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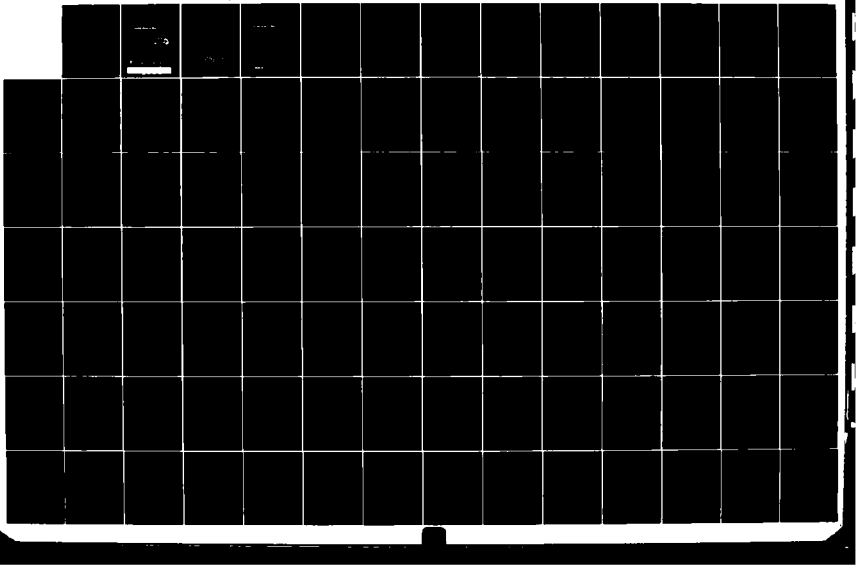

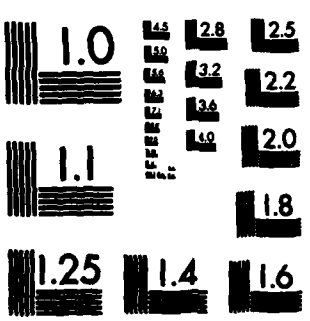

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Soviet Style In War

Nathan Leites

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Soviet Style in War

Nathan Leites

April 1982

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Contents

FOREWORD ix
Peter H. Vigor

PREFACE xiii
Notes to Preface xvi

SUMMARY xvii

CHAPTER I. WARDING OFF INACTION 1
The Suspicion of Inactivity 1
Depressed Inaction 2
Indifference 3
Indecisiveness 5
Not Carrying Through 6
Low Action 16
Dispersing One's Force through Time 31
Scattering One's Force among Objectives 34
Striking a Target "Evenly" 40
The Lure of the Single, Big, Brief, and Early Strike 43
Intermittence 46
Notes to Chapter One 75

CHAPTER II. WARDING OFF SLOWNESS 87
Wasting Time 87
Being Slow to Act 93
Being Slow in Acting 107
Running in Place 123
Too Much Time Spent on Deciding 132
Notes to Chapter Two 136

CHAPTER III. FIGHTING THE NEGLECT OF OBSTACLES 145
Improvising 145
Being Blind 151

Exalting the Self 159
Despising the Enemy 164
Dizzy with Success 168
"Eyewash" 175
Stubbornly Going Through with the Initial Plan . 179
Repeating despite Failure 191
Notes to Chapter Three 197

CHAPTER IV. WARDING OFF PASSIVITY 205
Preferring Offense 205
Offense Abuse 208
Offense Deficiency 221
Merely Pushing the Enemy Back 227
Waiting for the Enemy to Strike 230
Aversion to Defense 237
Retreat into Flight 252
Notes to Chapter Four 265

CHAPTER V. ENHANCING ONE'S COHESION AND REDUCING THE ENEMY'S 273
Warring by Oneself 273
Splitting the Enemy 299
Notes to Chapter Five 303

CHAPTER VI. ENHANCING ONE'S CAPACITY TO CALCULATE AND DEGRADING THE ENEMY'S 309
The Disinclination to Calculate 309
The Vulnerability from Within of the Capacity to Calculate 321
The Vulnerability from Without of the Capacity to Calculate: "Losing One's Bearings" 330
Degrading the Enemy's Capacity to Calculate .. 348
Notes to Chapter Six 358

CHAPTER VII. INFERENCES FROM THE DISPLAYED TO THE HIDDEN: STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WAR 367
Counterforce in Pretense and Intent 367
Maximizing the Initial Strike or Husbanding Reserves? 369

Banking on Asymmetries after the Initial Period of the War 371
Preemption? 374
If Any Nuclear Weapon, then All? 377
Taking Deterrence Seriously 378
Preparing for Strategic Nuclear War 379
Notes to Chapter Seven 380

BIBLIOGRAPHY 383

INDEX 389

SELECTED LIST OF RAND BOOKS 397

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Foreword

Peter H. Vigor

Dr. Leites' book sets out to do something that is clearly well worthwhile but that has never, so far as I know, been attempted in English in quite this form before. That is, to write a study of a whole series of proclivities of the Soviet Armed Forces on the battlefield, whether it be the "battlefield" of today's peacetime exercises or the real battlefields on the Eastern Front from 1941 to 1945.

The work involved must have been colossal. Not only did Dr. Leites have to scan a formidable amount of material, and extrapolate from that material whatever he thought would be of value; but he also had to arrange his extrapolation in a constructive and coherent order, so as to present his readers with something more illuminating than just another "selected readings" from the Soviet military press. In my opinion, he has performed this task very successfully, as I hope his readers will agree.

There are a number of themes in Dr. Leites' book which I for one am particularly pleased to see being given publicity. One is the Soviet attitude toward surprise. Nowadays we all talk about the Soviets' high opinion of the value of surprise, but far too often we tend to leave it at that; yet surprise is only of value if it is exploited, and exploited *thoroughly*. If it is not, all that happens is that the enemy recovers from his surprise, and all the skill and ingenuity that went into the surprising of him at once becomes totally wasted. The Soviets are very well aware of this, and Dr. Leites shows that they are well aware of this; I think he is much to be praised for having done so.

Similarly, it is good to see his section on the Soviet attitude toward infantry "hugging" their own artillery barrage or, in other words, advancing to the attack in close proximity to the bursts of their own side's shells. It is not at all easy to induce infantrymen to do this, because no one likes being near to a bursting shell, whether his own or one of the enemy's. It is really only experience of actual battles that finally convinces the infantry that, unpleasant though the business

of "hugging" may be, it is less unpleasant than attacking in any other fashion. The Soviets are of this opinion too, as Dr. Leites makes clear.

All NATO officers should study very carefully the material adduced by Dr. Leites concerning Soviet bridgeheads. If the Soviets succeed in creating one, the NATO officers in the area concerned would do well to make it their prime concern to eliminate it immediately. The Germans found to their cost that a Soviet bridgehead, if not immediately wiped out, got swiftly stronger, and very soon became almost impossible to eliminate at all. Dr. Leites acquaints us with a number of passages from German writings which ram this message home. It is obviously a very relevant one today for professional soldiers.

It is the politicians who should most particularly ponder Dr. Leites' suggestion in Chapter 7 that the Soviet doctrine of the inevitability of escalation, once the war has turned nuclear at all, may well be just a deterrence ploy. I can see that a tactical nuclear exchange could easily escalate to the level of theater nuclear; but there seems to me to be a "qualitative leap" between these and all-out nuclear. The notion that such a "qualitative leap" would be taken almost automatically by the governments concerned is surely wholly un-Clausewitzian in spirit; yet Western analysts usually hold that Soviet military thinking is basically very Clausewitzian.

On a negative note, I think Dr. Leites has been rather unfair to the Soviets when he comments about their attitude toward defense. The fact of the matter is that they praised defense, and cultivated defense as the prime aspect of war-fighting, only when they lacked the resources in trained men and in equipment to mount offensives. Once they had overcome these defects, they demoted defense to a minor role and began to stress, and have stressed ever since, the primacy of the offensive. That, at least, is my understanding of the matter; though if Dr. Leites and I ever succeed in meeting, I should be very happy to debate it with him.

As a further point, I must lament the absence of a treatment of *initsiativa*. For many years now, the young Soviet officer has been urged by his superiors to display this quality. It is not absolutely certain that *initsiativa* is synonymous with "initiative"; and it is a very great deal less certain that the young Soviet officer actually displays it, whether it is synonymous or not. On the other hand, from the point of view of the West (and so, by implication, the readers of this book) it is of enormous importance to know how this matter stands. The common view among NATO officers is that *initsiativa* equals "initi-

ative," and that the Soviets do not display it. But are these officers right?

Crucial for NATO, too, is a correct evaluation of the material that Dr. Leites treats in his fourth chapter, in the section entitled "Merely Pushing the Enemy Back." If things go badly for the enemy, he may, in favorable circumstances, be able to take to flight. In such a case, he will lose ground; and it may well turn out that the ground he loses is vital. In addition, he will have lost men; but all that he will have lost in the way of men will be those who have been cut down, or cut off and made prisoner, in the course of the pursuit. The loss of such a number may well prove insufficient to procure victory for the attacker in any but the battle in question. If the enemy's officers are any good, they will manage to rally the fugitives and reform them into battalions, and then lead these re-formed battalions back into the fight once more. It is essential for the attacker to deny them this opportunity. Consequently, not only the battle itself but (equally important) the subsequent pursuit must be so organized and so directed that the fleeing enemy troops do not succeed in escaping. The correct conduct of the pursuit is therefore a military art in its own right; the Soviets are aware of this; and we all ought to be grateful to Dr. Leites for drawing it to our attention.

In short, I hope that the reader will find this book as stimulating and enjoyable as I have. It deals with an aspect of military affairs which has been neglected for a long time. After so many works devoted to the somewhat boring litany of the nuclear exchange, I found Dr. Leites' book taking a refreshing new direction.

PREFACE

The author of this book tries, through a close study of Soviet and other comments on war and on the Soviet armed forces in peacetime, to contribute to conjectures about how the Soviets—particularly the Soviet ground forces—would fight. The study was supported by the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense. Publication of the findings was made possible in part by funding from the Rand Corporation.

The main sources, apart from books of military analysis, are *Red Star* (the armed forces' daily), *The Military Herald* (the ground forces' monthly), *Communist of the Armed Forces* (the political department's fortnightly), memoirs of Soviet and German commanders in the Great Fatherland War (i.e., World War II, referred to in the text as simply "the War"), and the *Military-Historical Journal* (monthly). Excluded from examination are words related to "ideology," the text being limited to statements about military events, those made in the present and recent past (the era of Brezhnev) as well as in 1941 – 45 (the War).

Even when articles in the publications named are signed by persons of modest military rank, they are presumed to have been screened for conformity with the preferences of the Stavka, or High Command ("the Authorities").

How pertinent are the 1940s (the War) to the 1980s? The Authorities' insistence on the current relevance of the "front experience" is, in the author's judgment, far from sham.

> To study the experience of the Great Fatherland War means to prepare oneself in the most serious manner. . . . I should like to advise officers . . . to have at home a small library of [War] memoirs.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . . I sometimes observed how a commander was for a long time unable to find the way out of a difficult situation into which he had fallen. But I remembered that in the book of a famous military leader an analogous situation is described, that it is analyzed there, conclusions drawn and recommendations made. Involuntarily the thought arises: If that commander had read that book and well

> analyzed what he had read, he would have found the necessary decision more quickly.[1]

The only *series* of books on military matters published in the seventies is a set of volumes called *Tactics in Combat Examples*—examples from the War. In many cases, in the pages below, points made about simulated combat parallel those made about real battle. In other cases, no direct evidence was available of the persistence of traits documented for the War. But even then the author may use the present tense of the verb, expressing the conjecture that what was important a third of a century ago has not ceased to be significant.

Reactions attributed to Stalin are treated like those of other commanders in the War. Where he exaggerates traits shown by others in less extreme fashion, he illuminates the narrative by this very fact.

Characteristics shown by armed forces in peacetime are not likely to remain unchanged when war comes. Wartime behavior, however, will be related to them. Preferences expressed in peacetime for certain calculations and modes of conduct in war are not likely to be fully realized when war comes. But, again, conduct in war will be related to such antecedents.

Do the points of style, or preferences, examined here not recommend (reject) both a certain conduct and its opposite, so that they end up by saying nothing?

> The Senior Commander orders that in the forthcoming offensive the 55th Tank Brigade become an "advance detachment." An officer of the Brigade then asks its Commander: "Aleksandr Pavlovich, what do you think about the advance detachment? Aren't they going to scold us once more? And how could it be otherwise? You go far ahead, and they scold you. You don't go too far away from your troops, and again that is bad. . . ."[2]

But this very predicament furnishes the reader with information that may not be trivial: On *this* dimension of events the Authorities perceive an inclination to do too much or too little.

On many—perhaps most—guesses developed below, Soviet style in war appears to be the result of a conflict between inclinations and attempts to ward them off. This does not mean that "weaknesses" dominate. The struggle against them may indeed be ineffective; *or* successful; *or* overdoing it, falling into an opposite inexpediency; *or* rather all of these in various mixtures in different situations. All that is claimed is that there is much struggle against what are viewed as fatal proclivities, with results that are neither perfect nor stable. About

the War, one of the most critical commanders may exclaim: "How we learned to fight!"[3] and another, less faultfinding, may report about "the hastiness, the hotheadedness, and nervousness of commanders": "Least of all can all this be explained by the defects of tactical literacy of our troop commanders, sergeants, and privates. Not less than ourselves, they understood the harm done by frontal attack. . . ."[4]

Nuclear weapons rarely appear in the military world evoked below. Officers—the only ones who speak *in public* about details of war in the Soviet Union—almost never discuss strategic nuclear war, and rarely theater nuclear operations. In the main, the latter have been treated, during the period studied, in a small set of books on "operational art" and "tactics" published in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There theater nuclear weapons are largely presented as just more powerful conventional arms.

What is Soviet about this particular trait? Readers acquainted with other military establishments are likely to ask this question at many points in the pages below, and they may be right. One will not know until now-nonexistent or unavailable comparative analyses have been published. In the meantime, the author has had to proceed on the possibly erroneous hunch that there is something surely not unique, yet distinctive, about each Soviet stance discussed below: distinctive in degree or in the configuration of which it seems to be a part.

The text focuses on the ground forces. If the Soviet navy and air force are also dealt with, this is not meant to imply that to the High Command there are no significant differences between fighting in these three domains. No attempt has been made to discuss the High Command's conceptions of fighting at great distances.

Another, and even greater, limitation is the author's insufficient treatment of priorities and interactions among the traits described below. While he has mentioned certain connections, there are probably more of them than were perceived.

At several points in the citation footnotes, one reads the elliptical attribution "A German commander." These references denote material taken from the National Archives (Washington D.C.) which may be quoted only if the source is not identified.

A few points on the author's own style. Emphases added to or found in quoted material are so identified in the notes. Even when quoting to illustrate a standard theme, the author may arbitrarily choose one instance in which it appears. Often, when attributing a point to the Authorities, he will speak as if in their person, with their point of view, in the surrounding text.

Andrew Marshall, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, P. H. Vigor, and Charles

Wolf, Jr. have offered important corrections and suggestions on drafts of the report.

Nathan Leites
The Rand Corporation
Santa Monica, California

Notes to Preface

1. General of the Army I. Tret'yak, *VV*, 1977, no. 9, 35. (See Bibliography at the end of the volume.)
2. Dragunskii, 215. Ellipsis in the text.
3. Voronov, 376.
4. Golikov, 194.

Summary

According to the Soviet High Command, the ideal Soviet commander (whom I shall call "the commander") fears that his subordinates of all ranks may succumb to what he takes to be the natural bent toward inaction (Chapter I). Moods, he is apt to believe, may deteriorate for flimsy or invisible reasons, and drag the level of activity down. Human beings, the commander knows, are inclined to be indifferent toward tasks with which they are charged, and hence disposed to avoid them or to perform them only partially and badly. There is only one effective safeguard against indifference: enthusiasm, prescribed and hard to foster. If one avoids indifference, one may still not arrive at adequate action but on the way to it succumb to indecisiveness, a characteristic to which personnel are held to be especially prone when it is particularly damaging: in an unexpected and critical situation.

When one has made a decision, one may still default on the often long and difficult path of executing it: "not carrying through" is sufficiently observed and expected to merit a pungent Russian-language noun. That a commander should evaluate a difficult situation accurately and make a correct decision which he thereupon fails to execute appears not as odd but as unsurprising. Words in conferences and documents may well replace acts, and ever renewed promises may replace never accomplished performance. A long record of carrying through may suddenly be followed by its opposite. The abundant wasting of time during peace may appear perilous, because one recalls examples of personnel acting in the same way even in war. Danger, a commander fears, will induce inaction and thus produce catastrophe. To ensure against too little action, a commander will demand a maximum of it as a necessary condition for both survival and success. He will oppose what he suspects to be his subordinates' penchant for leaving unutilized some potential of their weapons, equipment, or bodies. The commander also perceives them as prone to conducting an operation with less than the massed force that is likely to be cost-effective, producing pinpricks rather than earthquakes; or to letting an operation peter out

while only the maintenance of its initial level would have permitted success.

The commander will worry about the disposition in his forces (and in himself) to underestimate the effect of delivering a variety of strikes at the same time. He endeavors to counteract the inclination to scatter resources among objectives rather than focusing them on severely selected priorities. There is a presumption of advantage to be gained from striking at the enemy's deployment by overwhelming a small sector of it with a large fraction of one's own force, its application compressed in time: the learned art of the commander that goes against the grain of human nature, the art of defeating a superior force. While nuclear weapons change the mode of putting the principle of concentration into practice, they do not affect its validity. Given his belief in the noxiousness of delay, the commander will thus be disposed to make his initial strike also his main one. But while investigating the particular situation with which he is faced, the commander may perceive that the design of defeating the enemy with a single blow may stem from an infatuation with his own might. He then discovers the effectiveness of a sequence of strikes, particularly when each is stronger than its predecessor.

The commander fears that personnel, yielding to their penchant for inaction, will repeatedly interrupt an activity that requires continuity for success, as any activity is apt to do. Once one has wrongly ceased an action, the commander seems to worry, will one ever resume it? But even if one does begin anew, after a pause, that pause will have compromised the success of the operation. The enemy will have utilized the respite to reinforce himself, or to adopt a more favorable deployment, or to reestablish a capacity for combat that had been impaired by one's previous action. Forward movement, in particular, should be uninterrupted. Whatever you do in war—particularly when firing—attempt to move (forward) while you do it, and do it while you move; do not do it less well just because you are moving. Fight around the clock, and as effectively during the night as during the day. As to men and equipment that are worn out through uninterrupted employment, replace them with new persons and pieces without interrupting the operation. As to the various phases typically included in an operation, avoid the time gaps between them: enter into combat straight from the march; avoid any interval between the end of the "artillery preparation" for an offensive and the beginning of the advance by tanks or infantry; start pursuit immediately after a breakthrough; begin annihilating the enemy as soon as you have encircled him; prepare your next operation in the course of the current one.

There are, to be sure, situations in which not pausing would be even worse than doing so (as for instance, upon encountering an enemy much stronger than expected, and having completed a major operation conducted for some time without interruption); but the burden of proof is on interruption, even in the situations just mentioned. It is expected that a commander will reject altogether, or at least pare down, proposals for interruptions made by his subordinates. Commanders may be aware of the fact that, leaning over backward against the inclination to stop, one may commit a mistake of the opposite kind; yet this appears as the lesser danger. Interruption is feared even where Westerners might view it as either harmless or unlikely (because all too harmful)—as in leadership, the crossing of water barriers, pursuits, and combat intelligence.

Attributing to his subordinates—to human nature—a penchant for wasting time, the commander will be imbued with the conviction that any lack of economy or accuracy with regard to time risks failure in battle. He will surmise that there are always "unutilized reserves" of time, and be intent upon procuring a "reserve of time" for use in case things go wrong or not as anticipated. Any time lost that could have been saved is a gift made to the enemy that he will use against us; any time saved is a resource of which we deprive the enemy in his defense against us or in his attack upon us. Permitting an offensive to become "dragged out," rather than "crushing the enemy rapidly," is risking failure (Chapter II). Aware of the danger from acting prematurely—probably when overcome by feelings—the commander is more impressed by the danger from delay. "Being late" is as expected as it is grave; and the reliance on making up time later is as treacherous as it is widespread. In planning an operation, to defer is probably to miss the opportune moment. Delaying an attack works for the enemy in a variety of ways: It allows him to reinforce and to prepare for the attack, and it reduces the probability of surprising the enemy by attacking him earlier than he expects. Hence the commander may renounce other advantages for the sake of avoiding delay; he may, for instance, sacrifice striking simultaneously with the various components of his force so that those already in a position to enter combat will not have to wait for those not yet ready.

Once a time for the beginning of an operation has been set, the fear of delay may prevent even a postponement plainly indicated by unforeseen events. The commander attributes to his subordinates an inclination to be slow in performing tasks once they have overcome their propensity to delay undertaking them. In contrast, the commander will aim at overtaking the enemy, outstripping him in deployment and

engagement. As military technology advances, less time remains for performing a given task; but also less time is likely to be needed for it, if only the hidden "reserves of time" are discovered and put to use. The commander will aim at not allowing adverse circumstances to slow down his forces. For, like delay in starting, slowness in acting offers the enemy a gift of time in which to counteract. The slower an operation, the smaller the benefit from surprise. For that benefit is composed of two parts: first and less important, a reduction (by destruction) of the enemy's "forces and means"; second and crucial, a reduction in the productivity of the enemy's surviving resources for a time—the utilization of which depends on the surpriser's dispatch *after* having surprised his enemy. The more rapid his actions while the enemy is still enfeebled from surprise, the larger his gain.

In addition to *utilizing* the time gained by the enemy's degradation of performance from surprise, dispatch may *prolong* it and thus extend one's opportunities for damaging him. Imbued with the worth of swiftness—counteracting the temptation of slowness—the commander will be aware of the possibility of overdoing the "tempo" of action required or undertaken; perhaps he may also be yielding to a vice contrasting with, but also accompanying, slowness—that of haste from "hotheadedness" and "nervousness," as well as from a penchant for "improvisation" and exaggeration of one's own power. The commander will be especially worried by what he views as his forces' disposition to one particular kind of slowness, that of movement. In contrast, he demands high speed, which should be not only attained but also maintained; again, this is in contrast to the forces' inclination to sag, a tendency fraught with fatal consequences.

Speed should be steadily rising rather than brusquely falling. Speed reduces the size of the force required for certain missions, as well as the amount of loss that will be incurred (while it has the opposite effect on the damage done to the enemy). For speed facilitates "withdrawing from the enemy's strike," shortening the time of one's exposure to enemy fire and lowering its accuracy. The commander is conscious of the temptation to linger—inactively or busily—before making a decision, thereby probably reducing the advantage of a correct course of action finally adopted. The more that military technology has advanced, and the greater the danger in a given situation, the sooner a decision is needed, but the longer it might be in the making: a propensity that the commander attempts to resist.

His subordinates, the commander knows, are apt to neglect preparing adequately for operations and to rely, foolishly, on improvising in the heat of combat (Chapter III). Plans are likely to be insufficiently

detailed; the precise capabilities and deployment of one's own side—one's own unit and its "neighbors"—may be but incompletely ascertained. Intelligence about the enemy may be neglected, both as to comprehensiveness and to specificity. Particularly, the enemy's firing points may be insufficiently located. The commander is aware of a natural disposition to exaggerate one's own strength and thus to pursue excessive objectives; this is an error that a subordinate is more likely to perceive in his superior than the other way around, whereas the superior will regard such an estimate as an expression of the subordinate's propensity for insufficient action. There is an inclination to underestimate the enemy. While one aims at surprising him with what one believes will seem impossible to him, one may end up being surprised by *him* in the same manner. One is likely to assume that enemy conduct will fit one's preferred plan, which may well be following routine. One may even, in fact, deny the enemy's existence and attack as if one were not going to come under the enemy's fire.

The commander will worry about whether any fighter or unit that has attained excellence in exercise or success in combat will become complacent and head for a fall. The successful ones, as well as those responsible for them, are apt to imagine that maintaining high performance is less arduous than achieving it. The first victory after protracted defeats may, in particular, make one dizzy with success. When an operation is proceeding favorably, the self-refuting belief is apt to emerge that success is already assured—that the damaged enemy is incapable of recuperation—while this is true only for the dead one. If sincerely held estimates are easily distorted by interest or feelings and by aversion to effort, there is also a propensity on the part of subordinates to present self-serving and convincing lies to superiors, to "cover up negative events" or even to "embellish the real situation" when it is not negative.

As war, like all of history, abounds in sharp turns, one should be capable of veering sharply in short order in all aspects of one's action, whether it is the direction of movement or the mode of combat. While planning an operation is required to counteract the inclination to improvise, deferring decisions until the last moment is recommended so as to take account of unforeseeable developments. There is, however, an inclination to persevere in executing an initial plan, regardless of the emergence of unforeseen opportunities or obstacles. Wouldn't the very process of changing conduct in the course of an operation damage it more than benefiting it? (And how would my superior react to my abandoning an initial plan that *he* had approved, if not conceived? That, to be sure, is rarely mentioned.) There is, the commander also

knows and deplores, a tendency to go beyond proper "persistence" in executing a given maneuver in the face of obstacles, to display "stubbornness" in repeating an attempt that has failed; and thus, perhaps, to lean over backward against an obscurely felt readiness to give up at the first difficulty.

As the Soviet forces have become stronger in relation to their potential enemies, the preference for offense has become stronger. The offensive may be urged not only for the gratification it provides and the confidence one places in it but also as a means of overcoming fear and passivity, both of which are incompatible with offensive action (Chapter IV). Such leaning over backward may make one indulge in the offensive to excess—the High Command warns—entrapping oneself, for instance, into one's own encirclement; or making a futile and costly frontal attack with insufficient or ineffective fire preparation instead of striking at the enemy's flank and rear. Accompanying a disposition to abuse offense—the High Command insists—is an inclination to shy away from this mode of combat. One may utilize less than fully an opportunity for further gain arising from that already made in an offensive but unforeseen in the attacker's initial plan; an advantage achieved may provoke exaggerated expectations of enemy counteraction. One may abstain from an advance for fear of being encircled, or if one is content with merely pushing the enemy back rather than encircling and then annihilating him. One's objective should be precisely the latter.

The commander is aware of a disposition to wait until the enemy strikes before striking him in return; whereas, in contrast, a heavy burden of proof should be placed on abstaining from preemption. Forestalling the enemy's attack disrupts his design and thereby degrades his decision function, making him employ his surviving resources less efficiently. It has by now become rare to publicly present defense as interchangeable with offense according to circumstances, thus viewing both as mere instruments for altering the force-ratio between oneself and the enemy; offense now dominates. The commander will only grudgingly accept defense as an unpleasant aspect of unfavorable conditions. Being both squeamish and skeptical about gains from defense, the commander will be reluctant to choose it freely. In particular, he will attempt to avoid "strict" defense in favor of one with major "active" components: counterstrikes, without which one is unlikely to be able even to hold the positions one occupies.

Being hostile to retreating, though not excluding it, the commander foresees that a retreat properly ordered may stimulate rearward movements of forces contrary to orders. Any explicit acknowledgment

of retreat as a normal mode of fighting will foster self-ordered withdrawals, developing into flight. Freely retreating for gain—to lure the enemy into what had been one's own depth—appears now to be excluded by the High Command's silence about it; even retrograde movements in mobile defense are scarcely mentioned, while mobile defense itself may be clearly rejected. There is only one kind of rearward movement about which the commander is at ease; that which has deception as its short-run aim. The enemy is made to waste his resources in attacking what he still believes to be our forward line from which we have, unbeknownst to him, withdrawn—thus perhaps also luring the enemy into a "fire bag."

The commander worries about the inclination of units, down to the smallest, and even of individual fighters, to go "warring by themselves"; such worries may also be due to fears that comrades and "neighbors" may let one down by a lack of skill or will. One may neglect the damage that an action useful to oneself imposes on others on one's side, and even forget about one's dependence on them. Superiors may lack interest in fostering cohesion among subordinates. Provisions for communication between units, as well as the utilization of existing channels, may be insufficient; communicating may be all too readily given up for the sake of other objectives, such as speed. Because of insufficient communications, but only by virtue of that, the operations of various units may be insufficiently coordinated, in space or in time. The same target may be unintentionally covered more than once. Instead of cooperating with other arms of the force in an "all arms" operation, each arm—particularly tanks—may operate alone and thereby doom its enterprise. If an offensive force is composed of several kinds of arms with differing capabilities for speed, each may use its own potential without regard for the others' movements. Mutual assistance in emergency hardly comes naturally (Chapter V).

Attempting to enhance the cohesion of his own force, the commander will endeavor to reduce that of the enemy. He attaches high worth to infiltrating the enemy's deployment and hence to developing skill in doing that; and he values to an extreme degree fragmenting the enemy force as the crucial step toward its annihilation. To do so he will limit acting on his preference for concentration in favor of a plurality of strikes. This will also make it more difficult for the enemy to determine the direction of the main strike, and so will facilitate surprise. The objective is not simply to fragment the enemy's force in any of several feasible ways, but rather to split it into its various arms. Of course, once you have fragmented (and usually encircled) the enemy, you are likely to be capable of annihilating him.

If personnel avoid inactivity, they may still be busy, the commander knows, in unproductive ways. Actions may be aimless, performed not so much to achieve goals as to discharge feelings. In acting, one may be inclined to disregard both opportunities offered and limits set by the "relationship of forces." Estimates and plans, or orders, may be incomplete; they may lack specificity and be at best ambiguous as to the specifics they might imply. There is thus a disposition to neglect detail—or to be overwhelmed by it. One may adopt designs for conduct that, degree of realism apart, are not "thought through." In particular, the time-span taken into account by calculations may be short, and the urge toward economy weak—whether with regard to works of command or to casualties in combat (Chapter VI).

The High Command does not cease to insist that reason in human beings is continuously threatened by feelings, the victory of which, in war, entails annihilation. The objective is to be calm (the more critical the moment, the calmer), hence capable of concentrating on the task at hand, hence performing it well. The commander, aware of the worth of stability, is worried by the natural disposition to be uneven over time in both quantity and quality of performance, often because of fluctuations of mood; and by the inclination to shift from one decision to another, perhaps veering from one extreme to the opposite.

In a critical moment, the commander foresees, personnel may be overwhelmed by painful feelings, may "lose their bearings." They will then become unstably overactive; or paralyzed; or, at least, and with nearly as bad an effect, slow; or may commit a mistake, perhaps reacting in a routine way or even persevering in a previously adopted course of action. Loss of bearings, the commander believes, is likely to occur when the time available for making a critical decision is suddenly and sharply reduced; or when one's current plan becomes abruptly and flagrantly inapplicable; or when there is high danger; or even when the situation is merely unfamiliar; or when it is, on any ground, unexpected. Everything unexpected is stressful. In contrast to the disposition to react inefficiently to the unexpected, the commander will insist on the capacity to orient oneself rapidly in the foreseen, and to discern quickly one's optimal reaction in the new circumstances. He is worried that personnel, in their effort to escape the unexpected, will decree, as it were, a single future for which one can then safely provide, rather than preparing to react to a variety of variants, or—even better—to the unexpected itself: prepared to be unprepared. While personnel are inclined to extrapolate the present, one should, on the contrary, expect "sharp turns."

The commander is concerned that his subordinates will rely for

success not on skill in inventing a maneuver and in handling weapons but on amounts of men and of fire. In contrast, the commander will attempt to "confuse" or even "stun" the enemy, so as to diminish the efficiency with which the latter will use his men and arms. It is with this in mind that one should reduce the time available to the enemy (see Chapter II), thereby "disrupting" his current design (for which one needs will and skill to divine it), and, above all, surprising him. The surprised enemy has little time available for devising and executing his reaction, and little intelligence upon which to base it. Stunned, he is slow in whatever he is doing. Hence, it may be worth renouncing other advantages for the sake of surprising. Apart from reducing the efficiency with which the enemy will use the surviving components of his system, the commander will assign a high priority to destroying the components themselves, thus degrading what the enemy can do with the rest. Whichever means are employed to degrade the enemy's decision-making, the commander is aware that success in this regard does nothing more—and nothing less—than put at his disposal a limited time for "utilizing" that degradation, time that is limited—for an enemy who has been merely enfeebled rather than annihilated will soon start working to reestablish his former capacity. He may achieve this objective unless the period of his degradation is prolonged by the one who brought it about and thus provides enough time to destroy the enemy's forces and means while they are down.

While the standard suggestion that the Soviets are capable of disarming the United States by destroying its strategic nuclear weapons is, of course, not to be taken at face value, the High Command may in fact be more hopeful about incapacitating the enemy's strategic arm by striking at his "head." Once one has deprived the enemy's state apparatus of its "capacity to function," to what degree and with what effectiveness would even his amply surviving strategic nuclear weapons be used? In this indirect fashion, or directly, counterforce is to the High Command the primary use of strategic nuclear force (on condition of a favorable exchange ratio), once one predicts that the enemy will perform large nuclear strikes. Strategic nuclear war is war; the probability that the resulting damage may be higher than in recent wars does not change the fact that counterforce is a way to limit such damage (Chapter VII). Soviet strategic nuclear planners are probably torn between maximizing the initial strike and husbanding their strategic resources. That only the initial strike is emphasized in public may be due to the fact that such a stance is judged more deterring in peacetime. In strategic nuclear war the outcome appears to be strongly affected by the capacity of a government to reestablish more rapidly than the

enemy not only civilian and military plant and equipment but also human resources and organizations. The side superior in that endeavor is, it is asserted, the Soviets. The High Command yearns for the capacity of "forestalling," by striking first, a strategic nuclear strike against the Soviets. The implausible allegation of one's capacity to destroy an imminent aggressor *prior to* his launch may be supported by coupling it with the easier assertion (except with regard to Euro-missiles!) of one's capacity to prevent the destruction of one's own force through launch *under* attack. The High Command's *urge* to preempt would probably be frustrated if calculations were to present such conduct as *highly* disadvantageous. Yet that urge would make them exacting if they were to ask for evidence in favor of a distasteful and anguishing waiting-to-be-struck when the expectation of war is high. And they would be likely to launch under attack—which may be why they appear not to be overly disturbed by the enhanced vulnerability of missile launchers fixed in space; and why, seeing the United States in this regard in their own image (ready to launch under attack), they may not attribute to themselves for the early eighties the advantage we often assign to them. The prominent public Soviet assertion excluding the possibility that in a war only some, but not all, available strategic nuclear weapons will be used is not meant seriously, but is stressed so as to deter. Perhaps because the Soviets are so interested in the distinction between deterrence and warfighting, they have kept silent about it. Because damage from strategic nuclear war is likely to be so high, one should make a maximum effort to limit that damage as well as to procure gain (unlikely as it may be) from the outcome of such a war.

Chapter I
WARDING OFF INACTION

The Suspicion of Inactivity

If the situation is bad, this—in the frequently expressed view of the Authorities—must be due to the insufficient *aktivnost'* of the officer in charge of it! "Surely," a military leader during the War tells a senior officer under his command, "no Germans have been facing you for a long time already, and so you are running in place (*toptat' sya na meste*)."[1] "One must act, not sleep," remarks the same leader over the phone to another subordinate, while "not listening to my explanation."[2] "The officers of the intelligence department of the Front," a famous commander recalls, "reproached us for inaction. . . . 'You are running in place. . . . One company of the German-Fascist forces contains your Division. . . .' This is what one often had to hear."[3]

> *The 191st Rifle Division, December 14, 1941, in the area of Leningrad:* "I found General Ivanov worried. He told me that the enemy had noticeably increased all kinds of reconnaissance; from dawn on, a Zeppelin appeared from time to time. I turned toward the chief of artillery of the Division.
>
> —And you are calmly looking on that "sausage"?
>
> —Why not calmly? M.A. Shchervokov answered. I have already had antiaircraft artillery brought up so as to shoot the Zeppelin down.
>
> —That is the way to act! I praised him."[4]

The one who attributes inaction may be charged with it in turn:

> November 23 [1942 in the area of Stalingrad], the Front commander arrived at the command post of the 65th Army. Somewhat later, my Chief of Staff told me: The Commander was extremely irritated—*Galanin* [commanding the neighboring 24th Army] *reported* that the divisions on the left flank of our 65th Army were inactive

> and thus endangered the 24th Army. I.S. Glebov [commanding the 65th Army] answered with utter sincerity that the Commander of the 24th Army was wrong: General Lilenko and Colonel Prokhorov [commanding the divisions on the left flank of the 65th Army] were fulfilling their missions honestly, in accordance with the plan of operation.
>
> The same day the Front received an indication from the Stavka: *"Galanin acts weakly. . . ."*[5]

One way of affirming the adequacy of one's action is to deny the allegation that it is insufficient. "But one must *not* think that the artillery command remained passive or simply reconciled itself to the situation which had come into being."[6] "The crew of the helicopters also did *not* sit folding their hands (*sidet' alozha ruki*)."[7]

Depressed Inaction

Inaction may derive from a bad mood.

Mood changes frequently and sharply, either for unknown reasons—"I do not know what spoiled the mood"[8]—or for petty ones:

> For instance, a tank company is sent to the training ground for a gunning exercise. By an oversight they forget to take something with them. Explanations begin, time is lost, mood falls.[9]

As mood falls, the level of action sinks:

> I had worn my sandals out . . . the affair seemed trifling. . . . However, I had to go frequently to the workshop as well as to the military store. Either the repair man wasn't there or he wasn't in the mood.[10]

A bad mood may thus set up a vicious circle. "When," in simulated combat, "the ship, after an attack which it did not undertake [presumably, wrongly—NL], was forced to prolong the search for the 'enemy' submarine, trouble in the equipment appeared. Though it was quickly removed, nevertheless there arose among the crew a feeling of lack of confidence which had an unfavorable impact on the precision with which targets were ascertained and on the reliability of contact with enemy submarines."[11]

The Authorities continue to wage the eternal Bolshevik battle to make performance less vulnerable to bad feelings. Reporting on "the

practical exercises concerning the fulfillment of tasks of combat training'' arranged by Captain Kolbasov, two officers observe that ''the trainees increasingly refuse to be impressed by various kinds of irritating stimuli which yesterday still threw them from the normal rhythm of work.''[12]

When, on the other hand, the Authorities entertain or allege confidence in their power to produce good feelings, they may accept the notion that performance does depend on them. On the first day of studies at the Military-Political Academy in the Name of V. I. Lenin, with an address to students and faculty by Marshal Grechko, ''the good send-off by the Minister of Defense . . . created a situation of special elation and businesslikeness, created the mood of a disposition for work.''[13]

Indifference

Inaction can follow from indifference. Instead of recognizing confident serenity, one may perceive callous detachment:

> —What is happening with you?
>
> —The Germans counterattack. . . . [ellipsis in original—NL]. Nothing more.
>
> —How ''nothing more?'' Your right flank is retreating, and for you that is ''nothing''?
>
> —Well, I will hold them. . . .[14]

Personnel, the High Command allows itself to disclose in peacetime, often show a ''light-minded attitude toward assignments''[15] which leads to ''negligence (*bespechnost'*, *neradivost'*, *khalatnost'*) in performance. What is thus designated is often the presence of ''indifference (*bezrazlichie, ravnodushie*),'' the absence of fire. ''No fire was felt in the competition, which found striking expression in the . . . exercise.''[16] ''In this unit one did not feel a real combat élan. . . . Some soldiers reacted with indifference.''[17] Personnel will ''show an unconcerned (*bezuchastnyi*) attitude toward. . . .''[18] In simulated combat ''ten or so officers went on reconnaissance, or even a larger number, but only the commander and the heads of intelligence and artillery participated in the organization of the battle. The others kept the pose of bystander even when a matter concerning them directly was discussed.''[19]

Such a state of affairs may be guessed to lie behind a façade of

strenuous denials. "They cannot stand aside from such an important matter as. . . ."[20] "One felt that these specialists were not simply idle spectators, but rather active participants of the exercise. . . ."[21]

That the High Command believes this reaction to be both widespread *and damaging rather than normal* is indicated by the stress it puts on countermeasures. "The communists," an observer will say about a unit, "*stubbornly strive to obtain* that every soldier consider the fulfillment of his obligations as his very own intimate affair and give himself over to it wholly."[22] It apparently takes "selfless work and flaming words" on the part of communists to "obtain from the fighters" merely "an honest attitude toward the fulfillment of their service obligations."[23] Indeed, with regard to reactions as basic as "the feeling of obligation and responsibility for one's assignment . . . the rearing of these qualities . . . is a lengthy and complicated process, the results of which do not appear immediately. It requires stubborn, arduous work."[24]

Work is required against an attitude that is not named in the statements just quoted, but that is at times fully designated, such as when we learn that "Senior Lieutenant Vladimirov knew by experience: when *no* soldiers *indifferent* to the fate of the common cause are present in the collective, then any difficulties can be overcome."[25] "As is well known," comments another officer, "every undertaking has one enemy whose name is *indifference*."[26] "Fight indifference" seems to be a slogan recommended to young officers.

The habitual hold of indifference may be acknowledged once it has passed: "How the character of the exercise had changed! Even the most inert soldiers had come to life!"[27]

Misfortunes are apt to provoke indifference. When a young officer has committed a mistake, is censured by his superior, attempts to undo his error, commits another one in that very effort, and is now censured more strictly, he writes his friend: "You won't believe it, but I was seized by some kind of indifference. . . ."[28]

But an ostensibly minor, unintentional slight might have the same result, as a lieutenant learned: "Earlier I noted in the eyes of Sergeant Alenov signs of live interest in the unit's business. I liked his energy. . . . But gradually the light in the eyes of the sergeant became extinguished, and there appeared a cold estrangement."[29]

Even a favorable state of the soul may be felt to hover on the brink of indifference. "*Uravnoveshennost'* [equilibrium of mind, even temper]," warns General Pavlovskii, "must not pass over into indifference."[30] There is, one may hear, a category of officers who at first attract no attention to themselves: they have neither problems nor

successes. But then, after a year or two, such an officer may become indifferent to everything. Thus moderation veers toward insufficiency; to guard against too little or nothing, one must obtain much or all.

In addition, one may convince oneself that perfection is required if one is to obtain any substantial result. "More than once," an observer recalls, "I had to be present at exercises in the platoons commanded by Senior Lieutenant B. Braun and Ensign I. Deiba." To be sure, "externally, here, training and competition always seemed to be organically fused." Yet "one felt that all this was done without soul, in a formal fashion. as a 'measure' prescribed by somebody." And "*hence* the *weak* results of the competition."[31]

In these conditions, the absence of indifference becomes a kind of excellence. "There were no indifferent ones" is a striking thing to say about a unit,[32] as it is for a Marshal to describe it as one "where communists and Komsomol members show a personal example . . . of an honest relationship to service. . . ."[33]

> The submariners now had to perform the complicated work of . . inspecting the complexes and systems of the ship. This is a laborious and meticulous process. It is not easy to accelerate it, but there was a need for doing so; and now the rocket specialist, Captain of the Third Rank Yu. Kavizin, approached the commander.
>
> —In my opinion, Comrade Commander, there is a way to shorten the work.
>
> The officer's idea was highly effective and elegant. But that which perhaps gladdened Captain of the First Rank Lyulin above all was Kavizin's deep interest in the common business, his willingness and striving to help the commander.[34]

"Technology," say his comrades about Major-Engineer E. Koval, "is his element." The High Command proposes to enlarge this bit of utopia, setting itself the task "to create a situation . . . in which people themselves, without prompting, without having to be aroused, actively strive to help the commander."[35] The way in which this aspiration is expressed indicates how distant it is from a reality corrupted by indifference.

Indecisiveness

If one avoids indifference, one may still not arrive at action, for one may succumb to indecisiveness (*nereshitel'nost'*). According to some German commanders, "the Red leadership was repeatedly indecisive

in crises."[36] When a Soviet analyst wants to give an example of the exceptional "circumstances . . . in which a senior commander *can* assume the functions of a subordinate and himself complete the battle," what comes to his mind? "A senior commander cannot look with indifference at a subordinate . . . resolved upon nothing whatsoever. . . ."[37] A false decision—it may even be asserted despite the intensity of the Bolshevik aspiration to be capable of finding the "correct" one—is better than none. "In the analysis of such a large quality of all kinds of data as is usually involved in a commander's decision, even an electronic brain may make a mistake. All the more a live human being whom nature herself left the right to an . . . error. There is only one thing which the commander cannot admit—not making a decision. Of that right he is deprived."[38] For "combat," as the *Field Manual* of 1944 finds it useful to recall, "is the only means to attain victory."

More particularly, one may be subjected to *doubts* leading to *vacillation (kolebanie)*. Hence the requirement, in General Altunin's standard words, "to surmount doubts, . . . to reduce to a minimum vacillation in the taking of a decision, . . . to avoid . . . vacillation in the taking of a decision";[39] to possess "the capacity to take a decision without vacillating *even* in a situation which is insufficiently clear."[40]

Leaning over backward, one should *present* to subordinates an air of certainty. "In assigning tasks," General Pavlovskii teaches, one must preserve . . . a categorical manner so that subordinates be convinced: the decision adopted by the commander is the only correct one." For "this creates a corresponding . . . mood among the personnel . . . confidence in success."[41]

Once a commander has taken a decision, it might be useful for him to *feel* such certainty himself. " 'Fine fellow, battalion commander!' Major-General Vitalii Andreevich Tsapko . . . approached guards Captain Valeryi Demitkin [in a maneuver] . . . . And already addressing himself to all the officers who without a command had assembled around them, the General . . . said: 'Do you know what has pleased me most of all in your comrade? His boldness on the battlefield. His boldness deriving from the . . . certainty that in the given situation one must act thus and only thus. . . .' "[42]

Not Carrying Through

But even when one has made a fairly unambiguous decision, one is still only at the beginning of the long and difficult path of executing

it; one still has to surmount, in oneself and in one's subordinates, *"the penchant not to execute a decision taken (neispolnitel'nost')."* "Not in vain is it said," observes an analyst, "that between calculation and realization there is an immense distance."[43] It "is possible for a commander to evaluate accurately a most difficult situation, make the only correct decision, but then not realize it. . . ."[44]

That the High Command discerns in its forces a disposition *not* to "go to the end" in the execution of missions is indicated in several ways.

It may, for instance, seem worthwhile to dwell on any number of capital, but also obvious, aspects of the path leading from the choice of an objective to its realization. "The best founded decision will be hanging in air," a senior officer explains, "if the commander does not show the will . . . for his calculation to be realized."[45] "One may adopt a bold and original, well-grounded . . . decision," it will be pointed out, and yet "substantially amidst slowness . . . and one will fail." For "it is important to obtain the fulfillment of a decision taken."[46]

Without stringent measures of enforcement—it may be observed, as if this were a matter of course—there would be little carrying through of enterprises upon which one had ostensibly embarked. It is, according to an analyst, "as a rule" that lack of surveillance will lead to *neispolnitel'nost*.[47]

"Beyond such clear implications, direct admissions of the penchant in question abound."[48] "Lieutenant A. Zelentsov passionately undertook everything, but brought nothing to a conclusion."[49] "A substantial discrepancy," goes a typical observation, "turned out to exist between what these officers had planned and what they had really executed."[50] A headline of the armed forces' daily puts this constellation into a formula: "Obligations Are One Thing. But What Will Actually Happen? *(V obyazatel'stvkh odno. A na dele?)*"[51] "The famous army truth," muses a senior officer, "[that] the commander gives an order, the subordinates fulfill it, is in fact not that simple."[52] "Sometimes one wonders," adds a peer, "why it has not become the rule among us that 'if you have given your word—keep it, if you have undertaken an obligation—fulfill it!' "[53]

Personnel may be busy on behalf of a certain objective, and yet not advance it. "Regrettably," observes General Pavlovskii about the study of the new Regulations, "one also encounters facts such as these: a voluminous enumeration of measures is made, ostentatious exercises are held, examinations passed, but the change in the life of the unit

which could be expected is not visible."[54] There are, one may hear, commanders who pass the entire day with study of their in-box and their out-box, with the composition of resolutions, with questions and answers, agreements, meetings, and conferences—without, it is implied, any yield to speak of.

Or there may be even less excuse for not following through. "Sometimes," a senior officer observes, "much noise is made when obligations are being undertaken. But then silence sets in, and they are forgotten."[55] "Some comrades," according to an anonymous authority, "remember the actions they had intended to accomplish only when the term for their realization has already elapsed."[56]

One may fail to follow through even when the path toward doing so may seem to us—and to the High Command—short and simple. "It is not rare," General Pavlovskii notes, "that a punishment which has been announced is not applied, remaining merely on paper." Thus "Private Shurov was condemned to arrest three times in 1966, but at no time imprisoned."[57]

Time and energy may be spent in discussions among the people concerned with an objective, rather than on its realization. "Because of protracted conferences toward which some commanders nourish an inexhaustible passion," comments one observer, "a large part of the objectives entertained by commanders of companies, batteries, platoons . . . remains on paper."[58] "One still finds commanders," agrees a military leader (who also infers intent from effect), "who allot much time to . . . establishing coordination, to meetings and conferences, and thus strive to create a lying impression of being unusually businesslike, coherent, organized."[59] One may not even note, or care, that discussions are redundant. "In the . . . party organization of the unit whose political worker was comrade Zolotar, the question of measures to strengthen military discipline was discussed in meetings four times in the course of the year," while "the incidence of violations did not diminish." Now "if one analyzes . . . the resolutions taken, one arrives at the conclusion that there was in essence one and the same resolution, repeated four times . . ."; what happened was that "they produced paper and did not fulfill what was decided."[60]

Paper is apt to be the actual output. "But the good intentions remained on paper."[61]

Vanished into the air, or powerless on paper, the result is but empty words, a "divergence between word and deed, . . . an operation which does not go beyond talk, . . . chattering, . . . a light-minded attitude toward one's word, . . . words thrown to the wind."

The words may call for going beyond words, and thus help to

overlook the fact that one does not. "In the company and in the battalions," a military analyst notes, "there is much talk about the necessity of struggle for quality and efficiency." "But," he adds, "is it not sometimes forgotten that quality and efficiency are concrete conceptions, obliging one to care for the thoroughness of the preparation of each exercise?"[62] A commander may exalt his prerogative of giving orders, and then not issue any (just as a famous type of Russian nineteenth-century revolutionary exalted action and then did not act).

> *A conference of corps and division commanders of the 2nd Belorussian Front, June 7, 1944, with the new Front commander:* "Zakharov . . . launched into a disquisition on the difference between command conferences and meetings in general. The word 'command' was uttered with a maximum of feeling. Then came a harangue that began as follows: 'I am the one who does the talking here, and it's your job to listen and take note of my instructions.' He then insisted on seeing what people were going to take their notes on. Hands were raised holding tattered note pads and scraps of paper. Zakharov had some exercise books which he had obviously been keeping for this purpose; he had them given out and explained at some length what they were for. Having thus been equipped with exercise books, everyone naturally made ready to take down his instructions, but no instructions were forthcoming. Instead the commander made people stand up and questioned them in turn on army regulations and all-arms combat tactics. . . ."[63]

Officers may display "a show of total readiness for action." They "unceasingly repeat 'yes, Sir!', 'this will be executed!' But when the time arrives to report on the practical execution of the matter, they find with similar ease 'objective' reasons which allegedly prevented that."[64] A commander, it may be said, seems to work with the full expenditure of his forces; he apparently strives to react without delay to all remarks of his superiors. However, in reality this is not the case. From higher levels orders come down, plans for measures to eliminate defects are worked out, time passes—and still one observes the same defects. "When obligations were assumed," General Pavlovskii recalls about a unit, "many speeches were pronounced. But then everything fell silent, and the obligations were forgotten."[65] "Formerly, one could often observe how before the beginning of the training year, or of the period of teaching or competition, there was talk on every step, as the saying goes. Meetings were held, obligations discussed. . . . But then the competition was, as it were, forgotten. Its results were not even

established everywhere, the victors not determined."[66] "As a recent verification has shown," a senior officer reports, "a number of units . . . have not fulfilled the obligations they have undertaken, have shown themselves to be among the 'givers of false promises.' "[67]

> In the past training year the ship commanded by Captain of the Third Rank Yu. Savel'ev undertook a high socialist obligation. In meetings many promises and assurances were pronounced. But the promises remained on paper, the assurances remained hanging in the air. The crew surrendered positions it had already won.[68]

Thus, busy boasting may *replace* work to make the claim come true; there is the "delight of some comrades in discussing objectives at the expense of . . . working toward them."[69] "There are comrades," one observes over the years, "whose 'activity' and 'vanguard role' manifests itself above all in words . . . who report right and left on the high obligations they have undertaken, but do not expend any effort on their fulfillment."[70] "Among us," another senior officer agrees, "have not yet disappeared the lovers of making noise, of beating drums. It costs them nothing to throw a loud shout, to assume high obligations, to come forward with an initiative, and to do nothing for its realization." For instance,

> on the ship where Officer Puchkaev is the commander's political deputy, more than half a year ago obligations were undertaken which were not bad. The commander, the political worker, the other officers, the Party and the Komsomol organizations should have been concerned with how best to realize these obligations, they should have deployed hard and tenacious work to that effect. But the communists-leaders of the ship took another path. They began to declaim everywhere and at all times what a precious initiative they had shown, how much they had promised. Days followed days, but on the ship nobody was concerned with organizing the fulfillment of the obligations. When the time of accounting came, it turned out that the obligations had remained a mere sound.[71]

Such conduct is facilitated by an obscure and powerful belief that words will do, that an enthusiastic resolve ("throwing one's cap into the air") compels success: a faith which, to the High Command, is worth uncovering and rejecting. "The study of the new Regulations," one may point out, "is of course not an end in itself." Rather, "it is important that every person in military service . . . strictly obey the requirements of the Regulations. . . ."[72] "The very best decision,"

it seems appropriate to explain, "has worth only in case it is backed up by practical deeds."[73] That is, "resolutions, however well thought through, do not decide the matter by themselves."[74] "It is well known"—would one say it if it really were?—"that a well-composed plan is only the beginning of work, for the main thing is its realization."[75] Personnel may be praised for having grasped this truth: "adopting socialist obligations for the summer period of training, the fighters understand that appeals alone will not suffice. . . ."[76]

One may, of course, assign responsibility for execution to others. "The staff," demands General Pavlovskii, "must not work according to the principle: the document is signed—and hence it is off our backs *(s plech doloi).*"[77]

Being content with words, one may be particularly attached to words difficult to pronounce, such as admissions of one's own defects. "There is," an observer notes, "a category of people [officers] who . . . 'self-critically' acknowledge defects in their work," but "only in words." For instance, "more than once I met with officers V. Martynyuk and V. Yudinskii. Under the pressure of incontrovertible facts, they quickly agreed that there were defects in their work. But these were revealed again at the next inspection. . . ." Then it seems worth affirming that "the value of self-criticism is determined by . . the readiness to proceed immediately to the correction of mistakes."[78]

Not being very deeply concerned with the need to execute what has been decided, one may resolve upon the unfulfillable. "Obligations are undertaken without taking account of real possibilities, and then not fulfilled."[79] Thus *neispolnitel'nost'* joins with complacency (see Chapter II).

Again and again it will be discovered about a commander that "he showed an unconcerned attitude toward the question how his own orders were fulfilled"[80]—both from indifference and from the power attributed to the act of command. In the retreat of the Soviet forces in the Crimea in the spring of 1942, the Stavka affirms, "Comrade Kozlov [the commander of the forces] and Mikhlis [the representative of the Stavka] considered that their major task consisted in the giving of orders, that their function of leadership ended with the issuing of an order. They did not understand that the issuing of an order is only the beginning of work and that the main task of the commander consists in securing the fulfillment of the order. . . ."[81] In fact, "as to the order given to the 51st Army to cover the withdrawal of all forces of the Front behind the Turkish Wall, the order was not even delivered to the Army commander."[82]

In these conditions the High Command insists that "words not

diverge from deeds," that a person act "not in words, but in fact." "To be honest," it seems useful to explain, "means not to throw words to the wind, but to act upon them."[83] More positively, one must "be true to one's word," maintain "unity between word and deed . . . absolutely fulfill the obligations one has assumed . . . go to the end." "It is completely clear"—again, would one say it if it really were?—"that it is insufficient for a communist to merely be in accord with Party decisions." Rather, "he is obliged to stubbornly fight for their realization."[84] "The question is," General Epishev evidently believes it necessary to assert with regard to a major problem, "to transfer the solution of the problem of the quality of training from the plane of general slogans to that of practical realization."[85] "Beyond the Decision, There Is the Carrying Through of It," proclaims a title.[86] "Finish what you have begun," is a rule for young officers. So little is decision linked to execution that another general officer can remark that "after all, any order, disposition or command must above all be fulfilled." "In the course of the battle," proclaims a general officer in standard fashion, "commanders and staffs are obliged . . . to struggle stubbornly for the realization of decisions taken."[87] After an order has been given, according to Marshal Grechko, the genuinely combat-capable officer strives for its realization at all cost: that does *not* go without saying.

Those who do so strive receive a top grade. "Almost thirty years have passed," a general officer reminisces, "since the day when I took leave from my platoon commander Lieutenant Mindlenii. But even now he is before my eyes." Why? "He has remained in my memory as the embodiment of carrying through. There was not a single case in which he would have terminated an exercise earlier than the time set, in which he would not have worked this or that question through to the end."[88] "They Kept Their Word," proclaims a headline.[89] "After the decision taken by the Party meeting, there followed the deed."[90] "What was valuable in the conduct of the sergeant was that this commander [in a simulated battle] . . . having adopted a decision, executed it to the end without vacillation."[91] Lieutenant V. Novikov established as a rule for himself that he strictly fulfill plans.[92] Of a model officer it will be said, "If he takes something on, he will bring the matter to its end."[93] As to Navy Captain of the Second Rank V. Prokopov, he "is . . . a fervent partisan of faultlessly carrying through."[94] "The staff officers of this regiment," a senior commander reports, "possess such qualities as the aspiration to fulfill a mission precisely and in the required time, at any price."[95] "For many units and ships," it is noted with relief and pride, "it has become a law:

if a promise is made, it must be firmly fulfilled,''[96] Thus, ''there is every ground for hoping that they will keep their word.''[97] ''When Captain Morozov was appointed to a higher position, nobody among his older comrades doubted that he would satisfactorily discharge his new and more difficult obligations''; for ''the unity of word and deed had become a norm of conduct for him.''[98] This may even be the case, if not for a whole unit, then at least for its best elements: ''When you have taken an obligation, fulfill it, when you have given your word, keep it, do everything precisely in the fashion in which it was planned and promised—this immutable law became the rule for the foremost personnel of the company.''[99] ''It was always thus with him,'' remarks a commander of a colleague's conduct during the War; ''if he said it, he did it.''[100]

Such excellence ''does not come by itself''; far from it. Indeed, ''the education of all fighters in the spirit of strict conformity to the unity of word and deed [is] a most important obligation of the political departments [in the armed forces], of Party organizations, of all communists.''[101]

The supreme achievement of such high effort would be to do away with the need for it. Alas, if to carry through is not an easy task, it is even more difficult to assure that it is not a consequence of enforcement, but rather a natural necessity. In public, the difficulty may be neglected, as when officers are called upon by a senior commander ''to create in every military collective an atmosphere in which carrying-through . . . becomes an inner need of everybody.''[102]

The urges toward *nereshitel'nost'* and *neispolnitel'nost'* appear to be so widespread and strong that one or the other may be believed to have suddenly taken hold of a person who for a long time has never succumbed to it. ''It is not possible,'' a military leader declares, ''to make judgments upon the inability and lack of resolution of an officer who has been through the whole war on the basis of the result of one day's fighting.''[103] He may have in mind an incident such as this, which a commander of a tank brigade recalls from the winter of 1945:

> The day went toward its end. . . . While the situation in our sector was unchanged, we followed regulations.
>
> At twelve o'clock at night . . . the decoder gave me a combat instruction. General Ivanov ordered that the Brigade be taken out of the position it occupied, that it accomplish a night march and put itself at dawn at the disposal of . . . General . . . Mitrofanov . . . commanding the 6th Tank Corps.
>
> I called the Chief of Staff; it was his job to fulfill the instruction received.

With heavy tread, Sverbikhin came into the room. The task was not so difficult, and I, knowing the exceptional executive ability of the Chief of Staff, decided to sleep for an hour or two. When I woke up it was four o'clock in the morning.

—Where is the Brigade?—I immediately asked the Adjutant, having first rebuked him for not having woken me up in time.

Kozhemyakov leapt out on the street and after some minutes reported:

—Comrade Colonel, the Brigade is in place.

—How 'in place'?

I called the Chief of Staff.

—Why have you not led the battalions out of the battle?

—I don't know.

—Has the instruction on the transfer to the north been given?

—I don't know, answered Sverbikhin as in sleep.

—And do you know of what this smells? I said, losing my patience.

—I have not received any instructions from you, and I have not given any to anybody, he suddenly announced.

Losing my bearings, I looked at Sverbikhin: what had happened? I had known this man for a long time. He was a model of executive ability, of discipline, of boldness and honesty. He conducted staff work so that other brigade commanders envied me. And suddenly this! Had he not gone off his head?

—Grigorii Andreevich, are you not ill? Why did you not give the order to the battalion commanders? Where is the radiogram which I gave you last night?

—I have not seen anything, answered the Chief of Staff sullenly.

I looked at Sverbikhin and did not recognize him. *How could I have been so mistaken in him?* Could this staff officer with an executive ability reaching pedantry . . . change in such a manner in one moment? By his guilt a combat task was disrupted. The Brigade had to enter into battle together with the 6th Tank Corps next morning. Every minute was precious, every machine, every man, and here we still found ourselves in our previous positions. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].

Sverbikhin was silent, weakly lowering his head. Red spots appeared on his face. But his sight did not arouse sympathy in me; on the contrary, a new wave of *indignation* seized me.

I don't know how this would have ended if Dmitriev had not run into the room. He stood between us and with a calm voice softly said:

—Comrade Sverbikhin, explain what happened. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].

