconnaissance, two of the articles quoted Lenin's statement, "The most dangerous thing in war is to underestimate the enemy and rest on the assumption that we are stronger. This is the most dangerous thing that can cause defeat."<sup>9</sup> However, two authors in the series pointed to the weakness, that unfortunately, they still encounter officers who scorn reconnaissance, who overestimate their own capabilities or who possess a poor knowledge of the capabilities and resources of their subordinates and underestimate the enemy.<sup>10</sup>

Commanders at all levels are obligated to perform reconnaissance personally but the leading role belongs to the chief of staff. Based on instructions from the commander, he assigns the forces and means needed for the reconnaissance and he specifies how this is to be done. The Soviets expect intelligence on every aspect of the enemy just as U.S. forces would, but it seems that in their writings they expect to know the location of much smaller elements than one would expect and not just on the FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area). For instance, they expect to know the location of small antitank elements, e.g., TOWs, and they expect to know the location of the majority of them even into the depths of the defense.<sup>11</sup> They speak of destroying or suppressing them even before the start of the attack. Knowing NATO tactics and organizational tables will assist them in knowing the number of weapon systems and their probable locations. All of the articles cite exercise results to reinforce their statements, but in every case the exercise results are so

glowing and the commanders, particularly if they are above the rank of senior lieutenant, are all knowing. In the exercises the commanders always knew where the enemy positions were, and in a couple of instances by knowing the enemy's tactics and organization, they simply foresaw where the enemy was located.<sup>12</sup> Of course, it is extremely important to use all means necessary to determine enemy dispositions, but the Soviets are always so successful in their exercises that one wonders how realistic they are. They continually speak of the need for realistic training, but one certainly cannot detect the realism in the results described in these few articles. Nevertheless, their desire to get results and achieve success by reconnaissance cannot be overlooked. NATO forces must insure the security of their positions and actions.

As stated earlier, several authors discussed the attitude of some commanders toward reconnaissance. Lisovski adds that in tactical exercises, not all commanders and their staffs give attention to penetration of reconnaissance elements into the enemy rear. A possible vulnerability which must be exploited is to deny the Soviet forces the use of signal communications in transmitting intelligence data. "The most valuable information becomes old quickly under conditions of fast-moving modern combat and high troop mobility and maneuverability. Therefore, commanders and staffs are obligated to display maximum efficiency in collecting and processing intelligence information. To this objective, it is necessary to establish a reliable means of communication and to establish signal tables which would allow the rapid and accurate transmission of obtained data."<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the articles, good reconnaissance is demanded for the achievement of success. The most modern technology, the best trained

soldiers, and numerical superiority over the enemy, will go to waste if the commander, because of poor reconnaissance, chooses the wrong course of action. Without reconnaissance the sub-units (podrazdeleniye) cannot operate decisively and cannot reliably achieve the goals established. Hence, they lose the initiative and fail to maintain the tempo of the attack.

Col. Lobachev, citing the combat experience of World War II, the Great Patriotic War, established the rule that when a frontal attack failed, experienced commanders always resorted to fire and maneuver to outflank the enemy, struck where he was weakest, and took advantage of successful adjacent units. Col. Gen. Salanov repeats this theme in the concluding article and stresses the importance of maneuver in maintaining the tempo of the attack.<sup>14</sup> The Soviets intend to maintain the tempo by rapid and broad maneuver, utilizing nuclear weapons in conjunction with powerful conventional means to create gaps and disorient the enemy. Soviet forces have the ability to operate under conditions of radioactive contamination, particularly with tank and motorized rifle units, and they intend to move across these contaminated zones at high speeds and attack into the depths of the enemy's defense. Tactical airborne landings (vertical envelopment) can be made during either conventional or complementary warfare to disrupt and forestall enemy reserves, seize command and control facilities, etc., in order to support the non-stop advance of the main body. This is extremely vital, however, in nuclear warfare. The vertical envelopment either by airborne or by haliborne assault forces will prevent the opposing forces from occupying defensive lines at the edges of contaminated areas, thereby insuring that Soviet forces do not have to deploy in contaminated areas.<sup>15</sup>