> —I don't know anything about any orders . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. I don't remember having received one . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] affirmed the Chief of Staff in toneless fashion.
>
> —Do you understand what you're saying? asked Aleksandr Pavlovich anew. The matter concerns the fulfillment of a combat order!
>
> Sverbikhin lowered his head even more, pressed the fingers of his left hand with his right one, and was silent. I was smoking heavily . . . trying to gain control over myself, began to pace up and down, colliding here with the table and there with the stool. This enraged me even more. I . . . went toward Sverbikhin, saying with a voice which was not my own:
>
> —Leave the Brigade immediately and go wherever you want.
>
> Sverbikhin trembled as from a blow, sank his head into his shoulders . . . clumsily turned around and, swaying, left the room.[104]

It is only the next day that the Commander is made to return to his fleeting thought that his loyal and competent subordinate may be ill:

> From the story of the woman orderly of Sverbikhin, what had happened that night became known to me. The uninterrupted battle, the strong tension, the sleepless nights had finally exhausted Grigorii Andreevich. To this was added an acute stomach illness. He hardly was able to move, overcoming pain. Having received from me the document with the text of the order, Sverbikhin reached his room with difficulty and lost consciousness. When he came to again, there apparently occurred a break (*proval*) in his memory.[105]

The Commander's first misgivings with his own conduct are not that he had misdiagnosed the state of his collaborator, but that he had exceeded his own rights:

> Had I conducted myself correctly when I removed Sverbikhin? This thought tormented me all the time. Formally, I had no right whatsoever to act as I had done. The appointment and the removal of a chief of staff of a brigade belonged to the jurisdiction of an Army commander.[106]

At this point, the Commander is not prepared to waive penalty in the case of illness: all that matters is the consequences of conduct, never mind whether the person who has engaged in it had, at that moment, the capacity to avoid it or not:

> But I did not have . . . the right to leave unpunished even a single case of the nonfulfillment of an order.[107]

Still, contrition would have furnished a basis for omitting punishment:

> It is true, if Grigorii Andreevich had come to me the next day, explained everything, I would perhaps have changed my decision. But he did not do that.[108]

The requirement for punishment of a violation according to its gravity, without mitigating circumstances and without exceptions, prevails:

> At that moment, it was not permissible to act otherwise. . . . For a blunder, even if justified by illness, the former Chief of Staff of the Brigade bore the punishment.[109]

Even if the violation were justifiable by illness, the violator's unawareness of that is not justifiable: "He should have let me know that he was not capable of fulfilling the obligations of his position"—there should be no loss of memory about loss of memory. A superior and friend of the Commander, a famous military leader (Rybalko) with whom the Commander discusses the matter, and who takes a more lenient attitude, is unwilling to contradict him:

> —And you, Comrade Commander, how would you act in such a situation [Dragunskii asks Rybalko]?[110]
>
> Pavel Semenovich fell silent, moved his head to the side in thought, tore at his earlobe with his fingers. Then he looked at me . . . said goodbye and left . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].[111]

(Five years later, when, by accident, Sverbikhin is proposed as chief of staff to Dragunskii, who is now commanding a division, Dragunskii asks for him, Sverbikhin accepts, and they have many happy years together.)[112]

Low Action

Instead of taking it for granted that the level of activity in the forces has its limits in peacetime, the Soviet High Command affects intolerance of the disposition of persons who should be doers—"participants"—to make themselves into mere "spectators": one more manner of wasting time (see Chapter II). Indeed, according to an observer,

"in some tactical exercises of large scale it often happens that soldiers, and sometimes even sergeants, don't do anything at all."[113]

> It was natural to expect that Lieutenant G. Bogatov, acting as company commander, would make the effort to organize the exercise so that it would be of maximum usefulness for all.
>
> However, one had to observe . . . [the following] picture. In the advancing dusk the combat vehicles stood solitary. Far from them, in the rear part of the grounds, a campfire was burning. Around it sat soldiers.
>
> —What are you going to exercise?
>
> —We are preparing equipment and weapons for firing.
>
> —Here at the campfire?
>
> Private G. Troshev explained imperturbably:
>
> —The tyros are in the vehicles, they learn how to handle them . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. That is useful for them.
>
> In fact, in the BMPs gunners . . . were sitting who had arrived very recently from the teaching unit. Left to themselves they essentially did nothing: . . . just like those who warmed themselves at the campfire. Here was Sergeant V. Radchenko who hastened to say that he was still new in the company and for this reason bore no responsibility for the organization of the exercise.[114]

> The first three hours [of the day] in the platoon commanded by Lieutenant Yu. Nechaev were to consist in tactical preparation. According to the timetable, that should begin at 8:30. However, at 9 o'clock, the platoon was still engaged in trooping the colors. . . . Only at 9:10 did the soldiers reach barracks. It took another quarter of an hour to collect their weapons and gas masks and to prepare themselves for the exercise. Finally, the platoon left the barracks and directed itself to the place of the exercise. This was only several hundred meters away but passage took . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] 20 minutes.
>
> Thus the lesson began at 9:55, that is, with a delay of one hour and 25 minutes. . . . Then the leader . . . announced a "break" though only 15 minutes had passed since the beginning of the lesson.
>
> After the interruption . . . the personnel exercised only 20 minutes. The officer collected the platoon in formation and with this the exercise ended. . . . From the three hours allotted to tactical preparation, the motorized riflemen had trained for 35 minutes.[115]

Idleness may be resisting orders; there is a type of "commander who cannot achieve the condition where personnel do not stand around idly. . . ."[116]

But idleness may also be imposed upon subordinates. This may

be merely implied, as when we are shown soldiers who "stood there in the cold wind, and from their faces one could see that they were simply bored."[117] Or arrangements imposing idleness may be actually described. "Junior Sergeant V. Zhigarev . . . called on one soldier and trained him. The others stood around and watched, doing nothing."[118]

> The group of fighters under the leadership of Junior Sergeant Morozyuk is in the process of fulfilling the norms for the dismantling and assembling of weapons. The exercise is built in this fashion: one soldier takes an automatic rifle to pieces, and five watch him do it . . . and thus in turn.
>
> Of course, observing the actions of comrades is also a form of training; frankly speaking, not the most effective one. Without difficulty one could organize the affair so that all fighters at the same time fulfilled the norm.[119]

This suggestion is applied by another unit where, "while one crew was firing, other tankmen did not passively wait for their 'turn,' but rather fulfilled . . . obligations . . . on training vehicles."[120]

Yet though "everybody knows that in exercises the troops should conduct active combat actions for most of the time, . . . nevertheless, it happens that units find themselves for two or three days in their starting areas so that commanders may have the possibility of . . . studying tasks on the terrain."[121]

> —Why don't you begin the firing exercise? I asked the Lieutenant. The answer:
>
> —I don't have the right, the leader is not here. He must give the command . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]
>
> True, the leader of the firing exercise, the commander of the battalion, was absent; he had been detained somewhere. But that does not mean that one could not engage in useful activity without him. The company commander did not have the right to begin the firing exercise, but he could have organized and was obliged to organize training on teaching points.[122]

> One ship conducted a search for an "enemy" submarine. This occupied only the ASW unit. The other seamen . . . did not feel at all that they participated in "combat," they were bored, waiting for the end of the trip. This was discussed at a Party meeting. At that occasion the communists of the ship were criticized for not having utilized the period of search for working, for instance, on tasks of fighting for the ship's survivability (*zhivuchest'*), the repulse of the air enemy, etc.[123]

> According to intelligence, the attack of the "enemy" was going to occur the next morning. Thus the company had a day at its disposal. How was it utilized? The Deputy Commander for Political Affairs . . . conducted a short conversation with the future officers. Then the officers in training worked out actions in pursuance of an insignificant directive. The remaining many hours they sat with their hands folded.
>
> But it would have been possible to organize exercises about tactics, the working out of norms concerning the use of individual means of defense [against nuclear weapons], to arrange for training in the overcoming of natural obstacles, etc. The conditions for this were most appropriate. But Major Grishin did not utilize them.[124]

One major way of wasting time is thus to wait.

For instance, to wait for one's turn. "Somebody," notes an officer after observing an exercise, "was firing, and somebody else smoking, his mind absent, awaiting his 'turn.' "[125]

> This is what results: two officers stand there, discuss something, show something to each other, enter something on the map. But the unit, awaiting instruction, does nothing.[126]

Some may be waiting because another has failed to prepare in good time:

> One of these days I stayed for an exercise . . . with the tank company commanded by Guards Senior Lieutenant P. Kozhevnikov. . . . The working through of the theme began with a delay of twelve minutes. And this only because Guards Lieutenant Yu. Kudryavtsev, acting as company commander, did not verify beforehand the readiness of the machines used for military training. They turned out to be unprepared. It became necessary to eliminate the defects before leaving. As a result, there was delay.[127]

Or one may wait because somebody else is late:

> A firing exercise. According to the timetable, there already should be firing, but I hear no shots. Some soldiers stand around the canteen, others smoke beneath the pines. I inquire with the fighters why they don't exercise.
>
> —We are waiting for the company Commander, explained Junior Sergeant A. Morozyuk.
>
> The waiting continued for a long time. . . . One and a half

> hours of training time were lost. Finally, the company proceeded to the exercise.[128]

> It turned out that the motorized riflemen had trained to attack in difficult conditions only for a little bit more than three hours out of six. The rest of the time was spent on an "easy" march into the training area and back, on waiting for the officer in charge of the tank platoon who had, incomprehensibly, been detained somewhere. . . .[129]

What appears to be high activity may in fact be a kind of ordered idleness. "Some submarine commanders," a senior officer observes, "endlessly announce alerts during which the personnel [are at their] combat posts for hours having nothing to do. . . ."[130]

Commanded inactivity is apt to be tiring rather than restful. "Sometimes," notes another observer, "officers, before firing exercises and without any need for it, force personnel to remain for a considerable time in the place of exercise, give insufficient attention to the organization of . . . rest. As a result, the fighters are tired at the beginning of the exercise and sometimes fulfill their obligations only with difficulty."[131]

If, in the face of their commander's dereliction, subordinates proceed on their own, they may merely replace damage from inaction with loss from faulty operation:

> In fact, nobody commanded the firing from the BMPs. How else could one explain, for instance, that Sergeant V. Rybkin and Private V. Dovletyarov on their own opened fire from a distance which clearly did not allow for the reliable destruction of the target?[132]

Even if one avoids utter idleness, one may still fall prey to listlessness in action—that is, to less than a full effort. A military leader distinguishes between "those who work giving their full force and those who work only listlessly."[133] "It occurs," according to another prominent observer, "that an officer possesses sufficient mental and physical force, but does not have the desire or the patience to use them effectively . . . who fulfills orders listlessly,"[134] not "in the full measure of his possibilities,"[135] not "strenuously" but rather "lowering his arms."

That is probably (see the section on Indifference, above) because "it can't be said that he burns in his work,"[136] because he operates "flaccidly . . . without fire . . . without inspiration . . . in soulless fashion":

> In the case of Junior Lieutenant Valery Pugachev, service didn't work out from the very beginning. . . . His indifference toward the affairs of the platoon soon became clear. He did not feel like making efforts in work.[137]

Or, "not being overburdened with work," he may enjoy a quiet life as the very aspiration of man.[138] Such a person will serve "in middling fashion."[139]

Again and again the High Command comes up against the fact that "people are content with extremely modest results."[140] Yet the consequences of engaging in less than a full effort are highly damaging. "Only four percent of gross violations of military laws," recalls a senior officer, "occurred during training. The overwhelming majority of violations of discipline took place during the time when personnel was left to itself."[141]

Subordinates, the High Command suspects, are all too ready to "set great hopes on the development of an enterprise *left to itself*"; to forecast, wrongly and conveniently, that "everything will take shape by itself";[142] to entertain "the calculation that the concurrence of circumstances will be favorable."[143]

Hence the need to teach that "hopes for favorable developments occurring by themselves (*nadezhda na samotek*) are bad hopes."[144] At its very best, spontaneity is too slow. Thus, for instance, with regard to the maturing of junior commanders, "one cannot wait until life will have taught them, until they will come to everything by themselves."[145] Rather it is necessary to "fight energetically" for that advance, "to forcibly accelerate the commander's path toward spiritual and military maturity."[146]

The penchant toward spontaneity should be incessantly combatted. Thus in the analyses of exercises a model instructor "did not omit any occasion to show to what spontaneity (*samotek*) leads."[147] Not learning the lesson entails a severe sanction. "The Military Council removed the Ship commander, Captain of the Second Rank I. Yunakov, from his post. The penalty was severe, but one cannot entertain any doubt about it," for "this Commander did not want to strain his forces, as it behooves, he believed, that everything would come by itself (*vse poluchitsya samo soboi*)."[148]

* * * * * * *

Low levels of action in peacetime are not harmless, because one recalls the operation of the same penchant in war:

Why did he come here as an observer? Let him fulfill the order.[149]

A general officer arrives at the headquarters of a commander to whom he is to announce his dismissal.

—Where is General Lyapin? I asked the Staff Officer on duty.

—The General is resting, he has asked not to be awakened. . . .[150]

The crossing of the Bug in the summer of 1944: "The forcing of the river was in full swing.

Seeing that no intervention on our part was required, we set out to visit the commander of the 29th Guards Corps, Lt. Gen. Fokanov. We drove along the bank of the Bug in the expectation that units of his corps had already reached the river and started to cross it. However, after we had driven about seven kilometers . . . and then a little farther . . . we had still not met a single soldier. . . . We . . . arrived . . . at the village of Gorokhovishche. There on a veranda sat the commander of the 29th Corps, Lt. Gen. Fokanov, his chief of staff, Col. Kozlovitski, and another general. . . . We drove up to them not from the rear, but from the west, from the direction of the Western Bug, which took these generals considerably aback, as they were unaware of the situation on their own sector of the Front. We had to get them all into cars and take them to the bank of the Bug itself and order them to command their troops which were only now beginning to come up to the crossing point. I spoke to the representative of the Front Commander quietly, almost into his ear, but nonetheless clearly enough to be heard, and said, 'If this is how you're going to assist the troops and the staff of this Corps, I shall ask you to cut your stay with this Army short and return to Front headquarters.' "[153]

The situation requires decisive action. But there is no action. . . . Everybody mills around on the same spot.[152]

If the situation is bad, the cause may be inaction. (See the section on The Suspicion of Inactivity, above.) Stalin may have entertained this pervasive suspicion of the Soviet military class to an unusually high degree.

From [telephone] conversations . . . with General N. F. Vatutin, I learned . . . that an extremely difficult situation had arisen on the western and northwestern Fronts. Nikolai Fedorovich said that I. V. Stalin . . . was disposed to lay the entire fault on the command of the Western Front, its staff, reproaching Marshal G. I. Kulik with inactivity.[153]

If someone is not acting at this very moment, chances are that he is inactive at large and at length:

> *After days of uninterrupted combat in the summer of 1944, a commander and his chief of staff find a moment's rest:* "For the first time in some days we got ourselves into shape: We had just shaved and cleaned our boots when cars were driving up the street and sharply braking in front of our hut. Radetskii looked out of the window. Zhukov. We leapt on the porch.
>
> I wanted to gladden the representative of the Stavka, but it turned out otherwise.
>
> —You are shaving? . . . You are perfuming yourself? . . . Why have you not taken Baranovichi?"[154]

Even when the surmise turns out to be wrong, the reproach may be held to have spurred action:

> The commander of the Fifth Division, Afonin, ordered a platoon of sappers to seize a bridge. They left, time passed, there was no news. The commander of the sapper battalion was sitting at a meeting of Party Buro. He looks at his watch and is nervous. Somebody says: "We should send a member of the Party Buro to that platoon." Party organizer Speshilov stood up first: "I shall go. . . ." And he went. He came to the bridge and saw that the situation was awful. The locality was open and there before them were two machine-gun pillboxes of the enemy. Speshilov collected the communists of the platoon—there were seven of them—and said: "The members of the Buro are worried, wonder about you guys, how you take it easy here. . . ."
>
> The sappers became ferocious after these words, they went and took the bridge.[155]

When one describes a combat situation, one may note that important components of one's forces remained inactive:

> *The offensive of the 5th Tank Army at the Voronezh Front in early July 1942:* "The tanks entered into the battle . . . according to the procedure in which the advanced battalions, roughly two battalions per corps, are introduced into an accomplished breakthrough. As a result, the offensive of the Tank Corps was essentially reduced to the activity of the advanced battalions, while the major forces stood in place and bore unnecessary losses from the German aviation."[156]
>
> *The summer of 1942 on the approaches to Stalingrad:* "Three di-

visions of the 62nd Army were inactive, while there was an insufficiency of troops in other sectors of the Front . . ."[157] "Among the six full-strength divisions in the 62nd Army . . . in fact . . . only the 196th Rifle Division was really doing battle with the enemy group which had broken through. The 192nd and 184th Rifle Divisions and the 40th Tank Brigade were sitting as if they were bound rabbits . . . and waiting to be rescued from the north or from the south. The 33rd, 181st, and 147th Rifle Divisions . . . were gazing (*smotret'*) . . . on the widely extended 44th Infantry Division of the Hitlerites."[158] "When the 64th Army and the Southern Group in the beginning of August were repelling the attacks of the enemy from the south and from the southwest, the other grouping at the Volga north of the city was inactive for more than a week."[159]

The fall of 1942 in the Caucasus: "The Commander of the Northern Group . . . took a halfway decision. According to his plan, only three rifle brigades and four tank brigades went over to the attack [in the area of Nal'Chisk]; the basic forces of the Group—five rifle divisions and six rifle brigades—took up a passive position, and in fact did not have an enemy in front of them.

The Commander of the Front introduced corrections into the decision of the Commander of the Northern Group, ordering the use for the counterstrike of the whole 10th Guards Rifle Corps, of the 276th and 351st Rifle Divisions and of the 155th Rifle Brigade. However, the attack began nevertheless not with all forces, as the Commander of the Front required, but only with those indicated in the plan of the Commander of the Northern Group."[160]

The winter of 1943 in the Caucasus, pursuit: "In the 46th Army . . . only the 131st Rifle Division had been active during the last days."[161]

Such inaction is apt to surprise and baffle fellow commanders:

The winter of 1943: "In the area of the northern Don our defense became stabilized. . . .
. . . . for this we were least of all indebted to the transfer to that area of two tank corps. They manifested an incomprehensible passivity."[162]

The ineffectively hyperactive may suddenly turn inactive:

Vilkov is at times active and fussy, at times passive. He shouts, he runs, and then he stands silently aside, cannot surmount the flaccidness of the soul.[163]

Another is apt to let one down by inaction just at the critical moment:

> *On the approaches to Moscow:* "Colonel Paranov, sent to Zaraisk so as to accelerate the movement of the Ninth Tank Brigade and receive two tank battalions sent to us from Moscow, was silent.
>
> The Chief of the Political Department of the Corps, Miloslavskii, who arrived from Zaraisk, reported to me . . . that Baranov had let everything go adrift. At the most tense moment . . . he sat there, folding his hands, in the role of an observer."[164]

Mortal danger may induce inaction that brings about death—a disturbing sequence:

> *The Second Strike Army in the area of Lyuban', the spring of 1942:* "The German Fascist troops cut off its rear communications. The commander of the Second Strike Army Vlasov . . . an extremely unstable and cowardly man, did not act in any way. . . . He made no efforts to . . . withdraw the troops. As a result, the troops of the Second Strike Army found themselves encircled."[165]

Is our inaction not, in effect, a way of wasting an opportunity provided by the enemy?

> *The winter of 1943:* "The 29th Guards Division . . . held the Minsk turnpike at 170 kilometers from Moscow. At the beginning of February we received the order to prepare for an offensive. . . . The troops of our neighbor to the right, the Kalinin Front, were hanging menacingly from the north on the flank of the enemy grouping. From the south, in an equally menacing fashion, the troops of the Bryansk and Central Fronts were hanging over the enemy. Their successful offensive raised before the German-Fascist troops in the area of Rzhev-Vyaz'ma the menace of an imminent encirclement.
> . . .
>
> . . . . We understood that the Germans *would not long* remain in the bulge. . . . The thought that the enemy *had already* begun his retreat dominated the leadership of the Western Front and the command of the Fifth Army, as well as their staffs, to such an extent that they made life impossible for us. Every two or three hours we heard from the staff of the Army or the Front:
>
> —Why are you sitting there? The enemy has long ago begun to retreat and you are sleeping . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. Immediately go over to the pursuit!
>
> We gave the signal to the forward units who rushed ahead and fell upon such dense fire that they could not move. We located the

fire points and convinced ourselves that the entire fire system of the enemy remained unchanged . . . which meant that he was not in the process of withdrawing. On the contrary, the Germans, fearing our breakthrough, began to reinforce their positions even more.

After we had reported the failure of 'pursuit,' we were left in peace for a few hours, and then the same thing began all over again. Particularly, this happened at night time. For a few days we were harassed to such an extent that we had to think of how nevertheless to preserve forces for the case of a real offensive.

We found the following way out: on the entire front of the Division we organized in the trenches small fire groups with machine guns or with an artillery gun. As soon as the customary scolding arrived from the Staff of the Army or Front to the effect that the enemy had gone but we were sleeping, the duty officer gave the signal, and all fire groups immediately opened fire. The startled Germans, taking this to be an offensive, began to answer with all their fire means up to heavy artillery. After a few minutes of such skirmishing, specially emplaced observers, locating the firepoints of the enemy, reported . . . to the Staff:

—The enemy remains in place.

Immediately, we terminated fire, and after twenty or thirty minutes, all became quiet. . . .

But then an event occurred which again for a long time threw everybody into a flutter. In the sector of a neighbor, the 144th Division, a Feldwebel defected. Interrogated, he indicated that in the coming day or two the withdrawal of the German-Fascist troops in the direction of Gzhatsk would begin, and that some units already had left. This defector spoiled our entire life. An incredible commotion occurred. Now every hour the Commander of the Division . . . was charged with ignorance of the situation, with criminal slowness and other mortal sins.''[166]

* * * * * * *

Faced with what it sees as a pervasive penchant for inaction, the High Command insists on maximum action, a big *razmakh*—a word that, in English, calls up images of swing, sweep, might, wingspread, wingspan, scope, range. Both depth and tempo of attack, a leading analyst notes in passing, are among the ''indicators'' of *razmakh*.[167]

With regard to forces in peacetime, there will (in the context given above) obviously be stress on the requirement ''not to remain an outside observer,'' but rather to ''fully engage one's forces.'' Even to generals and admirals one may address the demand to ''unceasingly show love of work.'' General Epishev, in 1977, poses to the armed forces the

objective "to accomplish that standards of conscientious service become . . . the norm of conduct for all."[168]

Given the recalcitrance of subordinates, one's demands may weaken. One page further, the same military leader aspires merely "to accomplish that everybody busy himself with his assignment."[169]

When somebody happens to do that, he becomes something to marvel at. "A particular feature of these as well as other exercises," a senior officer reports, "was the fact that training time was not wasted, nobody of the tankmen did nothing."[170] "Here, for instance, is Lieutenant Nikolai Lavrenkov. He is an assiduous . . . officer. Of him one could not say that he prepared himself for flights listlessly."[171] More positively, "in our unit Captain Mikhalev enjoys a high reputation," for "with his entire soul, with enviable effort he fulfills his duty."[172] More modestly—which makes the statement more remarkable—"in our unit there are not a few young commanders and political workers who honestly fulfill their obligations."[173] And then there is a senior officer "Comrade Lutsenko [*who*] holds fast to the firm rule: only that officer can count on promotion and reward who honestly fulfills his obligations."[174]

Not that this "comes by itself." "The officers of the company," comments an observer, "*knew how to implant* in the soldiers a feeling of responsibility for the execution of obligations undertaken."[175]

Strong means may be applied for limited aims. It may be recommended to force personnel—to go beyond the call of duty? No, merely to "relate to their assignment in a more responsible manner."[176] "The officer . . . promised to award to Lieutenants E. Barta and M. Mak'yarov a short leave"—if they went beyond requirements? No, merely "if they worked as they were supposed to."[177]

"What are, for instance," a senior officer asks, "the sources of the successes of the personnel in these units?" The answer does not seem to bother him: "In them . . . the communists try to keep every man *within their field of vision in any situation*—in the exercises, on guard duty, in the hours of leisure."[178] It is taken for granted that "without a well-arranged checking up on fulfillment . . . even honest workers begin to take a worse attitude toward their work."[179]

Unceasing combat against inaction proceeds no differently in wartime.

> During the same night I visited two more rifle divisions, asking the commanders immediately to continue active doings.[180]

And the effectiveness of such pressure is just as much in doubt:

> You are again inactive! I came down on him. How many times have I repeated the same thing?[181]

* * * * * * *

One of the aspects of high action which the Authorities strive for is depth. Here they note (as a case in point) a disposition to avoid utilizing potentials of range. "Sometimes," an officer remarks, "a commander . . . avoids a decision . . . which requires firing at maximum range."[182] There is, comments another officer, a type of commander who "consciously avoids a decision which requires . . . acting at maximum tactical radius, utilizing the maximum range of one's weapons' sight and fire. . . ."[183]

> The ship returned to base. . . . To award its performance the highest mark—it was toward this that the opinion of the several staff officers participating in the evaluation inclined. But, after all, the firing was graded only as good. Yes, the crew had acted with high cohesion, the target was hit. But what was lacking for an excellent result was that the torpedoes had not been launched at a maximal distance. This means the commander of the ship had been overcautious. . . .[184]

In the face of this inclination, the High Command insists on "the indispensability of opening fire at large distances,"[185] asking commanders "to attack the target from a maximally distant position,"[186] "to begin the battle at maximum distance from the enemy."[187] When on the defense a maximum strike should be delivered on the approaching enemy at the largest possible distance from the defended line; similarly, in offense, there should be strikes on the most remote targets in the deployment of the enemy. In a properly executed meeting engagement "the strike against the advancing column of the enemy began at maximum distance."[188] It is when artillery "fully utilizes its range of fire so as to suppress the enemy in the greatest possible depth" that it "justifies its purpose."[189]

* * * * * * *

"Fully utilizing" the potential of weapons to overcome space, one must do the same—as well as go to the limits of the human body—in surmounting *nature*. One preferred way of attaining surprise—Suvorov can be cited—is to accomplish what the enemy believes to be physically impossible: for instance, "approaching the enemy . . . under difficult

meteorological conditions."[190] "The successful continuation of the strategic offensive of the Soviet troops [in the early spring of 1944] despite the onset of slush, was a great surprise for the enemy."[191] "In the Toropets-Kholmsk operation," recalls a military leader, "the main blow of the offensive was struck in a wooded area, with deep snow cover, without roads, which . . . according to the German-Fascist command was . . . impossible." And "precisely because of that the defense was not a solid front, but consisted only of strongpoints."[192] "However"—here the armed forces' daily newspaper relieves its readers' anxiety at a critical point in the narration of a simulated combat—"mountains turned out to be no hindrance for the company commanded by Senior Lieutenant E. Demidov. Going around the enemy's strongpoint with a part of his forces on a steep slope, the company made a surprise attack. . . ."[193] "It had been shown again during the previous months," writes a German commander recalling the fall of 1942 in the area of Demyansk, "that the Russians were not held up by impassable terrain or bad weather, but surprisingly appeared there where the German commanders excluded their presence."[194]

* * * * * * *

According to one preference of the High Command, the enemy should be defeated by a high level of action, by masses of bodies and fire.

In contrast, the High Command perceives its forces as being inclined in fact toward small operations with low or negative yield; as being disposed to disregard the fact that "the slightest weakening of fire impact . . . in the final results leads to the nonfulfillment of the combat mission."[195] "The excessive echeloning of units in the offensive," observes an analyst about certain phases of the war, "led to their being kept excessively in the reserve. A considerable fraction of forces and means was condemned to inactivity."[196]

> December 12, 1941 . . . the Supreme Commander . . . told the Commander of the Kalinin Front . . . "The actions of your group do not satisfy us. Instead of rushing on the enemy with all forces . . . you . . . lead into action separate units, allowing the enemy to exhaust them. We demand that you replace such a petty tactic with a real attack."[197]

> *The winter of 1942, according to a German Commander:* "The enemy made the strongest efforts to break through to the road Rostavl-Yukhnov. If he failed in this despite the weakness of the German forces, this was also due . . . to his manner of attacking. He

scattered his forces in many partial attacks. . . ."[198] A Soviet commander agrees: "Partial offensive operations did not furnish tangible results. . . . Being carried away by this kind of operation on the Bryansk Front was a mistake."[199]

The fall of 1942 in the Caucasus: "The situation required of our Command a[n] . . . attack with all forces available in this area. Only in that case would it be possible to annihilate the enemy grouping in the area of Gizel'. However, measures for such an attack were not taken. As a consequence, the enemy succeeded not only in leading the troops to Alagir, but also in creating strongpoints for defense."

The 351st Rifle Division, deployed in the immediate neighborhood of the only road on which the enemy troops retreated, could play a serious role in the annihilation of the enemy grouping of Gizel'. Despite the categorical requirement of the commander of the Northern Group and of the staff of the Front demanding the highest possible activity, the Commander of the Division . . . detailed only small units to the attack. Though these units encountered only comparatively small forces of the enemy, they could not overcome their defense. Therefore, the enemy continued to hold the corridor and led his troops out of the Gizel' sack at night.[200]

The battle of Kursk: "I . . . held the point of view . . . that strategic reserves should be led into action as a whole . . . and not in detail."

In the defensive period of the Battle of Kursk the strategic reserves were utilized in detail. . . . This led to the weakening of the Steppe Front, which organizationally united the strategic reserves.

"The Command of the Steppe Front [the author himself—NL] opposed at that time this manner of utilizing strategic reserves, addressing himself to the Stavka with a categorical objection against the 'fragmentation' of the Front, and proposed utilizing the Steppe Front as a whole for the transition to the counter-offensive. But . . . the Stavka did not agree with this proposal"; though it should have recalled that "on the Southwestern Front, in the summer of 1916, an exceptionally favorable situation created by the breakthrough of the enemy defense was not fully utilized because strategic reserves were introduced for the development of the offensive in detail, in separate corps. . . ."[201]

The spring of 1944 in the Southwest: "Preparing the troops for participation in the further offensive operations of the Front, the Military Soviet of the [38th] Army considered it possible to strike the enemy beforehand with the aim of removing him from the small territory which he had succeeded in seizing in April in several

> sectors . . . mainly so as to deprive the enemy command, which had been able to realize . . . only a tiny fraction of its offensive plan, even of that consolation.
>
> Our intention . . . was not approved by the Commander of the Front. . . . May 12 . . . Marshal G. K. Zhukov told me:
>
> —We must not replace crushing strikes against the enemy with pinpricks. . . . It is necessary to prepare an operation which will be like an earthquake."[202]

> On April 20 [1945] the troops of the 70th and 49th Armies did not succeed in crossing the West Oder. . . .
>
> The main cause of the failure of these Armies was the fact that, conducting a partial operation with small forces, they could not liquidate the enemy. . . .[203]

Not only may operations be too small to begin with, they are then also particularly apt to decline further, to "peter out (*zakhlebnet'sya*)." "The attack"—so runs the standard account of a frequent occurrence in simulated combat—"began to lose structure; it looked as if it was about to peter out."[204] In the Southwest in the fall of 1943 "the strikes of our troops not only did not grow, but gradually became weaker as a consequence of the insufficiency of the forces and means led into battle."[205]

But this emphasis on mass is opposed by a reliance on precision and indirectness, as discussed below.

Dispersing One's Force through Time

One aspect of the penchant for insufficiently large operations is, as the preceding discussion implies, insufficient "simultaneity (*odnovremennost'*)" in action.

> *A German Commander on the enemy in the area of the Pripyat Marshes in the summer of 1941:* "The Red Leadership . . . threw its forces into battle in succession."[206]

> *The summer of 1942:* "There were real possibilities of inflicting a mass tank strike on the flank and rear of the enemy grouping which had broken through to Voronezh, and of decisively changing the course of the battle. However, the counterstrike [by the 5th Tank Army on the left flank of the German Army Group Weichs] did not furnish the expected results. No powerful simultaneous tank strike took place."

> The tank corps of the [5th Tank] Army were introduced into the battle as they arrived: the 7th Tank Corps on the 6th of July, the 11th on the 7th of July, and the 2nd only on the 10th of July. The successive introduction into the battle of the corps of the 5th Tank Army permitted the enemy to bring up reserves and to organize a strong defense on favorable natural lines along the river Sukhaya Vereika, as a result of which the further advance of the units of the 5th Tank Army was arrested.[207]

> *The encircling at Stalingrad:* "I still do not understand why the beginning of the combat actions of Galanin's strike group was deferred so as to come three days later than ours [the 65th Army]. For in the calculations of the offensive toward the Volga, there was this red thread: there should be a simultaneous breakthrough in several directions with the aim of disorienting the enemy, disorganizing his leadership and depriving him of the possibility of maneuvering with reserves."[208]

> *Slovakia in the winter of 1945:* "To a considerable degree, our advance was hindered . . . by the fact that the 1st Guards Army on the order of the Commander of the Front began its attack three days later than we [the 38th Army]. Up to the present time I have not been able to see a clear purpose in the timing of strikes by the components of the Fourth Ukrainian Front: the 18th Army on January 12, the 38th Army on January 15, the 1st Guards Army on January 18."[209]

Nonsimultaneity of strikes may not be deliberate; it may result from a lack of coordination (see Chapter V).

> *The battle for Novorossiisk in the summer of 1942:* "At the beginning, the shore artillery acted in uncoordinated fashion. Firing was not massed, but by batteries and often even from single guns, which reduced its effectiveness. . . .
>
> To start with, naval infantry also fought in uncoordinated fashion, by battalions or teams."[210]

"The question arises," an analyst explains, "whether it is at present still necessary to strive for a simultaneity of attacks on the forward edge of the defense, a procedure to which exceptionally important significance was accorded in the past."[211] The answer is, yes. What is required as much as ever is "simultaneity in striking . . . the whole depth of the defense"; for only thus can one "decisively disrupt its stability."[212] The introduction into the battle of single units in

succession furnishes smaller results than the introduction of a large unit at one and the same moment. While in the meeting engagement "the main forces can deliver strikes . . . at the same time or in succession, . . . usually the greatest success is achieved by simultaneous strikes of the largest part of the forces and means."[213] Fire by air and artillery, one spokesman finds it necessary to point out, not only prepares the tank strike, but is uninterruptedly conducted in the course of its delivery. For discrepancy in the time between the fire strike and the attack profits only the enemy. In a proper procedure, in contrast, "the forward edge of the enemy's defense was attacked by tanks and infantry at a precisely established moment"; sure enough, "the simultaneity of the attack turned out to be one of the decisive conditions for its success. . . ."[214] In a simulated battle "a simultaneous attack from the front and the rear decided the issue."[215] More particularly, in the later phases of the offensive, "the greatest effect can be achieved by delivering on the cutoff units of the enemy a series of *simultaneous* strikes from the flank, the rear and the front."[216]

Simultaneity of action brings prompt results, which favors victory (see Chapter II); successive actions entail "protractedness (*zatyavzhnost'*)," which militates against success. "Let us imagine," an analyst invites us, "the following map of battle. In one sector of the front the attacking units . . . have been able . . . to go over to the attack simultaneously. On another sector attacks occur at different times, as the various units arrive from the depth." What will happen? "Other things being equal, the attacker will be in a more favorable situation in the first case. . . . The simultaneity of attacks . . . secures a quick . . . crushing of the enemy." Thus "the simultaneity of attacks preserves its important significance in present conditions." Nothing has changed since the War, when "battle experience indicated that in those cases in which infantry and tanks attacked the forward edge of the enemy's defense simultaneously, the breakthrough of the defense was usually accomplished in nonstop fashion and at high speed."[217] An analyst recalls, about the beginning of pursuit in the War, that "attacks conducted with small forces are easily repelled by the covering force" of the withdrawing enemy, so that "often such combat takes on the dragged-out character" which the Authorities dread; wherefore "one ought, immediately upon discovering the enemy's retreat, to conduct a strong strike. . . ."[218]

To act without simultaneity is to invite the enemy to perform on one's forces that dreaded operation, fragmentation (see Chapter V). "A difference in timing of the actions of . . . units in various points [of the battle area]," would, an analyst discussing regimental opera-

tions shows, "permit the enemy easily to split the . . . forces of the regiment . . . and to crush them piecemeal."[219]

Scattering One's Force among Objectives

Even when actions are simultaneous, they may be directed against widely different sectors of the enemy's deployment rather than concentrated on a few of them, or on a single one. The Authorities observe a penchant for such "scattering (*raspylenie*)" and judge it harmful.

Stress may be laid on a commander's "not scattering his efforts."[220] "The Commander," writes an anonymous authority, "must know how *not* to drown in an abundance of facts, not to scatter himself in petty details, but to concentrate attention on the essential"; his must be "the capacity to find the main link,"[221] to "press upon the principal."[222]

The High Command is thus afraid not only of its subordinates' paying too little attention to *melochi*, or details (see Chapter III), but also of their being too much concerned with unselected specifics. This set of opposing concerns does not, as some observers might judge, add up to zero: rather, it shows a lack of confidence in personnel finding the right middle.

With "scattering," productivity fails. When the modest results of his efforts are pointed out to an officer beset by this vice, he may "react with badly concealed offense" and recall that "I am on my feet the entire day . . . and suddenly this accusation!" Indeed, "from the morning on, such an officer verified the fulfillment of the timetable of the day, was present at firing exercises. Then he went to the training grounds where one of the companies exercised driving tanks. The same day the commander verified the preparation of the daily duty detail, the organization of the food supply and occupied himself with other matters. As we see . . . he did not stay in one place." Yet "one does not feel in his activity the capacity to concentrate his attention on the basic questions, on the unsolved problems"; he does not know how to "choose the principal links in the chain of numerous tasks."[223] "The communists of the squadron," we hear, "raised the question at the Party meeting . . . whether in the summer program . . . certain airmen should not be sent on leave and one should not concentrate fully on the teaching of the others; resources for the instruction, limited in any case, ought not to be scattered. . . ." But "unfortunately, this proposal was not accepted."[224] All too often one has to note "the officer's inability to see the *main* task of the month, the week, the day."[225] So it goes in war:

1941: "Many commanders organized an offensive simultaneously in several directions. This scattered forces and means . . . did not allow the creation of the necessary superiority over the enemy in the direction of the main strike."[226]

The 13th Army in the summer of 1941 in the area of Propoisk: "Instead of creating . . . a strike fist (*udarnyi kulak*) and attaining decisive superiority over the enemy, we scattered our forces, throwing them into battle in detail."[227]

The summer of 1941: "I stubbornly defended our [the Bryansk Front] proposal to conduct a single, but powerful blow. However, the Stavka, regrettably, did not agree with this, but accepted the proposal of the commander of the Reserve Front, who, on the contrary, considered it necessary to strike Peklin and Roslavl, with the forces of the 50th Army of the Bryansk Front. If, however, the four rifle divisions and also the reserve divisions acting on the right wing of the 50th Army and conducting a strike in the interests of the Reserve Front against Roslavl' had been utilized on the left flank of the 50th Army and struck together with the 3rd Army against Starodub, a radically different relationship of forces would have resulted."[228]

The counteroffensive in the area of Moscow in the winter of 1942: "Our design was not fated to be realized. The Front Command . . . ordered us . . . to conduct not one but two strikes—on the right flank of the Army and in the center. This scattered the forces of the Army."[229]

German commanders seem to agree: "The big Soviet offensive erupted in three places. . . . The question remains: what would have happened had the Soviets concentrated their force . . . in one place?"[230] "The Russian leadership seemed to scatter its forces in pursuing numerous aims across the whole front. It did not concentrate . . . on its chance to induce the collapse of Army Group Center . . . through a double envelopment with a massing of forces. . . . When in January one focus of enemy activity appeared after another . . . a sigh of relief could be heard in the General Staff of the Ground Forces."[231]

The winter of 1942 in the Southwest: "The arriving reserves were not concentrated for the creation of a . . . strike fist, but were . . . thrown into battle on different sectors of the Front."[232]

The first Soviet counteroffensive in the area of Stalingrad in the

summer of 1942: "The . . . cause of the failure was . . . also the scattering of forces."[233]

The summer of 1942 in the Caucasus: "There were . . . defects in the planning of defense. The situation which had resulted at the end of July and the beginning of August required special attention to the defense of the passes of the Main Caucasian Ridge, the allocation to this objective of such forces and means which would obtain a reliable defense of the passes. However, the troops of the Trans-Caucasian Front continued to divide their efforts. In the directive of the Trans-Caucasian Front of August 4 the 46th Army was given the mission, apart from the defense of the passes, to defend the shore of the Black Sea . . . and the frontier with Turkey."[234]

The fall of 1942 in the area of Tuapse (Caucasus): "Instead of being deployed in depth in a strong defense, the units of the 18th Army turned out to be scattered. Despite their superiority in force, they were on each sector weaker than the attacking enemy."[235]

The winter of 1943 according to German Commanders: "Instead of staking all on succeeding in this [crossing the Dnepr in the area of the breakthrough against the Hungarians], the Soviet leadership scattered its forces in eccentric strikes far removed from each other. . . ."[236] "The German success at the end of the winter battle [of 1943 in the South] would scarcely have been possible had the Soviet leadership not facilitated the German task. Its . . . successes at Stalingrad and the Don repeatedly gave it the opportunity to encircle the German south wing in whole or in part . . . [but] . . . it thought it could afford to scatter its forces in operations going in far-diverging directions. . . . Instead, it would have done better to . . . concentrate . . . on the lower Dnepr. . . ."[237]

Even when the proper degree of concentration exists at the beginning of an operation, it may not endure:

The winter of 1945: "The Sixth Army of General V. A. Gluzdovskii, attacking Breslau directly and acting to begin with very well . . . scattered its forces. The commander directed half of them to the covering of his right flank, though the remainder was clearly insufficient for the fulfillment of the main task. As a result, the Army got stuck (*zastryat'*)."[238]

According to German commanders, the summer of 1942 in the area of Rzhev: "The Russian pushes, which had begun with concentrated

force, disintegrated into particular actions which it was easier to counter for the weak defender."[239]

The inclination to "scatter" should, according to the Authorities, be checked by reflecting that what is needed is not to "spread one's fingers" but to form a "fist." A political officer exalts in a colleague "the capacity of Aleksei Egorivich to assemble the entire Political Department into a fist and to strike, to strike, to strike."[240]

The fall of 1941, the plan of the Stavka for a counteroffensive in the area of Moscow: "December 1 I talked with I. S. Konev [Commander of the Kalinin Front]. . . . The Commander . . . proposed that instead of furnishing aid to the Western Front, he conduct a local operation so as to seize the city of Kalinin. I could not agree with this proposal. . . . I was forced to announce the following to I. S. Konev:

— . . . To break up the German offensive against Moscow . . . is possible only by active actions with a decisive aim. . . . The Kalinin Front . . . cannot stay aside from this. You are obliged to collect literally everything so as to strike the enemy. . . ."[241]

The summer of 1942 in the area of Stalingrad: "Special attention was given to questions of organizing massed fire, which was still badly organized on the field of battle. It became necessary for the command and the staff of the Front to interfere in this matter so as to obtain real massing of fire. . . ."[242]

The summer of 1943, a communication from Stalin to Vatutin commanding the Voronezh Front, August 22, 1943: "I ask you not to scatter yourself (*razrasyvat'sya*), not to be carried away by the task of seizing Khar'kov from Poltava, but rather to concentrate your attention on the real . . . task—to liquidate the grouping of the enemy in the area of Akhtyrka. . . ."[243]

The spring of 1944; the plan for the summer campaign submitted to the Stavka by the commander of the First Ukrainian Front, Konev: "It provoked opposition from the Supreme Commander, who considered the conduct of two strikes by the Front inexpedient. He insisted on the renouncing of two strikes and recommended one—in the direction of L'vov. His argument was that in a series of Fronts, the greatest success had been obtained by one single, very powerful strike."[244]

As the ratio of strike force over target force rises, so does, it is claimed, the average yield of a resource unit employed: the upper

bounds to this relation are no doubt perceived, but hardly mentioned. "The concentration of *all* means on *one* . . . operation," writes an early analyst, "may yield a big economy of force. An enemy front capable of enduring dozens of small strikes may be broken by one big strike. In certain conditions, a certain mass of operation is necessary in order to obtain even minimal results. . . ."[245] It is "particularly with small units" that, according to another analyst, counterattacks "will not always be useful": the important ones are strong, involving "large forces of armored troops in combination with . . . troops landed from the air. . . ."[246] The Soviets have yet to be touched by the sense that anything but the big may be beautiful. How is "the quickest restoration of faulty machines" achieved? Well, "by massing mechanics."[247]

As we already know, there are, according to the Authorities, economies to be realized from compressing in time the application of a given amount of "forces and means." If a given amount of means is to be applied to the enemy, the average yield of a unit of means (and hence the yield of the allocation) will, according to a belief popular among Soviet analysts and commanders, vary inversely with the duration of the entire operation—that is, directly with the rate of impact per time unit within it. The effectiveness with which personnel are suppressed, then, depends not only on the quantity of ammunition launched, but also on the time during which it is expended. Losses inflicted within a short time, it is held, have a greater moral impact on personnel than losses occurring over a protracted period. Hence, the massing of artillery must attain a sufficient expenditure of ammunition on target during a unit of time. A military leader, recalling the third phase of the War, comments that "the basic tendencies in the perfecting of artillery preparation were the shortening of its duration, the increase in density. . . ."[248] The point is still today "to bring down short but powerful fire raids on the enemy."[249] For operations at sea, Admiral Gorshkov demands a "further reduction in the duration of impact on the enemy with a simultaneous increase in the power . . . of strikes. . . ."[250]

As to the seizure of large cities in the War, it was usually completed with the allocation of sufficient forces and means within a brief time and at small cost. With smaller allotments, the seizure of a city "dragged out" over a prolonged period. The unfavorable verb suggests not only a disadvantage from the passage of time (see Chapter II), but also a reduction in the yield of the resources employed.

As to damaging one's own resources in the process of eliminating those of the enemy—a subject on which the Soviets are, as is well known, reticent—high ratios of force per unit of time over the target

seem equally indicated. To the question "what is the relationship between losses, on the one hand, and the massing of forces and means, on the other hand?" there can be, according to one analyst, "only one answer: the relationship is very clear and sharp"—and negative. "If the daily casualties in the counteroffensive near Moscow as percentages of . . . initial numbers . . . be taken as unity, they did not go beyond .6 in the counteroffensive near Kursk [with a higher ratio of force over target]. In the entire second period of the War [1942–43] they amounted to .25, and in the third period [with an even higher ratio of force over target] they were lowered to .15."[251]

> *The fall of 1942:* "With regard to the Fourth Tank Army I had to recognize once more what large losses in equipment tank units bore for the reason that they were introduced into the battle in detail. . . ."[252]

High concentration of power per unit of time is believed to raise the probability of achieving what Soviet planners cherish (see Chapter VI): a temporary cessation of the enemy's "capacity for combat"; a period during which he has become unable to "put up resistance," while he is not yet even working on reestablishing his capacity for combat, or is already making efforts to this end but has not yet succeeded; a period which one can and must, on the one hand, prolong by continued striking and must, on the other, utilize to "complete the crushing of the enemy." "The same degree of losses," writes an analyst of the 1930s quoted in the 1970s, "can either ruin a unit if it is inflicted in the course of a short . . . assault, or it can be endured almost without any notice if members of the unit are eliminated from battle in the course of a long time."[253] "Losses . . . up to 80 percent, but inflicted in the course of a long time," observes another analyst of the 1930s, "may not only not deprive a unit of its capacity for combat, but even . . . allow it to be victorious. In contrast, even losses of a mere 10 percent, inflicted within minutes, demoralize a unit to such an extent that it may remain incapable of combat for a long time."[254] Indeed, "the experience of two World Wars showed that the effectiveness in suppressing the enemy by fire depends . . . on the amount of ammunition . . . launched in a time-unit on a space-unit." That is, "with . . . the same expenditure of ammunition, the results of suppression by fire turned out to differ depending [inversely—NL] on the duration of the artillery preparation. When the artillery preparation was conducted for a long time (for instance, in the First World War from three to seven or even sixteen days), then the losses inflicted

on the enemy occurred gradually. They did not render units and subunits incapable of combat, and the defense could adopt measures . . . in order to defeat the attack. But when the enemy was suppressed within a short time with a high level of fire . . . a high influence on morale was achieved, leadership of the enemy troops was impaired, and the defense was incapable of quickly reestablishing the combat capacity of its troops."[255] A further comment:

> . . . . *The offensive in the area of Stalingrad, January 10, 1943:* "Figuratively speaking, we intended to throw the enemy off his feet by a single strike with a heavy fist, rather than wasting time on weak boxes on the ears from which one can quickly recover."[256]

Striking a Target "Evenly"

The Authorities observe and reject not only a penchant toward "scattering" resources among widely divergent parts of the enemy's deployment, but also a disposition toward "evenness (*ravnomernost'*)" in the distribution of resources allotted to each target.

> *1941:* "The fatal plan for defense of the Crimea determined in the first months of the war by the General Staff . . . dispersed forces over the peninsula."[257]

> *The North in the summer of 1942:* "Starting with the third day, the offensive slowed up greatly. . . . In the opinion of Colonel General of the Artillery G. E. Degtyarev . . . the artillery chiefs of the Armies and the [Volkhov] Front committed . . . a basic mistake by violating the principles of massing in using artillery in the main direction. The artillery of reinforcement was almost evenly distributed over the divisions with a density of 70 – 100 guns per kilometer of the Front. On the other hand, the overall quantity of guns and mortars participating in the offensive would have allowed the creation, in the main direction of the strike, of a density of 150 – 180 guns per kilometer of the Front.
>
> The entire very heavy artillery was, like other calibers . . . evenly distributed over the divisions,"[258]

> *The fall of 1942, the 9th Army in the Caucasus:* "The failure of the operation was due to . . . the fact that the means of reinforcement were distributed evenly between the units.[259]

> "In the final stage of the offensive of [the Voronezh and Southwestern] Fronts in the winter of 1943 . . . there were virtually no powerful spearheads to deliver the main thrust."[260]

> *The fall of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "Combat actions during the first days of the offensive showed that in pursuit units advanced . . . with an even distribution of forces across the Front. . . ."[261]

> *Eastern Prussia:* "Some commanders strove to be strong everywhere, which led to the scattering of forces, to the weakening of the planned strike against the enemy."[262] The failure of the offensive on a certain sector on October 17, 1944: "The basic cause . . . was that the units of the corps were evenly extended over the Front, but no powerful grouping in the direction of the main strike was created."[263] The attack on Gumbinnen, October 21, 1944: "The 26th Brigade, attacking on a broad front, scattered its forces. Only after the intervention of General Burdeinyi, who ordered Colonel V. K. Shanin to concentrate the Brigade on a narrow front . . . was the attack successful."[264] The operations of the Third Belorussian Front, January 19 – 24, 1945: "The essential defect of the offensive at this stage was that it was conducted along the whole Front without concentration of basic actions . . . in the decisive direction. . . ."[265]

Admissions of a penchant for *ravnomernost'* are, of course, accompanied by renunciations of that vice, based upon experience if not insight:

> The command of the Leningrad Front, taking account of the experience made in previous combat, in September and October [1941] renounced the even distribution of forces and means across a front, and concentrated efforts on decisive directions. . . .[266]

Claiming no originality with regard to the principle of concentration itself, one may still glow in having applied it to an unprecedented degree. "Such a massing of tanks . . . in the decisive directions," observes a military leader about the Weichsel-Oder operation, "was without precedent in the history of war . . ."[267] Or one may glory in the increasing discrepancy between the expanding extension of the front and "the narrowing of . . . the sectors of breakthrough."[268] The necessity in the last phase of the War "to . . . mass forces and means for the sake of breaking through a strong defense," recalls a military leader, "provoked a further narrowing of the zone of the offensive."[269]

* * * * * * *

Should there be only one "main" strike, or a few? The question does not seem to have been decided; divergent answers may be given. A plurality of major strikes may serve to fragment the enemy as a prelude to encirclement, while making it difficult for him to divine the attacker's design.

However, the pull toward a single strike is strong. Looking back on the War, one may approve "the selection [in the winter of 1942] of a single sector of breakthrough [in the Moscow area] permitting . . . [us] to obtain [in it] a decisive superiority over the enemy. . . ."[270] Noting that "some Armies . . . accomplished the breakthrough in two or even three directions," one may add that "the infliction of several strikes by Armies did not allow a massing of fire power . . . creating necessary densities of artillery in the sectors of breakthrough."[271]

> *The Soviet offensive on the approaches to Moscow in the winter of 1942:* "The dispersion of forces had the result that the strike groupings did not have sufficient amounts of equipment for breaking through the defense and developing the operation."
>
> "The command of the Western Front could have avoided these mistakes. Instead of *four* strike groupings, only *one* should have been created. . . ."[272]

A strike that is not single may be described in words which suggest that it is. A military leader gives the following title to that chapter of his memoirs where he reports that, in the case of a major operation, "the Supreme Commander and his deputies insisted on one main strike": "Both Strikes Are Main Strikes."[273]

* * * * * * *

The greater one's ability to concentrate forces—according to the traditional assertion by the High Command—the greater one's assurance of victory over *superior* forces. "When opposing forces are roughly comparable in equipment and training," the U.S. Department of Defense explained in 1976, "it is generally believed that the attacker must have an overall superiority all along the front in order to advance towards his objectives."[274] The Soviets seem to disagree. The final results of combat action depends, they point out, not only on the relationship of forces and means of the fighting sides, but also on selection of the direction of the main blow. Thus, in the years of the

Civil War, when the enemy was superior in forces and means, determination, among numerous options, of the main front was the basic task of strategy; it is claimed that the Central Committee of the Party solved this task. Soviet military strategy, taking account of the overall insufficiency of its forces and particularly of its technical means, boldly proceeded to mass them against the main enemy. Examples are said to be the concentration of the basic forces of the Red Army on the Eastern Front against Kolchak and on the Southern Front against Denikin.

> *The operation at Stalingrad:* "The Soviet command, without superiority in forces and means, knew how to . . . create powerful strike groupings in the directions of the main strikes."[275]
>
> *The operation at Korsun'-Shevchenko:* "The relationship of forces in this operation in all its stages . . . was near equality, but in tanks the enemy was superior. . . .
>
> However, we succeeded in creating a superiority in strike groupings. . . ."[276]

* * * * * * *

It is, of course, apt to be necessary for the success of the operation to hide the massing of "forces and means" from the enemy long enough—or to make the massing brief enough—to keep him from counteracting it by strike or change in deployment. Having always been aware of this requirement, the Authorities well know how much more stringent nuclear weapons have made it. But here, as elsewhere, they seem—or affect—to be impressed by the continuity between pre-nuclear and nuclear fighting.

The Lure of the Single, Big, Brief, and Early Strike

The beliefs sketched above recommend, in effect, that one employ a large fraction of one's resources early on (see also Chapter II), during a short time, and on a small fraction of the enemy's force.

Correspondingly, the "initial strike" may be exalted.

"Earlier," Tukhachevskii observes in the 1930s, "one began by defeating the secondary forces of the adversary, and finished . . . with his definitive crushing. Now one begins . . . with a basic decisive

strike and defers until later the . . . defeat of the weaker-echeloned units of the enemy. . . ."[277] In 1977 a general officer expresses "the striving to throw oneself on the enemy with one's full might from the first minute. . . ."[278] Indeed, if there is something to the notion that "success in battle is born as the first shot rings out,"[279] then that shot should be as loud as one can make it; and the maximum combat power should be placed in the forward assault wave. If, "as they say, a good beginning is half of the whole business,"[280] let's make it as good as we can. "One of the most important conditions for achieving success in a meeting engagement [is] . . . as is known . . . the initial attack."[281] "Delivering a strong initial strike," another officer writes, "plays an important role in obtaining success in a meeting engagement."[282] "The force of the initial strike" will be seen to have had decisive significance when one is "completing the crushing of the enemy [first hit with nuclear weapons] by strikes of [conventionally] attacking troops."[283] In fact, "in the transition toward pursuit the strength of the initial strike has great importance."[284] Thus a general officer can state that "the initial strike must always be the strongest."[285]

The initial strike may, by virtue of its power, also be terminal. "Already at the very beginning of the war," declares a leading analyst in a fashion both stark and discreet, "decisive results can be attained"; "from the beginning of the war on," what can be attained is nothing less than "the basic strategic aims of the war."[286] What this general officer has in mind is not so much the physical destruction of enemy "forces and means" as the reduction of the degree to which, and the efficiency with which, the stricken enemy will put to use those that survive the initial strike (see Chapter VI).

Yet the contrary emphasis is present. "Now it is possible," says a commander soon to be replaced (Gordov) about the beginning battle of Stalingrad, "to destroy the enemy with one strike."[287] But even when the battle was ending, "a few days in tense combat showed that it was not feasible to liquidate the encircled enemy by one strike. Mere wishing was of little effect here";[288] the belief in a "single-act" strike appears as a manifestation of complacency (see Chapter III). Rather, "in a contemporary operation," as a leading analyst claimed in the 1930s "it is impossible to finish the enemy off in one strike"; a series of separate strikes is required.[289] "The contemporary deep operation," another analyst observed in the same period, "has many phases."[290]

> You see of course that we can't destroy all the fire points with one brief attack.[291]

When imbued with a sense that a succession of strikes cannot be avoided if one wants to defeat the enemy, one is apt to discover benefits in keeping within the constraints of reality.

Striking in succession reduces the enemy's chance of divining one's "design."

> The beginning of the attack [by different components of the attacking force] at different moments pursued the objective of deceiving the enemy with regard to our . . . design. This succeeded. . . .[292]

Striking in succession increases the chance that the enemy, surprised, will lose some of his capacity to calculate (see Chapter VI), and as a result may scatter his forces.

> *The offensive of the Stalingrad Front, November 20, 1942:* "Despite the plan, his [Eremenko's] armies did not go over to the attack simultaneously. And perhaps . . . this did not spoil things. If the simultaneous transition of three armies to the attack favored success due to the strength of the resulting strike, there also were advantages in . . . [the opposed] variant. It is not difficult to imagine the situation of the enemy who receives unexpected strikes from various directions. In such conditions he began to thrash around striving to close gaps, and inevitably scattering reserves. His strong 'fist' was loosened and he began to act 'with spread fingers (*rastopyrennymi pal'tsami*).' "[293]

There seems to be a peculiar force to "one strike following the other," particularly when each is mightier than its predecessor: *narashchivanie*, accumulation, building up, steady raising. "The offensive," an analyst wrote in the 1930s "must consist of a whole series of waves which run toward the shore with ever-increased force";[294] and in the 1920s Tukhachevskii had recommended "an uninterruptedly increasing strike."[295] "In the course of the meeting engagement," a recent study predicts, "the strikes on . . . the enemy will be uninterruptedly built up."[296] "In the course of the attack," writes an analyst, "strikes will be built up and become stronger as the attackers approach their targets."[297] "Upon one strike," according to an officer, "there should always follow a series . . . of even more powerful strikes"[298]—just as the advancing attacker should face "growing resistance,"[299] "ever-increasing resistance."[300] During the artillery portion ("preparation") of the attack fire, strikes should be mounting: an "uninterruptedly mounting storm."[301] Precisely because "in the contemporary

offensive the troops will even more often [than before]encounter the [fatal—NL] tendency toward the diminution of the strength of the strike," they should be imbued with "the necessity of increasing it. . . ."[302]

The conflict between the disposition toward "simultaneity" and that toward "successiveness" (*posledovatel'nost'*), in one of its meanings) is not faced in public. A sequence of operations may be approved in which *both* "massing" and "building up" are applied without clearly indicating the conditions which make the one or the other optimal. At the beginning of the War, recalls an analyst, "the organization of rifle divisions in depth led to only eight out of twenty-seven rifle companies participating in the simultaneous attack of the forward edge of the enemy's defense," a tactic that "did not secure a powerful initial strike and led to large losses." And "this is why we went over in the fall of 1942 to deploying the battalion, the regiment, and the division in one echelon. As a result, 80 percent of the fire power of the division was utilized simultaneously in battle," which in fact "sharply reduced losses in men and equipment and increased the speed of the breakthrough of the defense." But now these very "successes of ours in the winter campaign of 1942–1943 forced the German-Fascist forces to go over to . . . a defense with deep echelons," and "at the same time the possibilities of our troops for breakthrough substantially rose: the quantity of artillery, tanks, and aviation increased." It was in these conditions that "the division and the regiment began to create a second and sometimes a third echelon," which "allowed for the buildup of the strike from the depth. . . ."[303] At the expense of the initial strike, the maximization of which seemed required at the beginning of the story! Torn between contrasting inclinations, the Authorities, who talk so much about the choice between all-at-once and through-time, manage to say little in the end.

A lone dissenter may escape from the dilemma by rejecting dogma in favor of experience. "The affirmation," we read with disbelief, "that the first combat has advantages in comparison with the second is not confirmed by the practice of preparation for combat"; indeed, "there is no basis for the assertion that the efficacy of that battle is higher than that of any other. . . ."[304]

Intermittence

When a crescendo is required, it is apt to be an "uninterrupted" one—one of the many expressions of the Authorities' fight against the pen-

chant toward intermittence which they perceive in their forces.

German as well as Soviet commanders frequently report that, in the War, Soviet forces would unexpectedly interrupt whatever they had been doing.

> *The summer of 1942:* "After crossing the Don, the major forces of the 56th Tank Brigade of the 28th Tank Corps . . . were to advance rapidly. However, they stood for some time on the same place. . . ."[305]

> *The fall of 1942, the counteroffensive in the area of Stalingrad:* "The 4th [Mechanized] Corps . . . arrived in the area of Zety . . . on the second day of the offensive and . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] without cause delayed there. . . ."[306]

It is expected that any unit may interrupt what it is supposed to do.

> The second note from the Division Commander reached us not far from Baturino. "Don't stop anywhere, be in the appointed place before dawn. . . ."[307]

There are many conscious motives for interrupting what one should be doing; being diverted to nonmilitary aims is one.

> Our swift movement forward was, strange as it may be, sometimes hindered by booty. If some commanders in the 100th Division had not been carried away by the distribution of booty seized at the station and had not spent an entire night on that, the Division undoubtedly would not have afforded a breathing spell to the enemy. The enemy came to, collected all his forces, organized a hard defense . . . and . . . arrested our offensive on that sector of the Front.[308]

One may interrupt the fulfillment of a mission to engage in acts whose contribution to the mission, if any, is, in the Authorities' estimate, likely to be smaller than the damage caused by the interruption itself.

> *The spring of 1943 in the Caucasus, the offensive in the area of Krasnodar:* ". . . Instead of quickly advancing against the enemy and destroying him, our troops halted their pursuit and . . . began an unnecessary regrouping. The enemy utilized this . . . so as to organize a strong defense on new lines."[309]

Kurland in the spring of 1945: "The 1198th Rifle Regiment, having occupied Viveri and not encountered enemy resistance, discontinued (*prekratit'*) the attack.

—Why did you stop the Regiment? I asked the Regimental Commander.

—We are consolidating our position, he answered calmly."[310]

Or one may have been stunned by enemy action:

The winter of 1942: "Above the field of battle, forty enemy dive bombers formed a circle. In the first place, they threw themselves on the main tank brigade, which . . . was passing through a height. And here something incredible happened: instead of advancing, the brigade stopped.

It stood on the naked height, and the "Junkers" were raining bombs on it.

. . . . . .

[Later] we understood the conduct of the tank brigade. The majority of the tankmen were in combat for the first time. The unceasing bombing had stunned them."[311]

Or, in contrast, one may have become lazy with success (see Chapter III):

German commanders repeatedly assert this: "When the Russians . . . had obtained a success, they usually did not exploit it immediately, but let time pass which benefited the defender. . . . Usually the infantry was content with initial successes until an impulse came from behind. And very often it didn't."[312]

The interruptions faced by Soviet (and German) commanders have often appeared inexplicable to them:

The fall of 1941: "Some . . . [Soviet] tanks broke into the lines of the Third Division, but then stopped inexplicably. That sufficed to bring up flak which . . . hit one of the colossi. The others rolled back."[313]

A report of the Artillery Commander of the First Baltic Front on the offensive begun on February 3, 1944: "The infantry . . . in moving into the depth, lay down. Attempts to explain this by the increase in enemy fire are unavailing, as on the first day of battle there were seventeen enemy batteries, and the infantry went forward excellently. On the second and subsequent days of battle not more

than ten enemy batteries conducted artillery fire, while mortar batteries in the whole sector of breakthrough were few; but the infantry nevertheless did not move.

The defense position of the enemy was substantially weaker in his depth. But even in the absence of trenches . . . the infantry did not move."[314]

* * * * * * *

The damage from interrupting actions is, the Authorities insist, high.

What may contribute to their estimate is a largely unexpressed sense that if one interrupts what one is supposed to be doing, it is not to do something else (however unworthy) but so as to do nothing, fold hands (*slozhat' ruki*).

Early in the war a German commander received the same impression: "At first the Russian tank armies . . . after penetrating our front . . . did nothing to exploit their advantage and stood . . . idle."[315]

To see somebody *preryvat'* (interrupt) the fulfillment of his task, is to expect, more or less consciously, that he has decided to *prekratit'* (discontinue) his action. Will he ever resume it? A temporary stopping (*ostanovka*) of forces on the offensive does not necessarily mean that they have gone over to the defense or even to inaction:

"Why cease (*prekratit'*) the fulfillment of the mission? I shouted, losing control."[316]

Any inadequacy of speed in advancing may be called "running in place (*toptat'sy na meste*)."

The winter of 1942, the Stavka toward the Volkhov Front commanded by Meretskov: "We were accused of . . . running in place."[317]

I heard the voice of Ivan Khristoforovich Bagramyan:

—How are your Guard troops doing, Comrade Army Commander? Are they advancing or running in place?[318]

We arrived at the Oder at the appointed time, and we are scolded: "Why are you running in place?"[319]

In the early days of May 1945, a tank brigade is ordered to move as quickly as feasible from Berlin to Prague, and finds the going difficult, because of the mountainous terrain and also because of the obstacles which the enemy has put in their way. In the course of this movement, the Brigade Commander is asked to present himself to the Army Commander, who happens also to be a friend of his: "I prepared myself to report about the difficult nightly rush and about the preparedness of the brigade for further march. The Army Commander did not let me speak a word."

"Why are you staying on the same spot?" he asked me sternly. "Kalinin and Popov are already near Prague."[320]

Upon arrival in Prague: "For the last days the 55th Brigade had advanced hundreds of kilometers, and nevertheless the Army Commander reproached us for running in place."[321]

Even if interruption is not cessation but is followed by resumption, it will have changed the situation in the enemy's favor—as the enemy may learn in his turn:

July 15, 1941, the Germans occupy the southern (western) bank of the Dnepr in Smolensk, and fail to cross over to the northern (eastern) part of the city, which would, it is asserted, have been feasible: "Gorodyanskii [the Soviet commander] consolidated himself in the northern part. The Germans, having let slip a certain moment on July 15, now had to conduct a protracted battle for the northern bank of the Dnepr.

—Up to now I do not understand, acknowledged M. F. Lukin later, what brought about the halt of the enemy. During the night from the 15th to the 16th of July, and then in the course of the following day, the Germans could certainly have crossed over."[322]

The enemy may utilize this gift of time to increase his "forces and means." "The experience of the last war has shown," writes an analyst, "that often troops, having been highly successful in the course of a day, but having interrupted activity at night, encountered on the morning of the following day an organized resistance by the enemy." This, of course, "is explained by the fact that the interruptions . . . had permitted the enemy to accomplish a maneuver with reserves and units from other directions. . . ."[323]

The winter of 1942, Southwestern Front: "The 6th Cavalry Corps, having attained the area of Alekseevka on January 23, became inactive there for four days. During this time, the enemy brought

> reserves from Khar'kov. As a result, the Corps was unable to break through into the rear of the Balakleev grouping of the enemy and entangled itself in protracted combat for separate populated points."[324]

> *The summer of 1943 in the South:* "Why have you stopped? What right do you have to do it?" I threw at Sviridov [Commander of the Second Guards Mechanized Corps, an element of the Second Guards Army].
>
> Instead of an answer, he gave me a file of transcripts of telephone conversations containing the order given to Sviridov personally by Kreizer [Commander of the Second Guards Army]: to halt the attack temporarily.
>
> This went counter to the decision of the Commander of the Front and threatened the failure of the entire Front operation. In the most categorical form, I ordered Sviridov to renew the attack.
>
> . . . . However, the enemy had utilized our slowness, brought up even larger armored units, and reinforced his air strikes. . . . Protracted, bloody battles began. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> At the price of immense losses, the Germans succeeded in stopping the offensive of our troops at the Mius. Seeing the vanity of further efforts to break through the Mius positions of the enemy with the forces at our disposal, the Commander of the Front decided to bring the troops back to their initial positions—to the line from which seventeen days before we had begun the attack.
>
> What was the cause of these failures? Above all, naturally, the indecisiveness . . . of the Second Guards Army.[325]

Or the enemy may make use of the time offered him by adopting a more favorable position or deployment. "The column stopped," an analyst reports about a simulated battle. "Utilizing this, the 'enemy' occupied an advantageous line and delivered a strike on the flank." As a result, "the Battalion, though it made use of fully contemporary technique, could not fulfill the task set."[326]

> The tank battalion . . . broke through the defense of the "enemy." The commander of the battalion, Captain E. Minakov . . . established that the defenders began to retreat, So as to secure his withdrawal from the battle, the "enemy" created an antitank minefield in the direction of the attacking battalion and covered the withdrawal by smoke.
>
> Smoke began to shroud the battle line of tanks and the attached motorized riflemen. Fearing that tanks might explode on the mines,

> Captain Minakov gave the order to stop the movement and to wait for the passing of the smoke.
>
> The badly thought-through (*neprodumannyi*) decision of the officer helped the "enemy" greatly. Utilizing the inaction of the attacker, he arrived without losses at his next position. When the smoke dispersed and the companies resumed their movement, they were met by organized fire from ATGMs and then by other antitank means. The attack of the battalion was stopped for a long time.
>
> . . . . In this situation, the attacker should, immediately upon discerning the withdrawal of the "enemy," have gone over to pursuing him. Captain Minakov . . . should have bypassed the mine obstacles . . . and swiftly acted in directions less covered by smoke. Then . . . he would have forestalled the retreating forces in their movement to the next defense line, seized it from the march, and accomplished the crushing of the "enemy." Now, however, the "enemy" was capable of consolidating his position, and it became necessary to spend a great deal of time on suppressing him.[327]

Above all, introducing a pause is to risk permitting the enemy to undo all that one may already have done toward "depriving the enemy of his capacity for combat," or, if one has already succeeded in that, toward "preventing the enemy from reestablishing his lost capacity for combat." Only uninterrupted actions will deprive the enemy of the time and the occasion for establishing order in his troops, once Soviet troops have succeeded in striking him with disarray; while "even a small pause gives the enemy a breathing spell, allows him to collect his forces . . . to organize counteraction. . . ."[328] "The 'enemy,' " observes an analyst, in contrast, discussing correct conduct in simulated combat, "had not yet come to his senses after the first strike when the squadron rushed to the attack again."[329] The point is to prolong the period during which the enemy remains deprived of his "senses"—that is, the period during which he remains incapable of "reestablishing" his "capacity for combat," the period during which Soviet forces can continue depleting his "forces and means" with high effectiveness. "That side won," a commander in the Civil War reflects in the 1920s, "which succeeded in adding its strikes, delivering them uninterruptedly, and by that very fact *not allowing the enemy to heal his wounds*."[330] One should not grant the enemy a "breathing spell" in battle or even in the interrogation of political prisoners; one should "not give the enemy time to breathe by day or by night."[331] And it is not only "the withdrawing enemy" who "must not be allowed any breathing spell,"[332] but the enemy under whatever circumstances; it is indeed paramount "not to give the enemy any breathing spell."[333]

With a chance to catch his breath, his capacity for ra[illegible] "recuperation" is very high; without it, very low.

> German commanders repeatedly report on the damage of their forces from the Soviet pattern of "allowing no respite."[334]

> *In the area of Stalingrad, fall 1942:* "When the Russians did not attack, they crept forward under the protection of their tanks and dug in at twenty meters from the German positions. Their sharpshooters shot at each movement. At night, too, there was no quiet. The men's nerves were incessantly strained to the breaking point. . . . They were exhausted . . . by the fighting which went on *without pauses*.[335]

> *Stalingrad:* "The diaries and letters of the killed Fascists showed how big a physical damage and what terrible moral impact was due to our *uninterrupted* counterpreparation."[336]

"Uninterruptedness," then, procures many of the numerous and capital benefits that flow from *aktivnost'*—of which *nepreryvnost'* is one major manifestation. "The question of uninterruptedness is closely connected with the principle of *aktivnost'*"; in fact, it is "an indicator"[337] of this principle. "The *aktivnost'* . . . of troops finds its . . . expression in the *permanent* impact on the enemy. . . ."[338] It is uninterrupted actions that minimize the time and cost required for the attainment of any given objective, like the crossing of a river:

> The crossing of a river from the march (*s khodu*) is possible . . . when troops arrive at the river on the shoulders (*na plechakh*) of the retreating enemy, deprive him of the possibility of establishing a system of defense on the opposite bank and . . . seize a bridgehead.
>
> . . . . The opposed crossing of a river from the march was successful when the troops broke through (*vyrvatsya*) to the river on the shoulders of the retreating enemy and did not give him the possibility of organizing a firm defense. In the given case this was not so, and to seize a bridgehead was possible only after meticulous . . . preparation (secretly leading the troops into the area of concentration, preparing means of crossing, organizing airborne landings, uncovering the fire system of the enemy, planning artillery and air preparation, etc.)[339]

Uninterruptedness reduces or even prevents damage from slowness (see Chapter II): "Our offensive went slowly, but uninterruptedly every day."[340]

It favors surprise:

> *The Soviet counteroffensive on the approaches to Moscow in late 1941, according to a German commander:* "The Russian leadership relied on surprise. It was to be obtained by . . . secrecy, and particularly by the direct transition of the fighting troops from the defense to the offense, without an operational pause."[341]

* * * * * * *

Uninterruptedness, which procures such advantages, is insistently required by the Authorities. It is so uncongenial to their subordinates, however, that incessant and stringent pressure becomes necessary;

> If you press on him [a subordinate officer], he attacks. If you leave him out of your sight, he stops. . . .[342] [ellipsis in the text—NL].

Anything may be presented as a means for preventing the dreaded loss of uninterruptedness. "Tanks . . . must strive to annihilate the enemy, securing by that" . . . victory? No, "the *ceaseless* continuation of the march."[343] "The crushing of the enemy's counterattack [is] . . . an important condition for attaining" . . . victory? No again, "the *uninterruptedness* of the unfolding of an offensive operation into greater depth."[344]

If, in a rare case, one deviates from the dominant position, one may obscure this by first deferring to it. "One must not conceive of the uninterruptedness in the attack," states an analyst, "as a stopless (*bezostanovochnyi*) movement forward." Also "the transition from the attack to other forms of combat action . . . is often connected with stopping"; and "when repelling the counterattack of superior forces of the enemy, it may be appropriate to strike him with fire from place." With such boldness the article itself might better be named "Let There be Fewer Unjustified Pauses."[345]

For the rule is, "One Strike After the Other"[346]; "It Is Not Permissible To Stop"[347]; "Let Us Not Stop (*neostanovlivat'sya*)!"[348]

Whatever you do in war, move (forward) while you do it; and do it while you move. "The armed reconnaissance patrol," we read (about a simulated battle), "performed reconnaissance while moving."[349] In fact, according to a Western analyst, "Soviet reconnaissance detachments do not operate like their British counterparts . . . sit down and observe and report and observe again. Rather they observe

what they can and report what they can while continuing with their advance."[350] What is peculiar here with respect to the meeting engagement is that *the organization* of the crushing of the enemy is realized during the march of the two sides toward each other, avoiding stops such as this:

> The forward detachment . . . commanded by Ivan Tret'yak went to the severely damaged intelligence unit. Tret'yak stopped. Noting the hitch, I hastened in my tank to the forward unit in order to push it forward. . . .
>
> —Tret'yak! Why are you running in place?
>
> —Well, now, I'm trying to see clear in the situation.[351]

Above all, as an analyst put it in the 1930s, "what is new in contemporary fire is . . . firing while moving"[352]—in contrast to "a company or a platoon which began with firing in place, then stopped fire and began to move, then made a halt again so as to fire and so forth. . . ."[353]

> *A conversation with Stalin, September 17, 1942:* "He asked, 'Do the tankmen fire while moving (*s khodu*)?'
>
> I answered that they don't.
>
> —Why? The Supreme Commander looked at me intently.
>
> —Precision while moving is bad, and we are husbanding the shells. . . .
>
> Stalin stopped walking up and down, looked at me intently and spoke in precise fashion, separating all his words by pauses:
>
> —Tell me, Comrade Katukov, please, must one hit the German batteries while attacking? One must. And whose job is it in the first place? Of course, that of the tankmen, whom enemy guns hinder in advancing. Even if your shells do not fall directly on the enemy guns, but only nearby, how are the Germans going to fire in such a situation?
>
> —Of course, the precision of enemy fire will fall.
>
> —And it is that which is needed, Stalin seized upon my words. Fire while moving, we are going to give you the shells. . . ."[354]

Don't do whatever you are doing less well just because you are moving! "Combining fire and movement," you only have to "fire precisely from the march." All that is needed to abolish any disadvantageous tradeoff between speed and precision is practice—in a model unit "exercises are often conducted with the aim of mastering the methods for firing while running"[355]—and ingenuity in devising procedures for training:

The commander of a regiment observed that while many soldiers attained a sufficiently high precision of automatic fire when stationary (lying, on their knees, or even standing), they shot badly when moving. Baranov noted . . . they were not capable of walking both without slowing up and without the gun jumping up and down.

All that was done to remedy this—he himself demonstrated how to do it, the company commanders taught it, there were exercises until exhaustion set in, experiences were exchanged—was to no avail.

Once, returning late in the evening from a firing exercise, Baranov sat down in his study. He was thirsty. He filled a glass to the rim with cold water and brought it to his lips. At that moment a happy thought came to him. Viktor Alekseevich filled yet another glass with water, went out into the hallways, called the sergeant on duty, forced him to stretch out his arms in front of him and placed both glasses on his palms.

—Your task: to walk swiftly but not to spill a drop.

—I shall try, Comrade Colonel.

—Of course, he spilled. He repeated and spilled again. But then he made it.

The next night, on the firing ground, Baranov gave the sergeant an automatic weapon and cartridges; he lit up the target.

—Fire while marching. Walk as you did in the hallway with the water.

Almost all bullets were on target.

"Once more," ordered the commander.

Another excellent result.

In the regiment new ways to learn firing on the march were found. Practice proved their effectiveness.[356]

One of the several benefits from fighting also at night is the uninterruptedness of combat thus obtained. "The offensive," so goes a prominent prescription, "is going to be conducted uninterruptedly until the full crushing of the enemy, day and night and in any weather. . . ."[357] There will be an "around-the-clock conduct of the offensive."[358] Not only "can night not be a cause for ceasing combat operations,"[359] even a pause between actions during the night and those during the day "is inadmissible."[360]

The task remains as always: not to give the enemy rest, neither during the day nor during the night.[361]

Give battle to the enemy not only during the day, but also at night.[362]

The operation in the area of Uman-Botoshan, winter 1944: "The

> activity of our units at night rose substantially. By this they deprived the enemy of the possibility of breaking away from our troops and consolidating themselves on favorable lines.''[363]

Prepare for your next bout of fighting not during a pause after completion of the current one, but rather *during* the current one—''securing the conditions for the solution of the subsequent combat task in the course of fulfilling the previous one.''[364]

And replace men and equipment that have reached the limit of endurance—after an ''uninterrupted'' employment—by new persons and pieces that then, without interruption, enter upon *their* (uninterrupted) tour of duty. ''The uninterruptedness of pursuit [in the War],'' writes an analyst, ''was attained . . . above all by the periodic interchange of the pursuing troops by bringing second echelon and reserves into the battle. . . .''[365] Thus, we are told, in the course of the Weichsel-Oder operation the advance detachments of some units of the 3rd Guards Tank Army were changed five times in the period from January 14 to January 24, 1945, and the advance detachments of some units of the 2nd Guards Tank Army six times in the period from January 18 to January 30. The uninterrupted combat action of tanks in advance detachments rarely exceeded two to three days. ''Soviet high offensive plans,'' observes a Western analyst, ''include provision for replacement units from reserves and second echelons to continue the assault.'' For ''Soviet planners are . . . cognizant that night combat is a physically draining experience,'' and hence ''means are allotted . . . so that the advance can continue without respite for their opponents.''[366]

The Authorities oppose in particular the disposition to introduce gaps between the successive phases of an operation.

''The transition to the offensive,'' writes a military leader about the War, ''was preceded by *armed reconnaissance* . . . [which] in a number of cases transformed itself without pauses into an *offensive* of the main forces.''[367]

The entrance into combat should be ''from the *march.*'' ''The units of the main forces go over to the attack without any prior stopping,'' so that ''the completion of the *deployment* of the main forces also signifies the beginning of their *attack.*''[368] ''The transition to the attack'' should be ''from the march, as units advance from the depth.''[369]

Infantry/tanks, according to the Authorities, are inclined to wait a number of minutes after the end of artillery/air preparation before beginning their advance—with grave effect. (This point is illustrated by examples from the War rather than from simulated combat.) ''In

tactical training," an analyst remarks, "commanders often violate the principle of the uninterruptedness of fire support. Most often this happens at the occasion of attacking defense positions when one creates an unjustifiably large gap between the moment of the transfer of artillery fire into the depth of the defense and the moment of the transition of the motorized riflemen and tanks to the attack."

> March 5 [1943] the 11th Rifle Corps [in the Caucasus], attacking at 6:30, returned to its starting position having suffered large losses. The cause was the long pause between the end of the artillery preparation and the attack of the infantry.[370]

> *The winter of 1944. The failure in the area of Vitebsk:* "Everything proceeded in standard fashion: at dawn a powerful artillery preparation began, aircraft inflicted damage on the enemy, and then, as often, a pause emerged—the artillery transferred its fire [to the depth], and the infantry acted slowly."[371]

While the Authorities usually suggest that such misconduct is just another expression of a pervasive inclination to tolerate gaps, they sometimes disclose the real reason: fear. "The first enemy trench was still under our fire, but the Company Commander ordered the attack to begin."[372]

> In Askalepov's division, soldiers did not fear their own fire, he knew how to shorten to a minimum the pause between the end of artillery preparation and the beginning of attack.[373]

> The infantry . . . is loath to approach the explosions of its own artillery so as to attack the positions of the enemy . . . immediately after the transfer of fire into the nearest depth of the enemy's defense. . . .[374]

According to a German commander, "Russian infantry approached friendly fire very closely during artillery preparation. Sometimes infantry men, particularly penal companies, advanced under friendly fire. . . ." In fact, one of the characteristics of the "Russian method of attacking" was "to break into the positions of the defense still under fire of artillery support, without regard for losses."[375]

Yet "the experience of battle shows that the utilization of the results of a fire strike rose with the rapidity with which tanks and infantry arrived in its target area; which led to infantry and tanks 'hugging' the explosions of shells. . . ."[376]

> As soon as the pauses between the end of suppressing the enemy by artillery and the beginning of the attack by our tanks and infantry disappeared, victories over the enemy became usual.[377]

To eliminate such pauses, one might then go to the limit:

> According to a German commander, one Soviet pattern was suddenly, at the beginning of attack by the infantry, to exempt from artillery fire small sectors, 800 – 100 m broad, without reducing artillery fire anywhere else. Only the most precise observation allowed discerning these sectors. The dominating impression was that artillery preparation continued with undiminished force, while in reality the infantry attack had already begun.

As to further avoidance of gaps within a battle, in the War a military leader recalls that *"pursuit . . .* began immediately after the *breakthrough through the enemy's tactical zone."*[378]

Finally, there should be no *razryv* (gap) between encircling and destroying. "The plan of operations [for the counteroffensive at Stalingrad] foresaw," according to three general officers, "that the *liquidation of the encircled troops* would begin in *the process of encirclement* and would continue without pauses until their full crushing"; the point was, the authors repeat, "the unity of the process of encirclement and destruction."[379] In the third period of the War, generally, it will be recalled, the encirclement and annihilation of the enemy proceeded without pauses.

* * * * * * *

Any proposed or approved pause within an operation needs to be justified in some detail.

> Overcoming obstacles, zones of radioactive chemical or biological infection . . . entails as a rule some slowing up and on some occasions also a halt in the attack. This is explained by the necessity of performing a number of measures: supplementary intelligence, modification of the mission, engineering and other security measures.[380]

> *The battle of Kursk:* "Sometimes historians raise the questions: why did the troops of the Steppe Front not burst forward on the shoulders of the retreating enemy. . . . Why was an operational pause required?"
>
> In fact, from July 23 to August 3, there was a pause, and it

was extremely indispensable in order to shape up the troops of the 7th Guards Army and the 69th Army (transferred to the Steppe Front), which had suffered substantial losses in the period of defensive battle; so as to study the character of the enemy's defense, insofar as he retreated to previously prepared lines. . . . Time was required for regrouping. . . .

. . . . . .

Would it in these conditions have been possible to go over to . . . the offensive from the march? The offensive would then have been insufficiently organized, unplanned, unprepared, and materially unequipped; hence it could have failed.[381]

The winter of 1945 in Poland, facing the enemy's position on the western shore of the River Byala: ". . . we had to expect unnecessary losses in repeated attempts to break the enemy's defense from the march. This is a conclusion to which A. A. Epishev [Chief of Staff of the 38th Army] and I [Commander of that Army] came after having visited all corps and divisions, acquainted ourselves with the situation on the spot. Our decision was unanimous: what is needed is a short two days' pause in the attack, so as to bring up and concentrate forces and in all ways to prepare a new strike against the enemy."[382]

If an interruption is absolutely required, it should be brief.

After an insignificant pause in the morning of March 21 [1944], the troops of the Front went over anew to the offensive.[383]

Behind us were 120 kilometers, traversed while fighting in four days. It was necessary to fill up the tanks with battle supplies and fuel, and to check them. All this took a few hours, and by the afternoon, the Corps prepared itself for the battle for Bogodukhov.[384]

One is inclined to reject mere proposals for interruption: "They proposed their variant which included unjustifiable pauses. . . ."[385] Indeed, the requirement of uninterruptedness is often radical, "not admitting even small pauses and stops"; grounds for stopping which seem reasonable enough are rejected. "Some tank commanders," a general officer discloses with dismay, "not only do stop on the line of attack and even when advancing, but also attempt to argue the necessity of doing so, for the sake of 'drawing in' the units which are still behind, informing oneself about local conditions before attacking.

. . .''[386] In the 1960s an officer dared to propose in the *Military Herald* that ''as a unit approaches the enemy line . . . it stops at the line of the attack for five to ten minutes for orientation and so as to specify combat tasks. . . .''[387] Subsequently, the monthly published letters to the editor in response, such as one that found it ''impossible to agree with the recommendation of Colonel I. Semenov. To halt the unit at the line of attack is to condemn it to unjustified losses. . . . Units should attack from the march without any pauses or halts. It is during the time of reconnaissance that one should orient oneself and clarify the combat tasks . . . specifying them, if there is need for that, in the course of advancing.''[388] Finally comes the editor's verdict, eleven months after the deviation:

> Many readers expressed themselves against stopping a unit for five to ten minutes at the line of attack before an offensive. . . . They are right. . . . It is necessary to deploy into combat array and to go over to the attack without any halts.[389]

> The chief of the operational department of the Division . . . asks [the Division Commander, the author] whether there will soon be a breathing spell. . . .
>
> ''Don't expect a breathing spell,'' I answered.[390]

> *In the summer of 1941, the Germans occupied the part of Smolensk west of the Dnepr, whereas the Soviets were holding the eastern part, the local commander having had the bridges destroyed:* ''Evidently, the risk assumed by Malyshev was justified. Depriving the Fascists of the bridges across the Dnepr, we could with a higher chance organize the defense of the northern part of the city.
>
> However, we should not be slow about it. Going to the other side of the river, Nesterov had permitted his men a rest.''
>
> ''Do you want let slip the whole city? Where are the men?'' asked Lukin. ''Lead me to them!''
>
> We went to the houses near the market and the railway station. The fighters were resting in rooms, kitchens, stables. . . . We woke them up.[391]

> *The area of Stalingrad:* ''In the morning of January 17 [1943] there was a meeting called by the commander of the Front [Rokossovskii]. . . .''
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . All conversation turned not on specifying the next tasks, but

on the question whether to introduce a halt . . . and only continue to attack two to three days later.[392]

. . . . . .

Rokossovskii leapt in and proposed immediately to stop such proposals.

—No halts or pauses! The offensive is to be continued. . . . We must not give the enemy time to come to his senses, to fill the gaps which have emerged. . . . The enemy must be struck uninterruptedly! It is with this position that I agree to the prolongation of the meeting.

As an answer we heard:

—Everything is clear! Permit us to rejoin our units![393]

The winter of 1943 in the area of Novocherkassk: "We met the advance units of the 3rd Guards Mechanized Corps, and then found its staff." General A. P. Sharagin . . . reported on his decision to make a halt in order to bring up units which had fallen behind and so as to repair equipment.

"On all this I intend to spend ten to twelve hours," he concluded cheerfully.

It was impossible to agree to this. The situation required that one continue a stopless pursuit of the enemy. It became necessary to remind Sharagin of that. And it was only after we had convinced ourselves that our instructions were going to be unflinchingly executed that we left. . . .[394]

The battle of Kursk: "After twelve days and nights of heavy combat, the troops of the Sixth Guards Army had borne substantial losses in personnel and equipment. Seemingly, everything spoke in favor of giving the Army a rest, replenishing it in the second echelon of the Front."

Thus, I thought myself as well as the other commanders of the Army, we counted on some breathing spell. However, our hopes were not fulfilled. We received the order for the Sixth Guards Army . . . to move to the Voronezh Front. The time allowed for the preparation of the move was extremely short—ten to eleven days.

In those days I met the representative of the Stavka, Marshal Zhukov, and the Commander of the Voronezh Front, General of the Army Vatutin.

I asked them to make it possible for our Army to bring itself into order after such heavy . . . combat. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . G. K. Zhukov told me: "Comrade Chistyakov . . . we understand that your troops are tired. . . . But . . . the situation

requires to go over to the attack as quickly as possible. If we used another Army than yours, this would require much time."[395]

The decision to attack Gumbinnen in the morning of October 21, 1944: "It is a bold decision, I thought, and no doubt a correct one. Of course, General Burdeinyi knew that the tankmen were tired . . . needed at least a short rest. But . . . he also knew something else. . . . One must not stop and miss the possibility of developing the success obtained."[396]

That an unfavorable relationship of forces may make interruption an optimal tactic is thus never proclaimed, though it may in a rare case be taken for granted.

The fall of 1943 in the area of Novo-Georgievsk: "The attack developed with extreme slowness. . . . The enemy engaged in stubborn defense. We were again and again forced to stop in order to prepare the breakthrough of his defense. . . ."[397]

What dominates descriptions of the War is the avoidance of interruption.

We do not stand in place. . . . Though slowly, we advance.[398]

We did not count on big successes, yet we did not stay in place.[399]

The Army goes forward day and night without stopping, giving breathing spells neither to itself nor to the enemy.[400]

And thus, again to the battle, without a breathing spell, without a halt.[401] Despite the exceptional strain of the last combats, the corps was ready to fulfill new missions.[402]

A unit having been transferred and just arrived in its new place, the superior commander tells the unit commander: "There is going to be no breathing spell. Your men, I hope, have rested in transit? Now, immediately into the battle!"[403]

"Only in the hospital does the soldier get a rest," Mochalov said longingly. "Here it is from the march to the battle, from the battle to the march."[404]

To the counteroffensive [in the area of Moscow, in the fall of 1941] our troops proceeded without any pause; the counteroffensive in the area of Moscow gave the enemy no time for organizing his defense; our strikes against the Fascists who had, to our crucial advantage not had the time to organize their defense.[405]

The winter of 1943: ". . . the decision to continue with the offensive without a pause, since any loss of time on our part would allow the enemy to entrench more firmly on the lines they occupied."[406]

The offensive against Khar'kov in the summer of 1943: "All troops of the front conducted active combat actions. There was no breathing spell. They pushed the enemy back uninterruptedly. . . ."[407]

The operation at Königsberg and Pillau were conducted uninterruptedly, day and night. By this, we succeeded in exhausting the enemy . . . not giving him the possibility of conducting substantial regroupings.[408]

The First Belorussian Front in Germany, the winter of 1945: "Aware of the fact that the slightest delay in our advance would be utilized by the enemy for the organization of resistance, we were intent on the offensive developing without even the smallest pause. Therefore, we renounced any regrouping. . . ."[409] *The operation in eastern Pomerania:* "The rapidity and uninterruptedness of combat actions, not even for a minute giving the enemy a breathing spell so as to accumulate reserves and regroup, was a most important condition of success. . . ."[410]

But, then, do commanders, pressed by the Authorities, not overcomply?

"Fedor Vasil'evich," I said to Levkov, "we must let the soldiers sleep. How are we going to fight if the Regiment is sleeping on the march?"[411]

A junior officer in the summer of 1941 in the area of Demyansk: "With every hour things became more difficult. Many fighters, having lost their strength, simply let themselves fall to the road. It became evident: a substantial halt for rest and sleep was desperately necessary. However, the marching orders did not foresee that. The Commander and the Commissar of the Regiment did not bring themselves to ask the Commander of the Division for time for rest of the personnel. At that time I was not very knowledgeable about

military subordination and decided to address myself directly to the Commander of the Division. . . ."

. . . . . .

[The Division Commander tells him:]

—Your job is to lead people and not to ask for rest. Understand, the situation at the Front is difficult; we must make haste.

I began to remonstrate that after a good rest, the personnel would walk more quickly, that in any case enfeebled soldiers could not be led into battle. But the Division Commander apparently already did not listen to me.[412]

The experience of the operation at Novgorod-Luga showed . . . that on a number of levels (beginning with the division and ending with the Army) the important question concerning the timely replacement of units after protracted uninterrupted combat . . . was not sufficiently thought through. . . .

. . . [There ought to be] a way to prevent the participation of a given unit in combat in the course of many days without being replaced.[413]

The official refusal of a pause may be followed by a pause contrary to orders, or even involuntary:

The Brigade moved through the woods more slowly than it should. The Commander of the Brigade reported that the enemy put up strong resistance, that it was necessary to take every step through combat. I came to the Brigade at evening. People were exhausted with fatigue, needed a rest, but to interrupt the offensive on the approaches to Berlin would have been . . . criminal. Every hour of slowing up gave the enemy the possibility of preparing his defense better. It was necessary to advance "beyond impossibility."

. . . . . .

"Why are you, Comrade Lieutenant Colonel, milling around with the whole brigade the entire day almost on the same spot?" I asked.

"Comrade General, the enemy has mined all roads, has organized a strong antitank defense, allows neither the tanks nor the infantry to advance," the Lieutenant Colonel loudly reported.

—But it seems to me you simply want to sleep, and then you are finding pretexts so as not to move from place.[414]

The fall of 1944 in the Baltic: "The units went into the attack in proper fashion, but after some time one of them suddenly and inexplicably lay down and began to dig itself in." Kazakov [Colonel General M. I. Kazakov, the Front Commander] was startled:

. . . . . .

"Why did you stop"? Kazakov angrily asked the sergeant.

. . . . . .

. . . . [Kazakov, after having investigated, tells the author:] "In that same company which suddenly almost let the other units down, I discovered soldiers who slept. . . . Yes, in the midst of explosions and noise, some soldiers, as soon as they touched the earth, began to sleep. The regiment had fought already for two days without a breathing spell."[415]

* * * * * * *

Before and during the War, two situations were publicly exempted from the requirement for uninterruptedness: the period between a completed major operation and its successor, and the case of an enemy stronger than had been expected.

While "one must strive to shorten pauses," an analyst in the 1930s pointed out, "contemporary war will still . . . be characterized by operational pauses. After having attained a given objective, the troops will be forced to stop to send out covering detachments, to regroup in order to begin a new operation."[416] "Halts," another analyst declared in the same period, "are inevitable even in the most mobile war"; after all, "protracted halts took place in all past wars."[417] Operational pauses after the accomplishment of an offensive operation are (it could be declared at a time when the memory of the War was still fresh) fully lawful; they separate one offensive operation from the other and are foreseen by the appropriate command.

In War memoirs it is taken for granted that substantial pauses between major operations conducted by the same large units were normal, that is, required for the maintenance, if not the increase, of their combat capacity.

For the armies there began an interruption between combats.[418]

Such a pause might, of course, be timed with other Fronts/Armies resuming combat: "The idea of the sequential carrying-out of strikes in various directions was one of the new achievements of the Soviet art of war [in 1944]. . . . One operation had not yet finished when another began."[419] Yet, for any unit engaged in uninterrupted fighting, that very quality, in War memoirs, calls for a subsequent pause:

> In uninterrupted fights the personnel got exhausted. It became necessary to grant them rest, to check on equipment, to fill up personnel.[420]

Indeed, according to a German commander, the preparation of a Soviet offensive operation took such an inexplicably long time that often the surprise achieved was due only to the delay! Then, however, came execution uninterrupted until the achievement of the objective.

> *The Steppe Front in 1943, described by its commander:* "The lengthy operational pause which occurred on the fronts from April to July [*1943*] favored the successful high-quality accomplishment of combat and political preparation. . . ."[421]

> November 23 [1943] I reported by telephone to the Supreme Commander about the battles for the Dnepr. . . . Finding themselves in combat uninterruptedly for about four months, the fighters were physically tired, the troops needed rest and replenishment. I asked for permission to temporarily go over to the defense on the lines held. I. V. Stalin . . . agreed with my proposal.[422]

> *The Southwest in the spring of 1944:* "The fulfillment of the mission in accordance with the last directive of the Stavka [of April 8, 1944] was clearly beyond the forces of the [Second Ukrainian] Front. While there still were possibilities for an offensive on the right wing, in the center it was necessary to stop operations because of an insufficiency of tanks and combat supplies, because of the excessive extension of the rear, the lagging behind of the artillery, the fatigue of the troops. A pause was required."
>
> . . . . I communicated my observations to I. V. Stalin over the telephone. I reported that the troops of the Front, having overfilled all missions, had advanced fighting 320 – 400 kilometers on roadless terrain and in extremely difficult conditions. They could not further actively fulfill tasks—they were tired, the rear was extended; beyond this, the neighbor to the left was lagging behind very strongly, and the enemy was transferring all that he had at his front lines against the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front. A breathing spell was indispensable.
>
> I proposed to go over to the defense.
>
> I. V. Stalin approved this proposal.
>
> "Correct," he said, "Go over to the defense and bring your troops into order."[423]

But even then, there was, expectedly, an inclination to do away with this flagrant and massive violation of uninterruptedness.

> *The offensive into Hungary:* Some peculiarities of our . . . offensive on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front: "The first and most important peculiarity consists in this: that in contrast to the majority of strategic operations realized in 1944 – 45, the offensive in Hungary was prepared in the course of preceding operations, that is, in a situation of uninterrupted combat actions." For various circumstances "required not to tolerate even the smallest operational pause which usually occurs in connection with the preparation of a . . . big offensive, but rather to continue inflicting uninterrupted strikes in sequence."[424]

Indeed, a third of a century later, portrayals of the War minimize the pauses between operations which took place then. "In 1945," a military leader writes after thirty years, "the length of the preparation of offensives became shorter": in fact, "in some cases there were . . . no periods of preparation. The peculiarity here consisted in measures for the preparation of the next offensive being accomplished in the course of conducting offensive or defensive operations." More particularly the former: "The preparation of some Front operations was conducted in the course of an offensive, in the process of waging bitter battles. Thus, the Second Belorussian Front in the course of the East Prussian operation prepared, without operational pause, the beginning of the East Pomeranian operation. The First Ukrainian Front, after the Weichsel-Oder operation, without ceasing bitter combat . . . prepared and subsequently executed the Lower Silesian and the Upper Silesian operations."[425] At any point, "the prerequisites (*predposylki*)" of what came to pass "had been created earlier,"[426] *while* completing an action whose *predposylki* had, in turn, been brought into existence during the course of a previous enterprise. For the "impact on the enemy should be continuous"[427]; to put it somewhat redundantly, "one must permanently hold the defense under uninterrupted fire impact."[428] "The Soviet forces," according to an editorial of the armed forces daily, "fought with the [German] enemy without [the] so-called climactic pauses judged indispensable in bourgeois military science."[429]

Avoiding interruptions even between major operations contributes to achieving surprise:

> True, our troops are at the present moment not ready, physically and materially, for a new dash. The enemy, too, knows that. And because he knows that, he does not foresee a Soviet offensive.
> . . .
> . . . . But what could be more effective than a strike undertaken at a moment when it appears unthinkable, when the enemy does not expect it at all?[430]

Also, while forgoing an interruption has the effect of keeping our strength low, it may improve the force ratio toward an even more weakened enemy—one who would recuperate more rapidly in a pause:

> If only we could take a breath now . . . receive replacements, and then press on anew so that the enemy front break into pieces. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]
>
> To us, particularly at first view, it appeared strange that anybody might argue in a completely different manner.
>
> True, our troops are tired, but the enemy is not less tired. . . . If our troops long for rest, the enemy longs for it a hundred times more strongly!
>
> True, an operational pause would help us to fill up thinned-out regiments and divisions. But the Hitlerites, too, will not sit with their hands folded. Not only will they bring their troops into order, they will also create a firm defense.[431]

But here again, are not the Authorities, pressed by their fear of inaction, overdoing it, particularly in the face of unexpected enemy strength?

> *The winter of 1942 on the approaches to Moscow:* "The operation against Velizh followed immediately after that against Toropets, without pause, and therefore supplies furnished for this operation were extremely meager."[432]

> *The fall of 1943:* "In October and November the troops of the [Western] Front . . . tried four times to attack south and north of the Dnepr, but the penetration into the depth of the enemy's defense amounted to only 1 to 1.5 kilometers."
>
> At this, it would seem, one ought to have stopped. One ought to have made a big pause for the . . . preparation for the impending offensive operations, so as to give the troops a breathing spell. But no, one did not even want to hear us out on this.[433]

> Already February 12 [1943], at the time of the combats on the near approaches to Khar'kov, the 40th Army received the following combat order:
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Thus we learned that we were to conduct the fourth offensive operation since January 12 [1943]. As before, this had to be prepared in the course of the accomplishment of the previous operation, without any . . . pause. . . .
>
> . . . . Did these tasks correspond . . . to the possibilities of the troops of the Front?

> . . . . The troops needed at least a brief rest, so as . . . to fill up the losses suffered in manpower and equipment, to bring up the rear which had lagged behind, and to receive supplies of ammunition and fuel. That is, the best thing that we could do would be to halt the offensive. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In contrast to the operation in the area of Voronezh-Kastornen and even more to that in the area of Ostrogozh-Rossoshan, we had conducted the offensive operation toward Khar'kov with a great straining of forces. What was before us now was a new big offensive to the depth of more than 500 kilometers, without a breathing spell, without having received replacements, without having brought up the rear, and without having procured the necessary supplies.[434]
>
> *The same offensive:* "There will be no halt," he [F. I. Golikov] announced by telephone.
>
> But a pause was precisely necessary. We needed to bring up the rear, to bring up supplies and fuel. The units acutely needed to have their personnel replenished.[435] Indeed, while the offensive was soon arrested by the enemy anyway, we could have kept the operational initiative in our hands if after the liberation of Khar'kov we had only stopped for two or three weeks. . . . A pause could within two or three weeks sharply change the relationship of forces. The tank corps of the Sixth Army and of the mobile groups of the [Southwestern] Front could then have numbered not five to ten battle machines in good repair, but, in the lowest estimate, a hundred to a hundred and fifty.[436] Also, the troops would have received a breathing spell, and soldiers who are rested always fight better.[437]

* * * * * * *

The worth attributed by the Authorities to uninterruptedness is commensurate with their expectation of not finding it in their subordinates' actions. Thus, the issue is habitually raised in operational contexts where Westerners might view uninterruptedness as either unimportant or taken for granted.

Because uninterruptedness does not come by itself, work to obtain it should itself be uninterrupted. Thus, in the course of the War, "the artillery support of infantry and tank attack"—"uninterrupted," of course—"was uninterruptedly perfected."[438]

"We stubbornly strive," an officer reports, "for Party political work in exercises being conducted uninterruptedly . . . removing elements of intermittence. . . ."[439] "Work on the education of the soldiers

in the spirit of high vigilance," adds a colleague, "must be conducted not intermittently but uninterruptedly. . . . Deviation from this most important role leads inevitably to negative sequels."[440]

To the hell of intermittence the Authorities oppose the heaven of continuity, as on the first day of a new school year in the Lenin Military-Political Academy: "While the new students listened to introductory lectures, studies in the other courses proceeded as if they had never been interrupted."[441]

> *A junior officer reeducates a private:* "This whole history of the reeducation of the Private proceeded, as it were, without my interference. Must I suffer pain from that or experience joy? I rejoice. For I know: also when the fighters are in class, during the morning setup exercises, in the evening before the television screen—there are always with them my helpers, Sergeants D'yachenko, Borisenko, Senior Sergeant Ryabokonov, the Komsomol members Kuz'menko, Tarasov. That means that the arduous process of education of the fighters does not cease even for a minute."[442]

> *A political officer recalls the War:* "Though it was not easy to conduct Party-political work in the course of bitter battle, that work was not stopped."[443]

Similarly for training. Conducting training intermittently, occasionally, or "in swoops" sharply impairs its yield; such is a message of the High Command to its forces, in which it discerns a disposition of this kind.[444] The reason that "leading pilots do not know how to command subordinates on the ground" is that they are taught in that art intermittently.[445] "In the working out of elements of the program," observes an analyst, "substantial interruptions were tolerated. As a result, habits formed at the first exercise of a theme were partially lost subsequently."[446] "After an interruption in flight practice," pilots "only slowly reestablished the habits they had lost."[447] That is, "training is a . . . school of combat mastery only when it is conducted uninterruptedly, day and night. . . ."[448]

> *A young officer makes a mistake; is tempted to give up; is induced to overcome his mistake by a subtle maneuver of his superior; achieves success:* "The day on which the commander of the unit said a good word about me, when declaring the results of a socialist competition, was for me a real holiday. 'Now prepare for the exam for the second class,' Major Bukirev said to me after the meeting.
>
> To begin with, my heart was seized by cold anguish. Will I be up to it? . . . . [Were I to follow the Major's advice], it would

> turn out that, upon having succeeded in the first task, I would immediately without any pause (*tut zhe bez vsyakoi pausy*) start on the next already more complicated and difficult one.
>
> And then I understood that this would be for the best. If one stops on one's path, one may lose the feeling of sureness which emerges after the first victory over oneself, over one's doubts and fears. . . ."[449]

Similarly, for leadership. Listing desired aspects of "leadership in the armed forces," an editorial in the military daily adds to the expected qualities ("a precise plan of action, an optimal variant of decision, hardness, flexibility") the quality of "uninterruptedness."[450] Recalling that "there is no better school of military mastery . . . than training . . . in conditions maximally close to real battle," a military leader asserts that "precisely in such conditions" there develops not only "flexibility in the leadership of the unit" but also "uninterruptedness."[451] It seems worth insisting that, in war, commanders should "maintain uninterrupted contact with the troops and continuous knowledge of the situation."[452] When, during the War, an officer "undertook a sudden strike of the platoon against the enemy from the flank," he did it "not losing the leadership of the unit for even an instant."[453] Even when it comes to the extreme moments of "high-speed attack," and to discerning those qualities of leadership that constitute the decisive condition for such an operation, the first that may come to mind is that leadership then must be "uninterrupted." For "to lead uninterruptedly is not to let the thread of leadership *drop* for a minute *from one's hands*," which today is to fail: "Contemporary battle raises especially exacting requirements with regard to the uninterruptedness of direction. In the last war, a temporary loss of direction provoked complications, but could, as a rule, not exercise a decisive influence on the outcome of the battle. However, in contemporary war . . . the loss of direction, even for a short time, may lead to failure in fulfilling the combat task."[454]

Affirming that "the uninterruptedness of the crossing of water barriers now acquires a special significance," a writer finds it worthwhile to insist that "a crossing *which has begun* must be completed without a stop."[455] Evidently, the inclination to interrupt might get the better of even the most evident requirements of the situation.

Similarly with regard to pursuit:

> *The 28th Army in the winter of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "Uninterruptedness in pursuit was lacking, which gave the enemy the pos-

> sibility of breaking contact with our troops and, in a number of cases, of creating a solid defense."[456]

> *The spring of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "Serious mistakes were committed by the [Front] Command in . . . the conduct of the landing operations in the areas of Yuzhnaya Ozereika, Stanichka, and in the offensive operation against Krasnodar. A favorable situation for the encirclement of the Krasnodar grouping of the enemy required more decisive actions on the part of the Command of the Front. However, instead of a swift offensive against the enemy and his destruction, our troops stopped pursuit and, at the indication of the Command of the Front, began unnecessary regroupings. The enemy utilized this, found time to bring his troops back into order and to organize a strong defense on new lines."[457]

Any interruption in pursuit reduces the chance that one will obtain the *annihilation* of the enemy; any remnant of the enemy is apt to rapidly grow back to strength. "In contemporary conditions, each side has large possibilities, when retreating, for reestablishing the combat capacity of troops which have suffered large losses."[458]

There is an inclination, the Authorities perceive, to interrupt the acquisition of intelligence, with grave results:

> When the task [of an intelligence unit to locate "enemy" missiles] seemed almost accomplished . . . the unit's leader, N. Maslennikov, burned himself when inspecting a radiator. Though his burn was insignificant, he decided to go to the paramedic in the nearest town. The unit returned to its post very quickly, but . . . there was nobody to observe any more. The enemy battery and its train had disappeared.[459]

> In one exercise units of tanks and motorized infantry prepared for attack. Intelligence had been able to discover the "enemy's" system of defense. By the evening the emplacement of his line of defense, the limits of his strong points, the coordinates of his means of fire, and the area of his reserves had been established with great precision. The attack began at dawn. Overcoming the enemy's first line, the tanks and the motorized infantry swiftly moved toward the depth of the enemy's defense. Suddenly they came up against a system of obstructions of which they had no knowledge. From an unexpected direction the "enemy" brought a tornado of fire down upon the attackers.
>
> It was clear that under the cover of darkness the "enemy" had substantially altered his defense. . . . His maneuver had not been observed. At night observations were made only *intermittently*. . . .

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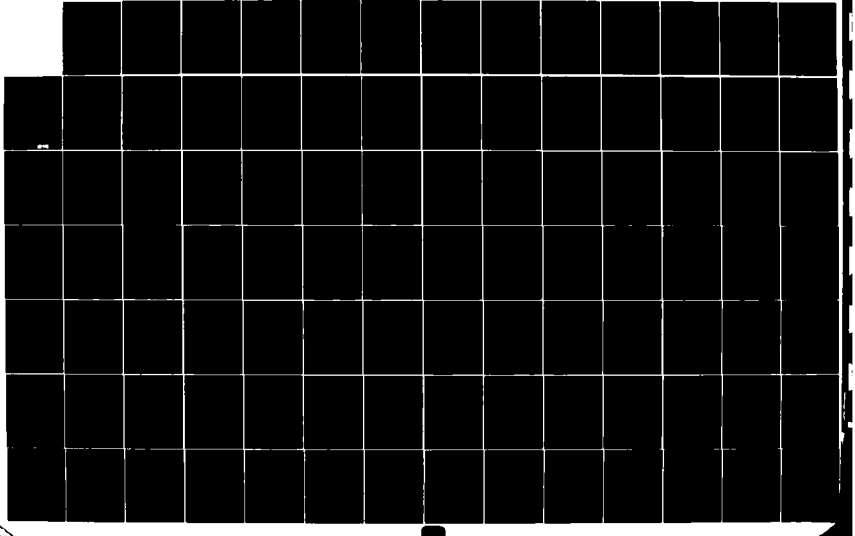

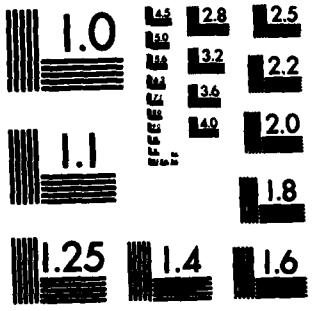

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

In contemporary war the situation changes with unprecedented swiftness. Hence even a short *pause* in gathering intelligence may render the information obtained until then hopelessly dated. . . .[460]

The attack began. First it developed successfully. However, soon its speed fell as the attackers unexpectedly met stubborn resistance. More than that . . . the "enemy" began a powerful counterattack. The battalion bore substantial "losses."

Why did this attack which had begun well not bring the desired result? Later it turned out that the Battalion commander had not known how to secure uninterrupted intelligence on the "enemy." During the day the defender was thoroughly observed by all subunits, but at night this observation weakened. It was this which the "enemy" utilized. Under the cover of darkness a part of his forces was concentrated on a tactically advantageous line. It was from there that the counterattack started which turned out to be unexpected for the attackers.[461]

In exercises one can observe this picture: the commander accords sufficient attention to intelligence during the organization of the battle, but forgets about it once action has begun.[462]

The commander of the combat intelligence detachment, Lt. V. Koryagin . . . quickly discovered a tank column of the "enemy." Having reported this to the commander of the Battalion, he decided that the job was done. Instead of sending out observers or a vehicle closer to the column, and of conducting an uninterrupted observation of it from various points, he allowed his subordinates to take a rest. In the meanwhile, the area where the tanks were deployed was ever more hidden by a fog, the noise of the motors became ever quieter, and finally ceased altogether.

As it turned out later, this was a ruse of the "enemy": during the time when the motors of one or two tanks were working at their full power, the other vehicles went off at limited speeds into another area from which they attacked.[463]

The offensive in the area of Stalingrad, January 10, 1943: "Usually, reconnaissance was conducted uninterruptedly from the beginning of artillery preparation and after its end during the entire course of the attack. . . . But here, when the artillery preparation began and the deployment of the enemy was hidden from sight by a dense curtain of smoke and fire, reconnaissance was discontinued for a time. Many held that with such smoke you can't see anything in any case, and that the enemy, kept to the ground by fire, can't undertake anything. Everybody was occupied with gazing at the

> highly impressive spectacle which one could not observe that often. And that is why almost under our nose after the first attack, one . . . detachment of enemy riflemen crawled from the first foxhole to the neutral zone and hid in the holes made by the bursts of shells. When our infantry rose to the attack, this . . . detachment opened fire. . . . After such a sad case, we required, until the end of the war, in the strictest fashion, not to discontinue the observation of the enemy even for a minute, not even during artillery preparation."[464]

> *The offensive against East Prussia, October 16, 1944:* "We based ourselves mainly on data obtained in the course of the preparation of the offensive. But the situation changed literally with every hour of combat. Our intelligence clearly did not keep pace with these changes. . . ."[465]

In such conditions it seems worth declaring that interrupting intelligence is a fatal deed:

> *Stalingrad, the fall of 1942:* "The situation forced us . . . to conduct observation uninterruptedly. . . . Let anything slip, and catastrophe becomes inevitable."[466]

"Uninterrupted combat intelligence" remains an elite characteristic: *gvardeiskyi priznok.*"[467]

Notes to Chapter One

1. Konev, quoted by M. I. Kazakov, 207.
2. Vedenin, 92.
3. Batov, 1962, 108.
4. Degtyarev, 122–123.
5. Ibid., 85. Emphasis added.
6. V. I. Kazakov, 48. Emphasis added.
7. Maj. G. Ivanov, *KZ*, August 2, 1978. Emphasis added.
8. *KZ*, September 6, 1975.
9. Lt. Col. V. Khodul'kin, *KZ*, October 6, 1975.
10. Maj. A. Trekhov, *KZ*, September 2, 1975.
11. Navy Captains G. Efremov and A. Dyadyun, *KZ*, October 18, 1975.
12. Lt. Col. Lashkevich and Maj. I. Karavaitsev, *KZ*, August 6, 1975.
13. Maj. A. Sychev, *KZ*, September 2, 1975.
14. Stuchenko, 241.
15. Ibid.
16. *KZ*, January 4, 1976.

17. Maj. G. Shafikov, *KVS*, 1977, no. 13, 34.
18. Col. Gen. N. Lapygin, *KZ*, July 7, 1978.
19. Gen. of the Army I. Tret'yak, *VV*, 1977, no. 9, 37.
20. Col. Gen. N. Lapygin, *KZ*, July 7, 1978.
21. Lt. Col. V. Zaritskii, *KZ*, October 3, 1978.
22. Lt. Col. M. Korotaev, *KVS*, 1966, no. 3, 36. Emphasis added.
23. Maj. Gen. I. Mednikov, *VV*, 1966, no. 4, 51.
24. Lt. Col. P. Gorchakov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 50.
25. Lt. Col. V. Devin, *KZ*, January 23, 1976. Emphasis added.
26. Lt. Col. N. Bukhteev, *VV*, 1975, no. 7, 20. Emphasis added.
27. Lt. Col. Smetanin, *VV*, 1966, no. 7, 58.
28. Lt. O. Dobrovol'skii, *KZ*, February 27, 1977.
29. Lt. V. Tarkhanov, *KZ*, February 5, 1976.
30. *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 6.
31. Maj. A. Ramanauskas, *KZ*, April 7, 1977. Emphasis added.
32. Lt. Col. V. Golovkin, *KZ*, April 18, 1977.
33. B. Kutakhov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 1, 32.
34. Sr. Lt. A. Tkachev, *KZ*, March 20, 1977.
35. Ibid.
36. Philippi, 57.
37. Col. K. Titikov, *KZ*, February 8, 1974. Emphasis added.
38. Maj. Gen. P. Safronov, *KZ*, February 8, 1974.
39. *KVS*, 1970, no. 18, 42.
40. Ibid., 44. Emphasis added.
41. *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 9.
42. Col. A. Stibnev, *KZ*, September 3, 1976.
43. Col. R. Dukov, *KZ*, June 23, 1973.
44. Col. Gen. A. Konstantinov, *KZ*, December 15, 1975.
45. Lt. Gen. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1975, no. 3, 33.
46. Maj. Gen. A. Surchenko, *VV*, 1962, no. 5, 19.
47. Col. R. Dukov, *KVS*, 1969, no. 8, 44.
48. Goldhamer, 123.
49. Col. V. Kostylev, *VV*, 1966, no. 7, 50.
50. Lt. Col. L. Muzyka, *KZ*, October 22, 1976.
51. *KZ*, June 19, 1976.
52. Lt. Gen. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1975, no. 3, 33.
53. Lt. Gen. I. Gaidaenko, *KVS*, 1975, no. 21, 36.
54. *KZ*, January 10, 1976.
55. Lt. Gen. P. Shkidchenko, *KVS*, 1975, no. 21, 36.
56. Editorials, *KVS*, 1966, no. 6, 4.
57. *VV*, 1967, no. 6, 60.
59. Marshal P. Batitskii, *KZ*, January 16, 1976.
60. Admiral V. Grishanov, *KVS*, 1967, no. 8, 14–15.
61. Lt. Col. A. Pimenov, *KZ*, March 25, 1977.
62. Maj. M. Malygan, *KZ*, September 8, 1977.
63. Shtemenko, 245–246.
64. Lt. Gen. O. Kulishev, *KZ*, January 6, 1976.
65. *KVS*, 1971, no. 1, 19–20.
66. The newspaper of the Odessa Military District, quoted in *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 55.

67. Lt. Gen. V. Budakov, *VV*, 1975, no. 8, 61.
68. Vice Admiral M. Ozimov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 9, 40.
69. Editorial, *KVS*, 1973, no. 12, 6.
70. Lt. Gen. I. Gaidaenko, *KVS*, 1967, no. 6, 31.
71. Admiral V. Grishanov, *KVS*, 1967, no. 8, 12.
72. Col. K. Bushmanov, *VV*, 1975, no. 11, 6.
73. Lt. Col. S. Vasil'chenko, *KZ*, January 20, 1976.
74. Editorial, *KZ*, May 24, 1977.
75. Col. Gen. A. Shcheglov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 2, 20.
76. Lt. Col. B. Gudymenko, *VV*, 1975, no. 12, 29.
77. *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 6.
78. Col. O. Pogrebtsov, *KZ*, July 1, 1976.
79. Editorial, *VV*, 1966, no. 1, 6.
80. Col. Gen. N. Lapygin, *KZ*, July 7, 1978.
81. A document of the Stavka, June 4, 1942, quoted by Vasilevskii, 211.
82. Ibid.
83. Editorial, *KVS*, 1976, no. 22, 5.
84. Col. V. Makhalov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 1, 25.
85. *KVS*, 1977, no. 2, 17.
86. *KVS*, 1967, no. 6, 3.
87. Maj. Gen. A. Ryanzanskii, *VV*, 1969, no. 6, 29.
88. Lt. Gen. O. Kulishev, *KZ*, January 6, 1976.
89. *KZ*, January 1, 1976.
90. Maj. G. Shafikov, *KVS*, 1977, no. 13, 33.
91. Col. F. Gredasov, *KZ*, January 14, 1972.
92. Lt. Col. V. Goshko, *VV*, no. 12, 42.
93. Col. A. Kulikov, *KZ*, January 7, 1977.
94. Vice Admiral M. Ozimov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 9, 41.
95. Lt. Gen. S. Belonozhko, *KZ*, June 1, 1977.
96. Editorial, *KVS*, 1976, no. 22, 5.
97. Capt. P. Labutin, *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 70.
98. Col. V. Kal'chenko, *KZ*, May 25, 1976.
99. Lt. Col. V. Odukhov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 11, 39.
100. Biryukov, 144.
101. Editorial, *KVS*, 1976, no. 22, 8.
102. Lt. Gen. O. Kubishev, *KZ*, January 6, 1976.
103. Chuikov, 1967, 164–165.
104. Dragunskii, 252–253.
105. Ibid., 254.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., 255.
110. Ibid.
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112. Ibid., 255–256.
113. Lt. Col. I. Noskov, *KVS*, 1968, no. 24, 53.
114. Sr. Lt. A. Savadash, *KZ*, January 4, 1976.
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116. Col. Gen. G. Salmonov, *KZ*, June 5, 1976.
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118. Lt. Col. I. Noskov, *KVS*, 1968, no. 9, 51.
119. Lt. Col. A. Pimenov, *KZ*, March 25, 1977.
120. Maj. Gen. E. Moiseev, *KZ*, March 23, 1977.
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122. Lt. Col. I. Noskov, *KVS*, 1968, no. 9, 51.
123. Vice Admiral V. Ivanov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 1, 21.
124. Lt. Col. I. Noskov, *KVS*, 1968, no. 9, 52–53.
125. Col. V. Nagornyi, *KZ*, January 22, 1977.
126. Editorial, *VV*, 1977, no. 3, 8.
127. Capt. V. Golovin, *KZ*, January 21, 1977.
128. Lt. Col. A. Pimenov, *KZ*, March 25, 1977.
129. Capt. V. Goryavin, *KZ*, February 2, 1977. Ellipsis in the text.
130. Vice Admiral V. Ivanov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 1, 21.
131. Col. Gen. Kh. Ambaryan, *KVS*, 1970, no. 1, 51.
132. Lt. Col. B. Gudymenko, *VV*, 1974, no. 12, 51–52.
133. General of the Army V. J. Margelov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 5, 32.
134. Col. Gen. N. Lyashchenko, *VV*, 1967, no. 9, 48.
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136. Lt. V. Svetikov, *VV*, 1976, no. 10, 5.
137. Capt. I. Kikeshev, *VV*, 1976, no. 7, 65.
138. *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 46.
139. *VV*, 1976, no. 11, 65.
140. Capt. V. Ovsyannikov, *KVS*, 1977, no. 2, 42.
141. Col. Gen. Kh. Ambaryan, *KVS*, 1970, no. 1, 41.
142. *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 57. Emphasis added.
143. Editorial, *VV*, 1969, no. 10, 4.
144. Lt. Gen. N. Mil'chenko, *KZ*, March 31, 1977.
145. Vice Admiral A. Sorokin, *KZ*, January 11, 1976.
146. Ibid.
147. Lt. Col. I. Emel'yanov, *KZ*, June 26, 1976.
148. Vice Admiral A. Sorokin, *KZ*, January 11, 1976.
149. Batov, 1962, 236.
150. Fedyuninskii, 68.
151. Chuikov, 1967, 37–38.
152. Batov, 1962, 199. Ellipsis in the text.
153. Zhukov, 279.
154. Batov, 1962, 289–290. Ellipsis in the text.
155. Biryukov, 144–145. Ellipsis in the text.
156. M. I. Kazakov, 123.
157. Chuikov, 1962a, 48.
158. Ibid., 62.
159. Ibid., 97.
160. Grechko, 1973, 209.
161. The Stavka, quoted by Grechko, 1973, 345.
162. M. I. Kazakov, 192.
163. Popel', 1959, 29.
164. P. A. Belov, 92.