Soviet forces do not intend to get bogged down in a protracted battle for every enemy strong point, but are resolved to take advantage of the terrain and fire suppression to penetrate swiftly into the depths of the enemy's defense, attacking nuclear weapons delivery means, artillery firing positions, and reserves by surprise attacks and by attacks from different directions. It is especially important to seize and maintain the initiative, win time, and preserve the high tempo of the attack without permitting the enemy to create and organize defenses on intermediate lines. If successes appear where they have not been expected, or if a decrease in the tempo of the attack occurs, indicating increased enemy resistance, the need may arise to shift from one axis to another. In these cases it is necessary to employ second echelons, and if needed, the reserves, to insure the tempo.<sup>16</sup> Much of what has been discussed about maneuver could just as well have been found in a U.S. military manual; however, Salzmanov in his conclusion states, "Maneuver is a sort of military cunning based on profound foresight, a sober calculation of the correlation of forces and weapons, and the combat training of the personnel. Besides that, any maneuver involves some risk. It is the commander's task to do everything he must in order to reduce this risk to a minimum."<sup>17</sup> Simchenkov states that one cannot agree with those officers who sometimes try to accomplish every mission in exercises by frontal assaults thereby saving time and maintaining the high tempo. This is total ignorance.<sup>18</sup> It appears from Salzmanov's statement that there is some reluctance to maneuver forces, and from Simchenkov's that this is exactly the case: some commanders continue to make frontal assaults against stubborn strong points, thereby incurring greater losses and losing the initiative. One



can only wonder how widespread this reluctance is, and such reluctance may indicate the lack of inventiveness and individuality of the Soviet officer corps. The point should not be overemphasized but is worth consideration.

One article is concerned wholly with the destruction of enemy anti-tank systems. This includes not only enemy tanks, but also antitank guided missiles (ATGMs) fired either from the ground or from attack helicopters. The author states that the destruction of these means is becoming a primary task and without it, the high speed of movement and ultimate success in battle is in jeopardy.<sup>19</sup> One approach to destroying the enemy's antitank means appears to be rather foolish. Because of the lessons of WWII and subsequent exercises, the Soviet author suggests that field artillery units be moved forward to conduct direct fire against point targets possessing antitank means. The crews of these weapons, therefore, have a direct opportunity to observe and detect the movement of firing systems and to quickly destroy them.<sup>20</sup> Not only does moving the artillery forward make it more susceptible to NATO artillery, because of the range and visibility to forward observers, but it would also be more vulnerable to NATO direct fire means, particularly that of tanks and ATGMs. It would appear that this artillery would be much better utilized in a normal indirect firing mode. Artillery in direct fire simply has not been designed to combat ATGMs and tanks. It could be that the Soviets are willing to sacrifice some artillery in this method to overcome enemy antitank means in the initial battles. Other means of overcoming anti-tank weapons are rather standard, such as fire suppression, utilization of terrain features, smoke, high speed of movement, etc., and do not bear further comment.

However, a few comments are necessary concerning a couple of tactical exercises described by the author which seem completely ludicrous and certainly do not obtain the degree of realism so often desired by Soviet officers in their writings. In one exercise a tank platoon supporting a motorized rifle company penetrated the enemy's defense, quickly moved into the depths of the defense, and overcame all anti-tank weapons. The article stated that the platoon knew all of the concealed locations of these systems because of superior reconnaissance. In another instance, two antitank helicopters suddenly appeared but because of the superior reaction of the air defense gunners, one was shot down and the other forced to retreat before either was able to fire a shot. In another instance, while moving forward, several enemy ATGM systems were observed setting up to fire, but before they could fire, the firing data was prepared, appropriate commands given, and mortar shells began exploding among the enemy ATGM systems. The enemy suffered losses and made several confused launches, but because of the concentrated long-range fire of tanks and mortars, were forced to retreat. There were no unexpected blows against the attackers and the company continued to progress at a high tempo.<sup>21</sup> Further comments about realistic training are not necessary, but one comment about Soviet expectations is. They expect to destroy more than half of the enemy's antitank means or at least suppress them in order to be successful.<sup>22</sup>

Achieving surprise is another important element in Soviet operations as well as insuring that one's own forces are not surprised. Truly scientific foresight makes it possible to determine properly the most probable nature of enemy actions, and on the basis of this to provide scientific measures which would disrupt or reduce to a minimum his attempts

to achieve surprise.<sup>23</sup> Many officers have developed this quality of scientific foresight according to Col. B. Shein. He gives an example of a recent exercise in which a company commander was supposed to maintain a defensive position until the arrival of the battalion's main body. However, after a brief reconnaissance, the terrain suggested to the company commander the location of the enemy reserves, and being able to foresee the course of events, he attacked successfully. The enemy was caught by surprise and defeated by the bold attack.<sup>24</sup> Scientific foresight? Maybe it is scientific in a canned exercise, but in real battle such actions could prove disastrous.