165. Vasilevskii, 185.
166. Stuchenko, 155, 156. Emphasis added.
167. Lomov, 150.
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169. Ibid., 21.
170. Maj. Gen. G. Komolev, *KVS*, 1977, no. 5, 50.
171. Lt. Col. A. Zubkov, *KZ*, April 13, 1977.
172. Lt. Col. Altashin, *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 45.
173. Capt. I. Kikeshev, *VV*, 1976, no. 7, 64.
174. Col. A. Nedosugov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 5, 42.
175. Lt. Col. S. Mostovoi, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 25. Emphasis added.
176. *KVS*, 1975, no. 3, 21.
177. Capt. I. Kikeshev, *VV*, 1976, no. 7, 63.
178. Maj. Gen. V. Mitronov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 6, 43.
179. Editorial, *KVS*, 1966, no. 6, 4.
180. Fedyunskii, 138.
181. Lashchenko, 157.
182. Lt. Col. V. Sigorov, *KZ*, July 16, 1974.
183. Col. A. Krasnov, *KZ*, October 11, 1974.
184. Vice Admiral G. Khdatov, *KZ*, July 16, 1978.
185. Maj. Gen. O. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, November 22, 1977.
186. Maj. Gen. L. Nosov, *KZ*, May 27, 1976.
187. Col. A. Krasnov, *KZ*, October 10, 1974.
188. Radzievskii, 1976, 186.
189. Sidorenko, 130.
190. Maj. Gen. A. Ryazinskii, *VV*, 1969, no. 6, 32.
191. Maj. Gen. N. Pavlenko, *VIZh*, 1966, no. 3, 17.
192. General of the Army A. Radzievskii, *VIZh*, 1974, no. 4, 14.
193. Capt. N. Kikeshev, *KZ*, July 7, 1976.
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195. Marchenko, 1947a, 192.
196. Radzievskii, 1976, 27–28.
197. Vasilevskii, 166–167.
198. Hossbach, 201.
199. Gorchakov, 11.
200. Konev, 1972, 16–20.
201. Ibid.
202. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 348.
203. Batov, 1965, 91.
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205. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 149.
206. Philippi, 24–25.
207. Rotmistrov, 130.
208. Batov, 1962, 41.
209. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 539–40.
210. Grechko, 1976, 263.
211. Reznichenko, 289.
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214. Radzievskii, 1974, 90.
215. Senior Lt. R. Abdullin, *KZ*, July 30, 1976. Emphasis added.
216. Ibid.
217. Ibid., 289.
218. Sidorenko, 174.
219. Radzievskii, 1974, 184.
220. *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 55.
221. Editorial, *VV*, 1972, no. 6, 2. Emphasis added.
222. A title, *VV*, 1971, no. 11, 41.
223. *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 55.
224. Lt. Col. L. Chuiko, *KZ*, August 27, 1976.
225. *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 55. Emphasis added.
226. Grechko, 1976, 91.
227. Biryuzov, 38.
228. Eremenko, 1964, 316–317.
229. Ibid., 407.
230. Haupt, 1966, 107.
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Chapter II
WARDING OFF SLOWNESS

Wasting Time

Why do the Soviets make such a fuss—as we shall see over dozens of pages—about swiftness? Does not the technology of war in general, and of contemporary battle in particular, make its importance evident? Precisely because that is the case, Soviet commanders may sense an all-the-more-harrowing difficulty: to the Bolshevik sensibility—in what is felt as a matter of common sense rather than a theorem of "Marxism–Leninism"—human nature is prone to scorn time. "We do not value the *minute*," observed an officer, "and sometimes we do not even consider half an hour an important amount of time."[1] There is, a colleague notes, an "aimless waste of training time."[2]

"For the Russians," observes a Western analyst about the High Command, "time is not . . . of *great* value, it is of the *utmost* value. . . ."[3] "Time," a leading Soviet analyst comments about "the revolution in war," "has come to play not simply an important, but a decisive role in determining . . . the outcome of combat."[4] "Let us remember," exhorts another analyst, "the precepts of A. V. Suvorov: 'Procrastination is like death.' 'An instant gives victory. One minute decides the outcome of a battle, one hour the success of a campaign.' "[5] When the same analyst sets out to affirm that success or defeat will depend not only on "superiority in forces and means," what other factors is he about to add? "Great swiftness" in the actions of troops and in the employment of nuclear weapons and "the reasonable utilization of time"[6]—that particular "reasonableness," about the prevalence and stability of which the Authorities seem to be in such doubt.

The worth of an action, it may be argued, is dominated not by its content but by its timing. "Even the most exact forecast," insists an editorial of the military daily, "is useless if made belatedly, even the most sensible measures will not bring success if they are realized in a slow manner"; "unfortunately, some commanders are not aware

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of this. . . .''[7] It is even possible to attain the maximum of apparent success, ''to destroy an enemy grouping fully and arrive at the intended line, and yet not to fulfill one's mission if one has accomplished all this . . . while being late.''[8]

The wages of ''despising time is death.'' ''A loss of time in battle is not less dangerous than losses in forces and means'';[9] more than that, ''it is not for nothing that it is being said that procrastination in contemporary battle equals defeat.''[10] ''In a meeting engagement,'' observes an editorial of the military daily (daring to use the forbidden word *smert'*, death, as Suvorov employed it in his warning against the Russian contempt for time), ''procrastination . . . is really the same thing as death.''[11]

Even a minute loss of time, the loss of a minute or less, is apt to entail failure. The efficacy of the best-laid plan is at the mercy of the slightest inaccuracy of timing. ''The smallest delay,'' an observer notes about a simulated combat, ''would annul all the efforts of the company.''[12] ''Being late [*zapozdanie*, a fearful noun—NL] to the slightest degree,'' remarks a leading analyst, ''can in contemporary conditions reduce to zero the effect of a maneuver which has been calculated correctly.''[13] ''At first sight,'' an analyst notes, ''mounting on and dismounting from armored personnel carriers seems an unimportant matter. But in combat . . . this often decides the outcome. It is one thing for a rifle platoon to take several minutes for mounting and dismounting, and quite another thing to need only 15 seconds.''[14]

Human nature, the authorities perceive, justifies and facilitates the neglect of time by the easily accepted forecast that one can make up for lost time later—which in reality has always been improbable and is ever less practicable. ''In contemporary conditions,'' an observer recalls, ''it is ever more difficult (and often even impossible) to compensate for time wasted.''[15]

The consequence of even the slightest degree of ''being late'' is apt to be, worse than failure, a severe setback. The smallest delay may lead to nonfulfillment of the mission, to large losses of troops, of equipment. If neglect of even one of the requirements on which moving troops depend leads to late fulfillment of the mission, this will ''in some cases'' entail ''the *destruction* of the advance.''[16]

In fact, behind any tardiness annihilation seems to lurk.

For in a battle, time works for the enemy—in contrast to the Marxist–Leninist belief about history. ''Time,'' a rare civilian writing in the armed forces' daily on a New Year's Day comments, ''works for us. . . . Time is . . . our friend, our helper, our élan (*stikhiya*).''[17] The contrary belief prevails about combat: ''The hands of the clock''

in a submarine moving toward a simulated duel "mark seconds, minutes. For whom does this time work? Whose victory does it secure?" The indeterminacy thinly masks a dread answer: "Perhaps it is already too late, perhaps the appropriate moment has already been permitted to pass without action."[18] Time works for us only on condition that we fully utilize it for action. Time works against us as we are impelled by our human nature not to do so, as our Bolshevik mastery of that nature is insufficient.

Then gaining time is gaining the battle. "Gaining time . . . is all-important for achieving the objective of the march";[19] success comes to the side which knows . . . how to take decisions . . . and to deliver strikes . . . more rapidly . . .";[20] "to win time is to win the battle."[21] Even mini-time: "if you win seconds, you win the battle."[22]

Hence the Authorities engage in an unceasing effort to make everybody "value time."[23] With the slogan "A second—that's a lot of time,"[24] they urge an incessant "battle for every second,"[25] "a constant struggle for gains of time,"[26] "the conquering of seconds."[27] "A meeting engagement," observes an analyst, "is characterized by . . . an exceptional effort to win time"[28]—but is that not also the case for any other kind of engagement as well as for all means of preparing for engagements, that is, for all of war? "The battle for time," remarks another analyst, "manifests itself literally in everything."[29] "*Political* work," in the formulation of one analyst, "is directed toward inspiring soldiers and officers to fulfill the mission given to them"—with disregard for life and limb? No, "in the shortest possible *time*."[30] More particularly, "all *political* work . . . must educate the soldier to aspire to a *timely* arrival in the target area."[31] "Rapidity and Once More Rapidity" demands the heading of a chapter in a commander's War memoirs.[32]

The inclination to slowness cannot be tolerated. "One must not"—the redundancy makes for emphasis—"lose even a single minute for nothing," in vain; "not a single minute should be lost for nothing."[33] "It is important," judges a military leader, "to create in every military collective an atmosphere of intolerance toward the nonrational use of time."[34] The absence of slowness may stand for all virtues: "The commander of the 31st Tank Corps was not slow, but rather severe toward himself. . . ."[35]

There is no moment that allows less rapidity than any other:

> An extremely dense exercise was held. Completing it, the fighters moved toward the barracks. They went slowly with a kind of unhasty

> looseness. It seemed incredible that just a few minutes ago they were active with enviable energy . . . What had happened?
>
> "But the exercise is over," the commander of the platoon pronounced calmly.
>
> So that is it! Thus it appears that the capacity to save seconds is required only in exercise, but that there is no sin in despising minutes once one has left class or training grounds?[36]

With the usual Soviet expressions of disregard for limits—less than fully serious, I suspect, but more than a shallow pretence—the Authorities insist that there are always "unutilized reserves" of time, that it is always possible to be yet quicker than one has already made oneself. Recalling that "according to some calculations a human being in the course of an average duration of life is capable of assimilating an enormous mass of information," an analyst observes that "something similar can be said about the psyche's reserve with regard to rapidity." In fact, "the possibilities of man to accelerate the speed of his activity" are nothing less than remarkable.[37]

One's aim in becoming yet quicker should be to attain a swiftness exceeding present needs—in other words, to acquire a "reserve of time" for use in case things go wrong. "While the platoon had fulfilled its mission, the commander could not forget the effort that had been necessary to this end, when not a minute had been left to him as a reserve. And already then he thought: the time for entering into contact must absolutely be reduced by a minimum of five to seven percent; so as to feel himself more sure, the commander must have a reserve."[38]

So valued is swiftness that the Authorities are willing—sometimes—to concede what is so uncongenial to them: that costs should be assumed on its behalf. While "it is universally known that one cannot attack machine guns frontally," declares an analyst, "there may be a situation where this cannot be avoided, because only thus can one destroy them more quickly."[39]

Rapidity—like any other favorable attribute, in the Bolshevik view—does not come to humans by itself. Rather, protracted work is necessary—and sufficient—for producing swiftness in operations:

> Not for nothing had P. Bilder during training led a hard battle for every second. For himself and the entire crew he established norms which forced one to accelerate tempi, taught an effort for rhythm. Sailors and petty officers, units, commands and groups, competed in reducing the norm, the new level attained, became, as it were, standard at the next exercise. Everybody had to equal those foremost

> in the competition. . . . Soon not only officers and petty officers, but all sailors recognized the true worth of seconds in battle.[40]

For this gain one should use all available detours and instruments, should "utilize," in General Epishev's words, "all forms and methods of influencing the consciousness of people so as to obtain that they . . . intensely value every hour of training time."[41] "The manner of beginning the day," an analyst remarks, "physical exercises, parades, assemblies and conferences—all this and much else, it might appear, has no relationship to questions of battle readiness." Yet "all this furnishes many possibilities for developing in people the capacity to count seconds. Accustoming himself to the thought that any activity must be performed as quickly as possible, the fighter creates in himself, as it were, a psychological reserve for the heightening of battle readiness."[42]

Correspondingly, if one only could "force the enemy to lose precious time!"[43] But the enemy "is not going to give us one spare second";[44] "you don't say 'wait' to the enemy."[45]

* * * * * * *

The point, endlessly applied, is that any time that could have been saved in performing our own actions is a gift offered to the enemy, which he will use against us.

While we, for instance, attack, "the enemy strives to counteract the offensive"; the less time we give him for that, the better for us. "The main thing in maneuver is high speed, swiftness." For "one must strive to disrupt the 'enemy's' design so that he is constantly too late in his . . . countermeasures"; "the speed of his maneuvers should be lower than that of the movements performed by our units."[46] For example, "it is very important for obtaining success in the whole operation to accomplish the breakthrough at the end of the very first day of the offensive." For "in the opposite case the enemy, utilizing the pause, can in the course of the night bring reserves into the region of the breakthrough. . . ."[47] Similarly, if the accumulation of forces in an airborne landing is slow, this gives the enemy a chance to concentrate his forces and means with the aim of annihilating them. "The 'enemy,' " notes a reporter of simulated combat, "did not fail to utilize the minutes and seconds, with the gift of which he had been presented."[48]

What is to be striven for is a rapidity such that (in one example) "the enemy did not find sufficient time for organizing counteraction;

the motorboat's missiles were on target before he could begin to maneuver."[49] In the meeting engagement, it is said, it is all-important to crush the enemy in short order before the arrival of his reserves.

> Nothing is more burdensome than a battle in which you push back the enemy from line to line, with noticeable losses. . . . The enemy withdrew, not finding time to reinforce himself on the next defense line. . . .[50]

But as technology advances, the enemy needs less time to act against us; hence, we must be ever more rapid. For instance, because "contemporary conditions allow creating a . . . solid defense in short order," gaining time "has a very great importance . . . for overcoming such a defense."[51]

Referring to imprecision in locating a target in simulated combat, analysts may complain that this or that "led to superfluous firing." Worse—the firing "dragged on":[52] a dread event. Whenever an operation takes more time than one has allotted to it, failure impends. Illustrating his assertion that "any maneuver carries risk," an analyst recalls that in a simulated battle "before the commander there was, essentially, a difficult question: will the units assigned to executing a flanking maneuver fulfill their mission?" That is, "will the 'enemy' not draw them into a dragged-out battle and thereby disrupt the intended maneuver?"[53]

Time works for the enemy with particular force in the mode of combat preferred by the Soviets, the offensive. "Every offensive operation," observed an analyst in the 1920s, "offers advantages in the first half of its duration";[54] for "the offense gradually loses the advantages deriving from surprise and preparation"; hence "one must not allow an offensive to drag on until its dying breath,"[55] or even to a "slow gnawing-through" of the defense.

Permitting an offensive to "drag out," rather than "crushing the enemy rapidly,"[56] is to doom it to failure because of the limited endurance of the preferred offensive weapon, the manned combat vehicle. "It is disadvantageous," an analyst pointed out in the less inhibited 1930s, "for a motor-mechanized unit to engage itself in a protracted combat. They cannot wait long for the arrival of replacements. A brief, decisive strike, and then either pursuit or leaving the battle—such is the . . . principle of any highly mobile unit. . . ."[57]

The aversion to frontal attack derives in part from the horror of protractedness. "Attacking from the front," a military leader recalls, "is to entangle oneself into a protracted . . . battle";[58] "a frontal attack would inevitably have led to a protracted battle. . . ."[59]

The stress on bypassing the defense's strongpoints once its forward positions have been breached derives in part from the same dread. One should then move toward the enemy's "depth" "without drawing the main forces into protracted battle against stubbornly resisting groups."

The striving to avoid protractedness furnishes another justification for massed attack:

> However, the fire might have been more effective if Captain Koren had allotted to the suppression of the target not a platoon but the whole battery. The time . . . required for suppression would in this case undoubtedly have been substantially shortened. The commander of the battery made, as we see, a . . . mistake.[60]

> In the War a military leader adopts "a structure of the strike grouping such that . . . the force of our initial strike be maximal and obtain a *rapid* breakthrough of the enemy defense. . . ."[61]

By the same token, if an operation has been forced upon one by the enemy, doom him by protracting the battle. Defeating the Germans was, in a well-known theme, "disrupting the German plan for a swift-flowing (*skototechnyi*) war."

Being Slow to Act

The Authorities' main enemy, on the front we are analyzing, is the vice of starting too late, rather than too early. The patient reader of Soviet literature may be surprised when, in a rare instance, he finds that the target has changed: "Immediately after having fired the SAM, it occurred to him that he might have given the command to fire too early. It would have been more correct . . . to wait a little."[62]

It is with greater regard to the enemy than to oneself that the propensity of acting too early is noted—particularly the possibility of inducing premature moves on his part. During the War one objective was "to deceive the enemy about the location of the forward edge of our defense [making him believe it was closer to him than was the case—NL] and thus to cause him to deploy his main forces too early."[63]

The danger of premature action on one's own part chiefly derives, in the Authorities' view, from being overwhelmed by feeling (yet another Bolshevik dread). It is declared by the *Field Manual* of 1936 to be "indispensable to manifest high mastery of self so as to open fire at the nearest and most effective distance." More recently, while

the rule of nondelay is stated explicitly, strongly, and often, the rule of delay is conveyed mainly by example, without much emphasis, and rarely. "Senior Lieutenant Sholokhov ordered the opening of fire only when the enemy tanks had approached the ambush at 150 meters."[64] Yet the authorities fear, I believe, the propensity which this officer is mastering:

> *At the height of the first battle of Moscow, October 23, 1941, in the area of Volokolamsk:* "Soon the tanks will be coming!" Efremenko shouted into the phone. "More calm and cold blood! Don't open fire without my order!"[65]

> The calculated plan [for the breakthrough of an encircled unit] was in the process of execution, but at the last moment was almost disrupted because of the absence of the proper restraint on the part of the commander of the 290th Regiment. Khaustovich was excessively hot. Fearing that enemy forces were advancing to the station, he ordered his artillery to open fire, not waiting for the common signal. In order that the attack not be disrupted, it became necessary for me to rapidly include the howitzers into the attack formation and to have the rifle regiments move forward before the appointed time.[66]

More importantly, the authorities discern a disposition to *delay*. The expectation of delay seems implied when the standard demand is raised "to repel the enemy's strike immediately, without delay";[67] or when "the essence of the [air force] officer's tactical maturity" turns out to consist in part in his unswerving disposition "to exploit air strikes without delay."[68]

"Being late" continues to be expected and remains grave. When an editorial in the ground forces' monthly seeks to illustrate a situation in which "defects appear," the event that comes to mind is that "somebody is late in beginning the attack . . . arrives late in the indicated area and so forth."[69]

> In one exercise I happened to be the involuntary witness of a conversation between two officers.
>
> —The attack is set for 11 o'clock.
>
> —Well, that means, look for it at 15 o'clock.
>
> And this was said so simply, in so natural a fashion that I could only be amazed.
>
> Indeed, the attack of the tank battalion commanded by Major E. Kuz'min had been set for 12 o'clock. For that moment, commanders had put tasks to their subordinates, prepared the battle,

> detailed time limits. And the personnel waited for the signal. . . . However, one hour passed by, then a second, and it did not come. Then it was announced: the attack is changed to 13 hours. But that moment passed also, and the long-awaited signal still did not come. Finally there was a new announcement—be ready for 14 o'clock. But in reality, it was only at 16 o'clock that the unit began to move.[70]

Being late, a condition so grave to the Authorities, is apt to be judged trivial by their subordinates.

> The battalion of Major E. Kuz'min, for instance, did not receive the signal to attack [at the set hour] only because the training field was not ready. But, one must suppose, the commander knew what was necessary for this purpose and by what time. Why was this not reflected in his plans? . . . The impression arises that somebody entertained the thought: being late by an hour or two does not mean anything.[71]

However, war itself (to modify a Soviet cliché) shows that it means a lot:

> The first offensive was to be conducted by the 21st and the 38th Armies together. Marshal S. K. Timoshenko ordered them to seize Belogorod in the night of the 5th of January 1942.
>
> This task was not fulfilled. The temporary commander of the 38th Army, Major General . . . A. G. Maslov, was late in the organization of the offensive.[72]

> *The Crimea in the spring of 1942:* "When on the second day of the enemy's offensive . . . the Stavka ordered the withdrawal of the Armies of the Front toward the Turkish Wall, the Command of the Front, and comrade Mekhlis [the Stavka's representative] . . . began the withdrawal with a delay of two days. . . ."[73]

> *In the summer of 1942 the Trans-Caucasus Command becomes aware of the fact that the passes through the Great Caucasian Ridge from the north are little defended, and gives orders for increasing their protection:* "However, the directives of the Front and the Armies were executed slowly. Units were late in moving garrisons to the passes."[74]

It seems worthwhile to *explain* how punctuality is pertinent to success. "Success," in simulated combat, it may be said, "will depend in not a small measure on strict conformity to the established regime

of movement, on arriving at starting and intermediate lines precisely at times foreseen.''[75]

Punctuality, in the pervasive Soviet locution, does not come by itself: ''all measures were taken so that the offensive began at the time set.''[76]

Punctuality is an achievement:

> The company commander looked at his watch and noted with satisfaction: the firing exercise begins precisely on the time-table.[77]

> The aircraft arrived at the indicated line, on the dot.
>
> ''It is possible to verify one's watches by the aircraft,'' the officers on the hill remarked with satisfaction.
>
> And so it was with every flight. If the plan indicated that the bombers will strike at 11:07, this meant that the noise of explosions occurred not at 11:06 or 11:08, but precisely 7 minutes within the 12th hour.[78]

Reasons need to be adduced for pausing, once a decision has been taken, before beginning to execute it: ''At present the situation changes so quickly and sharply that a calculation made earlier risks . . . not to correspond to the development of events.'' Hence ''the smaller the time interval between decision and realization, the more expedient the decision. . . .''[79] It is appropriate to insist that ''maneuvers . . . must begin immediately when the order has been given.''[80]

There are, the Authorities insist, grave sequels to ''being late,'' not only in violation of one's plan but also in adherence to a plan that permits delay. ''To defer is, probably, to miss the opportune moment.''[81] ''Time marched on implacably,'' an observer reports about simulated combat, ''the fate of the battle was being decided. But the battalion commander continued to delay.''[82] As we learn, by now without surprise, ''the smallest delay in beginning actions can have a negative impact on the fulfillment of the combat task . . .''[83]—an impact, it often seems suggested, which is fatal. ''If we don't do this right away such slowness will cost the troops dear tomorrow.''[84]

Yet, the authorities detect, there may be ''little effort at the start, and the hope that there will be time enough to make it up.''[85]

> In the squadron it was believed that there was enough time ahead so as to fulfill the plan. . . . They did not make haste to begin night flights.[86]

''Let them wait, there will be time enough later''; ''we hear,'' an

observer notes, "these words all too often."[87] "There is no doubt," a senior officer admits, "this is a seductive thought: when you have not done something, immediately you justify yourself, you calm yourself by saying that you will make up for what you have neglected later."[88] "On the training ground where Guards Senior Lieutenant M. Matveev was in command of a platoon, the tankmen, for instance, fulfilled the norms of protection against weapons of mass destruction without a tactical background (*fon*). No actions of the 'enemy' were indicated." Now "why did the platoon commander train his subordinates in oversimplified fashion? Senior Guards Lieutenant Matveev explained that . . . there still was much time for the exercising of norms against a tactical background. There will be time to make it up."[89] And then there are officers "who assume that all errors tolerated in the period of . . . preparation can be made up for in the . . . exercise itself."[90] *The Red Star's* headline is skeptical: "But Will There Be Time to Make Up?"[91] "Will one succeed in adjusting it later?"[92]

Thus, hope is put in "storming (*shturmovshchina*)" during the concluding stage, for instance, of training. One acts so that it "becomes necessary, in the final stage of training, to solve a series of questions in emergency (*avral'nyi*) manner." A manner high in cost, low in yield. Then "results are obtained by an excessive expenditure of motor and ammunition resources": this is "making it up on the run, blind pressing."[94] "Today," a captain is reported to have told a Party meeting, "I was with a platoon . . . where the officer brought himself and the personnel to perspiration, exhausted the personnel. And why? Well, because in yesterday's activities he did not prepare himself. I was there and saw everything with my own eyes. The soldiers were sitting and imitating depth of attention. They did not learn anything new, it was simply collective time wasted. And then, in order to make up for what had been neglected, the commander had to drive his subordinates today."[95]

The final spurt is apt to come too late. "In order to execute with such precision a march of the entire regiment," an observer muses about a perfect performance, "it would not have sufficed to work strenuously only during the days preceding the exercise." Rather, this "required . . . constant and unremitting effort during the entire training year."[96] But in the Komsomol meeting of a unit "the question how the fighters could keep their word was considered only at a moment when it was perhaps already late to speak of that."[97]

That time works for the enemy is shown in a variety of ways.

Time is time for the enemy to reinforce. As the counteroffensive at Stalingrad began at a date later than the earliest feasible one, a

general officer notes, "the enemy . . . could . . . reinforce his defense . . . substantially."[98]

> May 12[1942] the troops of the Southwestern Front began their attack in the direction of Khar'kov. . . . As a result, favorable situations were created for introducing tank corps into the battle. . . . However, this was done neither on the 15th nor on the 16th. The Front command was waiting for more favorable circumstances. The German command made use of this slowness. It transferred supplementary troops to the threatened direction and obtained a parity of forces in the sector of the 6th and 38th Armies, and even superiority toward the 28th Army.[99]

> *With time the enemy consolidates a recently occupied position. The breakout from encirclement of the 17th Guards Rifle corps in the winter of 1944:* "The breakout was accomplished rather easily and quickly . . . because it occurred already a few hours after the encirclement, before the enemy had time to consolidate the positions which he had seized."[100]

What the Soviets expect from the enemy, they inflict on him:

> A German commander: "[*A*] characteristically Russian principle is the forming of bridgeheads . . . to serve as bases for later advances. . . . It is . . . wrong not to worry about bridgeheads and to postpone their elimination. Russian bridgeheads, however small and harmless they may appear, are bound to grow into formidable danger points in a very brief time. . . . A Russian bridgehead, occupied by a company in the evening, is sure to be occupied by at least a regiment the following morning, and during the night it will become a . . . fortress, well equipped with . . . everything necessary to make it almost impregnable. . . . There is . . . only one . . . remedy . . . : if a bridgehead is forming or an advance position is being established by the Russians, attack . . . at once, attack strongly. . . . A delay of an hour may mean frustration, a delay of a few hours does mean frustration, a delay of a day may mean a . . . catastrophe. . . . Attack when the Russians . . . have had no time as yet to organize their defense. . . . A few hours later will be too late. Delaying means disaster. . . ."[101]

With time the enemy will be ready; at present he may not yet be. The less you delay your attack, the less ready the enemy may be to meet it. In a model action of the War "the commander was striving to dislodge the enemy from the line he occupied before he could

organize fire and dig in."[102] In a simulated combat "the battalion commander decided . . . not to give the enemy time to collect his forces, and, without waiting for the arrival of the neighboring units, to cross the river under the cover of darkness." While "it appeared that conditions for such an action were unfavorable," "the battalion commander knew that the enemy had not yet come to his senses, that his reserves had not yet arrived." And "this meant that only rapidity . . . could secure the success of the crossing."[103] In another simulated encounter, "the units of the 'enemy' came out of the wood and deployed in battle order. The columns moved out to open terrain. They had not yet restructured themselves into battle lines and were, as it were, weakened by the maneuver they were performing. Precisely now was the moment to crush this force; a minute later it would not be so easy to deal with it." Indeed, "there were unrepeatable instants in the battle. Some half-minute decided our success . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]."[104] Resolving upon an immediate attack in another simulation, "the officer held that the counterattacking 'enemy' had not yet had time to deploy in battle formation, and that if the attack developed rapidly . . . the actions of the attacker would annul the superiority of the 'enemy.' " Executing the officer's design, "the support battery . . . hindered . . . the deployment of the 'enemy' into battle formation and his arrival at the line of counterattack. His tanks, while [still only] preparing themselves for battle, were struck. . . ."[105]

In contemporary conditions it is essential to attack before the enemy has had time to deploy his antitank guided missiles.[106] As early as the 1930s, a pioneer of the tank had pointed out that "the worth of a mechanized unit shows itself in the highest degree . . . when the enemy has not yet had time to . . . organize . . . antiarmor defense."[107] The company commander, in one simulated combat, "understood that success depended . . . on how quickly he would succeed in arriving at the river in order to utilize the unpreparedness of the 'enemy,' particularly of his system of antitank fire. . . ."[108]

The less you delay, the more probably your time of attack will be earlier than that expected by the enemy, who will then be surprised, with the capital consequences that follow from that. "For the attainment of surprise in a meeting engagement," an officer points out, "it is especially important to gain time" and thus to "attack the enemy earlier than he expected it."[109] "The 'enemy,' " in a simulated combat, "decided to go over to the offensive earlier than had been supposed in order to make maximum use of surprise."[110] When, on one occasion during the War, "at eight o'clock the artillery preparation began," the enemy soldiers, "apparently assuming that preparation would be re-

peated [after having ceased], did not even leave their shelters. Not permitting them to come to their senses, the rifle unit broke into the first trench. . . ."[111] And "a [German] NCO of the 313th Infantry Regiment taken prisoner the 23rd of June [1944, in the Belorussian operation] in the first enemy echelon indicated: 'We were deafened by the artillery fire of the Russians. I and two soldiers of my unit were sitting in the dugout. . . . When I sent one of them to look . . . he immediately cried out: "Already! Already!" When we jumped outside, I saw that the Russians were already in the trench. The Russians broke into our position even before the end of artillery fire' "[112]—never mind at what casualties inflicted on themselves.

> Our offensive began not in the second half of January, as the enemy command assumed, but on January 9, 1942, and surprised the enemy.[113]

> "At the basis of the . . . calculations of the German-Fascist command was the . . . belief that the Soviet command after the accomplishment of the operation in the area of Yassy-Kishinev would be incapable of concentrating in a minimally short time a sufficient quantity of forces and means and with such a short delay undertake a new big offensive."[114]

The less you delay, the less apt you are to be surprised. "The opponent," comments an officer about a simulated combat, "banks on suddenness, attempts to stun by an unexpected maneuver. . . . There is only one way out here: we must surpass the 'enemy' in swiftness."[115]

The later you start, the more you require. A delay in the employment of small forces, which would have sufficed for a mission early on, may necessitate forces larger than are available.

The burden of proof is on delaying:

> The situation developed clearly in disfavor of the . . . "Westerners." The second motorized rifle company, which was to have attacked from the north, did nothing.

When reading this beginning of a simulated battle, one may think, here is another case of the dreaded disposition to abstain from action being lived out; but such is not the case:

> As the inaction of the 2d MR Company "appeared" to the observing officer "strange," we asked the commander of the company, Cap-

> tain A. Tsarev, how he evaluated the situation. The officer reported: "The situation of course is not easy . . . but . . . if we succeed in utilizing the fact that the enemy has not yet discovered this company and if he will then be throwing all his forces against the other two companies, then the last word . . . of the battle will belong to us"—and so it turns out!

The shocking—at least in public print—admission of the possibility that delay is optimal, calls for buttressing in an unusual fashion, which also illustrates the concept of military conduct as a special case of Bolshevik style:

> "To analyze . . . the episode described and . . . to elucidate the causes of success in what seemed to be a lost battle," the officer continues, "one is helped by the words of M. I. Kalinin, pronounced by him in May 1934 at a conference of the *aktiv* of the Komsomol of Dnepropetrovsk: 'The commander who throws all his forces into the battle immediately is not always a good commander. . . . A good commander is the one who . . . maximally preserves the energy of his fighters for the decisive battle.' " In another simulated combat, "it would have been feasible to attack from the front immediately. But the commander of the regiment consciously held the unit back." Thus "he took account of the peculiarity of the situation. . . ."[116]

> Why did we not fire on this [air] target as soon as we discovered it? Was it reasonable to introduce a pause at that moment?
>
> "Let us remember what the situation at that moment was," said the Lieutenant Colonel, having listened to his subordinates. . . . "At what distance could we destroy the first target? At what altitude was it flying? What probability of hitting it was there at that point?"
>
> The guidance officer answered all these questions precisely. —And now look what result we have obtained, delaying for a few seconds. . . . We lured the "enemy" into a space which he could not leave with impunity. He found himself in a sack of a peculiar kind[117]—it had indeed to be peculiar to justify delay.

> *An encircled unit:* "It became necessary to delay the breakthrough for almost 24 hours. Of course, from a formal point of view, every delay is one more minus for the encircled troops; for every lost hour benefits the enemy. But we had no other way out. Otherwise, we would not have succeeded in collecting and bringing into order the units which had been intermingled."[118]

An offensive in Moldavia: "At dawn on August 21 [1944] we finally succeeded in pushing the 7th Mechanized Corps forward. However, it arrived at its starting position for the offensive not at six o'clock in the morning, as was foreseen, but only at nine."

Despite this delay of three hours, General Katkov, for some reason, did not hasten to introduce the Corps into the battle, even after it was concentrated on its starting position. At first sight, his conduct seemed unintelligible.

"Why is he slow?" General Sharokhin said, irritated. . . . We knew the commander of the 7th Mechanized Corps, Major General F. G. Katkov, and his chief of staff, Major General A. I. Sommer, as strong-willed and experienced military leaders. Just because of that, their slowness in this case seemed particularly strange.

Suddenly I recalled a declaration of General Katkov when the plan of coordination in the offensive was considered. He proved that the Corps should be introduced into the battle only after the definitive breakthrough of the second defense zone of the enemy and after the crushing of the 13th German Tank Division. He gave his demand a highly convincing basis: before the Corps stood a long and difficult advance toward the river Prut; there was no point in engaging it into combat before the time.

The Mechanized Corps began combat only at 14 hours, after the enemy had been decisively defeated in the area of Ermoklii and his second defense zone had been broken through.[119]

But as a rule, earliest is best. A military business is apt to be "a business which brooks no deferring." Hence, before a meeting engagement, for instance, "the main strength of the political work . . . must be directed . . . toward striving for coming to grips with the enemy . . . entering into battle with him"—in one particular mode, namely "quickly."[120] What is of "great importance for the success of the counteroffensive" is not only "the rapidity with which it is conducted" but also "the maximal reduction of the time spent upon preparing it,"[121] that is, the early moment at which it begins.

The Stavka to Zhukov commanding in the Stalingrad area, September 3, 1942: "Any delay is inadmissible. To delay now amounts to a crime."[122]

The summer of 1943: "Antonov [Deputy chief of Staff] . . . stressed that the Supreme Commander attributes exceptional importance to the quickest beginning of active actions by the Southwestern Front."[123]

Hence, one might want to sacrifice other military assets for the sake of nondelay:

> Of course, there is a risk. But at present nothing is more precious than time.[124]

It may pay to accept reduced precision in a strike so as to avoid delay in striking:

> The commander of a patrol ship, Lieutenant Commander G. Revin, fulfilled in an exercise a task of searching and destroying an "enemy" submarine. The acousticians discovered the target rather quickly. The distance allowed an attack, but the Commander delayed. He delayed in part because he wanted to obtain a more reliable contact with the target to render the parameters of its movement more precise. One can understand the young Commander wishing an assured victory. But for the sake of rendering the information about the situation more precise, precious minutes passed. Also, with the reduction of the distance from the "enemy," his capacity to perform a forestalling strike increased.[125]

Trade force for time. "In a series of cases," an analyst observes, "one must deliver a strike even before the complete readiness of one's troops," as "one thus obtains a larger effect."[126] "Sometimes," explains another analyst, "commanders of divisions, when deploying artillery in a meeting engagement, go slow with the opening fire, waiting for all batteries to be ready." Now "in a meeting engagement this is inadmissible": "time here has decisive significance." And "though a division needs 25 to 30 minutes from the moment of its arrival in the area of firing positions in order to deploy and prepare for fire, some of its batteries can . . . begin to fire already after 8 to 10 minutes or even earlier." In such a situation "one must not wait for the readiness of all batteries and lose precious time." True enough, if the several units composing one's force "go over to the attack at the same time, one obtains a strong initial strike, which it is difficult for the enemy to repel." On the other hand, "in order to deliver such a strike, one requires a certain amount of time"; but "to limit the advance of forward units and, even more, to stop them is extremely disadvantageous." In contrast, "it may be advantageous to introduce each unit of the main forces into the battle as it arrives. . . ."[127] For "an attack without any delay even by a few units which have already arrived at the enemy's defense line, may have a much larger effect than one with larger forces, but conducted after the enemy has been

able to gain time for the organization of his defense." Thus, in view of the contradictory "principle" of "simultaneity" (see Chapter I), "the questions of the simultaneity of the attack must be resolved each time with a view to the particular situation"[128]—meaning that simultaneity may be sacrificed.

> "Understand, Kirillych," Gorelov demonstrated with excitement, "I cannot wait for Morgunov! Time has the weight of gold." Our force of course would be larger, but we would have missed the moment.[129]

> *The defense of Kashira on the approaches to Moscow:* "I had to decide one other important question: When to begin the operation [a forestalling counterstrike]? Many reasons spoke in favor of beginning the counterstrike not tomorrow, November 27, but one day later. The cavalrymen who had accomplished a lengthy forced march were very tired. In the regiments many had lagged behind. The main strike grouping of the Corps . . . was still on its way and had not arrived in the area of concentration. The main mass of artillery had also not been brought up, nor the ammunition. It seemed as if it would be premature to begin the attack tomorrow morning. . . ."
>
> However, time had by now become the most important factor. In order to forestall the enemy, it was necessary to strike him not later than tomorrow morning. . . .
>
> Naturally, I understood that such a decision carried a risk. But it was necessary to impose our will on the enemy, to strike him where he expected it the least.[130]

> *The winter of 1943 in the Caucasus:* ". . . .The commander of the 56th Army decided not to wait for the arrival of all the forces of the second echelon, but rather to lead into the battle . . . the parts of the 61st Rifle Division and the 76th Naval Rifle Brigade which had already arrived."[131]

> *The command of the [North Caucasus] Front, faced with a dilemma:* Either they could prepare properly for a breakthrough, but lose time in doing so, or they could press on without any basic pause, thus preventing the enemy from improving his defenses. The second alternative was chosen and only five days were allowed for preparing the operation.[132]

> *"The Koltov Corridor," a small breach in the enemy's defense:* "The risk in leading tank armies through it consisted in the fact that . . . the Hitlerites might be capable of making it impossible for

the mobile Soviet troops to pass through this breach. . . . The Front Command had to decide whether to lead the tank armies through the breach which had not been completed or to continue widening it. The latter course could lead to loss of time and furnish the enemy with the conditions for bringing reserves into the area. Calculations . . . of the probable situation showed the necessity of immediately utilizing the Koltov Corridor for leading our tank troops through it."[133]

Eastern Prussia: "We understood General Burdeinyi [wanting to secure his flank before proceeding with the attack]: a reckless advance toward Gumbinnen could have grave consequences. But it was also true that losing several hours would help the Hitlerites to organize a defense on the approaches to the town which it would then be necessary to break in stubborn combat, involving losses."[134]

Out of the nine divisions of our Army, three were storming Poznan, and two were on the road. It would not do to wait for them to come up and so lose several days. To win time meant to win the battle.[135]

The prize for renouncing an increment of force may be success in an encirclement:

The directive of the Supreme Commander of January 4, 1943: To detach a powerful column of troops from the personnel of the Black Sea Fleet . . . to get into Rostov from the east and to shut up in this fashion the Northern Caucasus grouping of the enemy, to make them prisoners or to annihilate them.

The Supreme Commander personally gave me this order:

Order Petrov that he begin his attack at the indicated time, not delaying it even for an hour, not waiting for the arrival of reserves.[136]

Warding off the propensity to delay, commanders are apt to commit a mistake of the contrary kind, an outcome fostered by complacency (see Chapter III):

A dissident recalls the War in which he commanded: "In the morning of June 22 [1941] all artillery units . . . received the order to return without delay to the localities to which they were assigned. All requests to defer these movements until nightfall were rejected. . . . Most of the artillery was horsedrawn. Anybody can imagine what then happened when Stukas attacked the columns, which had no means of air defense, on narrow roads."[137]

The summer of 1941: "In the morning my political commissar,

Pivovarov, and I were with the Commander of the 102d Division, Col. I. D. Illarionov. Checking our maps, he drew a red arrow and sharpened its end. . . ."

Attack im-me-di-ate-ly (*ne-med-len-no*) . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. Clear?

—Clear. But permit me to report: I can't immediately.

—What is that?! the Division commander responded, menacingly.

—The regiment is on the march—15 to 20 kilometers away from the forward edge. So as to arrive at the line not less than 4 to 5 hours will be required.

—Major, you begin badly, how will you end?[138]

The winter of 1943: "A new front called the Central Front was created. . . . It had to strike in the direction of Gomel', Smolensk, at the flank and rear of the Orel grouping of the enemy. The beginning of this beautifully conceived operation was to be February 15. But so as to begin it, it was necessary first to concentrate troops, the largest part of which with their rears were deployed in the area of Stalingrad.

My demonstration concerning the unreality of this deadline did not convince the Stavka.[139]

The offensive after the battle of Kursk: "Excessive haste was shown. . . . Troops entered the battle without sufficient preparation. . . . Instead of encircling and crushing the enemy, we merely . . . pushed him back from the Orel bulge. Yet it would have been possible, if we had begun the operation somewhat later, to concentrate forces on two powerful strikes converging on Bryansk."[140]

All through the War: "Times for the beginning of actions are established without taking account of the real possibilities. . . . The ones who have to do the fighting . . . usually are left with very, very little time, which has a ruinous impact on the preparation and organization of combat."[141]

Once a time has been set, the aversion to delay becomes an obstacle even against a postponement clearly indicated by unforeseen events. A change is made yet more difficult by the attachment to initial plans (see Chapter III).

When Biryuzov [Lieutenant General S. S. Biryuzov] took leave of us, I asked him:

—Is it really impossible to delay our offensive against the Crimea even for a week?

> It appeared to me that the General felt the same disquiet as all present [in the meeting]. An astonishingly small amount of time was allotted to the preparation of one of the most serious operations.[142]

> We were to renew an offensive into the Crimea already in March 1944. . . . [There was a] snowfall unusual for that time of the year. . . . In these conditions it was very difficult to organize an offensive. While the infantry could surmount such a snow cover, still the actions of our mechanized units, of the artillery and of aviation . . . were under the threat of failure. . . . The conclusion was evident: It was necessary to delay our offensive for a short while. . . . However, the Stavka and its representative, A. M. Vasilevskii, insisted on the offensive beginning independently of the weather.
>
> We . . . understood well that Aleksandr Mikhailovich did not voluntarily accept a decision doomed to failure. But in the end, A. M. Vasilevskii, agreeing with our considerations, obtained from the Stavka a change in the date of the offensive.[143]

> In the night of April 29 [1944] I had . . . a long talk [over the telephone] with the Supreme Commander. The operational design and the grouping of forces [for the attack on Sevastopol] caused no doubts in him. . . . However, when we began to talk about a new delay [proposed by Vasilevskii] of the attack, the Supreme Commander lost his equilibrium.[144]

While Stalin here, as elsewhere, was extreme, a Soviet commander's "equilibrium" is rarely unaffected by the matter of acting too early or too late. And it is not often that both are rejected at the same time in equal measure, as when an officer points out that "to start the attack too early or with delay is to reduce the whole calculation for the battle to naught."[145] Decoded: let us decide on the merits of each situation.

Being Slow in Acting

Observing in the twenties that "many among our commanders, however strange and sad it may be, do not resolve upon . . . bold envelopments," Tukhachevskii added that "if they accomplish them at all, they perform in the most dangerous fashion, that is . . . slowly. . . ."[146] "In a number of units," observes an editorial in the military daily in 1977, "slowness in the deployment into combat array and in striking from the march is still tolerated."[147] "In training," a

general officer comments with rare candor about what may be a less infrequent occurrence, "one sometimes has to encounter cases where units march slowly, practically crawl, approach the enemy and attack him in low speed. . . ." On one occasion "the motorized infantrymen, moving toward the line of attack, made haste very cautiously in their APCs . . . often lay down."[148]

"Only when the battle line of the 'enemy' tanks and APCs appeared at the height, did the company," in a simulated combat, "begin to make haste."

Alas, "it was already too late. . . ."[149] "And now ground control reported to the interceptor, 'I see a group of aircraft.' Naturally, such an indeterminate report rendered Rykov [the interceptor pilot] perplexed. He asked that the aim of the 'enemy' aircraft be more fully characterized, that their direction be indicated and the distance from them." Finally, "more precise information on the air 'enemy' arrived." However, by then "the indeterminateness of the report of the ground control man who first discovered the targets had let the airman down. For during the time required for supplementary information about the 'enemy' the latter discovered the interceptor and prepared a strike on him."[150]

> However, this mission failed to be fulfilled because the order arrived in the staff of the Corps with much delay.[151]

> The commander of the divisional artillery, Colonel Elkin, reported in extremely correct fashion. But, as one says, Moscow does not believe in words. I issued the order: the Third Battery should open fire . . . on the defense area of the enemy. The Colonel got busy. We wait. There is no fire!
>
> Elkin reports that the Battery Commander was absent somewhere. It became necessary to say severely: "The battle does not wait for the commander. On the contrary, the commander must wait for the battle. . . . !"
>
> Once I was at the command post of the 57th Army, with General Fedor Ivanovich Tolbukhin.
>
> The weather was excellent with very good visibility. At the front everything remained calm. Suddenly we heard in the far distance the noise of German aircraft motors, and soon we heard them approach at an altitude of about 3000 meters. . . . Immediately, the order was given to the two nearest AAA units to open fire against them and not to permit aircraft to arrive in the area of encirclement. Fire was opened belatedly and not a single "Junker" was shot down. Our fighters only arrived when the enemy aircraft had already landed within the encircled area.[152]

Slowness at any given stage of an operation may deprive subsequent phases of needed time:

> *The Caucasus, December 23, 1942, the 37th Army:* "The orders for the divisions and the regiments to attack were received with considerable delay, and thus there remained no daylight for preparation. The units did not have the time to conduct intelligence on the terrain, to organize cooperation between themselves and to prepare equipment for the battle."[153]

It is not implausible to presume that a commander is addicted to slowness:

> For us it is necessary to finish the operation as quickly as possible, but you deliberately drag it out![154]

Tasks are dragged out in innumerable ways, one of which (insisted on by the wordy Authorities) is "wordiness, multiple repetitions of the same questions. . . ."[155]

> An officer rises from his chair and begins, as it were, almost from Adam. You will see, he adduces examples known to all, recalls theoretical positions. But what is usually under consideration is a rather narrow, crudely practical question to which the orator addresses himself only at the end of his speech. When not one, but a few such speakers appear, the conference will extend over three or four hours instead of one hour.
>
> I tried to follow one such conference, as it were, with a chronometer. And then I occupied myself with elementary arithmetic: I multiplied the number of wasted minutes with the number of officers present. . . . The resulting number was very substantial! As if six persons from among the gathering had been absent that day from service altogether for unknown reasons. If that had happened, the alarm would immediately have sounded. But as it was, everything was in order.[156]

Contrasting elements of conduct—a surprising excellence rather than the expected normalcy:

> March 2, 1944, General Galanin [commanding an Army] asked me to see him. . . . He told me that the Commander of the Front would be coming. And, in fact, soon Marshal Konev entered the room. He was very concentrated and immediately upon having greeted us, entered into affairs.[157]

Being slow, one will be behind schedule:

> That which we feared happened: the crossing was not prepared for the scheduled time.[158]

> The March [1942] battles fought by the 38th Army showed that we worked out very good plans, but often were late in fulfilling them.[159]

> —We are late. . . . Tomorrow the attack begins, but the Division has spent excessive time extending its deployment on the march. Too bad that the 66th Army will not be able to conduct tomorrow's strike together with you with all its forces.[160]

Personnel may entertain the conviction that time does not matter. When, in an air unit, "at one time violations of the scheme of the approach to landing . . . multiplied," some pilots hold that "there was nothing prejudicial in this: if you don't succeed in landing at the first approach, you will make it the next time." It then becomes appropriate to recall that "a crew will not always have the possibility . . . of correcting a mistake or going at it once more," that indeed "the situation may be such as to require landing at the first approach."

It does not appear implausible to attribute to a commander an underestimation of the role of time:

> I and A. M. Vasilevskii continued to work at the point of junction of the Stalingrad and Southwestern Fronts. We were in a small hut, connected by telephone with Moscow. Unexpectedly the phone rang. The Stavka was calling A. M. Vasilevskii. From the very serious and slightly lost mien of Aleksandr Mikhailovich and from his endlessly repeated answer, "I take notice," it was easy to guess that the conversation bore a disagreeable character.
>
> Vasilevskii put down the receiver and sighed heavily. The Stavka accuses all of us, representatives of the Stavka finding ourselves here, of not understanding how necessary it was to finish the crushing of the encircled enemy as quickly as possible.[161]

> December 19 [1942] Stalin called me over the phone. . . . "Like some others, you evidently underestimate how important it is for us to liquidate as soon as possible the encircled enemy grouping."[162]

What does it matter at precisely what time an objective will have been attained? "One can't say," a military leader concedes, "that our regimental commanders have no plans." Yet "they often lack . . . di-

rectedness; . . . it is not apparent what must be obtained within a month."[163]

Beyond an indifference to time, there is a fear of swiftness:

> *The offensive against Khar'kov in the spring of 1942:* "If there was a possibility at all of succeeding in the offensive against Khar'kov, it depended on . . . rapidity of action. . . . The command and the staff of the Front . . . equated rapidity with unjustifiable risk."[164]

In contrast, the Authorities insist that, while acting without delay, one must also proceed with dispatch, reducing as much as feasible the time it takes to complete a given operation. "One must know how to appreciate time,"[165] must perform any given operation "in maximally compressed time."[166] "Party and Komsomol organizers, Communists and Komsomol members must by their personal example," an analyst demands, "influence all personnel to achieve a model fulfillment of any mission in the most compressed period of time."[167] The reason that "such methods [never mind which—NL] . . . should be considered the most advisable" is apt to be that "they permit . . . fulfilling the mission in the shortest time."[168] "As in no other situation," an analyst observes, "in the mountains great importance is placed on the swiftest possible defeat of the enemy . . ."[169]—but then this will be said about every "situation." "The ability to conduct swift actions becomes," for Admiral Gorshkov, "the most important indicator of mastery in the art of war at sea."[170] "For the success of a maneuver," an analyst declares, "it is of enormous importance to organize it quickly and to execute it within a short time."[171] Whatever the operation at hand, "the deputy commander for political affairs . . . must be where . . . [he] can arouse the troops . . . for the *most rapid* destruction of the enemy."[172]

> Marshal Vasilevskii . . . continuing to follow the battlefield attentively, once more addressed himself to me:
>
> —Sergei Semenovich, the attack which has begun well here may peter out because of the indecisive actions of the tankmen. I am asking you to visit Comrade Vasil'ev and explain to him that it is on his Corps that the success of the entire Front operation now depends. We should not admit even the slightest slowing up.[173]

> *A leaflet given to every infantryman who was to participate in the offensive beginning June 22, 1944:* "The most important thing is not to be slow! . . . . Don't be slow, soldier!"[174]

Passing ahead of the enemy is an omnipresent theme. "All officers as well as the Party and Komsomol *aktiv*," one recalls about the War, "strove to obtain in the personnel the consciousness of the fact that the battle is won by the side which first sights the enemy, outstrips him in deployment. . . ."[175] When "the Battery unexpectedly encountered the 'enemy' [in a simulated combat], the outcome was decided in seconds—who would outstrip whom in deployment?"[176] "It is well known," a general officer remarks, "that at that moment [of the enemy's counterattack] superiority goes to the side which is capable of outstripping the other in deployment."[177] "Everybody knows the worth of a second: to outstrip the enemy is to secure success in battle."[178]

An insistent question is, who will occupy the position favoring the side holding it in a battle that would be started from it? "Who is going to arrive first at the line advantageous for deployment?"[179] "The enemy," it is said about a simulated battle, "was unable to advance . . . to the advantageous position [furnished by the terrain]. Podrezov forestalled him."[180] "And when the 'enemy' pulled into the depression between the heights"—the terrain coveted by both sides—"we were already waiting for him."[181] Rapidity of action, among its innumerable advantages, permits one to forestall the enemy from occupying defense lines preferred by him:

> In war . . . success or failure depends greatly on the ability to forestall the enemy in the concentration of forces and means in the decisive sector. In the first period of the Great Fatherland War, we were often late in a maneuver which could forestall actions of the enemy. This tendency manifested itself visibly in the combats of 1941 and also near Stalingrad, August 16–22 [1942], when the Hitlerites succeeded in creating strongpoints at Vertyachi and Peskovatka from which they accomplished the breakthrough toward Stalingrad.[182]

The avoidance of slowness is something to marvel at. Again, the Authorities single out economy of words:

> In the interests of economy of time, Captain Nifontov gave extremely laconic commands. . . .[183]

> Precisely at the indicated hour . . . Captain V. Prokhorov appears in the office of Major Savchenko. Without any prefatory remarks, he expounds the essence of the matter briefly and precisely. One feels immediately that Major Savchenko requires an extreme econ-

> omy of words from his subordinates. Having put a few questions, Boris Sidorovich gives instructions and dismisses the officer. The whole conversation occupied three minutes.[184]

> In order to give the commanders of the units the maximum of time for the preparation and organization of the battle, I gave the order in brief form. Very brief also was the regimental Kommissar Sergeev in setting forth the political task.[185]

The belief that, in war, time works against them makes the Authorities keenly aware of the diminishing availability of time as military technology advances. "That which even in a recent past . . . took troops days to do, must now be done in half a day, in a few hours, even in tens of minutes."[186] "A deficit in time" in modern war "becomes the commander's permanent companion."[187] It is even apt to be a "sharp deficit,"[188] if not "the sharpest."[189] "High speeds," avers an officer to persistent laggards, "are not a subjective [i.e., arbitrary—NL] demand, but the will of the times . . . a requirement of contemporary combat which can be replaced by nothing else."[190]

Hence, the Authorities, as noted, urge a ceaseless "search for reserves of time"[191] under the assumption—ever-anew verified—that "not all reserves have been exhausted yet." Often, to be sure, "it seems at first sight as if there were not a single superfluous second by which an operation could be shortened." But when one "analyzes it thoroughly," it appears that time can be compressed still further; there is always "a key to high speeds."[192]

No gain in this respect is too small to be worthwhile. "It is important . . . to realize even the smallest possibilities for increasing the speed of the march."[193]

On the other hand, as already implied, there is no limit to such gains. "In the struggle for gaining time," an analyst explains, "there is no line after the crossing of which one can rest content."[194] "The certainty became ever firmer," an officer alleges from his experience, "that even extremely reduced delays are a hindrance to the solution of missions."[195]

There is apt to be a "norm" for any act, and the point is to exceed it (until the new mark becomes so normal that a briefer "norm" is established). "An 'enemy' aircraft . . . was approaching the target. It was just about to strike, but did not succeed—a missile was speeding toward it . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. The supervising officer stopped the stopwatch. The difficult combat norm for the missile strike had been significantly exceeded."[196] In simulated combat "the tank company under the command of Senior Lieutenant A. Kima pursued the

withdrawing path. . . . The commander decided to cross it from the march under water. Substantially exceeding the established norms for the preparation of tanks for underwater driving. . . ."[197]

The commander should move even more rapidly than the typical situation requires; conditions will no doubt arise when he will be in need of this excess swiftness:

> On the screens of the target finders an electronic storm was raging! Countermeasures! A submarine which had been located for an instant had disappeared again. After a few moments, however, the target was discovered, its parameters precisely determined. What particularly gladdened the officer was that all the operations leading to this had required less time than provided for in the norm. The Lieutenant-Commander had from his own experience gained the conviction that the commander of a missile ship always needs his own IR—his Intangible Reserve of seconds and minutes which he will permit himself to spend only in extraordinary cases. Such cases may occur for many reasons: because of the cleverness of the "enemy," his tactical flexibility, or from possible complications of the situation.[198]

While opposing routine in the macro-aspects of a decision (see Chapter III), the Authorities acknowledge its importance in the micro-features of execution. Fighters commendably "attempt to work on their conduct in battle until it becomes automatic."[199] They "develop their habits to the level of automatism,"[200] creating in themselves "the so-called 'memory of the hands.' "[201] For it is "automatism which permits, for instance, the artillerist in the moment of danger not to think of how to take a shell, which angle to adopt."[202] And when "every movement," say of the pilot, is "worked up to having become automatic," then and only then can he "give all his attention to the search for the target"[203]—and (what is not made explicit, but is presumably intended) spend less time on finding it.

Conversely, one objective of surprise is to lengthen the victim's reaction time. "The strike was so unexpected that the 'enemy' was incapable of beginning organized resistance right away"; therefore (presumably), "the tankmen succeeded in fragmenting his column. . . ."[204]

There is an insistence on not allowing adverse circumstances to slow one down, on acting in any conditions "without decreasing one's tempo."[205] Very near to the beginning of a chapter in a leading treatise on a subject as broad as "The Influence of Science and Technology

on the Development of the Means of Warfighting," the author makes a particular demand for "the fulfillment of daytime norms at night."[206]

The strength of the aspiration to dispatch leads to casual tautologies: "*Swiftness* of maneuver," a leading analyst explains, "is obtained by its organization in a *brief time*, by the *quickness* of the actions of the troops, their *timely* and all-sided logistic support."[207] "Contemporary defense," another analyst observes, "is characterized by *reduction of the time* required for the equipping of the terrain in an engineering respect," and, in consequence, "by *higher speeds* of its operation."[208] If, during the War, the destruction of encircled enemy forces was accomplished "in a *short* time," this ("analysis" shows) was "obtained above all by conforming to the *unity* of the processes of encirclement, dissection of the grouping to be encircled, and destruction of the dissected parts."[209]

When swiftness is at a maximum, all processes that could possibly be "simultaneous" (see Chapter I) *are* simultaneous. There will be, for instance, "the simultaneous creation of the outer and inner fronts of encirclement."[210]

Instead of using (no doubt without being aware of it) "unity of processes A, B, C" as a synonym for "rapidity of the sequence A, B, C," one may assert the simultaneity of processes that *can't* be that, but that *can* approach a state so desirable that one is gratified rather than disturbed by affirming the attainment of the unreachable extreme. "The accomplishment of the enemy's encirclement, fragmentation, and destruction" writes an analyst, "is most likely to coincide in time"[211]—although "one must note," according to another analyst, "that we did not always succeed in a simultaneous encirclement and destruction." Still, "the Great Fatherland War had shown that in operations of encirclement it is necessary to attain a merging of encirclement, fragmentation, and destruction of the enemy"—only a merging, one following rapidly upon the other? No, a merging "as a . . . simultaneous process."[212] Or one may begin with the extreme formulation and then rejoin reality: "In the operations of the campaign considered," observes a general officer about an episode of the War, "the processes of encircling, fragmenting, and annihilating the groupings of the enemy proceeded simultaneously *or rapidly*."[213]

Rapidly, of course, because anything less threatens catastrophe. "Not in vain is it said that slowness in battle is equivalent to defeat."[214]

> The smallest delay at any line threatened the failure of the entire operation which had been so successfully begun.[215]

Conversely, as the *Field Manual* of 1936 had declared, "troops which are capable of *rapidly* regrouping in changed circumstances, of *rapidly* arising from rest, of *rapidly* accomplishing marches, of *rapidly* deploying into combat array and opening fire, of *rapidly* attacking and pursuing the enemy can always count on success."

> Look, in attacking Gostivin, don't lose time. If you're going to act rapidly, things will be all right.[216]

That is, "maneuver carries a maximal effect when it is accomplished quickly, swiftly."[217] "The speed of maneuver is the decisive condition for its success"—the concluding words of a book.[218] A variety of factors make for this connection.

What is stressed about delay is also stressed about slowness in action once begun: it offers the enemy a gift of time to counteract. It was, notes an officer about a simulated battle, "rapidity of action" which "deprived the enemy of the possibility of utilizing in full measure his forces and means."[219] This is, of course, the case to a particularly high degree when the enemy, whether surprised or not, is not yet fully "ready." "At no occasion," an analyst observes, "is rapidity as important . . . as in the meeting engagement, because precisely then . . . the enemy . . . is far from always and everywhere ready for action." Then "any delay in the development of a success obtained will . . . accelerate the growth of the enemy's . . . resistance."[220]

Time allows reinforcement:

> *The Caucasus in the fall of 1942:* "The troops of the Army were already close to the fulfillment of the mission, but their slow actions allowed the enemy to transfer supplementary forces from the direction of Ardon and to stop the advance of the 37th Army."[221]

The slower an operation, the greater the chance that the enemy will undo the success it has obtained. "It was important," observes an analyst about the War, "to break through the tactical zone of the defense in the course of the very first day of operations; for otherwise the enemy, exploiting the pause, might in the course of the night . . . liquidate the breach which had been formed."[222]

Rapidity of action brings surprise. "If the leading aircraft had lost even an instant, surprise would have been lost."[223] "Preparations for executing a decision [should] be compressed in time . . . so that the enemy be unable to divine our design . . .";[224] we may then also be able to attack at a moment earlier than the enemy had deemed feasible

(see above). Conversely, an increase in the length of fire preparation can mean loss of surprise when delivering the strike. Slowness in the building-up of forces in an airborne landing brings a similar result.

Also, the slower an operation, the smaller the benefit from surprise. That benefit is composed of two parts: first and rarely mentioned, a reduction (by destruction) in the enemy's "forces and means"; second and stressed, a reduction in the productivity of the enemy's surviving resources *for a time*—the utilization of which depends on the surpriser's dispatch *after* having surprised. "The duration of the impact of surprise," an analyst observes, "is limited by the time which the enemy requires for . . . liquidating the unequal conditions provoked by the unexpected actions [of the side which has achieved surprise]."[225] "One must remember," another analyst remarks, "that the advantages which the unit [having surprised] receives bear a temporary character"; "they continue to exist only as long as the enemy has not removed his depression and loss of bearings." Hence, "the more quickly he knows how to . . . reestablish an organized . . . mode of action, the smaller will be the results of surprise." But also, the more rapid the surpriser's actions while the enemy is still enfeebled from surprise, the greater the attacker's total advantage. Thus "it is necessary to remember that surprise only furnishes the conditions for successful action, . . . conditions which one still has to be capable of utilizing in good time."[226]

In addition to *utilizing* the duration of the enemy's enfeeblement by surprise, one may *prolong* it by dispatch, thus raising the ceiling for utilization. The delivery of repeated strikes in the minimum amount of time denies the enemy the opportunity to regain mastery over himself, and hence lengthens the period during which he is less able to resist the force conducting the repeated strikes.

* * * * * * *

Commanders sharing the attitudes here described tend to allow insufficient time for the missions they set, leaning over backward to check the propensity to slowness which they perceive in others, and perhaps in themselves. "Sometimes orders are given when it is perfectly clear that it is impossible to fulfill them within the time indicated."[227] "In exercises it still happens," observes an anonymous authority, "that commanders . . . ask of their artillery and aviation tasks which are clearly beyond their power." Thus "in a recent exercise the unit commanded by . . . E. Nikitin was stopped in the course of advance by the fire of the enemy's antitank weapons from the slopes of a

commanding height. The Commander ordered the artillery batteries to suppress them, and the Company to attack the strong-point on the height after five minutes. He did not take account of the fact that the artillerists would be unable to fulfill their task within such a brief time."[228] "In exercises," the same authority remarks, "there are still cases where, for instance, a battalion commander, ordering the sappers allocated to him to create a passage through a minefield of the 'enemy,' allows them much less time than is required for that. As a result, the attacking unit is arrested by the obstacle, the speed of the attack sinks."[229] It becomes appropriate to insist that "commanders . . . take meticulous account of the fact that personnel need time for the locating of targets . . . and the opening of fire."[230]

> *Stalin during the first days of the war:* "When he set missions, he demanded their fulfillment in unbelievably short delays, not taking account of real possibilities."[231]
>
> *The counteroffensive in the area of Moscow:* "The order to the troops of the 50th Army required of our own and the 207th Rifle Division to occupy Shchekino already at the end of the first day of the offensive. . . . This term was clearly unreal and merely expressed the impatience of the Command of the 50th Army. . . ."[232]
>
> *An order from the Stavka, December 19, 1942:* "Comrade Voronov will . . . at the latest on December 21, 1942, submit to the Stavka a plan for breaking through the defense of the enemy encircled at Stalingrad and for liquidating him in the course of three to six days."

Whereto the addressee comments:

> I was given two days for the submission of a plan, and I still found myself far from the shores of the Volga. Even more unreal appeared to me the time allocated to the liquidation of the encircled troops.[233]
>
> *The offensive against Königsberg:* "There remained almost 50 kilometers until Königsberg, and what kilometers! The city was surrounded by three lines of fortifications constructed during a prolonged period, supported by powerful forts and a large number of guns and mortars. But the directive prescribed to traverse these 50 kilometers and to take the fortress of Königsberg in six days with the forces of two Armies which had already borne exceedingly heavy losses and which were supported by two also fairly enfeebled tank corps. . . ."

> I tried to express my doubts to the Commander of the Front. But Ivan Danilovich [Chernyachovskii] considered his timetable a realistic one. Regrettably, reality refuted his conviction.[234]

* * * * * * *

Warding off the impulse toward slowness becomes fused with the opposite impulse toward haste, which the Authorities perceive as less intense and widespread (while failing, of course, to acknowledge their own contribution to it).

> If he notices a defect [in inspecting a plane before flight], immediately he throws himself into removing it, instead of attentively inspecting the whole plane, noting his observations on a pad, and only after that proceeding to removal of the defect, [though] such a succession of procedures is, as experience shows, more effective.[235]

The Authorities have increasingly come to note "a disregard," in the words of a Western analyst, "of quality for the sake of speed,"[236] or, in the formulation of a Soviet observer, "chasing after rapidity at the expense of correctness."[237] Pressing for speed, the Authorities may discover that "in the race for swiftness thorough calculations are omitted."[238] They perceive (once more in the Bolshevik tradition) a penchant, in the words of an analyst, toward "hasty decision, taken without a sufficient analysis of the situation . . . without the execution of the indispensable analysis of the calculations,"[239] a striving "to save time at the price of taking an insufficiently founded decision."[240] "Commanders of platoons were carried away by rapidity in working on norms for firing, and neglected precision."[241]

> Once in an exercise a serious task was put before the unit commanded by Junior Sergeant V. Grishkevich. Lieutenant S. Abramov observed the actions of the fighters with a chronometer in his hand. . . . The officer laconically announced: "The norm is surpassed!" "And what about the quality of the operation?" asked the secretary of the Party organization, Officer D. Korol', who had entered the cabin.
>
> He had immediately noted the mistakes of the rocketmen R. Slavin and B. Bopov. In their haste these specialists had sometimes not followed the proper sequence of measures. . . .[242]

> We sometimes are attentive only to rapidity in firing . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. In reality, not so long ago the victors in exercises

were determined in the unit according to the sport principle: He who makes better time, wins. Often there was a neglect of quality. This led to Private S. Ozherel'ev—who had fulfilled the norms more rapidly than anybody else while training—letting the unit down in the winter firing exercises. It turned out that this soldier, while running after seconds, had not developed the habit of precisely fulfilling obligations. . . . As became clear afterward, this had not been asked of him either by his commander, Junior Sergeant Yu. Suprun. . . . In his haste Ozherel'ev made imprecise calculations.[243]

A tank crossing a river gets stuck:. . . . ?

—Why did you not measure the depth. . . . ?

—We were hurrying, Comrade Major, we wanted to be quicker. For we were competing . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].

This incident served as an occasion for conversation with the officers . . . on . . . competition which should help to produce skill in fulfilling a task not only quickly, but also correctly.[244]

It often happens that the commander of a unit accomplishing, for instance, a march is worrying about one thing only: to arrive as quickly as possible in the indicated area and to report the fulfillment of the task. And the leader of the exercise falls in with this. Safeguarding the secrecy of movements, conducting radiation and chemical intelligence, repelling sudden strikes of the air "enemy," overcoming minefields and irradiated areas—these and many other questions are solved in oversimplified fashion or not solved at all.[245]

The actions of Privates V. Yaibaev and S. Bakhbalov clearly showed one tendency: rapidity, rapidity at any price. Both committed mistakes from haste.[246]

Usually, when establishing the results of combat work, some officers and sergeants took account only of the time taken for the fulfillment of norms. But with what quality the tasks were worked through . . . was outside of the field of vision of the leaders of the exercises.[247]

Some commanders, when evaluating the actions of mechanics-drivers, take into account only time and rapidity. These are, of course, important indicators, but they are not all. However, we limit ourselves to them. Is this not one of the causes of the fact that in the chase for rapidity some mechanics-drivers commit serious mistakes leading to damage to the equipment?[248]

Thus, rapidity may be a necessary, but it is not a sufficient,

condition of correctness: "Even a rapid maneuver may turn out to be without utility if it is accomplished . . . not in accordance with the situation."[249]

It may now even be declared that maximum speed is not always the optimum:

> As a rule the squads become accustomed to the idea that the main thing is to increase the speed of firing: the higher it is, the better. That is true in many, but not all situations of battle. Sometimes it may be needed to slow up the tempo of firing.[250]

Under these circumstances, it becomes something to marvel at that personnel put rapidity in its proper place, "Not only the time," it is reported about a model unit, "but also the quality of the fulfillment of the norm in question is regulated."[251] In another unit "the orientation among all was the same: to obtain a grade of excellence not only by seconds gained, but also by the faultless quality of combat work."[252]

A preference for quality over rapidity may appear as a rare excellence:

> Now Lieutenant Kotlyarenko reports [about the performance of his unit]. Rapidity was excellent. A little bit later the commander of the neighboring platoon, Sergeant Aleev, reports. His subordinates lost out to their competitors [Lieutenant Kotlyarenko's unit] only by a few seconds, but worked with fewer mistakes, in a more organized, more coherent fashion. And Stepin [the leader of the exercise] *did not vacillate*; he determined that the platoon commanded by Sergeant Aleev was the victor. Thus the leader of the exercise showed the trainees that the secondometer is not the only judge of their actions.[253]

Exaggerating the Authorities' injunction of swiftness may, as noted above, be a means by which one yields to the urge for haste under heavy pressures. Much as the High Command desires its forces to be "quick in reaction, rapid in decision," it fears that such conduct will be caricatured by "persons who are not equilibrated, impetuous."[254] "Captain E. Luk'yanov . . . was disturbed by . . . nervousness. . . . He committed gross mistakes due to haste. . . ."[255]

Anxiety reinforces the inclination not to complete a job (see Chapter I):

> Some officers, having received a mission, began to get nervous, to act in haste. Without having finished one question, they went over to the next. . . .[256]

Not having finished one thing, he grabs another.[257]

Against such proclivities, the Authorities demand that one be "unhurried."

> With a group of tankmen we have an unhurried conversation about . . . The soldier . . . turned in a direction from which . . . in an unhurried manner an officer . . . was coming. In unhurried fashion he removed . . . a pouch from his shoulder. . . .[258]

Once one starts to hurry, one may find oneself alternating between that vice and its opposite:

> At one time, Senior Lieutenant Yu. Kiselev suffered failures in interception at high altitudes. Either he was slow . . . and the "enemy" succeeded in escaping the strike, or he hurried to attack . . . driving his aircraft to maximal speed [*sic*], and could not aim precisely. . . .[259]

Slowness, of course, creates an incentive to speed up later. "Some commanders," an analyst observes, "spend an unjustified amount of time in the collection of information, communicate it slowly." Naturally, "the loss of time at this stage is then compensated at the expense of other measures which lead to haste."[260] That "some commanders spent much time on . . . taking decisions" led to their "organizing combat actions in haste."[261]

But then haste itself may be slow:

> In their haste . . . the operators moved in excess, and were late in completing the operation.[262]

Conversely, efficient rapidity may appear slow:

> Looking at the operators of the radar station . . . one might first arrive at the belief that they are too slow. But this apparent lack of haste in their actions is full of inner dynamism. . . .
>
> There is not a single superfluous movement when a stream of information arrives, no nervousness when instants decide the issue of the battle.[263]

> Externally the officer is slow, unhasty. But when the situation becomes difficult, it is as if he became another person.[264]

Running in Place

One kind of slowness with which the Authorities are particularly concerned is that of the movement of persons attracted to immobility. "Sometimes," an officer notes, "a commander . . . avoids a decision which requires maximum speed in movement. . . ."[265] Observing that "unfortunately there are also commanders who in exercises . . . do not take account of the requirements posed by contemporary conditions," a military leader gives this example first place: "One still encounters low speeds in march and attack. . . ."[266] "Some units . . . attack with low speed."[267]

> *The winter of 1943:* "The Black Sea group of the Trans-Caucasian Front, having begun the offensive with a big delay, moved slowly."[268]

> *The preparation in the fall of 1942 of an offensive in the southwest:* "The staff of the 3rd Tank Army at the start still found itself in Tula and was occupied with the dispatching of troops by railway. Then it put itself . . . on the railway and, making haste slowly, moved into the area of Kantemirovka. It thus lost five precious days, though it could have arrived in a single day by car or in a few hours by plane."[269]

> On January 11 [1943] the Military Soviet of the Northern [Caucasus] Group informed the commanders of the Cavalry Corps that their speeds of advance were impermissibly slow. . . . There were cases where the infantry outstripped the cavalry in pursuing . . . the enemy. The Military Soviet noted that the Cavalry Corps . . . was milling around on the same place.[270]

Noticing their subordinates' disposition to avoid high speed, the Authorities are equally concerned about the penchant to fall below whatever speed has been attained.

Requiring "speed and once more speed,"[271] the Authorities oppose a reduction of speed even in the most difficult circumstances. When "in the course of a successful development of the offensive" at one occasion during the War "it was necessary to overcome . . . water barriers," the task was "essentially to cross [the] barriers . . . without a sharp reduction in the speed of the attack."[272] Even "the enemy's counterattack must be . . . repelled without lowering the speed of the offensive."[273] Of course, "the encirclement and the annihilation of the enemy must be accomplished without any pauses so that the

overall speed of the offensive not sink."[274] "At the slightest threat of a diminution of the speed of attack at night"—here the same analyst recalls proper conduct during the War—"second echelons were introduced without any vacillation. . . ."[275]—unusual words of emphasis. An officer in simulated battle abandons a plan that he had been considering: "He immediately renounced this variant of action, because it entailed the danger that the speed of the attack of the company could be lowered, which would have served the interests of the 'enemy.' "[276]

> *In the War* "The most worrying feature of the situation was that the crest of the wave of the offensive was now beginning to fall. . . ."[277]

Where a reduction in speed would (to a Western observer) appear natural, it is elaborately excused:

> Especially difficult conditions for the attacker occur when nuclear or chemical strikes are inflicted on him. In such a situation, it is necessary immediately to reestablish the impaired leadership, to ascertain the level of casualties of personnel and of damage to equipment, to modify combat tasks . . . , to organize help for the suffering. And a reduction of the speed of the attack is inevitable here.[278]

Even if a commander is not upset by a reduction of speed, he may be disturbed by such equanimity:

> Every slowing-up in our offensive did not provoke in me the feeling of . . . a beginning of failure. Why?[279]

One may feel protected from falling only when one is rising. "Successful attack," an observer declares, "requires not only the preservation of the initial speed of advance, but its uninterrupted rise throughout the battle."[280]

> *In the War:* "Breaking through the defense of the enemy, the tank armies speeded south, accelerating their attack with every hour."[281]

To be sure, such favorable results do not, according to the universally applicable Bolshevik formula, "come by themselves." "The commander of the company, Senior Lieutenant V. Chichko, strove to increase it when it is already so high, almost maximal?"[282] If you only look hard enough, you will find the proper answer: "unutilized reserves" of speed.

One major factor making for speed of advances is mass (see Chapter I).

> *The offensive in the Southwest, the winter of 1942:* "I considered it unjustified that, according to the plan, the breakthrough of the tactical defense of the enemy to a depth of 12 to 16 kilometers was to be accomplished only at the end of the third day of the operation. That speed of attack seemed to me too low. But . . . also the forces allotted to the breakthrough of the enemy defense were relatively small. . . . The insufficiency of forces was taken account of by the planners. . . . As a result, very insignificant speeds of attack were planned."[283]

Maximizing the speed of attack should be the commander's chief aim:

> In the memoirs on the . . . Great Fatherland War there arises before us the image of the commander. . . . In the fire of bitter battles the command character of Soviet officers was reared, and its most important quality was *creativeness*.
>
> Memory preserves many episodes from the War when the creative initiative of the commanders found the most rational path toward the solution of the combat task, favoring *the heightening of the speed of the offensive*.[284]

> —Remember, you are *responsible* for the left flank of the 21st Army.
>
> These words were taken as a requirement to *sharply raise the speed of the attack* of the strike group.[285]

Anything may be presented as a means, where the end is speed. "In these conditions," observes an analyst about contemporary battle, "it is not appropriate to wait for any indications [from the senior commander], as all waiting condemns one to inactivity," which "leads to the lowering of the speed of the attack."[286] So highly valued is speed that even a procedure as precious as "uninterruptedness" (see Chapter I) may be presented as a means to it. "Where the attack was developed uninterruptedly day and night [during the War] . . . the units succeeded in obtaining high speeds of attack."[287] It is "so as not to lower but rather to heighten the speed of the offensive," that "it is important . . . to obtain a permanent fire superiority over the enemy. Without such superiority, rapidity of action is hardly possible."[288] "This reasonable decision," one will say, "may substantially increase the survivability of tanks, BMPs [armored personnel carriers], and

other fire means''—good enough? No, ''[this] in its turn leads to an increase in the speed of the attack.''[289] ''The more quickly the means of fire of the 'enemy' are destroyed''—not the more favorable the force ratio, but ''the higher the speed of advance. Inversely, when emerging targets are not immediately hit, speed falls sharply.''[290]

The atmosphere surrounding speed is such that it becomes appropriate to recall that ''high speed is not an end in itself.''[291]

It is unusual to acknowledge the costs of speed, as an analyst does when he discusses the exceptions made during the War with regard to the rule that in an offensive the motorized riflemen go first: ''While tank armies breaking through the tactical zone of the enemy's defense bore definite losses . . . this procedure gained time. . . . The introduction into the battle of tank armies for breaking through the enemy's tactical zone as a rule led to an increase in the speed of overcoming it; and this often played a decisive role in the development of the tactical success into an operational one and for the attainment of the ultimate aim of the . . . offensive. . . .''[292]

It is more unusual to envisage sacrificing speed. ''Every maneuver,'' explain analysts stressing the role of that aspect of war, ''requires a certain amount of time for its preparation and execution, and it would seem that it will always be connected with . . . a reduction in the tempo of the offensive.'' Hence, ''sometimes it is held that from the point of view of high speeds of the offensive what would be appropriate would be a . . . ceaseless . . . movement forward . . .''[293]—which, the authors dare to imply, would cost more than would be gained. Even the most obvious sacrifices of rapidity for other advantages may be presented as exceptions that have to be strenuously argued: ''Naturally, one must not exclude that it will sometimes be necessary to wait until levels of radiation drop. . . . To risk the health of personnel, the security of the unit, in the name of high speed is not appropriate, unless it is acutely indispensable to do so.''[294] The return from holding back on speed must be immediate and decisive for that conduct to be readily acceptable:

> Major Voropaev understood that the interceptor was preparing to open fire and adopted a device tested by our fliers in the last war—he sharply reduced his speed. Carried away by the attack, the interceptor did not find the time to react to the change in speed, jumped forward and himself came under the fire of the bomber.[295]

It seems more likely that any reduction in speed will cause irremediable damage. Demanding that in the course of an offensive ''sup-

plements to the strength of the first echelon be furnished before the speed of the attack begins to fall, that is, before the first echelon's possibilities of attack become exhausted," an analyst foresees that "the entrance into the battle of fresh forces *after* the moment when the forward movement of the attacking units has slowed up or even after they have come to a standstill, would occur in unfavorable conditions." Indeed, they might be fatal conditions, since "the delay in the augmentation of the strength [of the attacker] would allow the enemy . . . to crush the attacking troops. . . ."[296] This is Bolshevik hyperbole perhaps, but it is probably also an expression of the pervasive (although little-formulated) belief that the wages of any "incorrectness" is death.

Conversely, "the main thing," we hear about a simulated battle, "which made the counterattack succeed, was high speed."[297] We learn the same about real combat: "The experience of the counteroffensive [at Stalingrad] showed," according to three general officers, "that the success of any offensive operation is indissolubly connected with high speed of breakthrough of the enemy defense, and a rapid development of the offensive in the operational depth."[298] Less obviously, "the higher the speed of advance, the greater the possibilities . . . for the disruption of the enemy's calculation [see Chapter VI—NL], for the fragmentation of his units and their piecemeal destruction [see Chapter V—NL]."[299]

> *A tank unit, at the beginning of the War, attempts to seize an enemy-occupied airfield:* "I explained the mission to the tankmen."
>
> —To break through to the airfield which, of course is well defended, is possible only . . . at the extreme speed[300]

> *The Southwest in the winter of 1942:* "The mission put before the 6th Army . . . was not wholly fulfilled: it . . . succeeded in crushing only a part of the forces of the enemy—two divisions. This was in substantial measure due to the slow development of the operation during the first day. If the average speed of the offensive over ten days was 8 to 9 kilometers per day, it did not go beyond 6 kilometers in breaking through the defense."[301]

With the advance of technology, the role of speed takes on added importance. Take pursuit: while with the "revolution in warfare" the pursuing troops "acquire an increased capacity for delivering strikes on the flanks [of the retreating enemy] and for interfering with his planned retreat," "at the same time the capacity of the retreating side to actively counter the attacker and to retreat rapidly has also in-

creased." "In these conditions . . . success has come to depend entirely on the gaining of time and on the speed of the troops."[302]

Speed offers not only victory but also economy (beyond that of time), both of force and of loss: "the attainment of success in minimal time and with little blood";[303] avoiding the dreaded "dragged-out" campaign (see Chapter I). During the War, an analyst observes, "speeds of offensive and losses were inversely proportional." In fact, "with an offensive of 20 to 50 kilometers a day, casualties were more than three times less among tank personnel or only half as many as with speeds of advance of 4 to 10 kilometers a day."[304] In addition, "a high speed of advance . . . secures for the offense the fulfillment of its mission . . . with smaller expenditure in ammunition and fuel."[305]

> In the operations preceding the crossing of the Weichsel . . . there were not a few cases in which the breakthrough of the enemy defense proceeded . . . with large losses. The main cause was the slow speed of the offensive.[306]

On the other hand, the enemy's losses vary directly as one's own speed: "With high speeds of the offensive, the losses of the defense . . . increase." Thus "in the Weichsel-Oder operation the Fourth Tank Army, advancing with a daily tempo of 30 to 33 kilometers [took] twice the number of prisoners as with a tempo of 10 to 13 kilometers." Also, "with high speeds of the offensive usually the number of seized automobiles, artillery, and tanks rises."[307]

Just how does speed promote victory?

First, it facilitates surprise: "There exists a direct relation between the speed of the offensive and surprise." "The transition of the offensive from the march secures the secrecy of preparations" and thus "surprise in the assault."[308]

Second, speed reduces the enemy's efficacy even beyond the effects of surprise. As "rapidly attacking tanks exercise a strong moral and psychic influence on the defenders," a general officer observes, "the accuracy of their fire will be reduced."[309]

Third, once more, time works for the enemy because it allows him more countermeasures. "The higher the speed of the offensive, the greater the possibility of . . . victory," because "with a low speed of the offensive the enemy . . . acquires the time for strengthening his defensive position, for . . . transferring new forces and means to the menaced sector";[310] "high speeds of attack . . . deprive the enemy of the possibility of undertaking effective countermeasures."[311] There is always the possibility that breaking through the enemy's "tactical

zone," while still feasible, will become slow and costly. In case the defense succeeds in regrouping its forces *earlier* than the attacker is able to utilize the results of his strikes for moving into the depth, the attempted breakthrough becomes a "gnawing through" of the defense, and then the losses of the attacker mount. Or, even worse, "since the concentration of reserves [for defense] in the threatened direction [of an enemy offensive] proceeded [at] a tempo more rapid than the enemy's offensive, his advance was arrested."[312] So often, one recalls about war and simulated battle, while the defense was being broken—but all too slowly—the enemy succeeded in moving up reserves and creating a defense on a new line.

> Speed decides. We must not permit the enemy to "come to," to deploy, to regroup. We must press and press.[313]

> The tanks accelerated their movement. We understood that every stop, the smallest slowing of movement . . . would be utilized by the enemy against us.[314]

> *The operation at Korsun'-Shevchenko:* "Success to a large extent depended on high speeds of the offensive, both in breaking through the defense of the enemy and in developing the attack. Only on this condition was it possible to encircle the enemy before he had the time to bring up his reserves from the direction of Vinnitsa and Korovograd.[315]

> *The Belorussian operation in the summer of 1944:* "Often in these days the Commander of the Front, I. Kh. Bagramyan, phoned me:
>
> —Speed up, speed up the attack!
>
> I myself understood what it would mean to arrive at the Western Dvina with a delay—the enemy would be able to prepare himself well at the shore. It would become necessary to smash his defense, and this would require much larger forces, and, particularly, casualties. Hence, we took all measures so as to advance ever more quickly, not engaging in battle for every strong-point. We went by parallel routes in the woods so as to arrive as quickly as possible at the river.[316]

> The tanks advanced slowly, cautiously. Not because they were hindered by the softness of the ground after the rain. The company commander considered that speed of attack advantageous.
>
> "I wanted to study the 'enemy' better," he later explained his conduct. But the fact that the "enemy" all this time conducted direct fire against the attacker was not taken into consideration.

> The commander was dominated by the striving to strike a maximum number of targets.[317]

Fourth, besides the gains from speed that have been described, there is the protection it affords against the enemy's actions: it maximizes the chances not only for victory, but also for survival (and thus again for victory).

> In front of the "enemy's" strong-point there extended a smooth field. Like a building site. . . . It seemed as if combat vehicles entering upon this terrain . . . would be subject to destructive fire right from the start. In this difficult situation, the commander of the motorized infantry company, Lieutenant V. Rozhin, made the decision . . . to strike the dangerous targets [the "enemy" strong-point—NL] at maximal speed. . . . The motorized infantrymen . . . destroyed them within a small number of seconds.[318]

Several factors make speed a valued means of protection.

For one, speed facilitates evasion, "withdrawal from the enemy's strike." If "mobility furnishes security," an analyst explains, it is also because "it allows units which have been located [by the enemy] to leave the area [in which they then found themselves] behind them, before the enemy can deliver a strike."[319]

Also, speed shortens time of exposure—a point that may be overlooked by addicts to slowness. "Even now," a general officer observes, "a number of commanders think it possible to attack with a speed of tanks of 12 to 15 kilometers per hour." They seem to forget that "the density of the enemy's antitank means has increased, as have their possibilities." Hence, "to attack today with such speeds means to lose a large part of one's tanks even before they have arrived at the forward edge of the enemy's position. For this not to happen, it is clearly necessary to increase the speed of the tanks . . . only thus can one shorten the time during which the vehicles find themselves under the fire of the enemy, and hence reduce losses."[320] One speeds "in order not to be exposed to the risk of being annihilated by the enemy before one has succeeded in doing anything whatsoever."[321] "In the final phase of the last war," an officer recalls, "our units frequently attained daily speeds of attack of 60 to 80 kilometers," and "precisely in this period losses . . . were the smallest." In fact, "analysis of the combat actions of some units . . . shows that when, in an attack, they advanced up to ten kilometers a day, losses in personnel were five to six times higher than in the case of speeds of 20 to 30 kilometers and higher. In the latter case, losses in equipment . . . were reduced by

4 to 4.5 times."[322] "It is important in any situation to approach the enemy and attack him at high speed, so as to be under his fire for as little time as possible";[323] in particular, in nuclear conditions "the dose of irradiation is inversely proportional to the rapidity of movement through the contaminated zone,"[324] and "the higher the speed of the offensive, the less exposure of the personnel to nuclear flash."[325]

Finally, the higher our speed, the greater the enemy's error in target location, and thus the lower his chance of hitting us.

"The calculation of the defense," in a simulated battle, "was simple: the porous snow cover of the countryside, the thawing waters in the glens excluded high speeds of attacking tanks and APCs [armored personnel carriers]. Moving with limited speed over open terrain, they would already at a great distance become targets easy to hit. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]."[326] As to counterattacking enemy forces, an analyst explains, it is important to strike them while they are stopping; and stops, even when one tries to avoid them (see Chapter I), are inevitable for the servicing of weapons and the resting of personnel, but also when facing zones of destruction, fire, and contamination. Yet if troops on the offensive stop even for a short time, "they create the risk of being struck by the nuclear weapons of the enemy."[327]

The Authorities—always disinclined to detail the cost of a preferred course—tend to slight the fact that movement in various ways entails a loss of "hardness." According to the leading analyst, "the rapidity and capacity for maneuver of tanks . . . have a much higher importance than armor protection."[328]

Superior commanders are apt to prescribe excessive speeds:

> The plans worked out for offensive operations . . . did not always correspond to the situation. Sometimes missions were established without taking account of the situation. The group commander, for example, ordered the 4th Guards Cavalry Corps to traverse . . . more than 160 kilometers in the course of three days. With this, no account was taken of the fact that the horses [were] exhausted.[329]

> *The operation in the area of L'vov-Sandomir:* "Acquainting myself with the directives of the Front, I could not but see that the speeds of infantry attack required went significantly beyond the possibilities of the troops."[310]

In this atmosphere, observers tend to express gingerly any doubt in the dominance of speed: "We must not forget," one will say, "that by themselves . . . technical possibilities of speed do not secure success." This is overlooked when "simplifying his task, a battalion

commander had not deemed it necessary to organize intelligence meticulously on his route of march so as to oppose the 'enemy' in case of necessity." Rather, "all the efforts of the commander were directed toward obtaining maximum speed." However, "which basic criteria must the deployment of a column marching toward a meeting engagement satisfy?" While "naturally, it must guarantee a high speed of movement, . . . this . . . is not all"; "the order of march must also correspond to the combat objectives of the unit, give it the capacity for rapid and independent actions, minimize its vulnerability . . . and render it capable of quick changes in the direction of movement . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]."[331]

That high speed is infeasible may be easier to confess to—in the face of the proper combination of common sense and experience—than that it is inadvisable:

> *The Carpathians in the fall of 1944:* "There was something to think about.
>
> It became evident that so as to fulfill the mission, we had to find and apply new ways of fighting. The experience of the first weeks of the operation suggested much. In the mountains one ought not . . . to count on a high speed of attack."[332]

There are rare liberations from dogma. "Is it always advantageous," two officers ask, "to fly with a speed close to the maximal one? Naturally, not insofar as duration and range depend on the regime of the flight. And when encountering a low-speed target, a maximum of speed renders the fulfillment of the mission more difficult, or even impossible. Hence, the one is victorious who chooses the appropriate speed." "It would be unreasonable," the heretics apologize, "to leave these considerations out of account or to attribute only a secondary role to them."[333]

Success is not always measured in kilometers.[334]

Too Much Time Spent on Deciding

Difficulties in making decisions are perceived not only as inaction (see Chapter I) but also as slowness in acting. "In one staff exercise," a general officer reports, "Major V. Povalyaev gave his subordinates provisional instructions as late as two and a half hours after having received a combat mission," while "in other staff [exercises] such instructions are given 15 to 20 minutes after the receipt of the mis-

sion."[335] "In tactical exercises," relates a military leader, "Lieutenant-Colonel Belikov acted unsurely, hastily, nervously. . . . There were many unnecessary questions and conversations." Thus it happened that "more time than conditions allowed was spent on taking a decision."[336]

> The march was organized thoroughly. There was no breakdown of equipment, the tankmen attacked swiftly. But in the last phase of the exercise, the commander of this unit seemed literally a changed man. The leader of the exercise demanded of him that he report his decision. But the officer was unable to determine where to utilize his main forces, where to direct the strike against the "enemy." Time passed. When finally, on the instruction of the leader of the exercise, he came to the head column and finished there working on the tasks set, the tanks of the "enemy" assaulted the unit from the left.[337]

> Lieutenant V. Krikoten' . . . saw on the screen the signature of the target and already began to hear the characteristic noise [of the submarine]. He should without delay have classified the signals according to all their characteristics and immediately reported that. However, doubting the genuineness of the contact with the discovered target, he did not bring himself to communicate the data obtained, fearing a mistake.[338]

> Indecisiveness and vacillation led to the Tank Corps being led into battle only on the sixth day of the operation.[339]

The greater the danger, the sooner a decision is needed, but the longer might it be in the making.

> When the situation gets unexpectedly difficult . . . Squadron Commander Major V. Tsokolov does not get excited, he does not become hasty, nor does he become slow with regard to taking a decision.[340]

"Sluggishness on the part of the commander in deciding . . . is fraught . . . with the nonfulfillment of his mission."[341] "Delayed decisions," observes a leading analyst, "inevitably lose their positive quality. More than that, slowness in taking decisions . . . may turn out to be [the] equivalent of defeat."[342] "Naturally," explains a reporter of a simulated battle, "there was a risk; if suddenly our ruse were detected . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]." But "no, the 'enemy' reacts slowly"; and "these seconds of delay cost him dearly. . . ."[343]

During such seconds, or hours, the commander may not be par-

alyzed by indecisiveness, but rather busy with preparing (excessively or inefficiently) for the decision that will come too late:

> In combat in the depth, when success in seizing an advantageous line depended on rapidity . . . Lieutenant-Colonel Yu. Motuz wasted more than three hours on clarifying the mission, evaluating the situation, and taking a decision. As a result, the commanders of the companies were deprived of the indispensable time for organizing the combat.[344]

> Major Dorofeev ascertained for a very long time the available reserves, conducted calculations of the line of the possible encounter with the enemy, and only after having thus spent an hour began to fulfill the instruction given him by the staff commander. But by that time, the "enemy" attacked the battalion with surprise. The battle was lost.[345]

> In a meeting engagement a motorized rifle company outstripped the "enemy" in deployment. The platoon of Lieutenant V. Zakarlyuk and antitank grenade launchers met an approaching column with sudden fire from an advantageous position. In the ranks of the enemy" confusion began. At the same time the main forces of the head column had found the time to arrive at the "enemy's" flank and prepared to attack. It seemed that the issue of the meeting engagement was already predetermined. Unfortunately, the further development of events did not confirm this assumption. Captain N. Rogachev lost too much time so as to inform himself about the situation, and assigned his subordinates tasks which were not formulated with entire precision. All this led to a lack of coordination in the actions of the tanks and of the motorized rifle units. The favorable occasion for inflicting a decisive blow on the opposing side was missed. The "enemy" recovered from the unexpected fire strike, deployed in battle order, and went over to the attack.[346]

> Slowness will cause haste:
>
> When a decision is taken belatedly, its execution inevitably leads to haste.[347]

In such a context, "rapidity in the taking of decisions" is, to a leading analyst, "a supremely important factor in determining victory in a meeting engagement even over a numerically superior enemy"[348]— or, for that matter, it would seem, in any mode of engagement.

It is thus "not accidental" that "the time spent by the staff for the realization of this or that measure serves as one of the basic criteria of battle readiness."[349] What is required is "to shorten to the minimum

expenditures of time for the calculation and selection of the mode of action."[350] In brief, "one must be governed by the principle: the earlier a decision is taken, the better."[351]

Incompleteness of information must not be grounds for delaying a decision. While "sometimes, at the moment of entering into battle, the commander will not have at his disposal exhaustive information about the enemy," and "in such a situation, some commanders begin to vacillate," "it is well known that . . . incompleteness of information about the enemy . . . does not justify indecisiveness and slowness."[352]

The cost of this preference may be slighted. In the words of a general officer—eschewing, in the fashion of public Soviet discourse, the question of the tradeoff between swiftness and correctness—the commander should possess "the capacity to take correct decisions for battle in minimal time. . . . The one [commander in an exercise] who acts more rapidly, yet without committing an error, is . . . favorably noted."[353]

Or the cost of swiftness may be admitted only implicitly and in cant: "Worst of all is . . . not to decide in good time";[354] "a reproach is merited not by the one who took a decision which was not the best, but by the one who did not take any at all."[355]

The need for rapid decision is one of the factors that inspire misgivings about the disposition of commanders to depend heavily on orders, or at least guidance, from above. It is a presumably massive factor barely acknowledged. "If in the decisive moment the commander . . . waits for prompting 'from above' and delays taking a decision, he will not," predicts a general officer, "obtain success."[356]

> In a combat situation and in the absence of an order from the senior commander, the commander must not wait, but act. However, the experience of exercises shows that there are still among us commanders who, even when they have received an order, act indecisively. . . . In order to report about the situation and to receive indications from higher commanders, Officer Medvedev stopped the forward movement of the vanguard almost for an hour, three kilometers away from the river [which he had been ordered to cross]. During this time the "enemy" brought up reserves, occupied the opposite shore, and the mission had to be solved in more difficult conditions.[357]

It is rarely admitted that it is "the *fear* of . . . actions . . . without an order from above," which is "one of the major causes of indecisiveness in critical moments."[358] In the words of a military leader,

"one still finds commanders . . . who delay decisions on questions which can be deferred out of a *fear* of responsibility."[359]

Decision-time saved is combat-time gained. "To command in efficient fashion," an analyst points out, "means . . . to spend as little time as possible on the processes of commanding, so as to put a maximum of time at the disposal of the troops, since it is precisely the troops which . . . inflict losses on the enemy. . . ."[360]

The more advanced the military technology, the shorter the *available* decision-time. "The art of war at sea," Admiral Gorshkov observes, "found itself faced with the necessity of resolving . . . tasks in shorter and shorter time-spans."[361]

The shorter the actual decision-time, the higher the chance of forestalling the enemy, with the favorable consequences following from that. "The less time is required for taking a decision . . . and communicating it to subordinates," an officer shows, "the more rapidly will the unit proceed to the execution of the task, the greater the possibility of outstripping the enemy in deployment and of forestalling him in striking. . . ."[362] Thus the "struggle" against slowness discussed in the present chapter is also in the service of another major orientation of the Authorities: their fight against the inclination to be passive toward the enemy (Chapter IV).

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Col. E. Datsyuk, *KVS*, 1969, no. 19, 58.
2. Lt. Col. L. Muzyka, *KZ*, October 22, 1976.
3. P. H. Vigor, *RUSI*, 1975, no. 4, 44. Emphasis in the original.
4. Lomov, 167–178.
5. Col. V. Savkin, *VV*, no. 4, 30.
6. Savkin, 248.
7. *KZ*, August 13, 1974.
8. Reznichenko, 258.
9. Col. V. Savkin, *VV*, 1971, no. 4, 33.
10. Lt. Col. I. Kurganevich, *KZ*, June 17, 1976.
11. *KZ*, January 24, 1974.
12. Col. K. Titikov, *VV*, 1971, no. 12, 22.
13. Lomov, 153.
14. Kirin, 35.
15. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 53.
16. Loza, 14. Emphasis added.
17. V. Zakharchenko, *KZ*, January 1, 1973.
18. Lt. Commander, Yu. Timoshchuk, *KZ*, December 7, 1973.
19. Loza, 85–86.
20. Lomov, 168.

21. Reznichenko, 259.
22. Maj. Gen. K. Babenko, *KZ*, August 3, 1976.
23. *KZ*, January 24, 1974.
24. *KZ*, April 4, 1974.
25. *KZ*, September 10, 1975.
26. *KZ*, July 28, 1976.
27. *KZ*, July 6, 1976.
28. Loza, 125.
29. Col. V. Savkin, *VV*, 1971, no. 4, 30.
30. Loza, 173. Emphasis added.
31. Ibid., 13. Emphasis added.
32. Fedyuninskii, 212.
33. *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 74–75.
34. General of the Army Epishev, *KVS*, 1977, no. 2, 18.
35. Katukov, 249.
36. Capt. A. Mitronov, *KZ*, July 20, 1977.
37. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 53.
38. Lt. Col. A. Pinchuk, *KZ*, February 3, 1977.
39. Lt. Col. I. Sinchuk, *VV*, 1973, no. 4, 27.
40. Navy Capt. Yu. Grachev, *KZ*, August 28, 1975.
41. General of the Army Epishev, *KVS*, 1977, no. 2, 18.
42. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 55.
43. An expression infrequently printed, but apparently fixed; cf. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *VV*, 1972, no. 8, 16, and *KZ*, January 27, 1976.
44. *KZ*, January 16, 1976.
45. Headline, *KZ*, September 15, 1976.
46. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, May 15, 1974.
47. Sidorenko, 75.
48. Navy Capt. V. Poshivailov, *KZ*, July 28, 1976.
49. *KZ*, September 28, 1975.
50. Lyudnikov, 1969, 84.
51. Sidorenko, 95.
52. Maj. Gen. V. Grozev and Lt. Col. D. Kudinov, *VV*, 1967, no. 3, 61.
53. Col. V. Savel'ev, *VV*, 1976, no. 9, 36.
54. A. A. Svechin, 1927, in Kadishev, 1965, 258.
55. Ibid., 254.
56. Maj. Gen. V. Platov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 57.
57. F. I. Kuznetsov, 1930, in Kadishev, 1965, 572. The last sentence is underscored in the text.
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Chapter III
FIGHTING THE NEGLECT OF OBSTACLES

Improvising

> The War: "Some commanders showed a tendency to look down on preparatory rough work. . . . They had a tendency . . . [to think] 'I came, I saw, I conquered. . . .' "[1]

"However precise the plan for combat . . . [may] be, it cannot play its role," a general officer finds it necessary to point out, "if . . . account is not taken . . . of resources in vehicles, ammunition. . . ." Yet "some staffs still concern themselves with such matters insufficiently, or they begin to work on them only when the exercise is already in full swing"—which is apt to lead to "a break in plans."[2]

That the Authorities believe the disposition to skimp on preparations to be strong seems indicated by their emphasis on the cost of doing so. "And the yield from the exercise was small because it was prepared in haste."[3] "Experience shows that even the simplest training combat does not forgive if the commander shows . . . contempt for preparatory work."[4]

> One day Sergeant G. Skoblob reported to me his readiness to conduct an exercise [to be introduced by a lecture of his] and gave me his outline for checkup. I was astonished by its meagerness. And when I learned that the theme of the exercise . . . comprised several serious questions, my astonishment became even greater. In answer to my remark, I heard: "I can conduct this exercise without any outline at all. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]." Then I decided to visit the exercise together with all the sergeants of the company. Naturally, there were many defects: no connection with the preceding themes, a low methodological level, a lack of sequence in

> the setting forth of the material, and dryness. For comparison the sergeants then assisted at the exercise led by Sergeant P. Ovchyn. He did not hope that "everything will fall into place by itself," but rather thoroughly prepared himself. And the exercise proceeded . . . in instructive fashion.[5]
>
> *The summer of 1943 in the area of Smolensk:* "On August 30 the Stavka sent the following message: '. . . . The experience of battle has shown that if troops are not prepared for and do not master the technique of the assault (*shturm*), of trench war, if they not master the hand grenade, have not acquired the habit of close combat . . . the attack will not have the desired results. . . .' "[6]
>
> It is said rightly that it is better to prepare for a week and to attack successfully for a single day, rather than to prepare during a single day and to "undertake efforts for a week."[7]
>
> They shouted *"urra"* and what resulted was *dura* (foolishness). . . . really not possible to give more time to the preparation of a counterstrike? . . . We asked for trouble. . . .[8]

Conversely, the rewards from preparation may be displayed, conveying that "it is extremely desirable to avoid improvisation at this occasion. . . ."[9] "Take, for instance," a military leader teaches, "the commander of a motorized rifle company, Guards Lieutenant V. Rozhin. On his worksheet one can find all the information indispensable for combat. He constantly bestows care on . . . the instruments of command. In his unit tables of signals, manners of designating targets have been elaborated." Now, says the author, confronting his recalcitrant officer-readers, "are these petty details? Naturally, no. In battle it will already be too late to establish tables of signals or . . . [to] agree on manners of designating targets." Unfortunately and ineluctably, "all the work must be performed before."[10] "Well-prepared units," it is pointed out, "take out many targets with significantly smaller expenditure of ammunition."[11] In one simulated combat "the leader of the exercise did not have to interfere." Why? Because "the previous analysis of all questions which had to be solved made itself felt."[12] "One must remember" what one seems prone to forget, "that tactical exercises . . . will be profitable only if they are preceded by thorough preparation."[13]

How well the "front fighters" of the War prepared! "In the years of the Great Fatherland War many commanders prepared themselves thoroughly before the attack and conducted tactical exercises also with live fire. Precisely at this occasion they tested the realism of their

calculations . . . the readiness of the units for decisive action. At these, as it were, rehearsals, the exercise grounds were equipped with engineering works corresponding precisely to the defensive positions of the enemy."[14]

That an officer does *not* show lack of preparation deserves praise. "There was *not* a single case," a military analyst observes about a model platoon commander, "where he prepared himself badly for an exercise."[15] To a colleague of that writer, "it is necessary to note" about certain named junior commanders that "they *always* prepared themselves thoroughly for exercises."[16] Here is a model unit:

> Every exercise is being prepared thoroughly and in all-sided fashion.
> . . .
> And *one other particular feature* is clearly visible in every exercise of the battery. . . .[17]

> Judging from the fashion in which the subordinates of Major Tomarev attack, it is not difficult to divine: the advance preparation of the unit has as always been conducted in full measure.[18]

"The experience . . . of the staff headed by Lieutenant Colonel S. Bogomolov" is, to a senior officer, "instructive" in that "here planning documents are thoroughly worked out *even before the beginning* of the training year."[19] The high officers' stress on the long run opposes what they believe to be their subordinates' short horizon.

On the other hand, by their very insistence on swiftness (see Chapter II), superiors may furnish pretexts or even grounds for their subordinates' omitting preparations.

> An important exercise was imminent. Without a high quality outline, it could not be handled. But the day before there were firing exercises day and night. The officers returned deep in the night. And only then did they sit down to prepare outlines. Could one demand of them that the outlines be perfect? And this, I underline, is not the only case where officers, not through their own fault, have to start on the preparation of an imminent exercise after retreat has sounded.
>
> I foresee the question: why is the training process planned in such an irrational fashion, the leader of an exercise deprived of time to prepare it? Unfortunately, little depends here on the commander of the company. The themes of the exercise, their succession and duration are determined for every day of the week by the battalion staff. The company commander does not have the right to change anything in the company's timetable. That which comes down from

the staff commander is being mechanically entered into the timetable blank.[20]

The winter of 1942 in the area of Demyansk: "How many times was our brigade not thrown into battle without having been given the time to prepare, to gather intelligence. . . ."[21]

The encirclement at Stalingrad: "I became convinced that we could not hope for success without special serious preparation for the attack. . . . I sent repeatedly reports to the Stavka asserting the impossibility of fulfilling the mission without giving the troops the necessary time for regrouping. . . ."[22]

Kurland from the fall of 1944 to the spring of 1945: "The commanders of battalions and companies were not given the time before a battle to gather intelligence on the fire system of the enemy. The troops often went into battle blind, bore unjustified losses."[23]

Yet insufficiency of preparations may occur without time-pressure from above:

The first Soviet counteroffensive in the area of Stalingrad in mid-September 1942: "The main cause of the failure was . . . the bad preparation of all kinds of troops. . . ."[24]

In the company it was known before the exercise: there is a night driving exercise coming on "alien" machines [belonging to a neighboring unit].

What was then required of the company officers? To verify during the daytime the working order of . . . the tanks. . . . However, this was not done. The company commander brought the tanks to be driven to the unit the day before and held this to be sufficient. In addition, the battalion Deputy Commander for Technical Affairs, Captain V. Lebedev, said that for any case of need there would be three teaching machines in readiness in the rear. But when the exercise began, it turned out that the three "reserve" tanks were also in reality not prepared for being driven.[25]

According to a German commander, insufficiency of preparation was the rule: "The landing directed against Novorossiisk stood in contrast to the many amphibious enterprises of the Soviets by having been carefully prepared."[26]

Preparation is sufficiently alien to Soviet officers that the High Command is at pains to spell out aspects of that activity which may

seem obvious in the West. Thus a military analyst formulates a "rule," namely, that "the more complicated an exercise, the more thoroughly one must prepare for it."[27] "The exacting commander does not allow vehicles to be mounted until he has convinced himself that they are all in good order. . . ."[28]

Overcoming his subordinates' aversion to preparations then becomes a major objective of a commander. It is "as a first priority" that, according to a military leader, "the commander must ensure that . . . every officer and sergeant prepare himself well for exercises."[29]

Detours may be productive to this end. Thus we learn about "a seminar which discussed questions of educating communists to a high sense of responsibility for the thorough *preparation* for a high-quality execution of each summer exercise."[30]

Rapidity itself is at stake:

> To be slow in these conditions, to lose time on calculations and the preparation of technical means is an impermissible luxury. Everything that can be done in advance . . . must be undertaken. . . .[31]

* * * * * * *

The plans themselves are apt, Authorities observe, to be insufficiently detailed. In simulated combat it may occur that "the directions of attack of every tank were not thoroughly studied, the procedure for overcoming the minefield not thought through."[32] "One can't say," a military leader remarks with moderation, "that our regimental commanders have no plans. . . . But they often lack concreteness. . . . The main tasks and aims are not determined."[33] There are airmen, an air marshal observes, who do that to which "nobody has a right": "They set their hopes on receiving an illumination in a critical battle situation itself"—and thus "they hope to be victorious without a thorough all-sided preparation for flight."[34] "Once the time for firing arrives," such officers will say, "we shall show of what we are capable!"[35]

> The young pilot began to behave tepidly toward tactical training. He justified this by such considerations as these: in the course of combat, it will become clearer which decision to take, everything will be resolved by the pilot's initiative. According to his words, modeling in advance was a mere waste of time.[36]

One may base such a hope on the permanent capacity of one's mind rather than on inspiration through crisis. "The specialists [of a ship

engaged in simulated combat]," we hear, "did not work out a reserve variant of action" for the case that their preferred course would become inapplicable. "Who should have corrected them? Of course, the specialists of the flagship command. However, Captain of the Second Rank Yu. Khyutiyainen did not do this. . . . 'I have everything in my head,' was his easy parry to a question of the senior commander."[37] "The regimental commander," a senior officer observes about a simulated combat, "relied on his personal capacity for managing," and thus "he hoped to make the necessary modifications [*utochnenie*, specifications—a euphemism—NL] in his plans in the dynamics of battle."[38] He, too, thus avoids the distasteful preparation of variants for an impending operation. He yields to the vice of acting "in improvised fashion without prior preparation,"[39] where the redundancies of expression may reveal how much the High Command feels it has to press against what comes naturally. "The aviator," one insists, "cannot rely on intuition, on the situation itself prompting him on to the path to victory": rather, "it is necessary to prepare oneself in a thought-through fashion for every flight."[40]

Insufficiency of detail in the initial plan can be damaging. Thus, "the experience of the War shows that the order of pursuit must be established already at the time of the organization of the attack"; it is this which allows one to "go over to pursuit immediately upon the discovery of the withdrawal of the enemy." Violation of this requirement had a negative influence on the combat results of the 176th Rifle Regiment:

> In the night of January 16 [1945] the enemy . . . began to withdraw. The Commander of the Regiment received the information in good time, but the Regiment could not immediately go over to pursuit, because it had not been prepared earlier. In the conditions thus created the Commander of the Regiment decided to form an advance detachment for the pursuit. . . . But the detachment was formed at night, in haste, and did not receive a concrete task; from then on the Regiment simply moved after the enemy, but did not pursue him. As a result, the enemy succeeded in tearing himself off from the attacking troops.[41]

High planning may be alleged to ensure success: "In one word, the breakthrough through the forward line [of the 'enemy'] had been thought through in detail; the success of the attack made by the battalion was natural."[42]

The experience of damage from too little planning supports the previous argument.

> *The counteroffensive of the 38th Army on June 11, 1942, in the Southwest:* "The utilization of tank brigades in the battle deployment of the infantry was justified. . . . But in this case one should have planned beforehand both the order in which tanks would be led out of the battle and their concentration for conducting a counterstrike as well as the preparation of starting positions in an engineering respect. But this we didn't do. As a result, to the relationship of forces unfavorable to us was added the unsatisfactory preparation of the counterstrike."
>
> . . . . The Deputy Commander of the Army for armored troops, Major General N. A. Novikov, assimilated well the lessons of the combats from the 10th to the 14th of June. From then on he became the warmest partisan of a well-timed and detailed planning of all actions of tank brigades.[43]

> "Remember," A. I. Eremenko said, "concerning the plan, the most important [element] is . . . a most meticulous preparation."[44]

Even operations demanding the greatest élan—perhaps particularly such operations—should be meticulously planned:

> If the commander disposes of a heroic assault group, but if its attack is not prepared, one cannot expect success. The *shturm* must be meticulously prepared, all its details must be calculated precisely.[45]

Thus emerges what a German commander called "the typical Soviet determining of conduct in advance," the wisdom of which it is rare to see doubted:

> Do you remember the pedantic German staff officer in Tolstoy's *War and Peace?* He displays everything on the shelf: "The first column will march . . . the second column will march. . . ." A century and a half has passed since those times, but the partisans of excessive detail have not disappeared.[46]

Being Blind

Commanders, the Authorities perceive, may have little desire for knowledge about their own force. "One commander, setting his hopes entirely on his experience, affirms that for him even a cursory acquaintance is sufficient for precisely evaluating the situation in a unit."[47]

—Comrade Battalion Commander, tell me, who are those who work on the crest of that height? You see, the two-humped one?

"That is the enemy. He digs foxholes," the Commander answers, visibly without assurance.

—Why do you allow him to work with impunity under your eyes? Give an order to the artillery or the mortar men. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].

I see that Grigor'ev dallies. Then I say to the Commander of the Division's artillery, Colonel Shcherbakov:

—Well, now Anton Mikhailovich, chase the enemy away with a little fire!

"I ask that fire not be opened. It is possible that these are ours," the Battalion Commander rapidly said.

—Then go up on that height, verify whose people these are, ascertain precisely where your forward edge is. . . .

Soon the Battalion Commander reported that personnel from his battalion were working on the two-humped height, and showed the precise coordinates of his and the neighboring units.[48]

When on the 10th of August 1942 the Stavka expressed doubt concerning the truth of the report of the Staff of the [Trans-Caucasus] Front concerning the defenses in the passes [from the North through the Main Caucasian Ridge] and posed questions, the Staff of the Front could not answer them. It did not have precise data as to which passes were covered and by what forces, which of them were prepared for demolitions.[49]

Knowing all about one's own forces is rare excellence:

During the time of my service, I have known many meticulous officers, but I always recall these two [Lieutenant-Colonels P. V. Kindur and N. I. Klimov] with a special feeling. . . . As a chess master . . . can foresee the course of the game with all possible variants, thus they knew at every moment which of their subordinates were acting where and for what. . . .[50]

Being inattentive to the state of one's own equipment may be related to taking its adequate operation for granted:

Air defense in simulated combat: "Only now did the operators understand what the problem was. It is not enough to ascertain the station's zones of visibility precisely, to thoroughly know the potential of one's equipment and the enemy's offensive means. It is also indispensable to watch the functioning of one's equipment, to maintain an optimal level of operation for each system.[51]

Then it seems appropriate to repeat "the well-known point that the best technique cannot by itself guarantee the fulfillment of . . . tasks. The main thing is the people in whose hands the technique finds itself."[52]

* * * * * * *

Lack of attention to the physical environment may similarly express a denial of obstacles. As a military proverb has it, "the plan was smooth on paper, only they forgot about the ravines."[53]

> Captain Chernyshenko decided . . . to attack through hollows and low-lying land, not considering the fact that they were covered with snow . . . the peculiarities of the material-technical and rear support were insufficiently taken into account. The delivery of ammunition and POL turned out to be impossible, as well as the evacuation of the wounded and of defective or damaged equipment. Such things would not have occurred had the Battalion Commander more thoroughly studied local conditions. . . . But Captain Chernyshenko, when taking a decision, remained glued to the map and as a result of this lost sight of exceptionally important questions. . . .[54]

> They forgot to ascertain how passable the terrain was.[55]

> How is it that you are giving an order for an immediate march, at night, without having interested yourself in advance in roads and paths. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL].[56]

> *In the area of Mogilev, the summer of 1941:* The directions for a counterattack were often chosen without a study of the situation."[57]

> *In the area of Mogilev, the summer of 1941:* "The plan for the forthcoming action was . . . for the 11th and 53rd Armies through converging strikes to liquidate the corridor of Ramushev. . . ."

> *The Northwestern Front in the winter of 1943:* "The plan for the forthcoming action was . . . for the 11th and 53rd Armies through converging strikes to liquidate the corridor of Ramushev. . . ."
>
> The more I penetrated into the details of the plan, the more I became convinced of the correctness of the proverb: "The plan was smooth on paper, only they forgot about the ravines." The area of the impending actions consisted mostly of swamps and besides them subsoil water. To lay roads there would entail an enormous amount of work. . . . For the majority of the fire points one would

need to build firm wooden decks so that the weapons in firing would not drown in the quagmire. This required much time.[58]

In such conditions the High Command stresses the requirement for "a complex approach," a major meaning of which is "to neglect nothing."

* * * * * *

Commanders, the Authorities note, are apt to abstain from acquiring feasible intelligence about the enemy, with consequent damage or missed gain and unnecessary cost.

Attacks in the Ukraine in the summer of 1941: "On the whole, the first day of combat for the liquidation of the enemy strongpoints turned out to be unsuccessful. The reason was that troops were introduced into the battle, as a rule, without prior intelligence. . . ."[59]

The area of Vyaz'ma in the fall of 1941: "Despite the enemy's superiority in men and equipment, it would have been possible for our troops to avoid being encircled. For that it was indispensable to ascertain more correctly in good time the direction of the main strikes of the enemy and to concentrate against them our basic forces and means at the expense of the passive sectors. This was not done, and the defense of our Fronts could not endure the concentrated strikes of the enemy."[60]

The Caucasus in the fall of 1942: "The staff of the 3rd Rifle Corps did not organize intelligence on the approaches to the passes from the north. Hence, the Commands of the Corps and of the Armies did not know the forces of the enemy with which the units sent to the passes entered into battle."[61]

The pursuit of the enemy in the Caucasus, the winter of 1943: "Tanks were used during the pursuit without due intelligence on the antitank means of the enemy."[62]

What is likely to be insufficient is the level of detail. In simulated combat it is apparently not unexpected that "the fire means of the 'enemy,' the obstacles in front of his forward edge and in his near depth were not thoroughly studied."[63] "In one exercise," a military leader notes, "the reports of Officers G. Eibenko and B. Shaplevskii . . . did not contain indications about the time of action, the force and

the designs of the enemy.''[64] ''In how standardized a fashion,'' muses a junior officer, ''we often approach certain elements of combat! For instance, in the repulse of a counterattack. Is it really [a matter of indifference] to the tankmen . . . which type of vehicles the enemy has, which antitank weapons? If the enemy tanks are heavy, one must fight them in one fashion, if they are medium or light, quite differently.'' Yet ''we sometimes prefer to repulse a faceless counterattack. Often one can hear: if you would begin to impose nuances on the subordinates, you won't find time for the main things.''[65] ''I asked,'' writes another officer in the same vein, ''one of the company commanders: 'What type of tank counterattacked you?' The answer was silence.'' The query which follows is already known to the reader: ''But is it really [a matter of indifference] to the tankmen what enemy vehicles he encounters? For the thickness of their armor, the caliber of their guns varies. . . . It is appropriate to conduct a duel with heavy tanks in one fashion, and with light ones in another manner. In one case it is advantageous to fire from a long distance, in the other case to approach.'' Yet ''in the exercise in question, the peculiarities of the 'enemy' were not taken into account.'' But the unit's ordeal was not over; for ''now a staff officer asked Senior Lieutenant N. Sokol on which concrete 'enemy' the battery *should* fire, and did not receive an answer which made sense. Once more because the 'enemy' turned out to be indeterminate, having, as one says, no face. Intelligence saw no need to find targets by revealing indicators. The officer ordering fire saw no need to analyze information (which did not arrive).''[66] ''In tactical exercises,'' observes another officer, ''one can sometimes hear reports such as these: 'The forward edge of the ''enemy'' goes through the western (or the eastern) slopes of such-and-such a height,' 'the strongpoints of the ''enemy'' have been discovered in such-and-such spots,' without a precise indication of their limits and of the positions of their means of fire.'' But, ''in such cases it becomes necessary to interrupt the commander and to explain that the 'eastern' or 'western' slopes may extend over hundreds of meters or even several kilometers, that it is necessary to indicate precisely the position of the first trench from point to point, from bush to bush, from mound to mound.'' And ''as to strongpoints, it is necessary to determine . . . where the machine guns are, where the antitank weapons, the tanks, the armored personnel carriers, the artillery, and so forth.''[67]

The summer of 1941: ''Of the commanders of units, we required . . . that they conduct intelligence not 'in general,' but in concrete

fashion, disclosing the fire means and the character of the engineering equipment of the enemy's strongpoints."[68]

The preparation for the defense of the Main Caucasian Ridge in the summer of 1942: "A series of directions permitting the enemy's approach to the passes . . . were not discerned and not at all defended. This occurred because detailed reconnaissance of the areas adjoining the passes had not been conducted."[69]

The area of Stalingrad, the combats for Kazachii Kurgan: "Attempts to seize this height were made on December 5, 9, and 19, but all failed. . . . The major cause of the failure . . . was that . . . the operation was undertaken without . . . acquiring sufficiently full and precise data about the . . . defense of the enemy."[70]

The summer of 1944: "For the last year and a half we were almost uninterruptedly chasing the enemy toward the West. But with this there had not yet been a single case in which before the beginning of an operation the defense of the enemy, his forces and means, and also his fire system would have been sufficiently studied."[71]

Particularly, intelligence about the location of the enemy's means of fire is, according to the Authorities, likely to be (needlessly) insufficient to enable an effective artillery preparation that would in turn allow a successful attack by tanks and infantry:

The absence of competent artillery intelligence played bad turns. In the area of the farms Shablence, Gaponovka, and Kholodobo the artillerymen launched several hundred shells against two or three machine guns of unknown location, and did not suppress them.[72]

The German salient in the area of El'ni in the summer of 1941: "The fire system of the German defense was far from fully ascertained. Therefore, our units conducted their artillery and mortar fire mainly not against really existing ..re points disclosed by intelligence, but supposed ones. Such fire is usually little effective. . . ."[73]

The spring of 1943 in the Caucasus: "The cause of the failure of the offensive was that intelligence about the forward edge of the enemy's defense was weak; as a consequence, the fire points of the enemy turned out not to have been suppressed."[74]

Artillery fire and air bombardment are successful only when firing and bombing is conducted precisely on target and not on areas or

> on supposed targets. Firing and bombing on areas cannot destroy the defense system of the enemy. So it was around L'vov . . . : there was much firing but no useful results were obtained.[75]

> The troops of the 70th and 49th Armies did not succeed on April 20 [1945] to cross the west Oder. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . The intelligence of the 70th and 49th Armies insufficiently disclosed the character of the defense and the system of fire of the enemy. As a consequence of this, the artillery preparation did not fully suppress the enemy's defense, the attacking troops were met by organized and dense fire, and failed.[76]

Intelligence is often degraded by an inclination of commanders to remove themselves from the enemy's deployment:

> Some commanders of Armies and Army artillery were disposed to direct the battle from command posts rather than from observation posts.[77]

—a penchant apparently coexisting with its opposite, what German commanders believed to be a Russian faith in commanding heights:

> *The advance of the 14th Panzer Korps toward Stalingrad:* "The Russians . . . are infallible in discovering positions which are essential for future operations, such as this hill where they could sit and look far into our rear."[78]

> . . . their [the Russians'] . . . belief in the importance of high ground. They made for any height and fought for it with the utmost stubbornness. . . . It frequently happens that the occupation of high ground is not . . . desirable, but the Russians never understood this. . . .[79]

> Despite all losses, the Russians were unable to abandon a tactical delusion: the belief that a height is the crucial point in any terrain. The Russians strove for any height . . . regardless of whether it dominated the terrain and was really needed by them or not.[80]

Still, the Authorities single out for approval "the commander who from his observation post sees his battle deployment well and does not rely on imagination, sitting in his shelter fifteen kilometers away from the forward line."[81]

> *The preparation of the offensive of the 5th Army at the Voronezh*

Front in the summer of 1942: "Setting objectives for the Corps, A. I. Lizyukov limited himself to a map on which he merely repeated that which he had heard from senior commanders. The commanders of the Corps proceeded in exactly the same way; they too set objectives for the brigades according to the map."[82]

The 37th Army crossing the Dnepr, in the fall of 1943: "The commanders of the units were at a big distance from the troops, did not see the battlefield. . . . I ordered the commanders . . . to transfer the observation points of commanders of divisions to the right bank of the Dnepr not farther than 1 to 1.5 kilometers from the troops, to places allowing an observation of the battlefield."[83]

The failure of the offensive against Eastern Prussia in a certain sector, October 17, 1944: "The commanders and the staff directed the battle essentially from cellars and slit trenches, that is . . . they did not see the battle. As a result . . . they did not analyze the situation in detail . . . they did not issue a multitude of specific orders. The situation was no better in the regiments and battalions. We found that some commanders of regiments . . . oriented themselves entirely by reports of commanders of battalions received by radio and telephone and took decisions on the basis of such reports."[84]

According to a German commander: "The absence of good observation has often entailed the defeat of large Russian units."[85]

Observations made may be insufficiently checked:

A particularly negative effect is exercised . . . by haste in taking . . . decisions without a detailed verification of informations received. . . .[86]

Commanders may unduly extrapolate from past to present:

In determining the rate of advance for the offensive [against Berlin] our Front headquarters had . . . not taken into account factors such as . . . the . . . new fortifications brought into being during the previous few months.[87]

Faced with what they believe to be an inclination to the contrary, the Authorities demand that commanders keep the enemy firmly in mind. "Preparing himself for breaking through the defense, Guards Captain A. Krasikov first of all studied in detail the . . . 'enemy. . . .' "[88]

> War, as everybody knows, is a two-sided process. One must prepare troops not for victory in general, but for victory over a particular enemy. Hence, in order to attain success, one must study that enemy, know his habits, and, one may say, his psychology.[89]

Confronted with a propensity to be content with "mere approximation" about the enemy,[90] the Authorities demand "precision and once more precision,"[91] "deep study of the enemy."