Air defense and particularly defense against ATGM helicopters is of grave concern to the Soviets. There is no doubt that air defense in general -- and air defense against helicopters in particular -- is one of the most important factors which will insure the success of the high tempo of the attack. Aviation is a means which will be one of the first to be employed to disrupt the high tempos of the attack.<sup>25</sup> The article on helicopters discusses at length helicopter tactics and capabilities which the author readily admits were taken from the foreign press. Again utilizing a tactical exercise as an example, Soviet forces successfully countered an air attack and a helicopter gunship attack due to excellent intelligence and the effectiveness of the air defense forces. The actions taken by the Soviet forces were standard precautions such as the use of observation posts, camouflage, radar acquisition, covering likely avenues of approach, etc. All of this is important, but again they were so effective against this type of assault that the enemy was driven off, apparently without causing casualties. The invincibility of Soviet forces may play some role in the psyche of the soldiers and officers in tactical exercises,

but one must question the effect on their morale in actual battle when the enemy doesn't pull back but stands and fights. The events in Afghanistan should offer some clues. Of course, there is another corollary. The Soviet officers reading these articles see no semblance in what is written to that which actually occurs during their tactical exercises.

Another concern of the Soviets also comes to light in this particular exercise and that is the conservation of missiles and ammunition. It could be assumed that this is a concern across the entire spectrum. They stress that teamwork and fire control must be practiced in engaging hostile targets in that all enemy targets are brought under fire simultaneously without several systems firing at the same target. This precludes an unjustifiably large expenditure of ammunition and missiles, which in the end would have an adverse effect on subsequent missions.<sup>26</sup>

Crossing barriers and obstacles, and radioactive and chemically contaminated zones, which are encountered during combat, normally involves some slowing down or possibly a halting of the advance. Unjustifiable pauses, however, must be avoided. The speed of advance on the battlefield and into the depths of the defense always was and remains the most important indicator of an attack's effectiveness.<sup>27</sup> Even water obstacles, which are seen by the enemy as advantageous obstructions, must be overcome from the march without reducing the rate of the offensive using all available means to develop the offensive on the opposite bank.<sup>28</sup>

One article in the series discussed the position of the commander in combat and requires a few comments. Basically, the author stated that the commander must place himself in the most advantageous position in order to control the battle but at critical times it would be necessary

because of morale purposes for the commander to move forward and lead his troops into combat by the battle-tested method: "Do as I do" (Delay, kak ya).<sup>29</sup> It also stresses that the command post or command vehicle will obviously be the priority target of an enemy attack. Commanders must insure that they are not prominent in the combat formation or in hasty positions obviously surrounded by radio operators, runners from platoons, air defense systems, etc.<sup>30</sup>

The Soviets place a tremendous amount of emphasis on fire suppression, and Col. Salzmanov asserts "that the experience of battalion and company tactical exercises with field firing shows that an overwhelming majority of officers make skilled and effective use of the firepower of organic and attached weapons to insure fire superiority over the enemy on the main axis for the purpose of insuring a favorable correlation of forces and for maintaining the high tempo of the attack."<sup>31</sup> After Soviet nuclear strikes, the rate of advance through the breaches formed has been determined by computations to be, in many instances, equal to the combat speed of the tanks and mechanized vehicles.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Soviets Understand the Importance of Realistic Field Training Exercises

Col. Gen. Salzmanov insists that during tactical exercises "we must better imitate battlefield conditions, create obstacles, zones of fire, and generally create a situation which will give personnel the feeling of combat, which will harden their determination and character thereby developing and instilling in them the desired moral-combat qualities."<sup>33</sup> Lobachev maintains that in his division, situations in field exercises are invariably created in which the commanders of the advancing units acquire or learn the necessary responses to specific situations.<sup>34</sup> The

previously cited exercises should give one a clue to the realism of these exercises, at least to the way in which they are described in writing.