> Entered the Chief of Staff of the Division, Aleksandr Dmitrievich Vyzhigin. . . . He had the dimmest conception of the enemy.
>
> — . . . you should know the enemy better than your kin. . . .[92]

Exalting the Self

The High Command discerns among its subordinates a disposition to exaggerate their strength, an inclination designated with several strong words. The penchant to "present the desirable as existing (*vydat'zhelaemoe za deistvital'noe*)"—the tendency, in Party language, for "subjective" factors to dominate "objective" ones—leads to *blagodushie* (literally, the bliss of the soul) and *samodovol'stvo* (literally, pleasure in oneself)—that is, complacency—and expresses itself in boasting (*samokhvalenie, bakhaval'stvo, khvastovstvo.*)

Commanders, the Authorities observe, may pursue a given objective with insufficient means insufficiently prepared (see Section on "Improvising," above).

> *Those in charge of training in a unit:* "Much time was wasted. Then they threw themselves into another extremity: they went overboard for complex exercises. For example, Officer G. Kileev received a mission including bombing, reconnaissance, and combat maneuvering. But . . . the qualitative workout of these elements turned out to be low. . . . What had happened? For Kileev is an experienced combat pilot. It turned out that the combination in one flight of several exercises is beyond the forces even for an experienced flier."[93] Indeed, "in training, some commanders aspire to pose several objectives at the same time, to solve a maximum number of tasks, although forces for this be insufficient."[94]
>
> *The operation in the area of Barvenkovo-Lozovoi, in the winter of 1942:* "The operation was insufficiently furnished with technical

means and ammunition, the staffs did not have the time to collect the necessary data on the enemy, and the commanders could not organize cooperation in sufficient measures."[95]

The withdrawal in the Crimea in the spring of 1942 toward the Turkish Wall: "The Command of the Front did not provide for sufficient rear guards, did not establish stages in the withdrawal, did not mark out intermediate lines for it, and did not cover the approach of the troops to the Turkish Wall with the timely dispatching of advance units toward that line."[96]

The offensive in the direction of Orel in the winter of 1943: "The units were led into battle . . . without artillery support or ammunition for it."[97]

The Caucasus in the winter of 1943: "The enemy retreated beyond the river Protok. Instead of thoroughly clarifying the task of crossing the Protok (knowing the contact with the enemy was lost and crossing on his shoulders not feasible), thoroughly informing oneself about the enemy, organizing the crossing, bringing up artillery reinforcements, means of air defense, ammunition, and supplies—instead of doing all this, the Staff of the Army on March 9 gave the order to cross the Protok and limited itself to that. The operation, as one could expect, did not succeed."[98]

The spring of 1943: "The enemy continued to hold the Taman Peninsula. . . . Offensive operations were often prepared in haste, without sufficiently supplying the troops with what was necessary."[99]

That is, there is a disposition to assign too many objectives for the means at hand. It is expected that one may say about a plan: "This plan . . . did not take account of the real possibilities of the . . . troops."[100] Of course, subordinates (at any level) are quick to allege this about their superiors' plans. While this may have a distorting effect, it may also stimulate correctness of perception—in the present case, to a substantial degree:

The War: "It happened that senior authorities issued commands without taking account of time or personnel which would have to fulfill their commands. . . . A command sometimes merely expressed . . . a wish, was not based on the real possibilities of the troops."[101]

The War: "Involuntarily the question arises: was such an order realistic, given the relationship of forces in that sector of the Front

as it had then emerged? I suppose that there can be no two views on that."[102]

1941: "The plans . . . of operations up to the counteroffensive in the area of Moscow often did not correspond with the real situation, and hence could not be entirely fulfilled by the troops."[103]

The summer of 1941: "The Chief Commander of the Western Direction, S. K. Timoshenko, gave the order to the troops of the 16th and 20th Armies to go over to the attack with the task of seizing Smolensk on July 30–31. These Armies, exhausted and enfeebled by uninterrupted tense battles lasting for a month, could, of course, not fulfill that task."[104] "The Stavka decided to impose on the Bryansk and Reserve Fronts the task of crushing the forces of the Army Group 'Center' facing it. This was a task beyond our forces."[105]

The winter of 1942: "The task put before the Front did not correspond to the forces and means at our disposal. But this was frequent at that time. . . ."[106]

The plan for the offensive in the Southwest to start on May 12, 1942: "How . . . realizable was, this time, the plan of the offensive operation. . . ?"[107]

December 29 [1942] General of the Army G. K. Zhukov at the instruction of the Stavka required of the commander of the Trans-Caucasian Front that he prepare and conduct an operation in the direction of Krasnodar. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . The Stavka posed before us an excessively difficult, not to say, unfulfillable task.

. . . . . .

. . . . The area of the impending battles was the spurs of the Main Caucasian Ridge. We had to pass them in the most unfavorable . . . time of the year when the temperature is above zero at the shore, but attains minus 15 and minus 20 in the mountains. In this period, the in-any-case almost impassable spurs of the ridge are covered with deep snow.

And what about the absence of roads for the bringing up of supplies? To build them required a large number of road and engineering battalions, which in our front could be counted on one's fingers.[108]

The offensive in the Southwest in the winter of 1943: "The Staff of the [Southwestern] Front did not, as it were, feel the situation

and did not want to take account of any of the existing obstacles. The Staff continued to put unfulfillable missions before us."

. . . . . .

It is difficult to believe it, but illusions in the staffs of the Voronezh and Southwestern Fronts in late February 1943 attained extremes. In those days I received the following operational orientation by telegraph:

—There remains a distance of 400 to 450 kilometers from the Dnepr, and until the spring mud 30 to 35 days. Make the appropriate conclusions and calculations on that basis. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.][109]

The superior demands too much of his subordinate also because he attributes to him an inclination to do too little (see Chapter I)—a suspicion that he may voice when a subordinate objects to an arduous order:

The War: The standard retorts of the superior when the subordinate points out to him that his demand is infeasible: "You have just assumed the command of the Division, you have not yet tried to organize the battle and you already begin to wail"; "A high post is entrusted to you, and you are in a funk!"; "One must fight not with numbers but with skill"; and so forth.[110]

If the subordinate, so far from protesting, promises to fulfill the impossible demand and continues to swear that he will even while developments increasingly show the task to be infeasible, the superior may maintain his illusion.

This was, in the summer of 1941, the sequence of reactions occurring between Stalin and Eremenko which led to the greatest single Soviet defeat in the War, in the area of Kiev. August 14, 1941, Stalin talked with Eremenko whom he had just appointed Commander of the Bryansk Front, and of whom Stalin demanded that he destroy Guderian's tank corps: "Having listened to Stalin, the newly appointed Commander of the Bryansk Front announced with much confidence that 'very shortly, absolutely' he would crush Guderian. This firmness impressed the Supreme Commander."

"This is the man we need in these difficult conditions," he said, after Eremenko had left his office. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]

. . . . . .

September 2 the Supreme Commander . . . [sent] the following message to the Commander of the Bryansk Front:

> —The Stavka is still dissatisfied with your work. . . . The Stavka demands that you . . . crush the enemy in reality. Until this is done, all talk about the fulfillment of the task remains empty verbiage. . . . Guderian and his whole group must be smashed into smithereens. Until this is done, all your assurances about success have no worth. We are waiting for your report of the crushing of the group of Guderian.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . Stalin took seriously the insistent assurances of the commander of the Bryansk Front, A. I. Eremenko, concerning the assured victory over the group of Guderian. V. M. Shaposhnikov [the chief of the general staff] and I considered from the very beginning that the Bryansk Front did not have sufficient forces to achieve this. But, evidently, we too, succumbed to the assurances of this commander.[111] Continuing to predict Guderian's imminent annihilation by Eremenko, Stalin continued to refuse authorizing a withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the area of Kiev, where they were annihilated.

In contrast, the superior may perceive a subordinate's overestimation of his own strength.

> July 10 [1944] a letter of the Stavka to the Commander of the Second Baltic Front said: "Task put before the troops for the first day of the operation are divorced from reality, infantry being asked for the first day to advance from 50 to 80 kilometers, which is infeasible."
>
> On the same day the Stavka sent a letter to the Commander of the First Ukrainian Front: . . . "For the first day of the operation you should set the infantry tasks which are within its capacities, while the tasks you set are undoubtedly excessive."[112]

Against such a disposition, the Authorities require "a critical attitude toward the results of one's own work,"[113] "modesty," an evaluation of what has been attained which is "strict," "principled."[114] "For many units and ships," one may write with at least feigned relief, "it has become a law: the results of military work must be evaluated with heightened exactingness."[115]

As to the work of subordinates, it seems appropriate to explain that "exactingness brings the wished-for results only when the tasks set are within the capacity of the executants," and to insist that "orders and instructions . . . be based on the capabilities of subordinates."[116] "Of course," a commander declares, "one must not put tasks [before subordinate commanders] which are beyond the strength of this or that

unit. . . ."[117] Indeed, "experience has shown"—thus one may quote Marshal Zhukov ("generalizing the experience of the War")— "that one must not ask of the troops tasks beyond their forces." For "the practice of posing tasks beyond available forces yields"—surprise!— "nothing except losses, exhaustion and disruption of the fighting spirit."[118] "Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. Malinovskii [too] has indicated," according to an analyst, "that 'it is never appropriate to give an order if it cannot be fulfilled.' " And to avoid doing that "one must above all put oneself into the place of the executant and decide how the order can be fulfilled."[119]

> One must always make sure that infantrymen, before being thrown into the attack, have bullets in the necessary quantity.[120]

Despising the Enemy

"Relying on a weak 'enemy' "[121] is an inclination that the Authorities describe and oppose.

Whereas one aims at surprising the enemy by performing what at first sight seems impossible, one may end up being surprised by his achieving what one deemed infeasible to *him* (though not to oneself):

> *The Caucasus in the fall of 1942:* The situation in the central sector of the Trans-Caucasian Front became more unfavorable for us. Excellently equipped Alpine German units occupied the passes of Klukhor, Sancharo, Marukhskii. . . .
>
> A major cause of this was the fault of the Command and Staff of the Trans-Caucasian Front, rashly deciding that the passes were . . . inaccessible to the enemy.[122]

Aiming at victory "not by number but by skill," one may believe the enemy to be stupid:

> *A coding system for the communications of an Army commander to his subordinates:* "It then was not necessary to call shells 'cucumbers' and tanks 'boxes' as naive comrades did who considered the Hitlerites complete cretins."[123]
>
> The most dangerous thing in war is to suppose that the enemy is more stupid than you.[124]

Striving for swiftness, one may assume that the enemy is mired in slowness:

> "And now, act for the 'enemy' in a more dynamic manner!" ordered Boiko. This is, it turned out, what was lacking—the swiftness of the maneuvers of the 'enemy'. . . .[125]

The enemy may be thought less well equipped than oneself. "Particularly the night plays a bad turn on the careless ones," observes an analyst. "Some soldiers proceed to their positions upright. The majority, of course, know that contemporary means of intelligence allow one to see as much at night as during the day." But then "they hope 'on the off-chance' [that] perhaps the 'enemy' is not appropriately equipped. . . ."[126]

A commander, the Authorities note, may assume that enemy conduct fits his *preferred* plan, avoiding laborious and changing intelligence that would force him to adjust design to reality:

> The meeting engagement approached. . . . The commander of a tank battalion, Captain L. Siliverstov assumed that the "enemy" would deploy his main forces . . . along the border of a grove ten kilometers away from the column of the battalion moving forward. In accord with this he took measures so that the forward echelon of his unit would hold the "enemy" at the moment of his deployment on that line. . . .
>
> In fact, everything turned out differently. The "enemy" against expectations, advanced to the grove substantially earlier. This confused all the plans of the Battalion Commander. He had to perform new calculations literally on the march, take new decisions, and organize their execution. All of this led to a loss of time and . . . had a negative influence on the issue of the meeting engagement.
>
> This would not have happened if the Commander had . . . organized intelligence about the "enemy" well, had uninterruptedly followed his actions, had in good time discovered his approach.[127]

Eager to adopt a *routine* design for combat, a commander may—the Authorities expect and deplore—take it for granted that the enemy will behave in a fashion compatible with that design or even favorable to it:

> In simulated combat, "Major N. Pivovaroz desired to enter into battle with the 'enemy' . . . after having crossed a river, on its opposed shore. Here, clearly, a role was played by the habit established in the Commander in the course of exercises . . . where, as a rule one side defends itself on the shore of a river and the other attacks. Now . . . the Commander convinced himself and his staff

> that the meeting engagement was possible only beyond the river. It was calculating on this that he determined the order of the battalions in the march. But the 'enemy' also was calculating . . . and had a completely different opinion on third account. Utilizing the fact that the marching columns did not have reliable protection, that only insignificant forces had been detailed to obtain intelligence in front of the river, the 'enemy' struck where he was not expected."[128]

So as to render a plan according to *shablon* (routine) acceptable one may deny to the enemy calculations that one would take for granted in oneself. Thus "in one exercise, both commanders of the opposing battalions decided to strike a blow from the flank with their major forces"—and to "utilize for their envelopments the same hollow," attractive to both because it ran parallel to the route of march. As a result, they "collided forehead against forehead"—which "occurred because each commander . . . took account only of the situation of his own unit, forgetting that the commander of the opposing side also attempts to utilize the favorable conditions of the terrain."[129] Pointing out that "surprise is incompatible with routine," an analyst is at pains to explain that "if one has succeeded in deceiving the enemy once, he is not going to let himself be deceived a second time by the same procedure." Hence, "it is necessary constantly to search for ever new procedures . . . for the attainment of surprise."[130]

The enemy may be presumed to utilize but little of his potential:

> The error of the exercise, as it turned out in the analysis, consisted in this, that Lieutenant Maiorov did not expect active counteraction of the opposing side. He hoped that the ew of the "foreign" aircraft would merely sketch a maneuver for the sake of appearance and that there would be no particular difficulty in attacking it.[131]

One may treat the enemy as if there were none. "The APCs conducted by Sergeant V. Gromov and Private A. Mukhitdinov attacked," an observer may note, "paying no attention to the fire of the 'enemy.' "[132] "In this case," an analyst remarks about a simulated combat in which not only the enemy but also nature are imagined to be compliant, "the mistake in the calculations of the Battalion Commander occurred because he did not take into account either the state . . . of the route of march, or the possibilities for removing obstacles which might be found in it, or the actions of the 'enemy's' aircraft or of his diversionist groups."[133]

> The units went to the attack without taking account of the fire of the "enemy." In real battle, this would have led to large losses.[134]

"The battalion has broken through the defense of the 'enemy' and continues to develop its success," reported Captain K. Kryzhnyi over the radio. Yet behind the tanks there remained targets unstruck, and among them antitank weapons unsuppressed. Hence, in real combat, the optimistic report of the battalion commander would hardly have been given. To "break" the defense of a strong "enemy" is much more difficult than it appeared in the exercise.[135]

The unit attained the line of going over to the attack in good time. And then . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] they stopped in order to straighten out their deployment once more. . . . Carried away by straightening out the deployment of the unit and even of particular tanks, the battalion commander literally forgot . . . that the "enemy" . . . attempts to disrupt the calculation of the attacker.[136]

In the War the high Soviet performance in concealment was accompanied by major cases of the opposite. The summer of 1942: "The concentration on the western bank of the Don proceeded mainly during the day without observing the elementary rules of concealment. The area west of Kalach is open, the enemy had the possibility of . . . seeing which forces were arriving from the East . . . of counting the number of tanks arriving at the western bank of the Don.

The starting areas of the counterattack [in the area of Stalingrad] as well as of the concentration were not covered by aviation and antiaircraft artillery."[137] The railway station of Chilekov was being bombed while Soviet troops arrived by train: "It was bitter to look at people who, arriving at the front and not facing the enemy, became casualties. All this occurred because the area of unloading of the arriving troops was not covered from the air. The staff of the Front had not provided for this."[138]

The Soviet offensive in the Southwest in the spring of 1942: "[Our] design . . . foresaw the regrouping of large numbers of troops dispersed over a wide space. . . .

. . . . The Hitlerite forces opposing us . . . fiercely tore forward. But we, as it were, counted on their stopping at the positions they occupied for the period of regrouping our forces.[139]

The summer of 1943 in the area of Tver: "The troops of the Fourth Shock Army . . . did not succeed in fulfilling their mission entirely. . . . The cause was their underestimation of the enemy, the supposition that the Hitlerites would retreat without special resistance. Because of this belief, no serious preparation was undertaken, in particular, no reconnaissance on targets conducted, no concrete aims given to the artillery."[140]

The Authorities demand that one subdue one's propensity to despise the enemy:

> But Vasilii Stepanovich Popov for a long time could not forgive himself for his contemptuous attitude toward the enemy.[141]

"Victory," the High Command insists, was and will have to be won over an "enemy" who is "strong, technically well equipped, and crafty."

> What can you do about it? In war, things don't always turn out as one would want. For the enemy, too, has his plans, and tries to realize them. . . .[142]

> *The operation in the area of L'vov-Sandomir:* "I cannot agree with the opinion which has been expressed that the enemy counterstrike in the sector of breakthrough of the 38th Army was the result of an erroneous calculation by the Command of the Front and Army. . . . The German-Fascist command applied the usual maneuver with its reserves, counterstriking on the attacking troops. It strove to liquidate our breakthrough from its very beginning. There is nothing new in this. From olden times it is known that the opposing side always strives to adopt countermeasures so as to break up the plans of the attacking side. Instances of this in the past war are innumerable. Such is the logic of war."[143]

> *In simulated combat:* "But the opposed side also aspires to victory and therefore maneuvers, puts up obstacles. One of the paths of *complicating* the exercise environment is, *in my view*, the realistic . . . taking account of the possibilities of counteraction [by the enemy] with interceptors and other means of air defense. . . ." Also, there should be "a *strict* requirement [for the managers of simulated battle] to take account of 'battle losses.'"[144]

Dizzy with Success

Falling from an excellence attained: this is the fate hanging, in the High Command's judgment, over any fighter or unit that has risen to heights:

> It sometimes happens that an excellent grade obtained in a firing

> exercise provokes the so-called "firing range sickness." It is characterized by "a spirit of . . . complacency."[145]
>
> Sometimes, having attained success, one weakens one's efforts, ceases to react sharply to defects. . . . Thus it happened, for instance, in the squadron commanded by Lieutenant Colonel G. Tartygin. After the unit had become "excellent," there was an effort not to notice the reduction in responsibility of some comrades. . . . As a result, indicators fell, the squadron lost the name of "excellent."[146]
>
> One cannot say that things go badly in this artillery division. It has what [one can] be proud of. . . . But if earlier all fighters of the unit distinguished themselves by a rigorous attitude toward the smallest violation of regulations, today symptoms of complacency visibly show themselves.[147]
>
> Two years ago the Division had won the name of "excellent." And then it obtained the second place in the District. . . . It seemed that nothing announced a fall . . . and then suddenly in the examination exercise, annoying lapses occurred. How could this happen? . . . We put this question to many, to the commanders as well as the soldiers. There was one conclusion: The missile troops had become arrogant, complacent. Success had turned their heads. The strenuousness of exercises diminished. Sometimes they were even omitted.[148]

Effort and "exactingness" may sink because success seems to prove that they had been excessive in the past:

> Navy Captain of the Second Rank A. Shakun, preparing himself for a simulated underwater duel, "did not regard it as necessary to consider several variants of combat." Rather, "basing himself on his experience and intuition," he selected the case most likely, in his opinion, and worked out decisions for it alone." However, "in reality, the situation turned out to be more complicated. And then Captain of the Second Rank A. Shakun was unable to reorient himself quickly." Thus, "he had evidently overestimated his possibilities." Alas, "it happens that several successes in combat, obtained without especially difficult calculations, create in the commander the illusion that naval combat is easy, that it is not necessary to prepare it thoroughly."[149]
>
> It still happens that . . . commanders . . . having obtained stable high indicators in combat training and service . . . begin to believe that they are up to any tasks and relax. As a result . . . forward

> movement slows up, the falling begins. This happened also to Lieutenant Colonel Kalinin.[150]

Or the successful ones may imagine that maintaining is less arduous than acquiring; whereas, "as the saying goes, to consolidate a success is not easier than to conquer it."

> Captain V. Makar'ev was, not without grounds, considered a well-prepared officer. . . . He was promoted. . . . The comrade decided that with his talents he did not need to work with a full straining of his forces, that the experience he had acquired earlier would suffice him for a long time. He weakened in exactingness . . . and this was the outcome: at one of the exercises his unit did not fulfill its mission.[151]

> When his fellow officers congratulated Leonid Yakovlevich on the high rating he had obtained, one of them said enviously: "Now you will be able to live in tranquility!"[152]

This fatal belief may be shared by those who are in a position to counteract it:

> Or does the Combat Commander assume that in an excellent unit everything will go by itself?[153]

> In his time Lieutenant G. Petukhov did much so as to obtain vigilance in guard duty, and then he mistakenly assumed that everything will run by itself.[154]

"We allot much attention," recalls an observer, "to the . . . education of fighters struggling for the name of 'excellent.' But now they have attained success. 'The whole affair is done, that load is off our chests . . .' we consider. And we transfer attention to others. After all, there is no need to worry about the 'excellent' ones."[155] "Sometimes," agrees an anonymous autnority, "commanders and political workers in the armed forces, concentrating all attention on those soldiers who fall behind and who are undisciplined, lose sight of those whose results in learning and conduct do not worry them." But "this [illegible] infrequently turns against the educators with 'unexpected surprises': some of the foremost ones reduce their effort in learning, permit themselves defects in service and lose . . . the name of excellent."

> Machinegunner Private Yu. Galyaev whom we [illegible]

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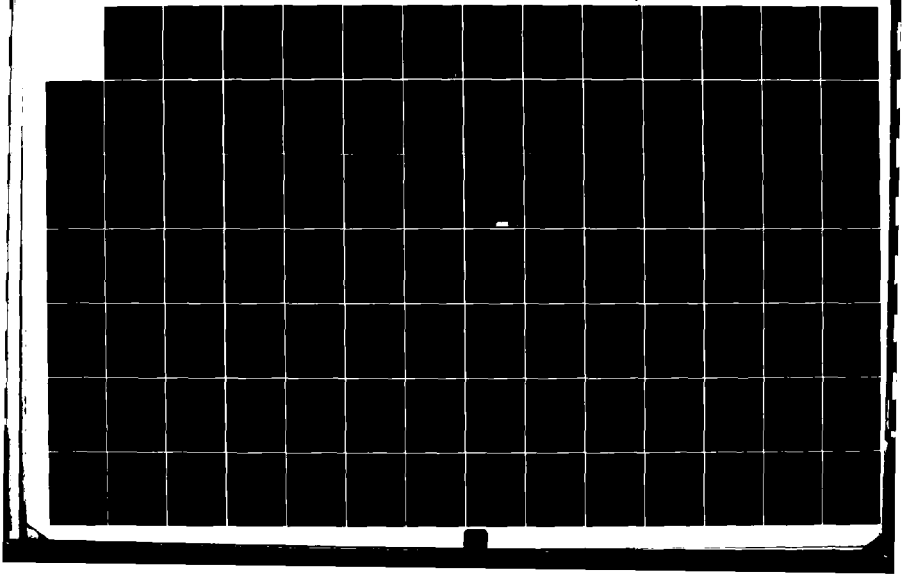

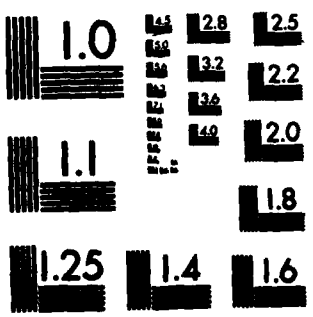

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

> shot did not hit the targets. What was the matter? It turned out that, in the Company, basic attention was given to those who were lagging behind; but those who were firing more or less assuredly were forgotten.[157]

Against its subordinates' disposition to take it easy, the High Command affirms that the choice lies only between rising and falling:

> It is very important that higher commanders and political organs daily concern themselves with the perfecting of the . . . qualities of officers-leaders. When this is not done, particular commanders cease to *increase* their knowledge, *lag* behind in the level of their preparation . . . and then commit serious *mistakes*. Precisely this happened to Officer I. Kochubei, who lost many positive qualities and finally *proved incapable* of leading his subordinates.[158]

So difficult is it to strain for yet another advance in the face of success, that the wise commander may ask that an achievement not be acknowledged:

> The Staff and the Political Department evaluated the work of the crew commanded by . . . Captain of the Second Rank A. Smirnov in strict and exacting fashion. In all respects, the performance merited a fully weighted five [the highest grade—NL]. However, the commander of the ship insistently asked that the highest grade not be awarded. Smirnov considered that even the grade of good [four—NL] in some way would be an advance for the crew which not so long ago had had the reputation of lacking in cohesion. A five, even if it were honestly merited . . . could create some complacency in the personnel at the most difficult moment.[159]

Captain Smirnov, whose request was granted, showed the required "permanent dissatisfaction with what has already been achieved," the proper "sense of responsibility for the stability of the success attained," the fitting "sense of responsibility for the creation of reliable reserves on behalf of the stability of success," and hence "the capacity to maintain himself in the position reached."

* * * * * * *

About the War, one expects to hear that "we were negligent. Most of all, this stemmed from successes which began to turn the heads of some people."[160]

> *The failure of the attempt to encircle and annihilate the 1st German Tank Army in the operation of Kamenets-Podol'sk (March-April 1944:)* "I shall speak about myself. The successes of the 38th Army [commanded by the author] . . . evidently had somewhat blunted, in me, in the Military Soviet of the Army as in many subordinates, the awareness of the difficulty of the task before us."

This reaction may be set off by a trifle. "At the first, often insignificant success," a peer comments about an officer in peacetime, "he begins to be immensely delighted with it, to shout that things are going very well."[162] "Some successes have been obtained," it will then be in order to observe, "but it is early to triumph."[163]

> *The counteroffensive in the area of Moscow:* "The 322d Rifle Division succeeded in liberating some villages. But this first success dampened the vigilance of some commanders, provoked a reduction of effort."[164]

The *first* victory after heavy defeats may provoke such a reduction of effort:

> There was, many believe, a possibility of larger gains than were achieved in December 1941 and in the winter following: "After the crushing of the German-Fascist armies near Moscow, an underestimation of the forces of the enemy appeared. . . ."[165]

> What was the cause of the mistake of our High Command? . . . The crushing of the Fascists near Moscow, the successful pursuit of the retreating Hitlerites gave rise among some of our military leaders to an exaggerated estimation of the possibilities of our troops and led to an underestimation of the enemy. . . . Successes of the Soviet troops obtained in December generated in the Stavka a little-justified hope that it was now possible to obtain large victories without introducing a pause before the new offensive operation. . . . The troops of the 43d, 49th, and 50th Armies and my group were fully capable of encircling and destroying the Fourth Field Army of the enemy. The Stavka ordered to encircle two armies—the 4th and the 9th. . . . The Stavka held the . . . forecast of a full crushing of the Hitlerite forces in 1942.[166]

Great successes are also likely to have such an effect:

> *In the winter of 1943:* "General Vatutin was seized by the idea of

exploiting . . . [our] dominant position over the Donbas . . . cutting off all the enemy's escape routes out of the Donbas." For the "victorious reports that had been coming in from the Fronts blunted the vigilance of both GHQ and the General Staff. . . ." However, "the troops of the Southwestern Front were in no condition for such a complex operation, which was designed to bring about the encirclement of an enemy force even larger than the one at Stalingrad."[167]

What lay at the root of . . . [the Soviet] failures [in the winter of 1943]? . . . Under the influence of the major victories achieved by our troops at Moscow and Stalingrad, certain military leaders . . began to underestimate the enemy's potential. This had an adverse effect on the preparation of some operations and led to the haphazardness of our offensive against Khar'kov and in the direction of Dnepropetrovsk and Mariupol. . . . It would have been wise to halt the offensive of the Voronezh and Southwestern Fronts back in January, switch temporarily to the defensive, move up the rear services, bring the divisions up to strength, and build up supplies of material.[168]

When an operation has been proceeding favorably, the belief may emerge that its success is already assured:

In the period of the pre-Carpathian operation . . . in the area of Kamenets-Podol'sk, Soviet troops had encircled the German First Tank Army, and the staff of the Front held that its fate was decided. Soon, however, it turned out that such a certainty was premature, that the ring of encirclement was not that stable.[169]

An enemy damaged may seem to be an enemy incapacitated:

The motorized rifle company commanded by Senior Lieutenant V. Abakumov broke through the defense of the "enemy" and successfully moved forward. So as to gain time, the Company Commander formed the unit into a marching column and began the pursuit of the retreating enemy. With this he . . . organized neither intelligence nor protection. Everything ended with the Company falling into the destructive fire of the "enemy."[170]

The 21st Army in the area of Stalingrad in January 1943: "Evidently, General Turbin and his nearest collaborators and advisers had buried the enemy too early. The enemy was still alive and continued to resist fiercely. . . . The sad lesson taught the Artillery Commander of the Army nothing. The next day he behaved in the same fashion."[171]

The winter of 1943: "GHQ's assessment of the results . . . achieved [in the Supreme Commander's order of January 25, 1943] . . . [was that] the Soviet Army had smashed 102 enemy divisions. More than 200,000 officers and men, up to 13,000 pieces of ordnance, had been captured. . . . Huge tracts of our homeland had been cleared. . . . Our troops had advanced nearly 400 kilometers."

. . . . . .

Operation Star was timed to begin on February 1. It involved a penetration of almost 250 kilometers. According to our . . . theory of those days, any such task . . . should have been carried out in deep operational formation. The Voronezh Front, however, attacked with its Armies in line . . . almost without reserves.

It was the same with the Southwestern Front under General Vatutin. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . At first, Operation Star made splendid progress. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . General Vatutin . . . assessed the enemy's behavior as a flight across the Dnepr.

In reality . . . the German command had no intention of withdrawing its troops to the other side of the Dnepr. During this fighting withdrawal, the enemy was preparing a counterattack.

. . . . . .

. . . . the movement of enemy convoys during the remarshaling continued to be regarded as a headlong retreat and an attempt to avoid battle in the Donbas and reach the western bank of the Dnepr as soon as possible.

. . . . . .

. . . . Vatutin, in command of the Southwestern Front . . . believed that all enemy resistance would soon be crushed. F. I. Golikov labored under the same . . . delusion, which spread from the Front Commander to the General Staff and from the General Staff to GHQ.

. . . . . .

. . . . Vatutin hurled the 6th Army and all his reserves . . . toward the Dnepr crossings . . . but failed to complete the whole assignment. . . . They [his advance units] were short of fuel and . . . on February 19 the enemy took them . . . by surprise with a counteroffensive.

Actually, the claim that it was a surprise is not entirely accurate. The Command of the Southwestern Front knew that it might run into strong enemy reserves in the Dnepropetrovsk area and even warned its subordinate staffs about this, but it put its own interpre-

> tation on the latest information about increasing enemy resistance and the 6th Army's reports of the appearance of the fresh units in front of them. The Command of the Front explained all this away with its favorite argument about the head-long retreat of the Nazi forces. Nor did it revise this argument even on February 21, when it became quite obvious that several SS divisions were attacking . . . the enemy was no longer capable of marshaling his forces for decisive battle.[172]

> As in November [1942], so in January [1943], there prevailed in the Staff of the Front [of Vatutin] among the planners, a mood of easy victory. One sometimes heard it said: "When we strike, the enemy will crumble." "We will suppress them by artillery alone," and so forth.[173]

—a reaction that seems so plausible as to confer a character of rare excellence upon that conduct which is proper:

> However, nobody among us entertained the illusion of victory. The staff officers continued to work seriously and in concentrated fashion.[174]

They were thus heedful of the fact that "in the struggle to preserve superiority," as a general officer recalls about the War in the 1970s (while perhaps eyeing the present), "it was necessary to act with a degree of exertion not lower than that required for winning that superiority."[175]

"Eyewash"

Believing, as we have seen, that sincerely held estimates are easily distorted by emotions, the Authorities also seem impressed by the propensity of subordinates to lie out of interest. "Some persons in military service," an observer notes about his colleagues, "feel hemmed in by honesty as if it were a shoe that does not fit."[176] *Ochkovtiratel'nost'* (eyewash), *paradnost'*, *pokazukha* (window-dressing) are taken as much for granted as they are deplored.[177]

Such are the energy and skill employed in these enterprises that they may succeed. As to "young officers who strive to pretend that what is desirable has been realized," they do it, a peer judges, "in so artful a manner that the senior command is left with no choice but to put them up as examples for others."[178] Of course, a military leader

may deny that he can be taken for a ride: "Such a businesslike atmosphere," he remarks about a model regiment, "naturally cannot be created merely for show, as is sometimes attempted before the arrival of senior commanders."[179]

There is, for one thing, the "covering-up of negative events." Perhaps by the mere avoidance of informing:

> *A division commander:* "The first indicator of success is that one calls you over the phone from below . . . that the commanders and commissars of regiments look for you. . . . But when affairs in the Regiment are not going well and the mission is not being fulfilled, then the answer to your telephone call will be that the Commander, alas, just left for a lower level. . . ."[180]

What is negative, and hence hidden, may be information on the course of the war itself:

> *The Southwest in the winter of 1943:* "In these days that were so critical for the Voronezh Front, it was impossible to compose an objective picture from Golikov's [its commander's] reports."[181]

Or what is concealed may be the violation of an order:

> *Stalingrad:* "Two rifle brigades, cut off from the [62nd] Army were fighting south of the river Tsaritsa, on the streets Kim, Terskaya, Koslovskaya. The staff officers of the Army sent to these Brigades did not return; apparently, they perished. The only contact with the Brigades was by radio. From September 23 on, the news received from these Brigades began to arouse doubts in us. Something wrong was felt in them, and I decided to observe the left bank of the Volga in order to find somebody from the Staff of these Brigades and to clarify the real situation. Our suspicions were fully confirmed. On the morning of September 25 it was reported to me that the Staff and the Commanders of the two Brigades, forsaking their sectors, had left the city, crossing over to the island Golodnyi, and from there sent lying reports on the course of combats."[182]

On the other hand, there is "the artificial enhancement of estimates," "the striving to embellish the real situation."

> "On the first day of the offensive the Corps Commander reported a substantial advance of the Corps. I verified it myself, and it turned out that the Brigades had not reached the lines indicated."[183]

Our joy about the crossing of the Dnepr was marred by one . . .

incident. The commander of one of the regiments [of the division the author commanded] reported that his forward battalion was already on the shore of the river. But in the Operational Branch of the Corps the information was different.

We went to the place in order to verify. Nobody was there, but the Battalion was having breakfast in utter calm, five kilometers from the Dnepr. Regrettably, there were things of that kind in the war, too.[184]

The fall of 1942 in the area of Stalingrad: "Wanting to verify readiness for attack, the Front Commander ordered that the locality named Five Graves [*Pyat' Kurgani*] be cleansed of the enemy. V. S. Askalepov was charged with this mission. . . . The 173rd Division [commanded by him] went into battle effectively. In the evening Askalepov reported: 'One grave taken.' Ivan Semenovich [Glevov, commanding the 24th Army to which the 173rd Division belonged] sent with satisfaction a report about this to the Staff of the Front. The second day Askalepov reported: 'Second grave taken.' Very good! . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.] The third day Rokossovskii [the Commander of the Front] called me over the telephone and asked with icy politeness and a slightly vibrating voice:

—Pavel Ivanovich! Could you please inform me how many graves you intend to take on the spot of the map bearing the mark 1350?

The chief of staff looked at me with pity:

—It seems that we have gotten into a mess!

The commander of the 173rd Division could not be reached over the phone. Glebov tried the Commissar of the Division:

—Have you yourself seen these graves?

—No. . . . I have not been there. . . . The Commander is there. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]

In a word, there were no graves. They existed only in the name of the height. Fortunately, the attack began, and the hunting tales of the Commander of the 173rd ended . . . without punishment![185]

Our neighbor on the left [the 69th Army] was lagging very much behind. . . . Nonetheless, the headquarters of this Army reported to Front Headquarters, "Forward detachments of the 69th Army are fighting in the center of Poznan." Similar reports were repeated two days running. We had a good laugh at these attempts at deception. . . .[186]

At the end of the first ten days of November 1943 . . . our units in the area of Fastov fought against a strong assault by enemy tank divisions. . . .

. . . . The Commander and Staff of the First Ukrainian Front

reported to the Stavka about all changes in the difficult situation. But in one of the reports incorrect data were given about the operational situation in the area of Fastov, Grebenka, Brusilov, for which the Supreme Commander severely punished some leading officers of the Front.

Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin [the Front Commander] said:

In war, more than anywhere else, truth is needed. Any . . . prettifying of reality can lead to severe damage. . . . Before reporting the seizure of a populated point, we must be well convinced of it. . . . Victories are necessary not on paper, but in reality; one must in no case first claim and then qualify.[187]

It is appropriate *not* to take it for granted that hiding from or lying to superiors is immoral (and criminal), but to argue the case for abstention from dishonesty in some detail. "The fighter," one may concede, "is obliged to deceive the enemy." And yet "he does not have the moral right to speak the untruth to his comrades in arms, to deceive his commander."[188] With particular regard to "attaching to one's uniform signs of others' glory: 'excellent soldier of the Soviet Army,' 'specialist of the second class,' and so forth," it seems worthwhile to explain that "a sign of soldierly glory must correspond precisely to the merits of the soldier himself."[189]

Like every other avoidance of evil, this "does not come by itself." Rather, as a military leader recalls, "the commander is obliged to educate his subordinates, with every step he takes, in the spirit of. . . crystalline honesty."[190]

"We [senior commanders] strove to educate in our officers . . . two *qualities, which I personally held and hold to be extraordinarily* important.

. . . . . .

The second quality is to furnish . . . truthful information to the senior commander about one's troops and about the enemy."[191]

By bitter experience we understood the iron law of the offensive, which is: . . . be able always to report the truth about the state of the forces under your command, however bitter that truth might be.[192]

Indeed, the capacity for that is excellence:

At the Oder and Neisse: "It was good that both Army Commanders,

> Pukhov and Lelyushenko, did not cover up their thoughts, did not hide from disagreeable reactions from above, did not attempt to act on the sly. As disagreeable as it was, they reported everything with absolute truthfulness to the Front Command. . . .''[193]

Stubbornly Going Through with the Initial Plan

Because war, like all of history, abounds in sharp turns, the commander—so the Authorities insist—should be capable of veering sharply on short notice—in contrast to ''the crew [of a boat] which was set up only for one variant of fire.''[194] ''The Communist vanguard of the working class,'' a Soviet leader declares in standard fashion, ''creates in itself the readiness toward a rapid shift of the forms and means of class struggle in accord with changes in the situation.''[195] ''Marxism-Leninism,'' a theoretician observes in equally familiar words, ''teaches that the revolutionary class must . . . be ready for the quickest and most unexpected substitution of one form of struggle for another.''[196] To a military analyst, ''*high operational efficacy*'' is, above all, ''reacting in timely fashion to all changes in the situation,''[197] being capable both of ''rapid transition from one mode of combat to the other'' and of ''their simultaneous employment.''[198] A commander ought to react ''quickly'' even to the smallest change in his environment,[199] react ''instantaneously'' to any maneuver of the enemy.[200]

> The battalion of motorized riflemen headed by Captain Yu. Kozlov was supposed to annihilate from the march the ''enemy'' in his strongpoint. At the very last moment the young commander received from the Minister of Defense present at the exercise a scenario which forced him to adopt a new decision and to change the very direction of attack. Which the officer did most rapidly. In the course of the battle the Minister put ever new tasks before the officer. Nothing could faze him. . . . The Minister promoted . . . Yuri Koslov to Major.[201]

As in this case, one must be capable of ''suddenly changing the *direction* of movement,''[202] of ''transferring efforts in a new direction.''[203] ''A characteristic trait'' of the third and concluding period of the War, according to a general officer, ''was the quick transfer of the efforts of aviation units from one direction to another, from one group of targets to another. . . . Thus, on June 24, 1944, the Commander of the First Air Army, General T. T. Khryukin, retargeted

within a few minutes his air units from the direction of Orshan to that of Bodyshev."[204]

Similarly for *modes of combat*. "In contemporary war," an analyst recalls, "the situation can change so sharply that it is difficult to count on victory without the skill to pass quickly from one form of military action to another."[205] "In extremely difficult circumstances," another analyst comments about the War, it was important ("for the repelling of counterattacks") to make "a quick and organized transition to the defense," to take "a timely decision to go over to the defense. . . ."[206]

In the formulations quoted, attention is averted from one sensitive aspect: the modification or abolition of previous decisions. For that is a difficulty.

* * * * * * *

When the Authorities consider their subordinates' propensity for improvisation, they demand a maximum of planning. But when they face unpredictability, they admit the cost of deciding before an operation what could be settled in its course, depending on that course.

> *The Belorussian operation of 1944:* "As experience shows, on the eve of an operation, we did not always succeed . . . in evaluating the situation and in taking the best decisions for utilizing mobile forces."
>
> Here is one example. The introduction into the breakthrough of the 5th Guards Tank Army was planned for the zone of the 11th Guards Army. . . . *The Commander of this [the 1st Belorussian] Front decided to move the 5th Guards Tank Army* close to the first echelon of the 11th Guards Army during the night before the attack, counting on its success. The Tank Army had been deployed at a junction of the roads and could have acted from the depth in two directions. . . .
>
> On the first day of the operation, the 11th Guards Army did not succeed. The enemy's front was broken farther north by the 5th Army . . . and therefore the 5th Guards Tank Army was directed toward the zone of the 15th Army.
>
> To accomplish a maneuver along the front was not possible because of the lack of roads and the large number of swamps. Hence, the 5th Guards Tank Army had to return to its starting position and then regroup into the zone of the 5th Army. As a result, the 5th Guards Tank Army lost more than a day and entered into the breakthrough only on the third day, having spent a great amount of fuel in vain.

> The enemy during this time succeeded in bringing up a tank division from his reserves to occupy the passage through a wooded and swampy terrain, which complicated the combat actions of the 5th Guards Tank Army. As a result, while the resistance of the enemy was broken, we, having lost time, paid by reduced speeds of advance.[207]

The chief of the General Staff implicitly retorts by claiming that the mistake was due to a violation of his plan:

> I informed [Stalin] that in the direction of Orshan-Borisov, facing the 11th Guards Army, the enemy defense . . . was much stronger than in the sector of the Fifth Army. . . . Hence, the direction of Orshan was, in my view, less promising than that of Bogushev . . . for leading the tank armies into the breakthrough. We agreed that, for the time being, the basic direction for the introduction of the tank armies into the breakthrough should be Orshan . . . because it was shorter and the terrain was more suited for maneuver. The definitive decision we deferred to the first days of the operation.[208]

To do so was unusual, and has remained controversial:

> In the GHQ instruction of May 31 . . . *[the] subsequent* objectives [beyond a depth of 60 to 70 kilometers] of the First Baltic and Second Belorrusian Fronts were defined only in the form of lines of advance. Some people now consider this was wrong. It is thought that this type of planning did not give Front Headquarters a clear idea of further operations . . . prevented measures to insure the success of the . . . operation from being planned in good time.
>
> There is something in this. But the Soviet Supreme Command deliberately took the risk of not immediately giving the troops set objectives for the whole depth of the . . . operation.
>
> . . . . To have set the Front objectives in great depth would . . . have meant the relatively rigid use of men and matériel. . . .[209]

There was another indeterminacy in the plan for another component of the same operation, the First Belorussian Front:

> A somewhat unusual decision was adopted: to begin the offensive by a reconnaissance in force by the forward battalions. We wanted to find out whether the enemy had not withdrawn his main forces toward a line in his depth, leaving mere covering forces in front of us. In that case, he would have forced us to waste supplies destined for the breakthrough of the major defense. . . .

> . . . . Earlier we had, with the Army commanders Popov, Gusev, Chuikov, and Kolpakchi, worked out the question as to how to best begin the offensive. It is then that the thought had come to us . . . to begin with a reconnaissance by the forward battalions and, if we became convinced that the major defense had remained on the forward line, to move all allocated forces and means into the battle without an interruption for further specifying missions.[210]

* * * * * * *

If the Authorities are aware of the advantages of limiting advance planning, they are likely to perceive the benefits that may follow from modifying an initial design, and to be displeased with a propensity of commanders to execute (*if* they execute at all—see Chapter I) the decisions made before the start of an operation.

Of course, the Authorities pretend to be unaware of their own contribution to such a stance, confessing only through their allegations about the enemy:

> From the interrogation of prisoners it became evident that the German Command and troops act to a high degree in routine fashion . . . merely fulfilling orders in blind fashion. Hence, as soon as the situation changed, the Germans lost their bearing, conducted themselves with extreme passivity, waiting for orders from the senior commander, orders which in the given situation, could not always be received in good time.[211]

The Authorities perceive, in the words of an analyst of the twenties, the frequent presence of a "fierce *(zhestokyi)*, implacable *(neumolimyi)* striving for an objective . . . enshrined in a document *(zaprotokolirovat')*";[212] of, one may say, a stubbornness in implementing a mode of combat action chosen earlier; of a failure to take account of a changed relationship of forces. A "good decision" may in the course of combat be "blindly maintained," no corrections being made in it "despite sharp changes in the situation"—and victory missed.[213] "In conditions [where] basic changes in the situation have taken place," analysts note, "loss of time results habitually not from working out a new decision, but from overcoming doubts whether it is indispensable to change a plan elaborated earlier."[214] "It takes them," a German commander asserts about his Soviet counterparts, "a lot of time to alter their plans, especially during an action."[215] "Russian officers in command," a German colleague goes further, "strictly . . . adhere . . . to previous decisions. They disregard changes in the situation, the reactions of the enemy. . . ."[216]

The "enemy" applied powerful radio jamming. The communication of the Staff with the Commander of the motorized rifle company, Senior Lieutenant A. Grevtsov, was impaired. The unit arrived at the indicated line with a delay. The defender immediately utilized this, directing his tank reserves toward the breach which had formed. How indispensable was not in these decisive minutes the support of combat helicopters! However, neither the all-arms Commander nor the representatives of support aviation called on the fixed-wing machines: it was not foreseen . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] in the plan. The battalion's attack exhausted itself.

In the exercise described, nobody was even talking of any correcting of plans. At no time did the all-arms Commander ask for a strike from the air, unless this was already foreseen earlier.[217]

In one exercise . . . it was proposed to . . . strike where the "enemy" had the fewest antitank weapons. However, the Company chosen for the solution of this task could not sustain the indispensable rapidity and was late by a few minutes in arriving at the line of attack. This amount of time sufficed for the "enemy" . . . to transfer ATGMs to the threatened flank. The situation had changed sharply, but the attacking side was far from immediately renouncing the plan worked out earlier.[218]

1944, in the area of Riga: "Strikes were conducted all the time in one and the same place. . . . Nobody dared to propose a change in the accepted plan of the offensive: it had been worked out by the Stavka and approved by Stalin. And that meant that no evidence could be taken into account. The Supreme Commander did not tolerate a revision of documents issued from the Stavka."[219]

Marshal Zhukov was not fond of withdrawing orders. . . .[220]

During the War, "fire was [often] transferred not in accord with the course of the combat actions of the company . . . but according to a previously established time schedule. . . ."[221]

February 19 [1943] the enemy went over to a counteroffensive. . . . The SS tank corps . . . attacked in the direction of the . . . flank and rear of the 6th Army of the Southwestern Front.

The troops of the Southwestern Front began to retreat. . . .

Even this did not lead the Command of the Voronezh Front to revise its plans of an offensive toward Kiev and Chernigov . . . [though] the success of the enemy counteroffensive ever more evidently threatened not only the Southwestern Front, but also the Voronezh Front.

> Despite this, the Command of the Front still tried to realize its previous plans. . . .[222]

> *The fall of 1943:* "And then we received information that the enemy had begun taking troops out of the front south of Melitopol and was transferring them to the north, that is, to the direction of our main attack. This meant . . . that the enemy was in no way expecting a strike on his southern flank.
>
> What was needed was to calmly analyze the new situation . . . and to introduce changes into the decisions taken earlier. However, the Commander of the Front did not lose the hope of breaking the resistance of the enemy with that deployment of troops which had been determined prior to the beginning of the operation. . . .
>
> . . . . I definitively came to the conclusion that favorable conditions had been created for decisive actions south of Melitopol. All that was required was some regrouping of our reserves. . . .[223]

Will not changing an initial plan in the very course of its execution weaken us more than it harms the enemy?

> In one exercise, Lieutenant Colonel R. Nikolaev manifested . . . haste in putting tasks before his subordinates. In the dynamics of the battle, it became necessary not only to modify his decisions, but to replace them by new ones, which introduced nervousness into the actions of personnel, provoked confusion.[224]

In such a context, initial forecasts may be maintained despite mounting counterevidence:

> Catastrophe . . . befell the Southwestern Front in the second half of September [1941] because of the stubbornness of the Stavka, which with inexplicable stubbornness *continued* to count on the capacity of the Bryansk Front to break the resistance of Guderian and to unite with the Southwestern Front.[225]

> In one exercise the senior commander noticed that the exercising officers knew about the "enemy's" line of deployment for counterattack, and shifted that line . . . toward the depth. But the unit commander was so much "attached" to his plan that he did not even believe his own intelligence, which discovered the "enemy" in another area. He deployed his unit on a line where the enemy was not.[226]

> *The Soviet offensive in the Southwest that began on May 12, 1942:* "Underestimating the opposed forces . . . the Staff [of the South-

> western Front] . . . overestimated our own forces. . . . These faulty estimates were not changed in the course of combat actions, even when our troops . . . lost the initiative. In the sector of attack of the Northern Strike Group the enemy command . . . already began on the second day of the offensive to impose its will on us."[227]

> *The winter of 1943:* "Even when the pressure of the enemy from the South and Southwest sharply increased, the Command of the [Voronezh] Front continued to believe that the enemy was withdrawing his troops beyond the Dnepr to the west and northwest of Khar'kov."[228]

The resolve not to take account of information emerging in the course of operation may lead to making it unavailable:

> According to a German commander there were "[Soviet] tank commanders who closed their windows at the start of an attack and opened them only upon reaching the objective. . . . To our good fortune, the Russian tanks almost always moved with closed windows and suffered large losses."[229]

* * * * * * *

The aversion to modifying plans in the course of execution is expressed in a number of ways in prose ostensibly advocating such flexibility.

The aversion may be acknowledged. "To take the optimal decision," a senior officer may observe, "to modify it in good time, and *even* to change it if the interests of combat require that. . . ."[230] Recalling that "often a maneuver is hindered by the decision initially taken," a military leader declares that "one must not be *afraid of changing* it. . . ."[231] While, in the view of an analyst, "it is useful that officers prior to going out to the terrain take decisions from the map," "it is not *a disaster* if it subsequently becomes necessary . . . to change them."[232]

One who stands for modifying a plan has to defend himself against those who implicitly reject such conduct:

> The first plan of Konev, commanding the First Ukrainian Front, had been to take L'vov frontally as no significant enemy forces were in the city. He changed his design when such forces appeared, and comments: "Regrettably, some . . . do not take into account the changed situation in the area of L'vov at the beginning of July 21, 1944, and view it statistically as it was on July 19, when no significant forces were in L'vov. Evidently, they do not correctly

understand the directive of the Front Commander to the 3rd Guards and the 4th Tank Armies on July 21, a directive which required them not to engage themselves in a protracted battle for L'vov, but rather to envelop it from the Northwest (for the 3rd Guards Tank Army) and from the South . . . (for the 4th Tank Army). Here *there is no necessity to prove* that it is the task of the Front and Army commander always to take account, in the course of an operation, of changes in the situation. . . ."[233]

One may avoid calling a change of plan just that:

A model officer: "His decisions . . . *took account of the latest developments* of events."[234]

The operation in the area of Kirovograd in the winter of 1944: "An important condition of success was *the flexible reaction of our command to changes in the situation.*"[235]

Utochnit', to specify, has become the standard euphemism for *izmenit'*, to change, with regard to a plan.

The summer of 1944: "Marshal I. S. Konev attentively studied the situation, the reports, and the proposals of General M. E. Katukov on the possible variants of leading his Army into battle. . . . He came to the result that it was indispensable to *utochnit'* the previously taken decision."

In taking *a new* decision, account was taken of. . . .[236]

One may stress what has not changed when a plan is changed:

One must remember, the basic aim of battle—the . . . destruction of the enemy—remains unchanged but the manners and methods of action . . . must change, depending on the situation.[237]

The encirclement at Stalingrad: "This idea was maintained during the entire operation—from the beginning to the end. True, the ways of fulfilling the tasks changed . . . but the plan . . . was entirely fulfilled."[238]

One may name instances of successful change of plan:

It occurs that in the course of an operation the direction of the main strike changes. This was the case in several operations of the Great Fatherland War, and in particular, in the first stage of the East

> Prussian operation in January 1945 and in the course of the Königsberg operation, when we transferred our efforts from the direction of the 16th Guards Rifle Corps to that of the 36th.[239]

> *The winter of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "The experience of the landing operations in the area of Yuzhnaya Ozereika and Stanichka shows that a plan of operations can be changed, depending on the situation which emerges in the course of the operation. . . ."[240]

One may affirm the normalcy of changing a plan:

> Such a change of organizational allocation *(perepodchinenie)* of a division in the course of battle is a wholly natural phenomenon.[241]

> As the experience of the War shows, maneuver in defense is not always executed in precise correspondence with plans worked out earlier. The situation emerging in the course of the battle, the possibilities and the character of enemy actions, can introduce substantial corrections both in the contents of plans worked out earlier as in the aims and missions of maneuvers.[242]

One may imply the normalcy of modifying a plan with varying suggestions of frequency. Even "the most optimal decision," observes an officer with a frequently heard redundancy, "*sometimes* suffers modification in the dynamics of battle."[243] When it comes to "initiate a meeting engagement," an analyst declares in more forthright fashion, "the commander must *often* make a new decision, in all ways different from that taken at the time of organizing the march."[244] "It is *probable*," insists another analyst, "that in the dynamics of battle, conditions change sharply and substantially enough to require not a mere specification of a prior decision, but taking a new one."[245] "Combat in contemporary conditions," a third analyst asserts "will *never* develop in precise accord with the plan [initially] made."[246]

One may derive the need for changes of plan from essential aspects of war:

> *The operation in the area of L'vov-Sandomir:* "In the course of the execution of a big strategic operation, when on both sides, millions of troops participate, departures from initial plans are always inevitable. These departures are caused by the change in the situation and unexpected countermeasures of the enemy which it is difficult to foresee in full measure."[247]

> *The Battle of Berlin:* "The plan established by us was not fully

> maintained, it is true. But there is nothing astonishing in that. In war, where two forces, two wills, two designs opposed to each other, collide, the plan which has been established can rarely be fulfilled in all details. Changes occur which are dictated by the situation which emerges, for better or for worse—in the given case for better. Our advance units moved forward more quickly than we had assumed."[248]

> "Naturally, in the course of a battle, one would like to fulfill the initial plan. . . ." —but "what does it mean to plan in war? We plan alone, but we fulfill our plans, if one may do so, together with the enemy, that is, taking account of his counteraction."[249]

In fact, come to think of it, it is not the commander who changes his plan at all, it is Reality itself that does it:

> *November 20, 1942, near Stalingrad:* "The commander of the 143rd Naval Brigade, Colonel Ivan Grigor'evich Russkikh confused signals and, instead of having the Brigade attack after the second strike of heavy "Katyush" rockets, attacked after the first one. What should be done? . . . I think of how to support the brave 143rd Brigade with other means. I order the Commander of the 13th Mechanized Corps to lead the head brigade of the Corps into the breach made. Tactfully he attempted to recall to me that according to the Army plan approved by me, the 13th Corps was going to be introduced into the breach from a line lying three kilometers in the depth of the enemy's defense and not in the sector where the 143rd Brigade operated."
>
> As to time, the entrance into the battle of the Corps was to come two hours and 30 minutes after the beginning of the attack of the infantry.
>
> —True, Comrade Tanashchishin, such is the plan, but *the situation has introduced correctives*. Lead the Brigade into the battle immediately![250]

So far from being weak and evil, changing a plan in mid-operation expresses skill and dedication:

> The operation of L'vov-Sandomir increased our arsenal of combat and operational-tactical experience. We acquired the habit of quickly replanning the introduction of tank armies into the breakthrough in a new direction in the dynamics of the operation.[251]

> *An occasion in the summer of 1944:* "Thus the constant study of the situation, the correct discernment of its peculiarity allowed the

commander of the Front to decisively renounce a previously taken decision, and to act in accord with the new conditions."[252]

The counterstrike of tank units [of the Voronezh Front] foreseen for July 4 1943: "Renouncing this counterstrike . . . was insistently required by a change of the situation. And that decision [to renounce it], in my view, expresses one of the characteristic traits of the gift for military leadership of Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin: the ability to precisely capture the smallest changes in the situation, to infer the further development of events from them . . . not even shrinking from basic changes in plans made earlier."[253]

Conversely, inability to change one's plan shows that one would have yielded to what thereby would have become an alien and hostile force:

The operation at Vitebsk, the spring of 1944: "The Command of the Army did not consider the plan as a *dogma* and corrected it in special cases. . . ."[254]

The initially invented idea of maneuver did not *hem in* the initiative of the officer, did not assume *right form*. . . .[255]

The Belorussian operation on June 23, 1944: "The situation clearly indicated that there was no necessity to continue 'gnawing through' the enemy's . . . defense, bearing avoidable losses, when we could break through. . . ."

I immediately phoned the Front Commander . . . and proposed to transfer the basic efforts of the Army troops from the main direction to the auxiliary one. . . .

To my profound satisfaction, General I. V. Chernyakhovskii without vacillation confirmed the new decision. In this was anew expressed his . . . breadth of operational calculation, alien . . . to *blind subjection* to a plan established earlier. The situation required substantial changes, and he . . . supported them.[256]

. . . . . .

One must assume that neither the groupings of forces and means adopted at the beginning of combat action, nor the system of fire organized at the beginning of the defense battle, nor therefore the positions of the troops will be able to remain in their initial shape. Rather, they will be changed . . . under the impact of those conditions . . . which will come into being in the course of the defense battle.[257]

"Combat experience has shown," a leading analyst finds it useful to point out, "that an offensive often succeeds elsewhere than in the sector in which it was planned";[258] "it would seem that one should immediately utilize the [unforeseen] success of one's neighbor. . . ."[259] It may be equally appropriate to advocate "the transfer of combat efforts toward new directions when the situation on the sector of the front intended for an attack suddenly becomes more difficult."[260] In fact, recalls yet another analyst, during the War "the direction of the main blow was frequently changed in the course of the offensive" for precisely that reason. "Characteristic in this respect is . . . the combat action of the 121st Rifle Division to obtain bridgeheads on the River Seim in the region of the city of Rylsk in August 1943. The Commander of the Division delivered the main blow with the 574th and the 383rd Rifle Regiments, which, however, were unsuccessful. But the 705th Regiment, acting in a secondary direction, could seize a bridgehead. . . . The Commander of the Division decided to leave in the zone of the offensive of the 574th and the 383rd Regiments only one rifle company for each, and regrouped the rest of the forces of these regiments to the zone of the 705th." It was the substitution of a new plan for an initial one in view of early outcomes of the battle which "led to success. . . ." Similarly, "the Commander of the 11th Guards Army in the Belorussian operation regrouped four divisions from the main direction toward a secondary one as soon as success appeared there."[261] In another instance of creativity:

> In January 1945 the Commander of the 74th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 27th Guards Rifle Division decided to introduce the second echelon for breaking through the second position [of the enemy] in the center. However, in the course of battle it appeared that the battalion of the first echelon did not succeed in attaining success in that direction. But on the left flank a gap in the deployment of the enemy was observed. In these conditions the Commander of the Regiment took a new decision according to which the introduction into the battle [of the second echelon] occurred on the left flank. As a result, favorable conditions were created for delivering strikes on the flank of the defending enemy. The introduction into the battle of the second echelon [in this direction] . . . had a decisive influence on the success of the operation.[262]

* * * * * * *

The emphasis on the modifiability of plans—"the art of leading a battle does not tolerate a stubborn attachment to a plan established before-

hand, . . ."[263] "one of the distinctive characteristics of Soviet military art is . . . to correct initial plans decisively"[264]—is, in good part, then, a reaction to the opposite inclination, that of blindly going through with a plan once established.

That propensity, in its turn, is fostered by the sense of power that persisting with one's plan in conditions that suggest its abandonment or replacement may give. "I want it, I have thus decided"—proving the unlimited reach of the pressure of one's will, and perhaps implying a major gratification derived from the stubbornness of this stance.

But there is also the difficulty of renouncing a plan when one fights against three inclinations discussed elsewhere in these pages:

- The difficulty of making a decision (see Chapters I and II).
- The difficulty of going through with a decision (see Chapter I).
- The urge to abandon a line of action and replace it with a different, perhaps opposite, one—without regard to changes in the circumstances under which an unvaried goal is pursued (see Chapter VI).

An article centered around the demand that one should be capable of modifying plans, and hence entitled "The Change in Situation and a New Decision," also insists that "one of the conditions for obtaining success . . . is a stubborn realization of the decision taken."[265]

Repeating despite Failure

The Authorities take note of an inclination in commanders (and show one themselves) to persist in conduct that has failed.

Recently, in an exercise, the company commanded by Senior Lieutenant Yu. Dorofeev, attacked . . . [the enemy] where his defense was strongest. Naturally, the company failed. One would think that after this the commander would resort to maneuver. But the motorized infantrymen continued to attack frontally . . . . The enemy did not only hold, but was able to transfer a part of his forces to another sector.[266]

A telephone conversation, September 5, 1942, between Stalin in Moscow and Zhukov near Stalingrad about the ongoing Soviet offensive:

I continued:

—Our units have moved forward only insignificantly and find themselves in a series of cases on their initial positions.

—What is the matter?

—Because of the lack of time our troops have not had the time to prepare the attack well, to conduct artillery intelligence, and to disclose the fire system of the enemy. . . . When we went over to the attack, the enemy stopped it with his fire and counterattack. Apart from this, enemy aviation ruled the air the whole day and bombed our units.

"*Continue the attack!*" ordered I. V. Stalin.

. . . . . .

September 10 I sent the Supreme Commander the following message:

"Further attack with the same forces and in the same grouping will be pointless, and the troops will . . . bear heavy losses."[267]

In . . . January [1944] the 3rd and the 4th Ukrainian Fronts undertook many attempts to smash the enemy grouping in the area of Nikopol'-Krivoi Rog, but were unsuccessful: manpower and equipment were insufficient, supplies were acutely lacking. The Hitlerites, contrary to our expectation, not only did not want to leave that area, but did everything so as to transform it almost entirely into strongpoints, well prepared in an engineering respect and skillfully connected by fire. In the middle of January, with the permission of the Stavka, we discontinued our attack. It was clear that . . . if we were to continue combat actions in the same manner, we would suffer unjustified losses, but not solve the task. . . . I decided to call the Stavka. . . . *I. V. Stalin was not in agreement with me*, reproached me for my incapacity. . . .[268]

The Crimea: "In the second half of the day of the 19th of April [1944] the 51st and the Primorskaya Armies went over to the attack . . . but, meeting stubborn resistance of the enemy, who went over to fierce counterattack, they did not obtain any substantial success. A more serious aid to the troops by artillery and aviation was needed, as also . . . an increase in supplies. So as to avoid vain losses, we decided to delay the general attack on Sevastopol until the 23rd of April; a decision which the Supreme Commander confirmed *reluctantly*."[269]

German commanders: "The rigidity of Russian attacks was . . . proverbial. . . . The foolish repetition of attacks on the same spot, the rigidity of Russian artillery fire. . . ."[270] "When the Russian

> infantry suffered an initial setback, a second, third, fourth, and fifth attack was certain to follow in short order."[271]

"In the morning of June 22 [1941] Soviet bombers attack . . . the German airfields. They do not avoid antiaircraft fire, do not save themselves from the German fighters. Rigidly they follow their course. . . . When ten have been shot down, fifteen appear. 'They came again and again the whole afternoon,' Captain Pabst reports, 'I have seen 21 fall down, not one escaped.' "[272]

> *A Soviet commander seems to agree by presenting one case of this kind as if it were not unfamiliar:* "The attacks made by our troops did not bring results. Nevertheless, attacks without favorable prospects continued. . . ."[273] *Dunaburg, the end of June 1941:* "In these days the Soviet air force made an all-out effort to destroy the bridges we had seized. With an astonishing blind stubbornness one squadron after the other flew in at low altitudes, obtaining only the result of being shot down."[274]
>
> *The summer of 1941:* "The 129th Rifle Division assaulted the positions of the Hitlerites at the northern border of Smolensk, but was unable to consolidate the territory seized. Strong counterattacks of the enemy . . . forced the Division every time to return to its starting positions. However, the subunits of the 129th Rifle Division again and again, day and night, with a stubbornness worthy of the highest evaluation, continued persistently to attack the positions of the enemy."

Seemingly unaware of the apparent difference between Soviet and German conduct, the author then describes the efforts of the Germans to cross the Dnepr near Smolensk:

> From the 17th to the 22d of July, the Hitlerites tried every day to cross the Dnepr *in different places*. . . .[275]
>
> *The winter of 1942:* "What was most difficult to understand were the insistent orders to repeat the attack, despite failure, from exactly the same point of departure, in exactly the same direction, several days running . . . the pointless and constant attacks on the same objectives for as long as 10 or 15 days at a time, regardless of the fact that we were suffering heavy losses."[276]
> *A German commander on the same winter:* "The Russians attack in familiar places and are smashed. With a uniformity difficult to understand they maintain their intention to envelop Staraya Russa by strikes in always the same directions."[277]

The following summer in the area of Vydra: "With immense regularity the Russians assault the 'Brown Height' every hour, without gaining ground."[278]

The same period in the area of Yassy: "It is astonishing how often the Russians continue their attacks in the same places . . . and with the same methods without regard for very bloody losses. Our artillery . . . can operate with very precisely located and practiced targets. . . ."[279]

What were the basic causes of the failure of the attempt to lift the blockade of Leningrad in 1942? . . . We . . . mainly conducted strikes in the same direction. . . .[280]

The Caucasus: "March 5 [1943] . . . the 11th Rifle Corps, having begun its attack at 6:30, returned to its starting position, having borne large losses. . . . At 7 o'clock, the Army Commander announced that the attack would be repeated at 13 hours. The results were the same, as no regrouping or preparations for the attack . . . had occurred. The tired fighters went over to the attack again [a third time?—NL], but that, too, did not bring success. All this cost heavy sacrifices and did not give the desired results!"[281]

The area of Orsha in the fall of 1943: "The Russians usually made about three tries a day—the first about 9:00 a.m. after heavy artillery preparations; the second between 10:00 and 11:00; and the third between 2:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon. It was almost like clockwork!"[282]

The War: "A series of examples can be given where the offense, lacking success in the chosen direction, nevertheless uninterruptedly attacked the enemy. . . . Thus in September of 1944 parts of the 28th Rifle Division attacked a tactically important height on the approaches to Riga. The attack was unsuccessful, as the enemy brought substantial reserves into this area. As a result of a repeated attack, the height was taken. However, the enemy, throwing aviation and reserves into the battle, reestablished the situation. There had to be one more attack. The enemy once more threw parts of the Division from the position they had conquered. The battle for the height continued for several days. In the end it was taken, but with . . . big losses. Subsequent study of this battle showed that we could have seized the height by bypassing it and attacking it from the right flank and the rear."[283]

Successive, identical attacks stop only when they have themselves created obstacles against their continuation:

> *A German commander about the German bridgehead at Porishche in the area of Luga, in the summer of 1941:* "The Russians attacked a fork of roads up to ten times a day. The head of the attacks were tanks in deep formation, as many as the narrow road could hold. Again and again the attacks were repelled and renewed—until it became clearly infeasible to pass through the narrow channels of attack because they were obstructed by tank wrecks and bodies.

There was, of course, also the opposite outcome. Soviet "persistence," at whatever cost, attained its objective. As an analyst observes, "breaking through the deeply echeloned defense of the enemy required a series of persistent, never-ceasing attacks."[284] A German commander perceives an "accepted Russian principle—once 'Ivan' makes up his mind to . . . gain certain objectives, he throws in . . . troops and continues to do so until he has secured his objective or exhausted his reserve."[285]

That the Soviets will, in such fashion, secure their objective would seem more probable to the Authorities if they attributed to their side, as they well may, an edge in endurance. To the defenders of Stalingrad, "after each repelled attack it seemed that it was no more possible to endure the next assault. . . ."[286] Still, they did, and the Authorities may count upon winning endurance races.

Persistence may be justified by the belief that in the attempts that failed just a *little* bit was lacking on the attacking side:

> Again and again the Brigade stormed the positions of the Hitlerites, and reeled back toward its starting positions. . . . In order to fasten the rope around the neck of the "bag" in which the enemy found himself, just a little bit *(chut'-chut')* was lacking.[287]

Perhaps the missing increment can be supplied without additional resources:

> *The case just cited:* "After one more failure, D. D. Lelyushenko ordered Malygin and myself to personally lead the Battalion in the attack. We did. But this, too, did not help. Our participation in the attack could not compensate for the insufficiency of tanks and artillery."[288]

The requirement upon oneself and others to persist in the face of failure may, in addition, be a reaction (perhaps not a fully conscious one) against the suspicion that one is ready to give up at the first difficulty.

Not doing so may be presented as an act of excellence. "There was not a single case," one reads, "in which the platoon commander would have refused solving an unintelligible question—without fail he clarified it."[289] "There were, it is true," one may say about the conduct of a model commander, "also some failures"; yet "the commander did not lower his hands," "he did not change a correct decision merely because . . . it was not feasible to attain the objective right away."[290] "They did not lower their hands at the first failure"[291] is a formula observation.

There is, then, a corresponding requirement. "Don't lower your hands as soon as a mishap occurs," demands an officer of a subordinate.[292]

Rather, show "stubbornness in the attainment of the objective,"[293] "steadfastness (*ustoichoivost'*)," "insistence and persistence (*nastoichivost'*)": major words—aiming for the heights, or also straining to avoid the depths?

Still, if such injunctions *are* obeyed while once more, as we have seen, incurring damage, it may become appropriate to recommend "flexibility so as not to break one's forehead against the wall. . . ."[294]

One may even want to turn against him the enemy's belief that one will do just that:

> *The area of Smolensk, the fall of 1943:* "The operational order to change the direction of the main strike was . . . a . . . military ruse. The point is that the Hitlerite commanders believed in the more or less dogmatic approach of Soviet commanders to the fulfillment of missions.
>
> Hence, it is not strange that also in the area of Dukhovshchina the Hitlerite command expected our effort to be concentrated on the direction chosen earlier. That certainty was so firm that the Hitlerites, in reinforcing that sector, did not hesitate to denude its neighbors. Even more, striving for a maximal massing of artillery fire in the previous direction of our strike, the enemy commands transferred to that sector the artillery observation points of the batteries and divisions whose guns were emplaced in the neighboring sectors. By this the enemy command blinded its artillery there where we were to conduct our new strike."[295]

Thus one surmounts the urge to repeat, evincing "the capacity to suddenly change the direction of movement,"[296] the ability to execute "*sharp* turns." (See the Section "Stubbornly Going Through with the Initial Plan," above.)

Early December 1941 on the approaches to Moscow: "Yesterday we were on the defense, we retreated, but today we went over to the offensive."

. . . . We all . . . had thought thus: first we would stop the enemy, then we would bring up forces, prepare, and, finally . . . throw ourselves on the enemy. Reality turned out to be different, harsher, and more exacting: . . . we did not find the time to . . . prepare. . . . It became necessary, figuratively speaking, just to turn around one's left shoulder to strike the enemy under whose pressure we had still been retreating yesterday.[297]

October 31, 1942, in Stalingrad: "How is that possible . . . the reader may ask, only yesterday the Command of the 62nd Army held that the Army was at the brink of catastrophe, and today it decides upon counterattack? Yes, dear reader, such is the law of war. . . ."[298]

Notes to Chapter Three.

1. Biryukov, 31.
2. Col. Gen. V. Yakushin, *KZ*, April 18, 1977.
3. Col. Gen. G. Salmanov, *KZ*, June 5, 1976.
4. Navy Capt. V. T[illegible]yuanskii, *KZ*, January 1977.
5. Capt. V. Khamly, *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 56–57.
6. Eremenko, 1969, 56–57.
7. Biryukov, 77.
8. Gulyaev, 25.
9. S. M. Belitskii, 1930, in Kadishev, 1965, 360.
10. General of the Army P. Belik, *VV*, 1975, no. 9, 23.
11. Col. Gen. A. Babadzhanyan, *VV*, 1964, no. 8, 8.
12. Col. Yu. Baskalov, *VV*, 1977, no. 4, 60.
13. Editorial, *VV*, 1961, no. 1, 5.
14. Col. Gen. V. Varennikov, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 20.
15. Lt. Col. F. Semyanovskii, *KZ*, April 26, 1977. Emphasis added.
16. Lt. Col. B. Gudymenko, *VV*, 1975, no. 12, 30. Emphasis added.
17. Col. E. Babynin, *KZ*, July 2, 1977. Emphasis added.
18. Col. V. Izgarshev, *KZ*, July 15, 1977.
19. Col. Gen. V. Yakushin, *KZ*, April 20, 1977. Emphasis added.
20. Senior Lt. V. Mechkov, *KZ*, September 4, 1976.
21. Ivushkin, 7.
22. Rokossovskii, 161–163.
23. Egorov, 150.
24. Chuikov, 1962a, 141.
25. Maj. M. Malygan, *KZ*, September 8, 1977.
26. Forstmeier, 47.
27. Col. R. Dukov, *VV*, 1971, no. 3, 41.

28. Col. D. Shapovalov, *VV*, 1965, no. 2, 33.
29. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 7.
30. Lt. Col. V. Obukhov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 10, 33. Emphasis added.
31. Navy Capt. V. Orlov, *KZ*, August 31, 1977.
32. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 5, 3.
33. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 4.
34. P. Kutakov, *KZ*, February 4, 1976.
35. Reported in an Editorial, *KZ*, April 5, 1977.
36. Maj. A. Puzanov, *KZ*, September 6, 1977.
37. Navy Capt. V. Druzhinin, *KZ*, June 6, 1976.
38. Lt. Gen. S. Belonoshko, *KZ*, June 1, 1977.
39. Col. Gen. F. Krivda, *KZ*, October 29, 1976.
40. Lt. Gen. P. Safronov, *KZ*, November 26, 1977.
41. Radzievskii, 1974, 109.
42. Lt. Col. A. Pimenov, *KZ*, October 3, 1978.
43. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 241.
44. Galitskii, 1973, 311.
45. Chuikov, 1962a, 342.
46. Biryukov, 86. Ellipsis in the text.
47. Col. I. Dokuchaev, *KZ*, March 18, 1976.
48. Birykov, 135–136.
49. Grechko, 1976, 280.
50. Ibid., 189.
51. Senior Lt. O Balakin, *KZ*, November 12, 1976.
52. Editorial, *VV*, 1978, no. 6, 4.
53. Rokossovskii, 123.
54. Maj. Gen. I. Podoved, *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 62.
55. Rokossovskii, 123.
56. Biryukov, 294.
57. Eremenko, 1964, 131.
58. Voronov, 354–355.
59. Grechko, 1976, 41.
60. Zhukov, Vol. 2, 9.
61. Grechko, 1976, 279.
62. Grechko, 1973, 279.
63. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 5, 3.
64. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1968, no. 7, 8.
65. Capt. V. Misyura, *KZ*, April 16, 1976.
66. Lt. Col. A. Shpin', *KZ*, January 22, 1977.
67. Lt. Gen. S. Krivda, *KVS*, 1977, no. 1, 59.
68. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 363.
69. Grechko, 1973, 156.
70. V. I. Kazakov, 126.
71. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 390.
72. Sevest'yanov, 153.
73. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 360.
74. Grechko, 1976, 481.
75. Zhukov, Vol. 2, 269.
76. Batov, 1965, 91.

77. Voronov, 389.
78. Col. H. R. Dingler, quoted by Mellenthin, 157.
79. Ibid., 291.
80. A German commander.
81. Popel', 1959, 277.
82. M. I. Kazakov, 123.
83. Konev, 1972, 71.
84. Galitskii, 1970, 85–86.
85. Carius, 120.
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87. Chuikov, 1967, 142.
88. General of the Army G. Petrov, *KZ*, November 3, 1978.
89. Eremenko, 1971, 252.
90. Maj. Gen. E. E. Mitryaev, *KZ*, November 3, 1978.
91. Headline, *KZ*, January 8, 1978.
92. Gulyaev, 16.
93. Lt. Col. A. Zrubin, *KZ*, November 20, 1977.
94. Col. P. Kuzmitskii, *VV*, 1974, no. 8, 61.
95. Grechko, 1976, 116.
96. The Stavka, June 4, 1942, quoted by Vasilevskii, 210–211.
97. Rokossovskii, 197.
98. Grechko, 1976, 473–474.
99. Grechko, 1973, 386.
100. Ibid., 184.
101. Rokossovskii, 89.
102. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 326.
103. Eremenko, 1964, 480.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Rokossovskii, 108.
107. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 178.
108. Grechko, 1976, 405–406.
109. M. I. Kazakov, 187.
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111. Vasilevskii, 137, 142, 146.
112. Ibid.
113. *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 45.
114. *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 60.
115. Editorial, *KVS*, 1976, no. 22, 5.
116. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 2, 2 and 5.
117. Maj. Gen. P. Butenko, *VV*, 1974, no. 4, 44.
118. Radzievskii, 1974, 38.
119. Novikov and Sverdlov, 56.
120. Eremenko, 1969, 543.
121. Headline, *KZ*, March 30, 1978.
122. Tyulenev, 193.
123. Sevast'yanov, 250.
124. Batov, 1962, 55.
125. Col. A. Sorokin, *KZ*, July 9, 1978.

126. Col. V. Rotastov, *KZ*, September 11, 1975. Ellipsis in the text.
127. Col. I. Vorodov'ev, *KZ*, January 27, 1976.
128. Col. R. Dukov, *KZ*, July 30, 1976.
129. Lt. Col. A. Zhentukhov, *VV*, no. 8, 65.
130. Reznichenko, 84.
131. Lt. Col. V. Shtanko, *KZ*, March 25, 1977.
132. Lt. Col. B. Gudymenko, *VV*, 1974, no. 12, 51.
133. Col. R. Dukov, *KZ*, July 20, 1976.
134. Col. E. Grebenshchikov, *KZ*, July 29, 1977.
135. Lt. Col. A. Shpin', *KZ*, January 22, 1977.
136. Col. E. Babynin, *KZ*, August 3, 1978.
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139. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 201–202.
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143. Konev, 1972, 288.
144. Col. A. Krasnov, *KZ*, November 12, 1978. Emphasis added.
145. Maj. V. Pimenov, *KZ*, November 11, 1976.
146. Editorial, *KZ*, August 24, 1976.
147. Lt. Col. V. Kholodul'kin, *KZ*, April 19, 1977.
148. Col. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1976, no. 12, 52.
149. Navy Capt. V. Tevyanskii, *KZ*, January 13, 1977.
150. Col. L. Lebedev, *KZ*, May 20, 1978.
151. Col. Gen. F. Krivda, *KZ*, October 29, 1976.
152. Maj. Gen. A. Sadovnikov, *KZ*, September 7, 1977.
153. Lt. Col. A. Pimenov, *KZ*, March 22, 1978.
154. Lt. Col. N. Delbunov, *KZ*, January 30, 1976. Ellipsis in the text.
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159. Navy Capt. V. Shutkin, *KZ*, May 4, 1977.
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162. Col. V. Makhalov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 1, 25.
163, Maj. A. Vun'ko, *KZ*, January 27, 1977.
164. P. A. Belov, 130.
165. Batov, 1962, 7.
166. P. A. Belov, 170–171.
167. Shtemenko, 104–105.
168. Ibid., 114.
169. Popel', 1960, 355.
170. Col. D. Vyskrebentsev, *KZ*, May 27, 1978.
171. V. I. Kazakov, 175–176.
172. Shtemenko, 100–109.
173. Batov, 1962, 40.
174. Biryukov, 269.

175. Col. Gen. N. Skoromokhov, *VIZh*, 1974, no. 9, 39.
176. Col. I. Gordienko, *KVS*, 1976, no. 17, 39.
177. Cf. Goldhamer, 122–123, 150.
178. Capt. I. Kikeshev, *VV*, 1976, no. 7, 64.
179. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 3.
180. Quoted by Rodimtsev, 145. Ellipsis in the text.
181. Shtemenko, 122.
182. Chuikov, 1962a, 171–172.
183. Batov, 1962, 328.
184. Biryukov, 117–118.
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186. Chuikov, 1967, 97.
187. Krainykov, 91–92.
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192. Fedyuninskii, 109.
193. Konev, 1970, 61.
194. Navy Capt. V. Velayev, *KZ*, April 6, 1973.
195. B. Ponomarev, *Kommunist*, 1976, no. 6, 29.
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197. Lomov, 173. Emphasis in the original.
198. Ibid., 149.
199. Col. Gen. I. Tenishev, *KZ*, November 4, 1975.
200. *KZ*, November 1, 1975.
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203. Lomov, 148.
204. Col. Gen. N. Skorodumov, *VIZh*, 1974, no. 9, 36.
205. Lt. Gen. V. Reznichenko, *KZ*, December 9, 1975.
206. Col. S. Gladysh, *VIZh*, 1974, no. 3, 30.
207. Rotmistrov, 191. Emphasis added.
208. Vasilevskii, 541.
209. Shtemenko, 253.
210. Rokossovskii, 272.
211. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 390.
212. A. A. Svechin, 1927, in Kadishev, 1965, 254.
213. Maj. Gen. R. Simonyan, *VV*, 1964, no. 4, 24.
214. Col. Gen. A. Dement'ev and Col. S. Petrov, *VIZh*, 1978, no. 7, 36.
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216. Mellenthin, 229.
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220. Chuikov, 1967, 151.
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225. Bagramyan, 116. Emphasis added.
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231. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1975, no. 1, 6. Emphasis added.
232. Col. V. Vinnikov, *VV*, 1964, no. 6, 23. Emphasis added.
233. Konev, 1972, 252–257. Emphasis added.
234. Eremenko, 1964, 97. Emphasis added.
235. Konev, 1972, 92. Emphasis added.
236. Col. Gen. A. Dement'ev and Col. S. Petrov, *VIZh*, 1978, no. 7, 32–33. Emphasis added.
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238. Rokossovskii, 164.
239. Galitskii, 1970, 465.
240. Grechko, 1973. 328.
241. Biryukov, 85.
242. Novikov and Sverdlov, 102.
243. Col. A. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, December 27, 1974. Emphasis added.
244. Loza, 148. Emphasis added.
245. Lt. Gen. V. Reznichenko, *KZ*, December 27, 1974. Emphasis added.
246. Lomov, 172. Emphasis added.
247. Konev, 1972, 285.
248. Lelyushenko, 365.
249. Konev, 1970, 108.
250. Eremenko, 1971, 208–209. Emphasis added.
251. Lelyushenko, 298.
252. Col. Gen. A. Dement'ev and Col. S. Petrov, *VIZh*, 1978, no. 7, 33.
253. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 69.
254. Lyudnikov, 1962, 87. Emphasis added.
255. Col. K. Titikov, *VV*, 1978, no. 10, 38. Emphasis added.
256. Galitskii, 1973, 490. Emphasis added.
257. Novikov and Sverdlov, 99.
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260. Reznichenko, 254.
261. Savkin, 292–293.
262. Radzievskii, 1974, 97.
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265. Col. Gen. A. Dement'ev and Col. B. Petrov, *VIZh*, 1978, no. 7, 34.
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267. Zhukov, Vol. 2, 83–85.
268. Vasilevskii, 392. Emphasis added.
269. Ibid., 425. Emphasis added.
270. Mellenthin, 181–182.

271. Middeldorf, 13.
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274. Manstein, 185.
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276. Gorbatov, 176–181.
277. Reinicke, 167.
278. Ibid., 91.
279. Ibid., 225.
280. Fedyuninskii, 109–110.
281. Grechko, 1973, 355–356.
282. General Heinrich, quoted by Liddell-Hart, 322–323.
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298. Chuikov, 1962a, 237.

Chapter IV
WARDING OFF PASSIVITY

Preferring Offense

When a general officer discovers that a training exercise is prejudiced in favor of the offensive, his suggestion is not to stress the offensive less but to be more exacting about its execution: "Unless the damage inflicted on the defense attains a critical level, the attacker should not be held to have been successful . . . the commander of the attacking unit then has to organize the suppression of the defense anew. . . ."[1]

In the large majority of simulated combats where the reporting officer puts himself in the place of one of the contending sides—the other side then being called "the enemy," in quotation marks—it is almost always the attacking party that is thus favored.

> *The "Berezina" exercise of 1978:* "Whatever side of the organization of the 'battle' we take . . . the offensive into the depth of the defense of the 'enemy,' the fire preparation or the fire support of the motorized riflemen and the tanks . . . every stage of the exercise . . . was instructive. . . ."[2]

And the attacker usually wins.

The preference for the offensive is such that even when the side taking the offensive is called "Westerners," as in *Kafkas*, conducted in the presence of Marshal Grechko and foreign observers, the outcome of the battle is at least in doubt: "The steel wedge of the 'Westerners' penetrates ever more deeply into the deployment of 'Easterners.' But the latter, as also the 'Westerners,' have reserves. That means that stubborn combat is yet to come."[3]

Noting that "in exercises it is not rare that one of the sides, *usually the defense*, essentially merely plays into the hands of the other," a senior officer insists that "if, let us say, the attacker has prepared his attack badly or organized his actions insufficiently, while

the defender performs well, then *naturally* he should be awarded success, and the offense forced to stop . . . and to repeat the attack." Alas, it happens in exercises that "the unit on the offense moves forward independently of the degree to which the 'enemy' has been defeated."[4]

During the War, for an important current of military sensibility (not of doctrine), only the offensive was appropriate:

> The first year of the War, commanders and political officers imbued the fighters with one thought: we are obliged to attack. Whatever the conditions, we must not stop, we must go forward.[5]

> *The Bryansk Front:* "The first echelons did not have real defensive constructions and did not strive to build them, as the Command of the Front considered the main mission to be to move forward. . . . Then, in the winter of 1942, we . . . considered the offense, even with small forces, to be the only correct method of combat. Defense seemed unacceptable."[6]

In the presence of such beliefs, a mild qualification may be indicated:

> However, . . . it was not always possible, nor sometimes even desirable to attack in all directions simultaneously.[7]

To prove to the enemy and to oneself that one has a high capacity for offense is gratifying—and may make one extend the meaning of "offensive" beyond what is customary:

> *In the area of Leningrad:* "At dawn on November 11 [1941] our artillery and mortars opened fire. For the Hitlerites this was . . . unexpected. They excluded that we might be capable of going over to the offensive."[8]

For the very stance of attack expresses strength: "The very fact of taking the offensive reveals a stronger will."[9] But superior "will" is conducive to victory: "In approximately equal conditions," we read, "success in battle is attained by the one who . . . foists his will on the enemy. . . ."[10]

Superior *initiative* (*aktivnost'*, activeness) achieves that—and is not offense more "active," does it not display more "initiative," than defense? "The role of battle *aktivnost'* in obtaining victory has in contemporary conditions grown to such an extent," an analyst judges,

"that one has begun to consider it one of the main principles of military art."[11] "In battle," an editorial of the military daily asserts, "success invariably falls to the one who, other conditions being equal, acts more actively"[12]—is more on the offensive.

Navalit'sya, to fall on the enemy, *obrushit'sya*, to come down on him—these may be sensed as acts of irresistible power, whatever other measurements of the relationship of forces may indicate. It is a feeling that is, to be sure, not unopposed among Soviet commanders nor, I would judge, insignificant.

> *August 25, 1942, the Stavka to the Commanders in the area of Stalingrad:* "You have enough forces so as to destroy the enemy who has broken through. Gather the aircraft of both Fronts and fall upon *(navalit'sya)* the enemy who has broken through."[13]

With such a sense, one expects that a new technology usable by both sides will benefit the offense. Noting the current increase in importance of the "distant battle" as against the "near battle," an analyst infers that "distant fire battle allows the troops to inflict *forestalling* strikes on enemy targets as they appear, creates conditions for the quicker and more reliable suppression of the *defense* in significant depth . . . which is extremely important for the rapid rupture of the stability of the *defense*."[14]

The Authorities' intense preference for the offensive may be so strenuously urged for the purpose of overcoming reluctance toward it—a connection not likely to be easily visible anywhere, particularly in the case of the Soviet Authorities with their aversion to awareness and display of "negative phenomena" of any kind. "It is not a secret," we hear—in a rare lifting of silence on such a matter, which might seem obvious in the West—"that on the . . . [psychological] plane the offensive is a more difficult mode of action than, let us say, the defense. Here the soldiers . . . believe in the . . . protective force of their covers, in their system of fire. In the offensive, however, they are more vulnerable; with every step danger lurks. In these conditions fear may emerge . . ."; indeed, "in the past War the offensive sometimes petered out because one did not succeed in the decisive moment to overcome, precisely, fear. Then the soldiers lay down under the fire of the enemy, the forward line of the defense was not reached."[15] One may speak more easily about a disapproved reaction when it can be presented as overcome, as does a tank commander about the offensive in the direction of the Dnestr begun on March 21, 1944:

> The tank and mechanized brigades learned to solve combat tasks

> without *anxiety* for their rears and flanks. For instance, we were already no more *frightened* by the fact that forward tank units, having advanced far ahead, left behind . . . strong points of the enemy.[16]

Perhaps, then, taking the offensive is precious also because of what it disproves: the suspicion that one may be dominated by fear.

Or by *passivnost'*, passivity: an inclination that the Authorities seem to attribute to their subordinates, as well as probably to themselves. So the predilection for the offensive would also be a part of a vast and permanent attempt "to root out all manifestations of passivity."[17]

Offense Abuse

Being moved to take the offensive by the desire to refute suspicions—on the part of others or of oneself—of *passivnost'* is not likely to result in expedient conduct:

> [*November 23, 1942*] *the Front of the Don received an indication from the Stavka:* "Galanin acts weakly. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . November 24, Galanin hastily sent into battle the 16th Tank Corps [which suffered heavy losses and made no gains]. . . . The Corps was taken out of the battle.[18]

When reminiscing about the War, the Authorities demonstrate a propensity of commanders to indulge in the offensive to excess; but in current analyses and prescriptions, as well as in accounts of simulated combat, the point hardly appears (with one exception, the "frontal strike," as shown below).

Might the propensity for inappropriate offensives have declined to such an extent that it is not worth warning against anymore? That seems unlikely. Or do the prospective adversaries seem weak enough to allow the Authorities to disregard this inclination? Or is there a reluctance to deal in public with a defect so detrimental to the image of the Soviet Union as that of having offense-happy commanders?

On this last point, the present tense is used at times in what follows in identifying possible proclivities of Soviet commanders, illustrated solely from occurrences in the War.

* * * * * * *

Stalin to the commander of the Voronezh Front, N. F. Vatutin, August 22, 1943: "The events of the last days have shown that you have not learned from experience of the past and continue repeating old errors. . . . The striving to attack everywhere and to seize the largest possible territory, without consolidating the success and without firmly securing the flanks of the strike groupings, is attacking of an indiscriminate character."[19]

In the first days of the War, for instance, when the intentions of the Hitlerites to cut off our large forces in the so-called Bialystok Bulge came to be observed, attempts were undertaken to engage in counteroffensives, instead of speedily leading these troops back into more advantageous positions.

When the enemy's Army Group "Center" turned south at the end of August 1941, and when the efforts of the Bryansk Reserves and Southwestern Fronts should have been concentrated on defending the sector in which the enemy intended to break through, the Stavka set before them offensive tasks. . . .[20]

The summer of 1941 in the Ukraine: "The 38th Army could have done much if it had gone over to strict defense. But the Commander of the Front demanded absolutely that it take the offensive rather than defending itself." [21]

The winter of 1942: "The low results of our offensive actions": "Would it not be better, it seemed to me, to utilize the breathing spell which we had gained and to go over to the defense so as to accumulate forces and means for a powerful attack? All of this, with calculations and conclusions, was set forth in a detailed report to the Command of the Front. The answer was brief: 'Fulfill the order!' "[22]

The fall of 1942 in the area of Stalingrad: "As the main role in the imminent offensive was laid on the shoulders of the 66th Army, I discussed the situation with Malinovskii [commanding that Army]. He began to ask me not to direct seven new divisions into the battle:

—We will only lose them in vain.

—To our good fortune, we received only three divisions from the Stavka at the appointed time. . . .

As one had to expect, the attack was unsuccessful."[23]

The inappropriate offensive may be confined to the imagination:

A division commander to his political commissar about a fellow officer, June 27, 1941: "Kuretin has already calculated how many days are required to arrive in Berlin on condition of marching 15 kilometers every day. He has omitted only one circumstance: We are advancing not toward the West but toward the Northeast, and our task at present is, alas, how to contain the onslaught of the enemy who advances more than 15 kilometers per day."

. . . . . .

. . . . We must think of how not to let Hitler into Kiev. Are you in agreement? Do these views seem defeatist to you?[24]

The calculations accompanying such offensives may deviate from reality in any one of the ways discussed earlier (Chapter III). For instance, by underestimating the obstacles offered by nature:

The Volkhov Front in the winter of 1942: "The conditions for conducting war here were very difficult. Forests and swamps, bad roads . . . constant fog. . . . The soft soil reduced the destructive effect of shells and mines. . . . The broad operational designs of the Command entered into evident conflict with the existing possibilities. It was clear that no haste was appropriate here in developing offensive plans . . . but, as always, the Stavka was in haste. . . ."[25]

But an offensive may also rely upon the power attributed to the offensive stance itself:

In the operational directive issued by the People's Commissariat of Defense directly to the troops of the Border Districts on the first day of the War, this was stated:

"The troops must come down upon the enemy with all their forces and means and destroy them in the areas in which they have violated the Soviet Frontier."

But there was no indication on which particular lines, with what forces and means, the surprise attack of the enemy should be repelled. . . .[26]

June 22, 1941: ". . . . General N. F. Vatutin said that I. V. Stalin had approved the draft of Directive No. 3 of the Minister of Defense. . . ."

—The Directive foresees the transition of our troops to the counteroffensive with the task of crushing the enemy . . . and of going over to his territory.

. . . . . .

> Requiring a counteroffensive, the Stavka did not know the real situation that had emerged at the end of June 22. . . . *In its decision, the High Command started not from the analysis of the real situation . . . but from . . . the striving for aktivnost'*, without taking account of the capabilities of the troops. . . .[27]

> The attack undertaken on February 16 [1943 in the Southwest] had not been prepared. It was conducted without a deep analysis of the situation, blindly, or according to the principle: only forward.[28]

It may be judged to be excellence *not* to rely merely on the power of being on the offensive:

> *The order of the People's Commissariat of Defense, No. 308, September 18, 1941:* "In numerous battles . . . the 100th, 127th, 153d, and 161st Rifle Divisions . . . have inflicted . . . defeat on the German-Fascist troops. . . ."
>
> Why have these rifle divisions succeeded in beating the enemy?
>
> *First*, because in attacking they went forward not blindly, not in headlong fashion, but only after meticulous intelligence, after serious preparation, after having tested the weak points of the enemy and having secured their flanks.[29]

An attack should therefore be based on calculations showing its probable worth:

> *The directive of the Stavka of November 12, 1943:* "The Stavka . . . recalled the important principle of Soviet military art that every groundless advance without taking account of the relationship of forces . . . can lead to undesired consequences."[30]

A commander resolved upon the offensive may avoid information showing it to be infeasible or inexpedient:

> *Kiev, July 15, 1941:* "In the morning I presented myself to the Commander of the Front, Colonel General N. T. Kirponos. . . . I had repeatedly to interrupt my report when the General gave orders to the staff over the telephone. There was a question of 'decisive cou nterstrikes' with sometimes one and sometimes two divisions. I observed that he did not ask whether these divisions were capable of counterstriking. The impression arose that the Commander does not want to look facts in the face."[31]

Or a commander may not even believe that he has grounds for

expecting a favorable outcome of an attack upon which he is nevertheless resolved:

> *The fall of 1943 in the Southwest:* "Against us were acting parts of two infantry divisions, supported by an elaborate system of defensive structures. In such conditions, to give the order to the troops: 'Forward, come what may' . . . yields nothing except heavy losses. It became necessary to stop the attack of the Corps."[32]

Even when the chances are seen to be weighted against the success of an attempt to advance, a commander may be loath to desist from it without having tried and failed.

> *The crossing of the Dnepr in the early fall of 1943:* "The General Staff agreed that an attack from the Bukrin bridgehead could scarcely count on success. The element of surprise had been wasted. . . . The terrain was extremely awkward for the use of tanks. . . . On September 25, Zhukov also reported to Stalin on the difficulties of attacking from the Bukrin bridgehead. . . . He thought a new bridgehead would have to be captured. . . . The Supreme Commander made no attempt to refute our arguments; nor did he agree with them. He said, 'You are giving up before you have even tried to launch a proper attack. A breakthrough must be made from the bridgehead that exists. No one knows yet whether the Front will be able to secure a new one.' "[33]

A commander, resolved upon a risky attack, may reject the aid of another unit, preferring to attack on his own.

> [*November 23, 1942*] the Front of the Don received an indication from the Stavka: "Galanin [commanding the 24th Army] acts weakly. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . Galanin gave free rein to his nerves. . . . November 24 [he] hastily sent into battle the 16th Tank Corps against a sector of the enemy's defense which had not been broken through, proceeding across the deployment of the 214th Division. . . . On the morning of the 24th, General N. I. Biryukov [commanding the 214th Division] saw a tank lieutenant who was arriving on a motorcycle. The Division Commander said: "Let us fulfill the task together." The officer impatiently answered: "I don't know how to go forward with your infantry. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.] We shall break into Vertyachii alone." And now the Corps went to "break in." The tanks moved straight into the minefields. . . . Some tanks blew

> up, others went forward and perished under the fire of the enemy. The Corps was taken out of the battle.[34]

Then there is the attack against a flagrantly superior enemy:

> *The summer of 1941:* "The order to conduct a counterstrike was again received. However, the enemy had such superiority that I took upon myself the responsibility not to counterstrike, but to meet the enemy with defense."[35] "Look what we did. . . . We attacked the flank of the German 39th Army Corps with one division. A whole corps! And without air support! You know what that is called? . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]"[36]

> *The battle for Moscow:* "Unexpectedly, an order was received from the Commander of the Western Front to strike from the area north of Volokolamsk at the Volokolamsk grouping of the enemy. The time allotted for the preparation of the attack was one night. . . . It was unintelligible to me how the Commander reasoned when giving this order. We could spare only few forces, no time was left for preparation. . . . My request, at least to increase the length of the preparation, was rejected."
>
> As could be expected, the partial counterstrike begun on November 16 [1941] on the order of the Front brought little advantage.[37]

The cost of attaining the aim of an attack may be predictably high, and the worth of the objective evidently low:

> Even if we drive the enemy out of Kulevka, our positions will not have improved on the whole.[38]

> I received the order: to take the Red Farm by storm. . . . It stood on the reverse slopes of a height that rose before us, and however much observers strained, they did not succeed in having a thorough look at the defense system constructed there. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And even in case of a successful completion of this task, the seizure of the Red Farm did not bring us any advantage. . . : From the side of the enemy, the farm was excellently visible and targetable.
>
> I communicated my doubts to the Army Commander. Having listened to me, N. P. Pukhov announced:
>
> ". . . Nothing can be done. This is an order from the Front."
>
> [As the troops proceeded toward the line where the attack was to begin], the enemy opened fire on them with all his weapons.

There were wounded and killed, and we were still far from the line to be reached.

It became evident that . . . [the troops assigned to the attack] would be simply destroyed, even before the attack began. There was no point in continuing this attack doomed to failure.[39]

The area of Stalingrad: "Conversing as friends over a cup of tea with Pavel Ivanovich Batov [commanding the 65th Army], I recalled to him our telephone conversation at the time of the heavy combats in December [1942], when we were asked insistently to rapidly crush the just-encircled enemy without having sufficient forces and means to do this. I had called Batov on the telephone and asked him how the offensive was developing.

—The troops are advancing.

—How are they advancing?

—They crawl.

—Have they crawled far?

—To the second horizontal of the Kazatskyi Kurgan.

I had told Batov: If his troops were forced to crawl and succeeded in arriving only at some imaginary horizontal, I was ordering [him] to cease the offensive, to bring the troops back to their starting position, and to go over to the defense. . . ."

Of course, for such independent action, I could be heavily censored.[40]

One may insist in the face of failure (see Chapter III):

The Voronezh Front in the fall of 1942: "The commanders of the Front . . . did not want to reconcile themselves to failure. . . ."

With every day it was felt more sharply that the operation was fading. But one did not want to acknowledge that. In the Staff we tried very hard to beat the enemy off on the map and report a microscopic advance of the unit.

In the General Staff, one began to understand the pointlessness of our further attempts. However, no orders came to stop these useless and costly actions. There, too, evidently, one still harbored the hope for some miracle. Only at the end of September a directive of the Stavka ordered the Voronezh Front to go over to the defense.[41]

As in the case just cited, when attacking is infeasible, one may still posture as if one were on the offensive:

And then they started playing "attack."[42]

There is nothing worse than to pretend to be continuing an offensive when it cannot be continued anymore, when it is in fact stopped. . . .[43]

That the enemy retreats may be sufficient grounds for one's advancing:

Of course, one must not throw oneself in headlong fashion on the enemy at the occasion of every retreat of his. . . . Sometimes a quick advance . . . turns rapidly into bitter defeat.[44]

All the more as the enemy's retreat may be merely imagined:

A rare instance of inappropriate offense in simulated combat: "In one exercise . . . the company commander, Senior Lieutenant N. Ayuev, received a report that small groups of the 'enemy' had withdrawn from the strongpoint, and decided to go over to pursuit. . . . But the 'enemy' opened heavy artillery fire on the Command and at the same time counterattacked against its flank. The unit bore substantial 'losses' and its advance was . . . held up."[45]

One may be heedless of one's flanks, uncovered by attacking:

The operation "General Rumyantsev" in the summer of 1943: "The enemy began to concentrate his reserves . . . intending to stop our offensive. . . . The Command of the Voronezh Front underestimated the imminent danger or simply overlooked it altogether. Our advance continued without sufficient . . . covering of flanks. The enemy took advantage of this and launched powerful counterattacks. . . . The troops of the Voronezh Front suffered considerable losses. In some places both of our tank armies were . . . pushed north. . . ."

Antonov [of the General Staff] . . . reported the situation to the Supreme Commander on the night of August 21.

"Sit down and write a directive to Vatutin," Stalin told me.

He armed himself with a red pencil and, pacing up and down along the table, dictated. . . .

"The events of the last few days have shown that you have not taken into account past experience and continue to repeat old mistakes. . . . The urge to attack . . . without . . . providing . . . cover for the flanks of the assault group amounts to a haphazard attack. Such an attack . . . allows the enemy to strike at the flank

and rear of our groups which have gone far ahead and not been provided with cover on their flanks."

The Supreme Commander stopped for a minute and read what I had written over my shoulder. At the end of the phrase he wrote in his own hand, "And to slaughter them piecemeal."[46]

Attacking, one may entrap oneself in one's own encirclement:

The summer of 1941: "Conducting a protracted battle at Grodno, we went directly into the jaws of the Fascists, into the very bottom of the 'cauldron' they prepared for us. Evidently, it would have been more correct to lead the troops back toward the East."[47]

The attack on Volokolamsk, November 16, 1941: "At first . . . we succeeded in penetrating into the enemy deployment for three kilometers. But then the enemy began to attack on the whole front of the Army. Our units, which had advanced, were forced to return in haste. The situation became especially difficult for the Cavalry Group of L. N. Dovator. The enemy pressed on it from all sides. Only due to its mobility and to the skill of the Commander could the cavalrymen break out and avoid full encirclement."[48]

The Southwestern Front in the spring of 1942: "The situation required stopping the offensive and concentrating attention on the liquidation of the enemy grouping which had broken through. Regrettably, this was not done in good time. At that time many among us could not understand why the offensive of the Southwestern Front continued, while the threat of the encirclement of these troops was evident."[49] "The major forces of the Southwestern Front continued the attack, advancing westward. . . . In other words, our troops went ourselves into the sack, into the gaping jaws of the enemy."[50]

Finally, there is the only type of inexpedient attack which the Authorities continue to stress, the "frontal" one, to which there is still, after decades of rejection, "attachment" on the part of some officers:[51]

The battalion commander drew the correct conclusion: in this situation there is no point in pushing right through; here one must operate through a ruse.[52]

Even swiftness should not always be maximized at the cost of a self-damaging and vain frontal attack:

One cannot agree with those officers who in exercises sometimes

strive to solve every task by frontal attack. They say the shortest distance makes it possible to economize time and . . . to maintain a high speed. This is a profound error. . . .[53]

Frontal attack works best as a feint:

By a maneuver with a small group of tanks on the enemy's forward edge, Lieutenant A. Shishkov created the appearance of an attack, but with the others he attacked the enemy from flank and rear.[54]

But now there is before the unit a well-defended strongpoint. And here the commander of the company decided to apply a military ruse. The platoon commanded by Lieutenant N. Poichenko, attacking in the center of the unit's deployment, concentrated, creating in the "enemy" the impression of being about to attack. At the same time the platoon commanded by Lieutenant A. Shaitanov directed itself, without being observed, against the flank of the "enemy." And from the left the strongpoint began to be seized by the platoon commanded by Lieutenant V. Gavrilov.[55]

In the calculation of the Commander of the Tank Battalion for an attack on a strongpoint of the enemy, an important role belonged to the unit of Senior Lieutenant N. Martynov. While other units proceeded to an envelopment of the strongpoint from the flank, the company commanded by Martynov was to attack from the front and thereby to attract to itself the attention of the defender.[56]

What is, of course, rarely mentioned is the approval given in the past to frontal attack:

In the winter campaign of 1941 – 1942 we were still in significant measure under the influence of those views which in 1940 . . . led to the frontal attack on the Mannerheim line.[57]

Nor is attention often directed to the support granted to frontality by an indifference to losses:

The battle for Skirmanovo on the approaches to Moscow: "Malygin proposed to go around Skirmanovo from the left and to strike the enemy in flank and rear. But the representative of the Front decidedly refused this variant. He considered that we had neither sufficient time nor sufficient forces for it.

—But to attack from the front here means to send people to their death, Malygin argued his position.

"Do you propose to fight without losses?" Makukhin retorted.[58]

Experience purportedly demonstrates abundantly—without naming particular reasons—the higher yield from attacking flank and rear rather than front:

> The sudden attack of one *eskadron* from the rear usually brought more success than the methodological attack of a whole regiment from the front.[59]

> A frontal attack pursued throughout many days did not bring us success. However, it sufficed to undertake a maneuver of envelopment merely with small forces, and the enemy immediately left in haste.[60]

One rarely sees a qualified rejection of frontality as the principal direction of attack:

> The conception of the vulnerability of the battle deployment of the enemy is usually connected with his flanks, the gap between enemy units, his rear. But in this case [from the War] the front of the enemy turned out to be . . . his most vulnerable part. The commander of the attacking battalion took account of that in good time and creatively utilized the situation which emerged, not letting himself be bound by the conventional conception concerning the superiority of the flank strike.[61]

In accounts of the War, of course, occurrences tending to confirm that "conventional conception" prevail:

> *The summer of 1941, the area of Mogilev:* "The counterattacks were directed not against the flanks of the tank units of the enemy which had broken through, but against the enemy's front, often in those sectors where he was strongest."[62]

> *The 65th Rifle Division in the area of Leningrad in the fall of 1941:* "More often than others Major Lembo got it [from the Division Commander] for frontal attacks:
>
> —Don't do it from the front. You should know that you won't break in a wall with your front."[63]

> *The Southwest, the counterstrike of the 38th Army of June 11, 1942:* "The tank brigade struck the enemy frontally. However, there were fully possible maneuvers of envelopment, which doubtlessly would have given better results."[64]

The first Soviet counteroffensive in the area of Stalingrad in mid-September 1942: "The counterstrike was conducted on a large sector of the Front (Akatovka-Kuz'michi)—25 kilometers in length and not against a weak spot in the battle deployment of the enemy . . . not on the flank or the rear, but against the head of a powerful battering ram consisting of four corps."[65]

What were the basic causes of the failure of the attempt to lift the blockade of Leningrad in 1942? . . . We mainly . . . conducted frontal strikes. . . .[66]

The Caucasus, 1942 – 1943: "Often we attacked frontally and not by envelopment, which is especially pernicious in mountain war."[67]

The first attack against Pilluponen did not furnish a positive result, as it proceeded from the front without any maneuver.[68]

In one variant of the frontal attack, one runs straight into the enemy's fire, which has substantially survived one's own artillery preparation.

The summer of 1942 at the Voronezh Front: "This operation, too, ended without results. . . . We had to attack troops in the spring of 1942. The attack was preceded by a so-called 'accelerated artillery preparation' with an insignificant density of artillery, while the attacking units encountered a firm positional defense with a developed system of dugouts. The divisions bore unnecessary losses and the objectives were again not attained."[69]

The 24th Army [in the encircling operation near Stalingrad] conducted the major strike in the area of the height 56.8 with three rifle divisions, one of which, the 214th, had to take that height frontally. The Commander of the Division . . . N. I. Biryukov, attempted to convince the Commander of the 24th Army that the key height should not be taken by frontal attack, but that one should rather go around it to the left where there were no strong reinforcements on the ground. Galanin answered: "Of what are you afraid? With such artillery as we have, we suppress the Germans right away." In fact, the Army Commander had at his disposal for the support of the first echelon seven regiments of artillery reinforcement and four regiments of Guards mortars. A big force, but only on condition of cooperation; the enchantment with a single kind of troops does not bring success. . . . The powerful artillery . . . "worked over" the enemy, but the division attacking later had only 40 barrels left, of

> which ten were occupied with counter-battery combat. Breaking through the forward edge of the enemy, the 214th Division approached the height 56.8 and then lay down, pressed to the earth by murderous fire. Heavy, unsuccessful battles lasted for two days.[70]

According to a German commander, his side did a better job of destroying the enemy's means of fire before an infantry or tank advance:

> And then into the Russian positions! Almost everything is already smashed. . . . This was the main target of our fire; we arrive at it without a single shot having been fired at us. Look, you Russians, this is the way to attack over open terrain, not in the manner you did for days in vain![71]

This is the Soviet manner, according to their enemies:

> *The summer of 1941:* "Riflemen on trucks and tanks move toward our line of fire. Result: extremely heavy enemy losses."[72]
>
> *The area of Novgorod in the winter of 1943:* "Wave after wave of Russian infantry is moved forward; in part the attackers must collect their weapons from these fallen, and wave after wave is smashed."[73]
>
> *The area of Borovsk in the fall of 1941:* "Our men let the Russians approach to 200 meters. . . . Then they lie [about] like mown [hay]. But a new wave comes from behind."[74]
>
> Shouting "Hurrah," the Russians broke out of the forest. . . . All our men had to do was to discharge rifles and machine guns. But the Russians rushed forward as if blind. The last attackers were killed literally in front of the mouths of our weapons. Only a few escaped. The whole "ghastly spectacle" took only ten minutes.[75]
>
> *The Crimea in the fall of 1941:* "From the steep shore at Genishesk . . . we can observe the enemy's every movement. I am therefore not a little astonished when the Russians attack . . . presenting themselves as if on a chessboard. Company after company moves slowly and steadily toward us, toward the certainty of death or captivity. . . . Numberless brown points cover, a few minutes later, the meager grass, while others walk unsteadily toward our positions with raised hands."[76]
>
> *The area of Rostov, November 25, 1941, 5:20 a.m.:* "Out of the darkness in the dawn masses of Russian infantry run against our

> position, singing and shouting. The first rows have their arms linked. . . . The mines exploding under the ice do not stop them. In the middle of the river our fire mows them down. Those behind climb over those fallen. . . . Three divisions have attacked a few hundred half-frozen men."[77]

There are, to be sure, no corresponding Soviet reports—only occasional statements implying that the enemy believes stories of the kind quoted to be true:

> Their main calculation was that we would . . . throw ourselves toward their stationary infantry and fall under its . . . machine gun and automatic fire, from which one cannot save oneself.[78]

Such conduct may be attributed to the enemy himself:

> They press forward in headlong fashion, drunk; they understand nothing; they put themselves directly under fire.[79]

Only a dissident will say it directly:

> *The summer of 1941:* "Our tanks went over open terrain . . . directly into the fire of the enemy's artillery, which had not been suppressed, and . . . became targets of enemy aircraft.
>
> Nevertheless, they advanced without pause."[80]

Offense Deficiency

If there is a Soviet inclination to indulge in the offensive to excess, an opposite disposition also seems to exist. (I have been unable to discover which conditions make for the one and which for the other.)

When one does not act according to the maxim "a strike group must *only* strive forward, not look at its flank,"[81] one may be *greatly* preoccupied by threats to one's flanks which might result from advancing. German commanders have been puzzled by the Soviet refusal, in the winter of 1945, to press on from the Oder to Berlin by their decision to stop for two months so as to eliminate the threat from East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia to the flanks of their force advancing westward.

When one does not act according to the maxim of *bypassing*

enemy strongpoints when moving forward after a breakthrough, one may be *greatly* concerned with seizing them first, even at high cost:

> Already before the beginning of the operation, when we conducted exercises, prepared the troops for the attack, we indicated in particular that the troops . . . should not attack centers of resistance but go around them . . . ; nevertheless there were cases when divisions and brigades entangled themselves into battle for population centers.[82]

> *The offensive of the Fourth Guards Cavalry Corps in the Caucasus in the fall of 1942:* "The Commander of the Front ordered the Commander of the Corps from the morning of October 30 on to go around the strongpoints and to attack in the direction of. . . ."
>
> However, the Command of the Corps decided in the night of October 30-November 1 to attack anew and to seize Achikulak. The enemy had at this time succeeded in concentrating supplementary units here. . . . For two days the Cossacks conducted unsuccessful heavy combats with the infantry and the tanks of the enemy, but did not succeed in seizing Achikulak. Suffering large and unjustified losses, the Corps stopped the attack and retreated.[83]

> *The Southwest Front, the spring of 1942:* Major General A. F. Bychkovskii, commanding the 6th Cavalry Corps: "He did not know how to break through into the operational depth of the enemy's defense. Instead of this, he foisted off three cavalry divisions [in] combat with enemy infantry in populated points. Attacking the enemy from the front. . . ."[84]

One may less than fully exploit the potential for further gain created in an offensive, but unforeseen in the attackers' initial plan (see Chapter III).

> *The spring of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "When the troops of the 56th Army at the time of the offensive west of Krymskya obtained successes and when it was necessary to lead supplementary forces into the sector of the breakthrough so as to develop these successes, this was not done, though possibilities for such a maneuver existed."[85]

> *The second day of the offensive against Eastern Prussia, October 17, 1944:* "The insufficiently decisive actions of some units, particularly in the Eighth Guards Rifle Corps, permitted the enemy to break away from the attackers and to occupy second . . . lines without hindrance. The commanders of corps did not always aug-

ment their strike from the depth; [they] utilized weakly such a powerful means of developing a success as second echelons."[86]

According to a German commander with whom many of his colleagues seem to agree, "on many occasions a successful [Soviet] attack, a breakthrough, or an accomplished encirclement was not exploited. . . ."[87]

The area of Stalingrad, December 1942: "There was the danger that the enemy would attempt to widen his breakthrough by introducing fresh troops. We could hardly have withstood further pressure. The enemy did not utilize this opportunity."[88]

The winter of 1943 between Don and Donets: "It is inexplicable that the Russians made a halt in front of the gap [in the German deployment] between the rivers Kadipya and Bystraya. . . . Only later did they engage stronger forces here, and then it was no more possible to encircle large German units."[89]

To our astonishment we [the author is the pertinent German commander—NL] observed on the morning of January 30 [1945] that the Russians had not utilized the opportunity to seize Königsberg during the night. . . . They would not have encountered any serious resistance.[90]

We have a hole in our front through which the enemy can freely penetrate. A Russian battalion already stands between our Main Combat Line (HKL) and our positions. It is inexplicable that the Russians don't advance a bit farther and liquidate our few men. It is even less understandable that they have not tried to roll up our HKL from the rear. Every German officer would have attempted that immediately upon breaking through. But . . . when the Russians have reached the objective indicated in their order, they remain . . . seated and eat.[91]

An initial gain may slow an attack by raising exaggerated expectations of enemy counteraction:

The area of Moscow: "December 16 [1941] the expected [Soviet] attack occurred. . . . Our situation came to be desperate when the Russians, despite the exceptionally favorable position they had attained, became perfectly passive. As prisoners of war during the next days made clear, the Russians now expected a strong German counterstrike."[92]

The area of Stalingrad, January 1943: "The Russians were then

still very timid. They really never utilized their . . . initial successes. . . . They never followed up on their strikes, or they could have destroyed the encircled group much earlier. The Russian leadership was . . . probably afraid of surprises. . . ."[93]

There is a particular fear of being encircled:

The area of Mogilev, the summer of 1941: "Where our strikes were successful, they were not reinforced, either out of . . . or out of fear of being encircled."[94]

The winter of 1942 in the Southwest: "The caution and sometimes even the indecisiveness inhibiting commanders during the breakthrough of the enemy's defense were . . . dictated by the fear of being encircled by the enemy."[95]

At least in the beginning of the War, little was needed to induce the belief of being encircled; and that belief then did much to reduce performance:

In the first months of the war, the word "encirclement" was very often employed. This was a . . . panicky . . . word, and not a military term appropriate only in particular conditions.

It happened that panicky people, hearing machine gun fire or even rifle shots in some direction, shouted: "They have encircled us!" "We are encircled!" In such cases, if no firm hand of command was found, the unit . . . succumbed to panic. . . ."[96]

It was our mission to break through the enemy defense . . . and to make the 21st Cavalry Division enter into the gap thus created for the sake of a strike into the rear of the enemy in the area of Roslavl. . . . That Division had just arrived at the Front. . . . Its Commander, Ya. K. Kuliev . . . immediately talked of what worried him most:

"If we only could get out of this swamp . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL] into the width! . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. There, nothing is fearful. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]"[97]

The intensely negative reaction to encirclement was presumably heightened by the negative reaction of the Authorities to encircled personnel:

The commission of inquiry sent to investigate, on October 29, 1941, the giving up on October 27 of Volokolamsk by the 316th Division: "The Chairman of the Commission stated that the Division Com-

> mander had made the mistake of putting into the direction of the German attack the 690th Regiment, that is, a unit which had come out of encirclement and therefore was little steadfast. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . [Whereupon the author said:] it is time to take out of use the concepts of "encirclement," "encircled ones," with which some connect something incompatible with Soviet military honor.[98]

> According to a dissident, "the heroes who . . . had managed to get out of encirclement were received with executions or had to bear . . . the dishonorable name 'encircled ones.' Most of them got into camps or penal battalions."[99]

The Authorities, then and since, have, of course, also demanded that one fight in encirclement as effectively as in any other condition:

> Encirclements with us are closely associated with the years 1941 and 1942. . . . This does not prepare the young fighter for the fact that when attacking . . . he can find himself in . . . an encirclement.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Commander must always be ready to fight in an encirclement, he must consider this a normal manner of fighting.[100]

—which personnel allegedly did in 1943–44:

> *The spring of 1944 in the Southwest:* "In September 1941, encircling the troops of our Southwestern Front, Kleist attacked from the area of Kremenchug toward Romny, and Guderian also toward Romny from the area of Klentsov. Toward Romny from the North and from the South went, in each direction, three to four . . . German tanks. With that little, our troops held and felt themselves to be in encirclement. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.] How many times did it not happen: a dozen enemy soldiers equipped with machine guns penetrate into our rear, fire into the air, and a whole regiment begins to panic: "We are encircled!"
>
> Now we have dozens if not hundreds of Fascist tanks in our rear. From Stanislav, Nadvornyi, Nizhnyuv, recently replenished German Divisions are attacking. We are not hiding the difficulty of the situation from the troops, who see themselves that ammunition, rifles, and letters are obtained by air. But I have not a single time heard . . . the anxious whisper: "We are encircled!" The Tank Army lives its normal combat life, only in a tenser fashion than usual. There is no loss of bearings.[101]

Offensive actions, the Authorities point out, will fail not only when one fears being encircled, but also when one aims not at encircling and then annihilating the enemy, but at merely pushing him back by a frontal strike—a costly mode of striking that is likely to fail or to be of insufficient yield if it should succeed.

> In essence, we did not crush the enemy, but dislodged him.[102]

> *The seizure of Khar'kov in he winter of 1943:* "In the final stage of the operation, a mistake which had been committed in planning . . . showed itself more clearly. The 40th Army and the 3d Tank Army moved into the city with their main forces and by that very fact allowed the enemy . . . not withdraw to Poltava."[103]

> *The Taman Peninsula, in the fall of 1943, the Germans retreating:* "The combat actions in the first days of the offensive showed that in pursuit units . . . advanced with an even distribution of forces across the Front, adopted maneuvers of envelopment but little, did not always utilize the absence of a continuous front of the enemy. All this led to the retreating units of the enemy not being encircled and annihilated in detail, but merely pushed back."[104]

> *The defeat of the Germans in the Caucasus:* "While heavy losses were inflicted on the German-Fascist troops, we did not succeed in encircling them. . . . The enemy retreated . . . from line to line, left behind a large quantity of equipment and arms, but he still was able to evacuate to the Crimea through the Kerch Straits."[105]

> *Eastern Prussia:* "Despite the requirements of the Staffs of the Armies, the envelopment of strongpoints and centers of defense was little practiced, which led not to the encirclement, but to the pushing back of the enemy."[106]

> *A German commander about the Soviet offensive in the area of Moscow in early January 1942:* "Then at the latest the center of the Soviet deployment should have become inactive . . . for the sake of the envelopment and encirclement of the German Army Group Center. But the entire Russian Front continued to attack. Its components in the center pressed the Fourth Tank Army and the Fourth Army farther back and thereby . . . out of the [possible] encirclement."[107]

Merely pushing the enemy back, as an objective, is justifiable only by one's weakness:

> *The offensive of the winter of 1942:* "All of which our exhausted troops were capable was to push the enemy back . . . and not to obtain decisive results."[108]

For an enemy merely pushed back may return:

> *A village seized:* "The soldiers, gladdened by victory, did not think of the possibility that the Germans might return."[109]

> The pushing back of the enemy never leads to decisive victory, but most often carries disagreeable surprises.[110]

Merely Pushing the Enemy Back

It is precisely the exclusive capacity of the offense to *annihilate* the enemy which renders it precious. "The offensive always was and remains today the most decisive manner of action because only as a result of the offensive is the full annihilation of the forces and means of the enemy obtained. . . ."[111] An officer goes out of his way to remark that "with defense only one cannot decide a combat task. One must annihilate the enemy."[112]

But the offensive is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for annihilating the enemy. For the latter to occur, the offensive must not be misused for merely pushing the enemy back; one must not even permit him to go back.

> The basic requirements of maneuvering tactics: not to push the enemy back from one line to the other, but to annihilate him. . . .[113]

> The directives of the Stavka of February 6 and 11, 1943, to the Southwestern Front asked it "not to tolerate the withdrawal of the enemy toward Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozh'e, to chase his Donets grouping into the Crimea."[114]

> *The Stavka on July 24, 1944, to the Commander of the First Ukrainian Front:* "The Stavka . . . orders you . . . to crush the L'vov grouping of the enemy and not to permit its retreat beyond the river San. . . ."[115]

> *Stalin on January 4, 1943:* "It is not to our advantage to push the enemy out of the North Caucasus. We should gain more from

keeping him there so as to bring about his encirclement by a blow from the Black Sea Group."[116]

Encirclement, the principal means of annihilation, becomes as precious as that end itself. One is reluctant to renounce the word "encirclement" in a marginal case:

The operation in Belorussia, 1944: "The experience gained in the battle of Stalingrad and other major battles had shown that encirclement and destruction of the enemy entails great expenditure of men and matériel and loss of time. . . ."

We [in the General Staff] decided that previous methods of destroying the enemy were not suited to the present . . . situation. The new idea that took shape was as follows. Having shattered the bulk of the enemy's forces in the tactical zone of his defense . . . we should knock the remnants out of their fortified positions into the woods and marshes. There they would be at a disadvantage, and we should harass them from the flanks and the air while the partisans helped us in the rear. . . .

. . . . . .

The Belorussian operation was finally defined as the encirclement and destruction in the Minsk area of large forces of Army Group 'Center.' The General Staff . . . did not want to use . . . 'encirclement,' but we were corrected.[117]

Encircling takes precedence even over maximizing one's strength of strike (see Chapter I):

A meeting of the Stavka, late June 1944: "I. S. Konev explained the design of the impending operation [in the Southwest] showing . . . how our troops, by two . . . strikes in the direction of L'vov and Rava-Russka, would split the German Fascist Army Group 'Northern Ukraine,' encircle and annihilate the enemy in the area of Brody."

"And why two strikes?" asked the Supreme Commander. . . . "Let there, instead of two strikes, be a single powerful one."