The authors also stress the importance of morale, an important factor in any military organization. "The success in any battle, and tempo of the attack in particular, depends to a great extent on the morale of the soldiers, and therefore on the content and purposefulness of party-political work. The exercise of the Great Patriotic War showed that well presented party-political thoughts created a high morale and an offensive resolve in the soldiers' fulfilling the commander's order through strong actions to destroy the enemy."<sup>35</sup> Of course, the role of party-political work becomes even more important in battles involving nuclear weapons. New demands are placed on the soldiers and they must maintain a psychological steadfastness. At the critical times in battle they must be able to overcome their fears. Psychological training is required to establish in the soldiers and officers an emotional stability and to prepare them for fearless, resolute actions in dangerous situations, particularly those involving weapons of mass destruction.<sup>36</sup> This, of course, is a concern of all soldiers, everywhere.

Finally, the high tempo of the attack places additional strain on the commanders and staffs to insure that coordination is maintained with higher, lower, adjacent, and attached units. The high rate requires the constant, stable control of the units. "The only commander who achieves rapid advance is the one who continuously controls his own and his attached units, who maintains in his hands all the threads of combat, and who quickly reacts to changes in the situation. The loss of communications with subordinates for even a brief period of time, or a delay in assigning them new tasks, are fraught with serious consequences."<sup>37</sup>

This becomes then another vulnerability. By interrupting communications and further creating confusion on the battlefield, NATO forces can slow the tempo of the attack of the Soviet forces. Other methods of accomplishing this mission will now be examined and some already alluded to will be expanded.

In order to win the next war on the European battlefield, NATO forces must impede and stop the major initial thrusts of the Warsaw Pact forces; they must stop the first-echelon forces which will in turn affect the tempo of the attack, and consequently the second-echelon forces. Attack operations stress fire power. Suppressive fires by artillery and air will precede an assault by maneuver units and support their subsequent combat actions to the depth of the defense. Much of this fire power is provided by second-echelon artillery and artillery from army and front organizations. "The high rates of an offensive would be unthinkable without the reliable suppression of the defending forces' fire means, primarily his antitank means, or without the sufficient ability on the part of the combined-arms commanders to make efficient use of the results of nuclear strikes, and the fire might of the attached and supporting units (podrasdaleniya), primarily the artillery and air units, as well as the antitank guided missile units."<sup>38</sup> This high rate or tempo must be impeded and stopped by all means available to NATO forces, but one can readily see that NATO forces in the defense must be sufficiently protected or hardened to survive the enormous fire suppression efforts of the enemy. In this regard, a great deal of improvement is necessary particularly in the unarmored antitank units. The active reconnaissance of the Soviet forces must be limited. Likewise, NATO must have the means to collect and produce timely intelligence in order

to be able by all means, particularly counter-battery fire, tank-killing helicopters, and close air support, to suppress and destroy the enemy's air defense capabilities and his fire suppression means, primarily artillery.

Col. G. Lobachev states that "planning the high rate of offensive at the present time would be unthinkable without reliable anti-air defense of the units and subunits (chasti and podrazdeleniya). An airborne enemy, possessing high maneuverability, and varied and powerful armament, can with sufficient accuracy, inflict sudden strikes at mobile and small-sized targets on the field of battle."<sup>39</sup> There are a number of useful recommendations for combined-arms commanders on matters of organizing air defense in the attack and combating low-flying targets, but it is very important to underscore that air defense is generally one of the most important factors ensuring the high tempo of the attack. "It is hardly possible to achieve success in modern warfare without a reliable screen for friendly combat formations from the air."<sup>40</sup> NATO forces must improve their ability, as will be mentioned later, to suppress enemy air defense by artillery, electronic counter measures (ECM), and air, to include armed drones, ECM drones, etc. The Soviets have weaknesses in both artillery — such as towed artillery, fire control, etc. — and in air defense — such as soft-skinned vehicles, antennas, command and control, etc. The enemy's vulnerabilities in fire suppression and air defense must be exploited to the fullest in order to interrupt his coordination and his tempo which will not only assist in the destruction of the first echelon but will create greater confusion and hinder the actions of the second echelon forces creating a more vulnerable target and greatly assisting in the overall defeat of Soviet forces.



The most effective way of impeding the second echelon by conventional means is air interdiction. The two types of interdiction are supply interdiction and battlefield interdiction. Supply interdiction is the use of air power deep into the rear of the enemy, striking at lines of communications, logistical facilities, etc. On the European battlefield, supply interdiction may yield only limited results if using only conventional weapons because of the difficulty of blocking a dense transport net with conventional ordnance, the inability to loiter and destroy enemy vehicles in a sophisticated air defense environment, the ability of the attacker to anticipate requirements by forward stockage, and the time lag before interdiction affects deployed forces.<sup>41</sup> These limited results could be improved, however, with the advent of better conventional munitions such as "smart bombs" and concrete-cutting cluster munitions against the transportation network at vulnerable choke points. Additionally, cruise missiles (CMs) with conventional warheads could be utilized in conjunction with the air forces to accomplish part of this mission; and it is becoming apparent that the technology for CM accuracy will allow it to be used in this role to some extent. In a nuclear context, supply interdiction becomes a manageable operation.

Battlefield interdiction in a conventional war will yield greater results. "It seeks to destroy the road net, vehicles and supplies approaching the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). (This should not be confused with close air support.) More fundamentally, battlefield interdiction has the potential of disrupting the enemy's operational plans and — particularly in conjunction with offensives and major counter-attacks — of dislocating the enemy command system."<sup>42</sup> NATO forces must be able through intelligence means to pinpoint the heavier concentrations

of Warsaw Pact forces, to detect those areas where they intend to force a penetration, and by means of battlefield interdiction, NATO must be able to obtain leverage by hindering the enemy from moving or shifting his second echelon forces to the critical areas and to impede coordination.

The Soviets in their military writings continually stress this principle of coordination variously read as coordination, interworking, or interaction. "An attack at a high tempo depends to no small extent on the ability of commanders and staffs to organize for combat, to maintain in its dynamic action the coordination of participating personnel and weapons of the different branches, combat arms and special troops, and to control them."<sup>43</sup> In the Soviet system all elements of the combined arms and services must operate together in battle. They constantly emphasize the use of individual initiative if coordination becomes disrupted, but one gets the impression from Soviet military literature that initiative may, in fact, be a major weakness.<sup>44</sup> Subordinate commanders are expected to act without orders to regain contact with adjacent units or with higher headquarters and to coordinate ongoing actions. In the confusion of battle, the ability to disrupt Soviet commanders by such means as battlefield interdiction, electronic warfare, etc. could pay high dividends.

To prevent a penetration of the NATO front, NATO air forces must disrupt the coordination of Pact forces and dissipate the focus of their penetrating effort through large-scale road cutting and/or vehicle attrition within relatively narrow lanes through which the penetrating efforts will originate. Attacking at random across the entire spectrum of the battlefield will

produce only limited results of military significance, particularly in what is not expected to be a long-term sustained conflict. Close air support must be available to operate against the first-echelon forces in support of the forward elements of the NATO defense while other air assets must be striking at second echelon forces. To hope that significant casualties could be inflicted against second-echelon forces would be ideal but highly improbable in a non-nuclear environment against an increasing array of hard-skinned battlefield equipment. However, disruption by blocking or destroying must be accomplished in order that ground forces prevent the attacker from exploiting his opportunity to pour second echelon forces through the penetration and into the depths of the defense.

"Battlefield interdiction can be accomplished in three areas and against two types of targets. Interdiction can be focused in the penetration area behind the line of contact, at the penetration base to seal off the penetration or in the cone (or "funnel") extending from the anticipated point of penetration slanting outward and backward 100 kilometers or so into the attacker's rear where his reserves (subsequent echelons) are assembled (located -- probably non-static).<sup>45</sup> Targets will vary from vehicles to the transportation network, priorities being different at various points in the cone, depending upon the ability of the air forces to suppress, or operate in, the air defense network of the hostile forces. The new smart bombs or reference guided munitions as well as the use of air-deliverable, scatterable mines, could be particularly useful in sealing off the transportation networks at geographically vulnerable choke points. The tempo of the Pact forces must be slowed and disrupted to create confusion and conditions which

will present more lucrative targets. The high speed and mobility of the second echelon must be stopped before they reach the penetration zones. However, Soviet ground losses would have to be severe before their effect would be significant. Because of the large size of the subsequent echelons in the cone, the primary target must be the road net. Breaks in the road net serve to compress the enemy's columns, facilitate and simplify target acquisition, and increase the time over target. The object and necessity of battlefield interdiction is to disrupt the coordinated movement of the second echelon into the area of concern.

There are many ways in which the Soviet forces can be defeated. Impeding and disrupting the high tempo of the attack of the Soviet forces must be achieved if NATO forces are to be successful. Methods discussed above offered some insights on how this might be accomplished and the discussion of the Soviet military articles should give the reader a better understanding of Soviet military operations. A fuller understanding of the tempo of the attack in Soviet operational art and tactics should enable the U.S. officer to be better prepared to counter the threat.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>General V. G. Reznichenko, Taktika (Tactics), edited by General Major Reznichenko, Voyennoye Isdatel'stvo, Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1966, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Soviet Army Operations, Department of the Army LAG-13-U-78, Washington: US GPO, April 1978, pp. 3-13.

<sup>3</sup>Col. Gen. G. Salmanov, "Vysokiy Temp Nastupleniya - Valniye Vremeni," ("High Attack Tempo in a Demand of the Times,") Voyennyy Vestnik, No. 12, 1977, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup>Col. S. Smirnov, "Pomen'sha Neopravdannyykh Paus;" ("Fewer Unwarranted Pauses,") Voyennyy Vestnik, No. 9, 1977, pp. 58-60; and Soviet Army Operations, op. cit., pp. 1-6.

<sup>5</sup>It is interesting to note that in the concluding article, Colonel General Salmanov quoted almost verbatim portions of the previous articles, many times not giving due credit. Most probably none of the other officers, all junior to Salmanov, objected to the infringement.

<sup>6</sup>Col. G. Lobachev, "Vysokiy Temp Nastupleniya - Nepremennoye Usloviye Podedy," ("The High Tempo of the Offensive - A Necessary Condition for Victory"), Voyennyy Vestnik, No. 2, 1977, p. 44; and Salmanov, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>7</sup>Salmanov, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>8</sup>Lt. Col. V. Lisovski, "Pervoye Slovo - Razvedka," ("The First Word is Reconnaissance"), Voyennyy Vestnik, No. 3, 1977, p. 51.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 51; and Salmanov, op. cit., p. 63. The original quote is found in V. I. Lenin, Polnoye Sobraniye Sochineniy (Complete Collected Works), tom 41, (Vol. XVI), p. 144.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 51; and Salmanov, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>11</sup>Major I. Slyusarenko, "Interesakh Uspakha Boya," ("For the Interest of Success in Battle"), Voyennyy Vestnik, No. 5, 1977, p. 55.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>13</sup>Lisovski, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>14</sup>Salmanov, op. cit., p. 64. It is interesting that Salmanov gives credit to Col. P. Simchenkov here while Simchenkov had taken this theme from Lobachev's article. There is a tremendous amount of redundancy in the articles. See note 5.

<sup>15</sup> Col. P. Simchenkov, "Manevr - Klyuch k Pobede," ("Maneuver is the Key to Victory"), Voyenny Vestnik, No. 4, 1977, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>17</sup> Salzmanov, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> Simchenkov, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> Silyusaranko, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>22</sup> "Aktual'naya Problema Taktika," ("Topical Problem of Tactics"), Voyenny Vestnik, No. 7, 1977, pp. 56-57.

<sup>23</sup> Col. B. Shain, "Ne Zabyvat' o Vnezapnosti," ("Don't Forget About Surprise"), Voyenny Vestnik, No. 6, 1977, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Col. Yu. Zakharov, "Pomnit' i o Vertolotakh," ("Remember About Helicopters"), Voyenny Vestnik, No. 8, 1977, pp. 63-64.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>27</sup> Smirnov, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

<sup>28</sup> Lobachev, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Col. V. Chalenko, and LTC G. Us, "The Position of the Commander in Combat," Voyenny Vestnik, No. 11, 1977, p. 82.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-83.

<sup>31</sup> Salzmanov, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> Lobachev, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> Salzmanov, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>34</sup> Lobachev, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> Salzmanov, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Lobachev, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>40</sup>Salmanov, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>41</sup>LTC Steven L. Canby, "The Interdiction Mission -- An Overview," Military Review, July 1979, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Salmanov, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>44</sup>Lobachev, op. cit., p. 46. See last paragraph on this page where Lobachev discusses the need for further training of the Soviet commanders in order to achieve greater initiative.

<sup>45</sup>Canby, op. cit., p. 26.

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