I. S. Konev advanced that one strike, even if it were very powerful, would merely push the enemy back . . . —whereupon Stalin withdrew his proposal.[118]

One may raise the question whether there is a substitute for encirclement as a means for annihilation—and leave it unanswered:

The Carpathians: "How can one . . . crush the . . . enemy? For

> a simple pushing back does not lead to a decisive victory. However, encircling the enemy in the mountains and then destroying him is . . . practically improbable. It is not by accident that the experience of many centuries of war has given us no example of a decisive crushing of opposing troops in the mountains."[119]

It is only for the sake of avoiding collateral capital damage that one may renounce encircling:

> *The seizure of Cracow:* "We did not set ourselves the task of cutting the last path of retreat of the Hitlerites. If we had done this, it would then have been necessary to root them out there at length, and we would doubtlessly have destroyed the city. Tempting as it was to create a ring of encirclement, we did not do that, though it was possible for us to do so. Confronting the enemy with a real threat of envelopment, our troops pushed him out of the city through the straight strike of infantry and tanks."[120]

It is hard on the commander to renounce encirclement; so difficult that a matter of soul may be mentioned:

> *Not encircling the Germans in Upper Silesia so as to avoid the destruction of industry:* "The skillful envelopment of the Hitlerite forces by converging actions from the West and the East created in the German-Fascist command the impression of an impending encirclement of the whole Silesian grouping."
>
> And in reality, the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front only had to close the ring. But this did not enter into the plans of the Command of the Front, because desperate actions of the enemy, finding himself encircled, would indubitably cause the destruction of the Silesian industrial region. . . .
>
> It was difficult for Ivan Stepanovich [Konev] to renounce a more active form of combat—the encirclement and destruction of the enemy. Also, it was necessary to convince the commanders and the troops that we should not close the ring but rather leave the enemy a corridor for leaving the "bag. . . ."[121]

> An inner battle took place in me. . . . At the beginning of the operation when we . . . had not yet felt to the end what destruction lengthy combat in this area might entail, I gave the order for encirclement.
>
> [Then] the thought matured in me that we were obliged to seize the Silesian industrial area . . . whole, that is, that we had to leave the Hitlerites out of this trap. . . . On the other hand, it is precisely encirclement which is the highest form of operational art. . . . Then

> how could I . . . renounce it? It was not easy for me, a professional military person . . . to go against established doctrine. . . .
>
> This was a difficult psychological situation. . . .[122]

Waiting for the Enemy to Strike

The Authorities seem to sense—often without full consciousness—among their subordinates and even in themselves a rarely mentioned disposition to just "sit with hands folded" when struck by the enemy.

> In numerous battles . . . the 100th, 127th, 153d, and 161st Rifle Divisions . . . have inflicted severe defeat on the German-Fascist troops. . . . Why did our rifle divisions succeed in beating the enemy. . . ? . . . . In the fifth place, because when pressed by the enemy, these divisions *responded . . . with a strike to a strike* of the enemy,[123]—while they might well have responded with inaction, as other units, it is implied, did.
>
> *The offensive against Eastern Prussia, October 18, 1944:* "How to help our attacking units from the air? The weather was manifestly unfit for flying."
>
> "How come, Efgenyi Makarovich," I said to the Deputy Commander of the First Air Army, General Nikolaenko, "the Germans, utilizing breaks in the clouds, bomb our troops, *and we calmly look at that*? True, their airfields are not covered by clouds in contrast to ours. Our pilots must fight their way to the enemy airfields. I see the weather is not fit for flying, but this is indispensable."
>
> Nikolaenko . . . immediately got in touch with the Commander of the 303d Fighter Division, Major-General G. N. Zakharov, and established the possibility of flying our fighters.[124]

At the very least, there is the belief in a disposition to wait to be struck by the enemy before striking him. "Instead of actively searching for the 'enemy' . . . he preferred to wait," we learn about a submarine commander in simulated combat. "Perhaps the 'enemy' will show himself," he says.[125] While the Authorities do not often talk about the disposition to wait for the enemy, I believe that they assign considerable strength to it, as one of the expressions of a penchant not only for delay (see Chapter II) but also for "passivity." (Another manifestation is directed not against the enemy, but against one's superior: "Even in the absence of an order by a superior," declares an analyst, "the commander must not wait, but act. . . .")[126] "They," Stalin alleged

about the Guard Units of the Soviet Army in the fall of 1941, "did not *wait for the moment at which the enemy would strike them* . . ." —exactly what the Soviet government had done two months earlier! "One must . . . strike first rather than '*respond to fire*.' "[127]

> Enemy tanks and infantry were approaching, but the regiment for some reason did nothing.[128]

The wages of waiting to be struck by the enemy is defeat:

> *The 100th, 127th, 153d, and 161st Rifle Divisions in the area of El'ni in the summer of 1941:* "Occupying a defensive position . . . they did not wait for the moment when the enemy would strike them *and* throw them back, but went themselves over to the counterattack. . . ."[129]

> *A conference in the Stavka, April 12, 1943, concerned with the summer:* "A provisional decision on deliberate defense was taken. Stalin was *apprehensive*, and he didn't hide it, as to whether our troops could withstand a strike of large masses of Fascist tanks."[130] "The . . . moment for launching the counteroffensive had . . . to be decided. The enemy must not be allowed to *deplete* the defending troops."[131]

Waiting for the enemy to strike is tantamount to being "a bound rabbit facing the hunter who charges his rifle."[132]

> *The calculation behind the attack in Stalingrad, September 27, 1942:* "All knew, felt and saw that the enemy prepared himself to new active actions. To miss the beginning of his attack was for us tantamount to inevitable annihilation."[133]

On the other hand, the possibility that preemption could be self-damaging may be implicitly excluded. Thus, it may be taken for granted that preemption can only improve one's situation:

> *The counteroffensive in Stalingrad on October 31, 1942, soon after having avoided catastrophe:* "On our side it would have been madness to sit and wait for what the enemy might undertake and not to try to ameliorate our position, were it even to a small degree."[134]

More than that, preemption guarantees victory. In a moment of simulated battle, "the iron law of battle came into force: he who forestalls wins."[135] Between submarines, asserts an officer, "the first

attack usually determines victory."[136] According to an editorial in the military daily, generally "the scales quickly incline in favor of the commander who forestalls the enemy."[137] Hence, "every measure of the enemy requires a forestalling answer."[138] Appeal is made to fighters' wisdom—"when you have forestalled, you have already half won"[139]—as well as to the insight of strategists—"as A. V. Suvorov said, the one who forestalls is victorious."[140]

> The fighters of the opposed side were the first to swoop into attack. In this fashion, the "enemy" obtained tactical superiority . . . from the beginning of the battle on.[141]

It may be taken for granted that preempting improves the force ratio. "For the success of defense," an analyst observes, "it was always of great importance to be able to maximally hinder the preparation of the enemy's attack, to weaken the force of his initial strike . . . and in favorable conditions even to disrupt the offensive already before the enemy troops went over to the attack."[142] As "is persuasively shown by the experience of meeting engagements in the two world wars," where one "succeeded in anticipating the enemy in . . . opening fire, there, as a rule, one obtained success."[143] "Striking *first*," *one may "inflict on the enemy* damage such that he is forced to renounce [what has now become] a counterattack."[144]

> Counterstrikes were conducted with the following aims: . . . to crush the forces and means prepared by the enemy for a strike. . . .[145]

Sorvat', disrupt, an impending attack—the term denotes not only destroying the enemy's "forces and means," but also degrading his decision-function, making him employ his surviving resources less efficiently (see Chapter VI):

> *The Soviet offensive in Stalingrad, October 12, 1942:* "I calculated that it is only by a counterstrike that one can disrupt the enemy's . . . preparation for a new offensive. To force the enemy to take the offensive earlier than at the time which he had set is more advantageous for us than to sit and wait until he will be fully prepared. . . ."[146]

That such favorable estimates of the effects of preemption can be so readily adopted is probably due to the attractions of that stance itself.

If one beats the enemy to it, one is surely not "late" (see Chapter II):

> What satisfaction does the commander not take from the consciousness of the fact . . . that he was not late . . . in delivering the strike, that he knew how to forestall the "enemy."[147]

And one then certainly displays *aktivnost'*, avoids *passivnost'*. "Lieutenant Colonel Skachkov," writes a general officer about a simulated combat, "succeeded in uncovering the intention of the 'enemy,' determining the approximate time of his attack." Then, "proceeding from this the officer decided to forestall the attackers and *to impose his plan of battle on them.*"[148] While "until the meeting engagement [the point about to be made applies, I believe, in Soviet eyes to *any* engagement—NL] the two sides may dispose of the same possibilities for attaining success," victory will go "to the one who will show a higher degree of *aktivnost'*." But "in the meeting engagement *activnost'* manifests itself above all in the fact of forestalling the enemy . . ."[149] —as well as in that of forestalling his forestalling us: "We should not give the enemy's firepower the possibility of forestalling us."[150]

Being forestalled—having permitted oneself to be forestalled—is shameful:

> It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. Except that the Germans forestalled us in the morning, one doesn't need to be ashamed about the rest. . . .[151]

The Authorities insistently propose to their subordinates—as we have seen—to "strive to anticipate the enemy in the opening of fire."[152]

> Shevchenko [a fighter pilot] decided to apply a maneuver unexpected by his competitor, hoping suddenly to attack the aircraft of Davydov.
>
> The plan seemed to be a good one. But Captain Davydov . . . in flight executed . . . a countermaneuver. He attacked first.[153]

"When the 'enemy' is preparing . . . an attack," one must "react to this at that very instant."[154] "The commander . . . divining the intentions of the enemy, forestalls in good time and effectively the surprise strike which he is preparing, paralyzes all his undertakings in their beginning."[155]

> To repel an attack which has already begun is little. One must . . . forestall the enemy. . . .[156]

Stress may be placed on what is thus avoided:

> We heard the noise of motors. What should we do? Wait until the Hitlerites attack us? In no case![157]

In the same vein, stress may fall on what the enemy is not. "One must not," it occurs to one analyst, "represent the 'enemy' as a simpleton who is ready to cede victory to us easily, who does not take countermeasures. . . ."[158] For, according to another analyst, "there is no such 'enemy' who would be *waiting passively while one demolishes him*"[159]—perhaps first attributing to the enemy and then denying to him a penchant that one finds and fights in oneself.

With such dispositions it is difficult to renounce preemption. When the Soviet High Command predicted in the early spring of 1943 that the enemy would attack in the Kursk salient (which he did in the summer), the decision was made to renounce preemption:

> May 8 the Stavka sent the following directive: "According to certain data, the enemy may go over to the offensive on the 10 – 12 of May in the direction of Orlov-Kursk or of Belgorod-Oboyan or in both places together. . . ."
>
> When this did not happen, the Military Soviet of the Voronezh Front saw in this fact vacillation and perhaps a renunciation by the enemy of the offensive. The Front asked the Supreme Commander to resolve the question concerning the ability of inflicting a forestalling strike on the enemy. I. V. Stalin was very seriously interested in this proposal, and we—Zhukov, myself, and Antonov—had to spend some effort so as to convince him not to adopt it.[160]

The decision not to preempt may be facilitated by the concurrent resolve to attack if the enemy does not:

> *In the case just described:* "Simultaneously with the plan of deliberate defense and counteroffensive, it was decided to work out also a plan of offensive action, *not waiting* for the offensive of the enemy if it were to be delayed for a lengthy period."[161]

* * * * * * *

Without attacking the preference for preemption frontally, one may assert that preemption is inappropriate in a particular case, and even draw inferences from the case, without denying dogma in so many words. In a duel between submarines, as a report on a simulated

encounter makes clear, the one who shoots first might miss, while the other grants himself the time to locate the target more precisely, all the while escaping the enemy and finally destroying him. Here the enemy has been "too hasty in shooting." "In a duel between submarines, the one who outstrips the other in beginning the attack will not always come out on top"[162]—a heroic insight in view of the predilection for doing, and doing first. The War comes to the rescue of the realist:

> *May 28, 1942:* "In the Varanger Fjord the submarine M – 176 . . . at 18:22 noticed an enemy sub. . . . The Fascist sub plunged almost at the same time as ours, but its position turned out to be more advantageous. It is going to attack right away. Evaluating the situation instantly, the commander ordered:
>
> —"Plunge to the depth of 45 meters. . . ."
>
> The pointer of the instrument measuring depth was still moving when the sound of an enemy torpedo was registered. . . . The whole crew understood the commander's design—to exhaust the enemy.
>
> . . . In the M – 176 the number of enemy torpedoes launched was counted.
>
> "The tenth!" reported acoustician Adanyuk.
>
> That meant that the enemy was expending his reserve of rounds.
>
> At 21:50 Bondarevich discovered in the periscope the Fascist submarine, which had surfaced. . . . One minute and six seconds later . . . it was annihilated.[163]

> Was the offensive toward Khar'kov in May 1942 not a mistake?
>
> The Germans—we knew this for certain—were preparing for pushing east. We forestalled them by two days and encountered a fist formed to strike. The fist came down. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]
>
> A little bit more than a year later in the Bulge of Kursk, our troops patiently waited until the Hitlerites went over to the offensive, exhausted them by staunch defense and only then rushed upon the enemy. . . .
>
> At Khar'kov our forces were sufficient to form a deeply echeloned defense. But they were insufficient for an offensive. . . .[164]

> *A Stavka conference, in late March 1943:* "In considering the plan of an offensive proposed by the Command of the Southwestern Sector, Marshal V. M. Shaposhnikov expressed the disagreement of the General Staff with this plan and tried to point to the difficulties of organizing this operation in the absence of reserves. . . . However, the Supreme Commander, not permitting him to finish, said:
>
> "We should not *sit on the defense, holding our hands,* and

> wait until the Germans strike us first! We must ourselves conduct a series of preemptive strikes. . . . Zhukov proposes to take the offensive in the North, but to be on the defense in the other Fronts. I believe that this is a half measure." Then S. K. Timoshenko spoke . . . and said:
>
> "The troops of that sector . . . must absolutely strike the Germans in a southwestern direction with a preemptive strike and ruin their offensive plans. . . . Otherwise, that which happened at the beginning of the war will repeat itself."[165]

Given the failure that ensued, the author does not need to comment on the limitations of preempting.

Perhaps, as Charles Wolf suggests, the urge to preempt rises with the number of personnel involved, as well as with the intensity of the feelings aroused. On both counts, that urge would be weaker in submarine than in ground warfare.

Once one has consented to be attacked, one will—always, all or nothing—perceive it to be optimal to respond late rather than early:

> In the beginning of September 1942 the 322nd Division was on the defense on the eastern shore of the river Resseta. The Germans uninterruptedly attacked its positions. . . . Most of all, they bothered the rifle company of Lieutenant I. Grishaev. That unit covered a clearing in the woods through which it would, in the calculation of the Hitlerites, be easiest to break through to the rear of the Division.
>
> The riflemen beat back the first attack of the enemy. . . . But the Company Commander was dissatisfied. He went through the dugouts and loudly scolded the fighters: "You got frightened by the Germans, you opened fire early. You should have waited until the Fritzes had arrived at the hillock, and then fired point-blank at them!"
>
> After some time, the Hitlerites prepared again for an attack. Standing in a trench, Grishaev attentively observed the concentration of their forces. One after the other, liaison men came to him.
>
> "The Fritzes are massing in the hollow, soon they will move against us!" one of them said. "The Commander of the Platoon asks for permission to open fire."
>
> "Don't fire without an order!" answered Grishaev without turning around. The liaison man disappeared and another took his place.
>
> Hearing for the third time about the threat from the enemy, Grishaev, to the astonishment of the liaison man in question, declared with satisfaction:
>
> "It is very good that they be massing. And now let them all rush us at once!"

> Hearing such an answer, the young fighter looked with perplexity at the Commander and shrugged his shoulders. "What is good in that?" his gesture expressed. "We should fire now, afterwards it will be too late!"
>
> Finally, the Hitlerites sprang to their feet and . . . firing, ran forward. This time the riflemen strictly fulfilled the order of the Company Commander, which allowed the enemy to come out from the hollow to the hillock without hindrance. The Germans, with a foretaste of success, already were going straight for the clearing when at a signal of Lieutenant Grishaev . . . machine guns were beginning to talk. . . . Rifle fire also reached maximum intensity. . . . The ranks of the Hitlerites, rapidly thinning, reeled backward.[166]

Aversion to Defense

It is rare to find defense presented publicly as interchangeable with offense according to circumstance, both being mere instruments in "the battle for the alteration of the relationship of forces."[167]

> *The planning of the summer campaign of 1943:* "The Soviet Command found itself before the dilemma: to go on the offense or to be on the defensive? All possibilities were attentively analyzed. . . ."[168]

> One must be prepared for defense, even if one intends to take the offensive tomorrow.[169]

> The experience of the War . . . dictated this: even when attacking, and even more so in the period preceding an attack, one must always be ready for the defense.[170]

> In the defense one must think of the offensive, and in the offensive not forget about the defense![171]

Yet there is "the rejection in Soviet military strategy of the legitimacy of defense on the strategic level."[172] The reason is, of course, that defense lacks those characteristics of offense which render it appropriate—no, mandatory—at the highest of the three levels of war (strategic, operational, tactical) which Soviet analysts perceive; worse than that, defense has, as we shall see, opposed negative properties.

Still, limiting defense to the operational and tactical levels involves rejecting the deviant views of those who would extend the rejection of strategic defense to the operational and even the tactical

planes, and who foresee that for the duration of the war only offensives will be conducted.

That an aversion to defense does extend to these planes is visible in many ways. In a simulated combat, "the major had two paths available in trying to change the course of the duel. The first was to create a firm defense, to inflict significant losses on the 'enemy,' forcing him to renounce further active doings." The Western reader might think that that would be good enough, but no; for "in such a case, *the initiative* remained with the rival. Remembering the statement in the Regulations that *the crushing of the enemy* can be attained only by a decisive offensive, the battalion commander chose the other path. . . . Forestalling the 'enemy,' the Battalion unexpectedly went over to the offensive."[173] A commander's decision in favor of defense is apt to be subjected to pressure, from within him and from without, to go over to the offensive:

> *An Army Commander in the area of Velikie Luki in the fall of 1942:*
> ". . . Have you, Comrade Commander, not read our plan for seizing Velikie Luki? I presented it to the Staff of the Army on September 19. . . . "We propose," began the Commander of the Division. . . ."
> . . . . . .
> [To which the Army Commander answers:] "The offensive is a matter for the future. For the present we must not forget about the general operational situation in the area of Velikie Luki, Nevel', Novosokol'niki. Here the enemy has created a big grouping. We must keep firmly in mind that today the main thing here is defense. . . ."
> Thus, I had in some measure to cool the ardor of Colonel A. A. D'yakonov, which doubtlessly expressed the offensive élan by which the personnel of the 257th Rifle Division was seized. And not only that unit. The offensive spirit was also present in the 28th Rifle Division to which I went the following day. Here, too, it was necessary to direct all attention to the fulfillment of the task of perfecting the defense. I did this, of course, with a heavy heart, as I, myself, was ever more insistently thinking of the offensive. But that had still to be prepared in the most meticulous fashion. And for the present, I did not have the right even to talk about offensive actions of the Army.[174]

Aversion to defense disposes one, when recommending it, to justify it as one of the dark sides of military life, whose inevitability the required realism makes one recognize. That is, unwilling to accept defense on a par with offense as a means to be adopted or rejected

according to the situation, but also loath to outlaw defense, the Authorities suggest that it is all right to go on the defense in unfavorable circumstances. Deplorable though defense may be, they seem to say, it should be accepted as one of the numerous unpleasant aspects of life. "Wars which would from beginning to end contain only victorious offensives," recalls Lenin in words used as a motto for the part of a manual treating defense, "did not occur in world history, or, if they occurred, only as exceptions. . . ."[175]

Defense, it is advanced, is all right for the weaker party, although only for him. "Defense," declares an analyst, "is realized with limited forces and means against the superior forces of the enemy";[176] the objective of defense "derives from" that "inequality of forces."[177]

Defense, it is conveyed, is allowed if, and only if, one is forced to have recourse to it. "In contemporary war," declares the highest authority, "ground defense . . . is a forced mode of action" to which "one has recourse only in case one is unable to change the situation in one's favor by an offensive, when nuclear munitions are exhausted [*sic*]."[178]

It is only when invoking the *force majeure* of inferiority in "forces and means" that one can permit oneself to stress favorable modification of the force-ratio between oneself and the enemy as *the* rationale of defense. It is only "in those cases where there are no favorable conditions for the conduct of a counterattack" that an analyst seems ready to admit the possibility that "the second echelon . . . will solve the task of annihilating the attacker by fire from place . . ."; [179] he seems reconciled to this shameful mode of killing enemies only when physically debarred from the only proper one: annihilating by supreme *aktivnost'* of the attack. Cost-effectiveness appears to be neglected.

Being squeamish and then skeptical about gains from defense, the Authorities are reluctant to envisage choosing it freely. True enough, they do observe that defense may be either "forced" or, on the contrary, adopted "in advance," "deliberately," "not in immediate contact with the enemy"; and that there have been cases—among them a major one—during the War where defense bore this non-"forced" character. "While the majority of defensive operations were forced upon us," an officer recalls about the War, "there were also those which were prepared in advance, whose design was worked out already before the beginning of the active doings of the enemy troops"—for instance, "the operation of Kursk, of Lake Balaton and some others."[180] "As is well known," it is elaborated, "in the battle of Kursk, the Soviet High Command deliberately renounced forestalling the enemy in the transition to the offensive, so as to give this possibility to

the enemy, and in the course of defensive actions to grind up his strategic groupings, and then to inflict a crushing blow on him''—a ''decision all the more remarkable as our troops were fully capable of taking the offensive. . . .''[181]

After having elaborately described and justified the Stavka's decision in favor of defense at Kursk, one of the main contributors to that decision adds (with emphasis):

> In such fashion the defense of our troops was certainly *(bezuslovno)* not forced *(vynuzhdennyi)* but extremely *(sugubo)* deliberate *(prednamerennyi)*. . . .[182]

Yet emphasis on non-forced defense is exceptional; as a rule, that possibility is neglected in favor of the somber presentation of defense as forced: ''The . . . War showed that defense is . . . forced. . . .''[183] So it was, so it will be. ''The transition of tanks to the defense,'' it is foreseen, ''is a forced reaction; they will go over to the defense, as a rule . . . under the strikes of the enemy's superior forces.''[184]

Having thus put defense into its inferior place, the Authorities proceed to make that place habitable. Defense, they stress, is conducted on behalf of offense.

First of all, on behalf of past offense. One may defend what has previously been acquired; one may first have been ''actively seizing sectors or localities advantageous for the further conduct of the battle,'' and only subsequently ''reinforce oneself on the line attained and organize the defense.''[185] ''In the course of the past war,'' we are informed, ''tanks went over from the offensive to the defense most frequently with the aim of consolidating lines seized, when the attacking troops had exhausted their possibilities for attack. . . . In other words, tanks went over to the defense, as a rule, in the consummating stage of [a preceding offensive] operation.'' It is only after this that one may note that ''often tanks went over to the defense when they were subjected to . . . counterstrikes of the enemy or forced to repel his beginning counteroffensive.'' But this in turn is followed by a return to the initial and agreeable case: ''Numerous also are the examples of tanks going over to the defense on bridgeheads seized in the course of an offensive.''[186]

Defense in certain sectors may be in support for offense elsewhere.

And, of course, the Authorities, when considering defense, rarely fail to note that it serves an impending offense in various well-known ways.

When the capacity of defense to favorably alter the force ratio between oneself and the enemy is recognized, that change is apt to be presented as a mere means for the coming offensive:

> In the organization and conduct of defense at Kursk was manifested with exceptional clarity the basic essence of defense in the understanding of the Soviet art of war. It is considered as a mode of combat actions adopted with the objective of bloodying the enemy and creating favorable conditions for the transition to a counteroffensive.[187]

> In the course of defense, it is . . . necessary to aspire to create favorable conditions for . . . a counterstrike. For that, it is important above all . . . to exhaust the enemy . . . to inflict on him . . . losses in manpower and equipment.[188] Thus in the War, "[tasks of defense] such as exhausting the forces and means of the enemy . . . were subordinated to the main task—the preparation of a counteroffensive."[189]

Beyond being a means for offense, defense is presented as itself partaking more and more of the latter's precious substance. "In defense, elements of offensive action find an ever-larger application."[190] Defense *is* counteroffensive; more and more so. "Modern defense," declares an editorial in the military daily, "is based on combining stubbornness in holding positions"—the "passivity" of "holding" being alleviated by "stubbornness"—"with counteroffensives."[191] With the advance in military technology, one is apt to affirm, the rule of offensive action in defense rises.

> The highest expression of activity in defense is the conducting of counterattacks and counterstrikes.[192]

Even (or particularly) in defense, one may (or should) give tit for tat:

> K. K. Rokossovskii demanded that the activity of the defense be enhanced, that every attack be answered with a counterattack. . . .[193]

Defense—thus one may counter the dominant vision of passivity at its core—renders the enemy passive. In defense during the War, "the troops had the task of . . . forcing the enemy to renounce active deeds."[194]

The very inclusion of defense into one's instrument panel, it will be said, is an act not of passivity, but mastery. It is "so as to master all forms of combat" that "our troops must assimilate the defense."[195]

And who says (one is apt to overlook that it may be oneself) that defense is not *"active"?* While "the possibilities of showing *aktivnost'* in defense are not always utilized,"[196] "our science," comments a prominent analyst, "acknowledges not a passive, but an active defense"; indeed "the *aktivnost'* of the defense is the most important requirement placed upon it."[197] "To the *decisive* objectives of the *attacker"*—thus one may deny the inferiority with which defense is usually burdened—"the *defender* opposes his *no less decisive* objectives and modes of action" (it had better do that, for "otherwise, the defense will be crushed").[198] "Defense," an officer declares in standard fashion, is "not a passive holding of positions, but an active deed."[199] Given the role of counteroffensive actions in defense, defending is not mere "repelling," but rather "disrupting the attack"—that is, "delivering strikes on the enemy which will force him to renounce his attack."[200]

Who maintains that defense relinquishes the *"initiative"?* "The defender chooses the place of battle,"[201] according to one analyst; for another "the advantage of defense consists in the fact that it can choose" not only "the area of battle and position for battle," but also, somehow, "the modes of action and the times of maneuver with fire, forces and means."[202] As no evidence is offered for these surprising assertions—surprising in the Soviet context—what is intelligible here is above all the resolve to make defense look better than it had seemed.

Who believes that it is the offense which *"foists its will"* on the defense? On the contrary, it is the defense, an analyst explains, which "consists in . . . foisting one's will on the enemy *and* creating conditions of battle unfavorable for him. . . ."[203] (That the formulation is felt as designating two aspects rather than only the latter, which might suffice for Westerners, is made more probable by its repetition: "Defense must strive to impose its will on the enemy *and* to create conditions of battle unfavorable for him. . . .")[204] "The *aktivnost'* of defense," an analyst agrees, "consists in . . . foisting the defender's will on the enemy";[205] "the activity of the defense [during the war] included . . . imposing one's own will on the enemy's. . . ."[206]

Finally, who says that only the offense can *annihilate*? "The transition to the defense," a prominent analyst explains, "is intended to deceive the enemy and, in favorable conditions, to annihilate him."[207] "The main task of the defense," according to another au-

thoritative voice, "will consist not in the repulse of the enemy's attack . . . but rather in his destruction or suppression. . . ."[208]

* * * * * * *

The set of points here described, ostensibly favorable to "defense," both mask and reveal an aversion to "strict defense," without sweetening counterstrikes.

What makes sheer defense so obnoxious is succinctly expressed by a military leader when he demands that "one must learn *not* to beat off the enemy *but* . . . to impose one's will on him . . . ,"[209] for in defense it is the enemy who succeeds in "fettering" the defender.[210]

Worse, a side that defends itself, one may remark in passing, forgetting about the denials that have been described, "is thus in some measure passive";[211] "transition to the defense takes place under the enemy's active impact."[212]

> He [N. F. Vatutin] did not feel comfortable with defense. . . . He did not tolerate passivity.[213]

Defending may not be thought to be equivalent to doing:

> *The spring of 1942:* "The Supreme Commander said [to me about the defeat in the Crimea]: 'You see to what defense leads. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.] We must firmly punish Kozlov, Mekhlis, and Kulik . . . so as to keep others from loafing.' "[214]

Hence it may seem plausible that going over to the defense will reduce morale:

> *January 1942 on the approaches to Moscow:* "Before our Armies . . . [with regard to] the strong counterstrike of the enemy, the question arose: . . . to go over to the defense or not?"
>
> Going over to the defense in these conditions . . . would have been death . . . [also] with regard to the morale of all personnel, including commanders.
>
> One must seriously grasp the fact that the 10th Army during its combat history had not gone over even once to the defense . . . that all its divisions beginning December 6 [1941] had only been attacking. . . . How would a . . . transition to the defense in extremely unfavorable circumstances have influenced the mood of our personnel, including the command-political staff?[215]

In the context sketched it will, on the other hand, seem implausible that *strict* defense might be capable of damaging the enemy. A belief to the contrary may then have to be stated in so many words:

> So as to inflict a defeat on the tank units of the enemy, we were forced to go on the defense.[216]

But it will not come as a surprise if defense leads to disaster:

> *The fall of 1941, on the approaches to Moscow:* "The Military Soviet of the Front laid on me the personal responsibility for the defense of Kashira. I was ordered to . . . smash the enemy and throw him back toward the south."
>
> I myself perfectly understood that the town could not be held by passive defense.
>
> *A conversation between this Commander and his political commissar, the latter saying:* "I was with the troops today, spoke with people. They have only one thought: we shall stay to the death, we shall not let the Fascists go through."
>
> —To stay is little. The Germans . . . can go through on our corpses. It is necessary to beat them. . . .[217]

> *October 31, 1942, in Stalingrad, the decision to counterattack:* "Was it permissible to show the enemy that we were capable only of defense and twisted about on the same spot, like bound rabbits before the hunter charging his rifle?"[218]

That is, merely to hold one must counterattack; merely to attempt to repel the enemy is to be doomed to defeat at his hands: the wages of passivity is death.

> On July 6 [1941] directives were issued from the Stavka and from the Staff of the Supreme Commander of the Southwestern Sector [to the Commander in Kiev, Kirponos] to hasten . . . the beginning of the counterstrike in the area of Kiev. The fully understandable impatience of the Stavka and of the Supreme Commander upset General Kirponos even more. He, in his turn, also began to hasten commanders, requiring an immediate introduction of divisions arriving from reserve corps, their entrance into the battle from the march and in detail, not waiting for the concentration of all forces.
>
> With hindsight, one can . . . criticize the Command of the Front for . . . haste, depriving the troops of time for preparing counterstrikes. . . . An important worth of this decision was . . . the manifestation of high activity. Despite the extreme limitation

of forces, the Command of the Front . . . decisively refused passive defense on the approaches to Kiev.[219]

The summer of 1941: "Where our troops did not simply defend themselves, but counterattacked at the first possibility by day and night, they almost always were successful. . . ."[220]

The Army Commander, who had been the day before at the Staff of the Front, brought with him in the evening of November 14 [1941] the directive: "Strike the Volokolamsk grouping of the enemy on its flanks and in its rear." Before the 16th Army there now stood the task of reconquering Volokolamsk.

"Seriously speaking, we are, of course, not in a position to advance attacking," said the Army Commander. In the Staff of the Front this is perfectly understood. However, it is necessary to hold . . . while the operational-strategic reserves are in process of preparation. This is the point of the counterstrike against Volokolamsk.[221]

Stalingrad: "In the second half of October the enemy continued his . . . sallies against the factories, *The Barricades* and *Red October*; the Soviet troops invariably answered by counterstrikes, inflicting colossal losses on him."[222]

The fall of 1943, the First Ukrainian Front commanded by Vatutin finds itself in a difficult position: "Utilizing the passivity of the Front, the enemy collected a strong tank grouping and began to inflict strikes. . . . Vatutin, instead of answering by . . . *counterstrikes*, continued to *defend* himself. This was his mistake"—a mistake from which he is rescued by the advice of Rokossovskii (who visits Vatutin on Stalin's order); "Vatutin . . . inflicted such strikes which immediately . . . forced the Hitlerites to go over to the defense."[223]

Thus, "the counterstrike is the soul of contemporary . . . defense. Without it, a defense is dead and passive, powerless to fulfill complicated tasks. . . ."[224] In the First World War, "the main task was to hold a line, position, front, and to inflict losses on the enemy; with this the most important feature was the fire battle, repelling the attacking enemy with fire." But now "in no case may one limit oneself to the simple holding of an occupied position."[225]

* * * * * * *

Thus, in the judgment of many Western analysts, the advantages of defense are not so fully stated by the Authorities as the benefits from

offense. It has not always been thus. In the twenties an analyst could envisage a situation in which "one of the contestants in advance renounces the initiative and strives to utilize the strong properties of the defense . . ."[226]—a sentence unpublishable at present. "The strength of the defense," the *Field Manual* of 1936 declared, "consists in the more advantageous utilization of fire, terrain, engineering works, and chemical means" (Paragraph 224)—another pronouncement that has become unusual. It is rare to hear an officer addressing himself to "the strong sides of the defense," or observing that "fire from prepared positions significantly surpasses in effectiveness the fire of attackers."[227]

While the requirement that the offense in its sector be sharply superior in mass to the defense is stressed (see Chapter I), it is only early in the Soviet period that this requirement could be publicly derived from the superior *effectiveness* of the defense. It is, according to the *Field Manual* of 1936, precisely because "the force of the defense is great, also when there has been little time to prepare it," that "the offensive battle requires the concentration of superior forces and means . . . the securing of a crushing superiority in the direction of the main strike."

Correspondingly, only in the early period could it be easily acknowledged that, in the words of the *Field Manual* of 1936, "in defense, victory can be attained with small forces . . . over a superior enemy." Defense, in the formulation of the *Field Manual* of 1944, "is a form of combat in which troops, utilizing the advantageous conditions of terrain, its engineering reinforcement, and the force of contemporary fire, can hold positions occupied against superior forces of the enemy. . . ." Later it became exceedingly rare to advance that "the defenders are capable of stopping the attack of a superior enemy with smaller forces."[228]

The Authorities, as noted, are loath to acknowledge that, while in certain conditions it is the offense that optimizes the probable value of the force ratio between oneself and the enemy, in other circumstances it is the defense. Observe the difference in losses entailed by offense and defense, respectively. In an earlier theme, "we do not need to fear partial setbacks [when on the defense] in our first echelon, as the attacking enemy in obtaining such advantages wears himself out. . . ."[229] Indeed, "the defense should be built in such a fashion that it exhausts the enemy's forces in the zone of obstacles so as to . . . annihilate the enemy when he arrives at the first edge."[230] "The Soviet troops," an analyst recalls twenty years later about defense in the War's first period, "in bitter battles . . . inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, obtaining thereby a radical change of the situation.

. . .''[231] But by that time the *general* statement that defense may optimize the force ratio had long since been set aside.

A similar proscription concerns the possibility that defense may optimize the force ratio by allowing a gain in time for differential reinforcement. Real as the gain might be, it suffers from the implied forecast that distressing aspects of the last war will recur in a future conflict.

* * * * * * *

In such a context, dissent on the indispensability of counterstriking to the task of holding is muted.

The dogma may be implicitly denied by talking about the enemy:

> The enemy . . . makes . . . a gross mistake. The Hitlerites have not adopted strict defense, but rather uninterruptedly conduct counterstrikes. I believe that this is favorable for us.[232]

Recognition that events are going counter to doctrine may be implied in an otherwise favorable context:

> *The enemy offensive in the area of Lake Balaton:* ''From the first to the last moment Army Commander Trofimenko remained master of the situation, even despite the fact that he had merely to repel strikes, but not to deliver them himself. The Army did not proceed to counterstrikes in view of the clear superiority of the enemy in forces and means; it could only contain and repel attacks. . . .''[233]

The strictness of defense may become acceptable when the shameful characteristics of the stance are balanced by the principle of *stoyat' nasmert'*, standing unto the death:

> Defense. Strict defense. Its principle is simple: to hold unto the death.
>
> They are heaping bombs upon you . . . but you hold. They hit you with guns, machine guns, rifles, but you hold. They go at you from your flanks, they already aim at you from the rear, but you hold. Your comrades have been killed, the Commander is no more, but you hold.[234]

By implication—and when the words chosen are brief, pungent, and hopeful—dogma may be contradicted for a particular occasion:

> Let them smash themselves on our defense.[235]

When one's forecast is not adopted but is later borne out, one may hark back to it:

> *Planning in the Stavka for the spring in the winter of 1942:* "There were several opinions. On one side it was proposed to limit oneself to defense, to exhaust and bloody the enemy, and then . . . to go over to the offensive."[236] "In the General Staff and the Stavka it was held that the next basic task of the Soviet forces was temporary strategic defense. Its aim would be to exhaust the strike groupings of the enemy through defensive battles on previously prepared positions . . . and thus to prepare, with the smallest possible losses for us, favorable conditions for the transition of the Red Army to the . . . offensive." In contrast, "the decision was taken that, together with the transition to strategic defense in a number of directions, partial offensive operations would be undertaken. . . ."
>
> Critically evaluating now the plan of action then taken for the summer of 1942, I am forced to say that the most vulnerable aspect of this plan was the decision to simultaneously be on the defense and on the offensive.[237]

> In accord with the indications of the Stavka, the Commander of the Northern Caucasian Front ordered on July 28 [1942] the Don grouping to stop its retreat, to go over to the defense, and to conduct a counterstrike on the morning of July 30 in the direction of Nikolaevsk. . . . Such a double face of the mission was set (to go over to the defense and on the following morning to go over to the offense). . . .[238]

Unusual conditions of combat may facilitate deviation in doctrine:

> During these two days we experienced all the advantages of the defense in mountain war. The Hitlerites attacked, but our fighters . . . defeated them at choice.[239]

* * * * * * *

Aversion to defense was expressed in several ways at the influential occasion of the Battle of Kursk. The basic decision to go over to the defense followed Zhukov's report of April 8, 1943:

> Taking the offensive in the immediate future with the aim of forestalling the enemy I consider inexpedient. It will be if we exhaust the enemy in our defense . . . and then . . . go over to . . . the attack. . . .[240]

But then,

> General of the Army N. F. Vatutin looked somewhat differently at the situation which had emerged. . . . He proposed to deliver a preemptive strike on the enemy. . . . In this he was . . . supported by the member of the Military Soviet, N. S. Khrushchev. The Chiefs of the General Staff, A. M. Vasilevskii, A. I. Antonov, and other workers of the General Staff did not share this proposal of the Military Soviet of the Voronezh Front. . . . The Supreme Commander . . . vacillated as to whether one should meet the enemy with defense or deliver a preemptive strike.[241]

The fact that defense worked was apparently not sufficient to assuage misgivings about having adopted it:

> *The meeting between Rotmistrov and Zhukov after the battle at Konev's command point:* "After the conversation with the Commander of the Front had ended, G. K. Zhukov asked me a question: had I seen Stalin and which indications had I received? . . . The author of these lines told of how I. V. Stalin explained why the Red Army did not go over to the offensive first on the Kursk Salient. . . . He said that in the battle of Kursk he had agreed to meet the strike of the German-Fascists by defense (though the Red Army had enough strength to go over to the offensive itself) because. . . . As you see, I. V. Stalin said, in conclusion, by . . . defense we created favorable conditions for a successful offensive.
>
> G. K. Zhukov was not astonished [at] hearing this information and was very positive about all that had been said.[242]

The alleged uniqueness of the conduct chosen, its "creativeness," are called in to subdue dismay:

> I think this is a unique, unprecedented case in military history when a strong side, having all the possibilities for an attack, went over to the defense.[243]

> In the summer of 1943 the Soviet High Command found a new strategic mode for crushing the enemy. In the course of the . . . Battle of Kursk, the Soviet troops, deliberately going over to the defense . . . bloodied the strike groupings of the attacking German-Fascist forces, then began a decisive counterattack and crushed the enemy.[244]

To subdue misgivings, it was not enough for the battle to begin, after all, with an offensive act by the Soviets:

> In the night of July 5 . . . German sappers were captured who unmined minefields. They indicated that the attack was set for three o'clock in the morning. . . . Until that moment, a little bit more than an hour was left. Should we believe in the indications of the prisoners or not? If they spoke the truth, we should already begin our planned artillery counterpreparation. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . I immediately gave the order to the commanders of artillery of the Front to open fire.
>
> At 2:20 on July 5 the noise of guns shattered the predawn calm. . . .
>
> As it turned out, this was only ten minutes before the moment at which the enemy's artillery preparation was to begin.
>
> . . . . The enemy suffered large losses . . . and his system of leadership was impaired.
>
> . . . . The enemy decided that the Soviet side had itself gone over to the offensive. This caused loss of bearings among German soldiers. The enemy needed almost two hours so as to bring his troops back to order. Only at 4:30 could he begin his artillery preparation. It began with weakened forces and in unorganized fashion.[245]

Still, even after that, Soviet success was endangered by the urge to abandon the defense:

> The Commander of the Voronezh Front [Vatutin] took the decision to conduct powerful counterstrikes against the enemy, who had penetrated into the defense of the Sixth Guards Army, counterstrikes to be conducted by forces of the First Tank Army and the Second and Fifth Guards Tank Corps. Our Army [the author is its commander] was given the task of conducting a counterstrike in the direction of Tomarovka on July 6. This point of the order troubled us greatly. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> So we would move against the Germans . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. But what could come of that? For their tank forces did not only exceed ours in number, but were also superior in armament! . . . The enemy "Tigers" could, with their 88-millimeter guns, hit our vehicles at a distance of two kilometers from a zone where they would be invulnerable to the fire of the 76.2-millimeter guns of our T-34s. In other words, the Hitlerites were capable of conducting a successful fire fight with us also from a distant position. Should we then hand them such a strong trump card? Would it not be better . . . to rely on our thoroughly prepared, deeply echeloned defense?
>
> Let the Fascists crawl forward in the hope of breaking out into

the operational depth . . . and they will perish in our defense. . . . And when we have bloodied their units, smashed the Fascist armored fist, then the moment will have matured for a . . . counterstrike. . . .

We submitted these considerations to the Commander of the Front. We waited for an answer, but did not receive it by the end of the day. And in the meantime, the delay for the fulfillment of the order to counterstrike approached, nothing remained to us than to have the tanks advance.

With a heavy heart I gave the order for the counterstrike. . . . The infantry moved out behind the tanks.

I was worried. For me, as I have already said, it was not a secret that the 88-millimeter gun of the "Tigers" and "Ferdinands" could penetrate the armor of our tanks at a distance of two kilometers. . . . But the heavy tanks of the enemy had a disadvantage—their bad maneuverability. It is that defect which could be well utilized in ambushes. Before the steel colossi could turn their turrets around, the easily maneuverable 34s could fire on them.

Already the first indications from the field of battle showed that we were doing what we shouldn't be doing. As one could expect, the Brigades were bearing heavy losses. With pain in my heart I saw from the observation point how the 34s became ablaze and smoked.

It was necessary to obtain at any price a change of the order to counterstrike. I hastened to the command point, hoping to reach General Vatutin quickly and once more to submit our considerations to him. But hardly had I crossed the threshold of the hut, [than] the communications officer . . . reported:

"From the Stavka . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]. Comrade Stalin."

Not without excitement I took the receiver.

—Good day, Katukov. . . . Report on the situation!

I told the Supreme Commander of what I had seen with my own eyes about the field of battle.

"In my opinion," I said, "we have been hasty with a counterstrike. The enemy has large reserves among them, also of tanks, at his disposition."

—What are you proposing?

—For the time being it is expedient to utilize the tanks for firing from place, digging them into the earth, or using them for ambushes. Then we can let the enemy vehicles approach to 300-400 meters and annihilate them by aimed fire.

Stalin was silent for a time.

"Good," he finally said. "You are not going to counterstrike. Vatutin is going to call you about it."

> Soon the Front Commander called me and announced to me that the counterstrike was canceled.[246]

Retreat into Flight

Before the War there was a substantial disposition to regard retreat as normal. "If . . . the troops have to retreat *(otkhodit')*," an analyst might say in routine fashion, "it is necessary to decide in advance on those lines on which it is possible to hold the enemy attack. . . ."[247] Like defense, retreat was presented as related to offense:

> Retreat is a concept which fully enters into that of the attack. I retreat over 100 to 200 kilometers so as to go over to the attack on a certain line at a certain moment decided by myself.[248]

"Retreat," simply, "is one of the movements in the general course of offensive operations"[249]—particularly with Soviet space:

> The extent of our territory, the possibility to retreat over considerable distances without losing the capability for continuing the battle furnishes a favorable basis for the application of maneuver of strategic character. . . .[250]

"In order to gain time," wrote an analyst in the 1930s about the First World War, "Russia was forced in a general retreat of its armies to yield enormous space to the enemy. The colossal territory of Russia allowed adopting this maneuver without damage."[251]

At present, little of that attitude is visible in public expressions of the Authorities. The classic Bolshevik rejection of any reluctance to retreat, the easy Bolshevik assignment of rationales to retreat, are now rare in public print. There are few recent companions to the statement authorized by Marshal Sokolovskii that, while "always and in all armies there has been scorn for retreat . . . those armed forces which do not master . . . retreat . . . more often than not suffer defeat";[252] and it is bold of the Marshal to allow the truism that "troops may be forced to retreat as a result of an unsuccessful defensive battle"[253]—as well as the truism that "sometimes a retreat can be conducted *deliberately* with the aim of occupying a more favorable position for subsequent combat."[254] It is exceptional to hear from a general officer that in the first phase of the War, "retreat grew beyond the frame of maneuver and became a . . . mode of combat action." Then

"it was essentially conducted with the aim of leading units out of impending strikes of the enemy or of occupying more advantageous lines of defense in one's depth." There was retreat "when it was only by the temporary abandonment of a part of the territory that one could change the unfavorable situation which had emerged."[255]

The mode now prevailing for dealing with retreat is silence.

When silence is broken—even if only implicitly—there is rejection. "Combat actions of the 2nd Battalion of the 572nd Rifle Regiment [during the War] show clearly that where defense is well organized, where the personnel utilizes the full power of its fire means, there the areas of defense become inaccessible to the enemy."[256] Consequently, during the War "the mission of the regiments and brigades of the first echelon of the division (corps)" was "to bleed the attacking enemy troops and, *firmly holding the positions they occupied*. . . ."[257] Therefore, "after the adoption of a decision [for a unit to go over to defense] . . . a Party and Komsomol meeting was held if the situation allowed. . . . Pronouncements in such meetings were short and concrete. They bore the character of pledges: 'Not a step backward!' 'Let us stand unto the death, but not let the enemy pass. . . .' In November 1943 at the time of the battle for the bridgehead on the River Kerch', the Communists of one Party organization took the following decision: 'We shall stand until the end, and count as a respectable cause for the removal of a Communist from the battle only his death,' "[258] "The whole unit," reports the same general officer upon the fulfillment of such a pledge, "perished . . . but did not withdraw. . . ."[259]

> *The battle of Kursk:* A subordinate of the commander of a tank army, a famous brigade commander, A. F. Burda, arrives at the command post of his superior and friend: "We had never seen him in such a state. . . . 'My unit has suffered terrible losses, Comrade Commander. . . . Sixty percent of the Brigade. . . .' I shook the Brigade Commander's hand. 'Consider that you have fulfilled your mission. The important thing is, you withstood the enemy onslaught and you did not retreat.' "[260]

Retreat has been largely expunged from written accounts of the War. Having described a certain pattern of deployment of the Soviet forces adopted at its beginning, an analyst becomes original when he adds that in these conditions it was "with relative ease" that the enemy "forced our troops to retreat."[261] It is rare to run across the evident fact that "in the first phase the Great Fatherland War our units were forced to retreat under the strikes of the superior enemy. . . ."[262]

It has become not unusual for overall characterizations of the War

to suggest, or even declare, that what ought not to have been had not been in fact: that there had been no retreat—on condition that this contention nest in a richer sentence. "In the late war," an analyst asserts, "only the combination of a *stubborn maintenance of defense zones and lines* with a whole series of . . . counterstrikes . . . counteroffensives and partial offensive operations procured success for the defense. . . ."[263] In the first period of the War "the Soviet troops . . . not only *held the positions they occupied*, but inflicted big losses on the enemy. . . ."[264]

* * * * * * *

It is easy to attribute advocacy of retreat to a bad motive:

> *The Stavka, the evening of September 7, 1941:* "Shaposhnikov and I went to the Supreme Commander with the firm intention of convincing him that it was indispensable to transfer immediately all troops of the Southwestern Front behind the Dnepr and farther East, as well as to relinquish Kiev. We considered that such a decision at that moment was already rather belated, and that a further refusal to take it threatened an imminent catastrophe for the Southwestern Front.
>
> Stalin reproached us that we . . . took the line of lesser resistance: instead of beating the enemy, we strove to go away from him. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.].[265]

> September 13, 1941, the Chief of Staff of the Southwestern Front, Major General V. I. Tupikov, urgently demands permission for the Front to retreat so as to avoid annihilation by encirclement. Here is the response: "Major General Tupikov . . . has sent a panicky report. In contrast, the situation requires the preservation of exceptional cold-bloodedness and endurance of the commanders of all ranks. It is necessary not to succumb to panic and to take all measures so as to hold the positions occupied. . . ."[266]

Retreat properly ordered will, the Authorities appear to predict, stimulate retreat contrary to orders. They attribute in any case a propensity for such violations of discipline to their forces. "The officer warned the fighters," we hear, "that it is indispensable . . . not to retreat when something does not succeed."[267] "In the morning of July 15 [1944] there were," a general officer reports in the mid-1970s in a manual designed to transmit experiences of the War, "meetings in all sub-units [of the First Battalion of the 396th Rifle Regiment] in the

course of which the commanders . . . *recalled* that nobody had the right to leave the position he occupied and to withdraw without an order from the commander."[268] At another occasion, "explaining to the personnel the combat task [in defense], the commanders, political workers, the Party and Komsomol *aktiv fostered* among the soldiers *the consciousness* of the fact that nobody has the right to leave the position he occupies and to retreat without an order by the commander."[269] In yet another instance, "commanders, political workers, the Party and Komsomol *aktiv* . . . *particularly directed the attention* of the fighters to the inadmissibility of leaving positions occupied without an order by the commander." [270] Or "explaining the combat task to personnel, commanders, political workers, the Party and Komsomol *aktiv* strove for every fighter *deeply coming to be aware* of the fact . . . that *an unconditional* law of defense is this requirement: not a step backward without an order of the commander."[271]

> *The famous order No. 227 of July 28, 1942:* "It was prescribed to dismiss commanders of armies, corps, and divisions who allowed them to retreat on their own. The same measures were to be applied to commanders and commissars of regiments and battalions for troops leaving their combat positions without orders."[272]
>
> *A commander on the approaches to Moscow, November 21, 1941:* "The most important thing now is . . . not to retreat without an order."[273]
>
> The principle of defense is simple: to hold fast unto death. . . . The fighter must not even retreat a single step. . . . He can retreat only on the order of his commander.[274]
>
> Despite the clear superiority of the enemy in tanks, not one unit retreated without an order.[275]
>
> Need one explain the significance of a conversation in the trench, in the forward line, between the senior commander . . . and rank-and-file fighters. . . . "As the general was here, we must hold!" And then the fighters will not retreat without an order. . . .[276]

Even model personnel may retreat contrary to orders:

> *The area of Volokolamsk, the fall of 1941:* "The 316th Division [a famous unit—NL] fought only for one week with us, but how it fought! . . . I remember only one case when we had high words with the [famous—NL] Division Commander. This happened, I

believe, on October 19. From the Staff quarters I saw through the window an unaccustomed movement on the streets of Volokolamsk. Horse-drawn vehicles and cars were passing."

"What unit is this?" asked Rokossovskii, approaching the window.

—It appears, Serebrayakov [the Chief of Staff of the 316th Division]!

—Mikhail Sergeevich, have you authorized the retreat of the Division Staff?

—No.

The Army Commander went out on the street. He ordered the Staff of the 316th Division immediately to return to Ryukhovskoe. The Staff was transferring itself on its own initiative. The Division Commander, having heard of this, took no steps.

—Let us go to see Panfilov [the Division Commander]!

The Division Commander was in his observation point, near the combat deployment. He met us as always, began to report. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.] Rokossovskii did not listen: "I had a better opinion of you, General. You understand what you have done?"

"It was my mistake," Panfilov admitted.

—The Staff retreated. A pernicious example for the unit. I did not expect this of you![277]

Somewhat later, the commander of the 316th orders on his own a retreat from Volokolamsk: Two days later a commission from the Staff of the Western Front arrived. On the instruction of the Stavka, it inquired into the causes of the giving up of Volokolamsk.

The Commission had the Division Commander invited so that he could explain himself. . . .

"I am firm in my conviction," Panfilov said, "that the giving up of Volokolamsk was not a loss of steadfastness."

"And nevertheless," said the Chairman of the Commission to Panfilov, "you had the categorical order of the Military Soviet of the Army to hold Volokolamsk, and you have given it up. . . ." [ellipsis in the text—NL.]

That was a difficult conversation, though everybody understood that the Stavka cannot calmly look on troops retreating and giving up town after town to the enemy on the approaches to Moscow.[278]

Under these conditions, the Authorities seem to expect, any explicit acknowledgment of retreating as a proper mode of fighting would sharply increase self-ordered withdrawal. Hence, when an order to retreat is given, the word might not be used:

Stalingrad, October 18, 1942: "For the first time during the entire

> period of combats in the city, I had to order a part of the troops to retreat 200 to 300 meters toward the Volga. By this time the Front was straightened out and the battle deployment made denser."
>
> In the order there was no mention of retreat but rather this was said: "The divisions of Gurt'ev will at 4:00 on October 19 occupy and defend the sectors of the streets Sormovskaya, Tupikovskaya. . . ." [ellipsis in the text—NL.]
>
> We could not and should not use in our orders, words such as "retreat *(otkhod)*," "to retreat *(otstupit')*," so that other commanders would not think that . . . it was permissible to lead troops back to new positions.[279]

In a related scenario, retreat might engender flight (an expectation usually absent in the case of political "retreats," which might account for the greater willingness of the Soviet leadership to engage in them).

In the War, a refusal to flee could be considered excellence:

> *An order of Stalin singling out certain units for excellent performance:* "Why have these rifle divisions succeeded in beating the enemy. . . ?"
>
> —Because in the fifth [and last—NL] place, these divisions, when the enemy pressed them, have not fallen into panic, have not thrown away their arms, have not run to the woods, have not shouted "We are surrounded."[280]

The *Field Manual* of 1944 included provisions "so that a retreat not transform itself into a disorderly withdrawal and not demoralize the units. . . ." For example, special attention must be given to the . . . selection of the commanders of the rear guards . . . capable of fulfilling the honorable and difficult tasks laid upon them which require high courage and skill. For "the retreat from a . . . battle line," a military leader observes, "is an event undesirable in psychological respects."[281] "Retreat," Frunze had observed more than half a century earlier, "is not flight"[282]—or is it?

> *The Caucasus, the summer of 1942:* "Badly led units . . . often retreated in disorganized groups, often offering almost no resistance to the enemy."[283]

Or, in one of the evil transformations that the Authorities are disposed to expect, a retreat might *become* a flight:

> *The Stavka to the Bryansk Front in the summer of 1942:* "We believe that [an] unprepared withdrawal of the Army of Parsegov

> to the line Bystrik-Arkachangel'shoe will be dangerous, as . . . the retreat will become flight."[284]

> Lopatin should be pulled back . . . a withdrawal to be carried out . . . in good order so that it should not degenerate into flight.[285]

* * * * * * *

Earlier, *retreat for gain* was presented as one of the normal modes of seeking military advantage. "One must," an analyst proposed in the 1920s, "look for a gain in time by *deliberate retreat.*"[286] "The enemy," Tukhachevskii pointed out in the 1930s, "may turn out to be forced to draw supplementary resources toward those fronts where we, deliberately surrendering territory, do not place decisive strikes."[287] "There is," declared Frunze in the 1920s, "strategic retreat caused by the striving . . . to lure the enemy deeper so as to crush him better."[288] In the image of the first phase of the War during the late Stalin era, the Soviet Army drew the enemy into a strategic situation unfavorable to him. "The . . . past of our . . . country," the *Field Manual* of 1944 observed, "furnishes many examples when by retreat the enemy was lured, exhausted, and then a crushing strike inflicted on him. Thus it was in the days of the Fatherland War of 1812, thus it was many times also in the Civil War. . . . Retreat may be applied so as to create favorable conditions for the continuation of the . . . struggle with the enemy and even for his defeat (Kutuzov in 1805 in the war with Napoleon, and in 1811 in the war with Turkey)."

But after Stalin "luring" was banned, at least in public expression.

Earlier one could declare the irrelevance of ground, the sole importance of force. "The defender," an analyst observed in the 1920s, "will . . . not always be bound by a position in space. Often space does not play a decisive role for him. . . . He may withdraw under the pressure of the enemy until his and the enemy's forces are equalized. . . "[289]

Later this view was eliminated, at least from public utterance.

The *Field Manual* of 1936 could envisage retreat to *render an unfavorable force ratio more propitious:* "the enemy, rendered weak in the overcoming of the depth of the defense. . . ." "Retreating troops," an analyst observed in the 1920s, "put themselves in order through the paths of gaining time and space [sic]"[290]—just as "the withdrawing enemy [may be] gaining in the maneuver of retreat an operational situation advantageous to him. . . ."[291]

From the beginning of the War to the end of Stalin's reign, the

retreats in the first phase of the conflict, difficult to deny, were justified as an application of Kutuzov's strategy in 1812, modernized by the contrast drawn between the temporary advantages enjoyed by the "treacherous" aggressor and the "permanently operating factors" in the possession of which the victim is superior but which, at the beginning, are a mere potential whose "utilization" takes time. Such was the explanation of "the forced retreat into the depth of the country"—an explanation accompanied by the creation of an Order of Kutuzov for excellence in retreating. The need to put the least bad face on initial defeat by the Germans thus temporarily procured public prominence for the Bolshevik rejection of squeamishness toward retreat, as shown by Lenin in the face of the hard German peace conditions of early 1918.

Not content with this. Stalin had the course of the War presented as the only possible one if victory were to be its end:

> I. V. Stalin indicated the necessity of the strongest attention be paid to the counteroffensive, viewing it merely as offensive actions after retreat. . . . The counteroffensive was treated as the highest form of the strategic and operational art, as the most important achievement of the Soviet science of war. . . . What was lauded to the skies was "the counteroffensive after a successful offensive of the enemy, which, however, has not brought decisive results." In such fashion, willy-nilly, the Army cadres were instilled with the thought that for victory it was necessary to admit . . . a seizure of a substantial part of the territory by the enemy.[292]

One might have thought that in the limited rehabilitation of Stalin as a military leader in the later 1960s and 1970s the Authorities would have renewed recourse to what one might call the Kutuzov Out. But they demonstrated their fear of retreat by going the other way, made more practicable by the passage of time: minimizing the occurrence of retreat during the War. What happened during "the first period" of the War is now mostly just "defense." In the mid-1970s an article by a prominent analyst on *Tactics in the Years of the Great Fatherland War*[293] does not include the word "retreat" (which would presumably sully the anniversary being celebrated) and in only one passage deals with the events designated by that term. But the General does acknowledge "defense" amply—yet turning the reader's attention (perhaps even his own) away from the fact that much space was given up when conducting it.

> In the first and most difficult period of the war . . . the Soviet Union essentially conducted strategic defense. . . .[294]

It is under the protection of "defense" that the dread word "retreat" may become speakable. "*Defensive* operations [during the last war] were," an analyst recalls, "as a rule, connected with a *retreat* of a depth from 150 to 400 kilometers,"[295] Still, even then it is easier to write down "retreat" when denying that it took place in certain cases, even though thereby suggesting that it did occur in other and more numerous instances. Describing the operations around Kiev in the fall of 1943 and near Lake Balaton in the winter of 1945, the analyst just quoted stresses their "peculiarity"—namely, that "they proceeded without significant retreats and [*sic*] loss of territory. . . ."[296]

The current aversion to retreat thus resembles the one so prominent and so damaging early in the War:

> *The summer of 1941:* "The directive of the Supreme High Command prescribed holding every inch of land. . . ."
>
> "Not a single step backward, fight to the last drop of blood. . . ." [ellipsis in the text—NL.][297]

> In the staff of the Corps there were no maps of areas to the east of Dubno. We did not intend to retreat.[298]

> *The first days of the War:* "The task consisted in quickly leading units near the frontier out of the [way of the] strikes of the enemy, back to the lines where one could organize a solid defense, and not to throw isolated units into a counteroffensive which was pointless in these conditions. . . . As a result of these events, many of our units found themselves encircled and . . . bore enormous losses or were fully annihilated."[299]

> *In the summer of 1941, a Colonel from the General Staff to an officer retreating with his unit:* "We did not teach how to retreat. We did not even admit such a thought. Only 'forward without fear or doubt!' . . . Hitler counted on this. . . . The Red Army will not retreat, and hence it will be possible to finish it off in a few days. Thus, your retreat is for him worse than any defeat. . . . Perhaps it *is* his defeat"—to which the officer reacts thus: "I was astonished by the paradoxical character of his reasoning and did not agree with him in my soul."[300]

But the enemy did agree:

> July 13 [1941] it became clear that the enemy . . . was no more willing to sacrifice important positions. In the Command of Army Group South there was a sigh of relief . . . only thus could its calculations work out.[301]

> *October 4, the approaches to Moscow:* "On the sectors of the front not attacked by us the enemy remains everywhere in place, so that the formation of encirclements proceeds in very promising fashion."[302]

> It was precisely the blind stubbornness with which the Russians remained in their positions when both their flanks were threatened which made encirclement possible.[303]

However, even about the concept of *retreat to avoid destruction*, the Authorities today, with their reluctance to talk about unfavorable situations in public, remain silent. The propriety of a retreat thus motivated is *rarely* made in so many words even when reminiscing about the War:

> An operational-strategic war game . . . was played . . . in the fall of 1940 and directed by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General N. F. Vatutin. At that time, in a similar operational situation [to that which made him retreat in June 1941] [General] V. I. Kuznetsov . . . decided to retreat, giving his reason in the following fashion:
>
> "It is important to preserve the troops. This allows beating the enemy later on."[304]

> *The First Ukrainian Front in the winter of 1944:* "Of course, it hurt to retreat. . . . It was clear that the German-Fascist command . . . attempted by sudden strikes . . . to destroy . . . a part of our troops. To deprive it of such a possibility, to lead our units out of the strike and, having attained a favorable line, to stop the enemy—such was in those days our task."[305]

As for *retrograde movements in mobile defense*, their propriety, too, is only rarely implied:

> *The exercise Berezina, 1978:* "The system of . . . strongpoints . . . secures for the defense of the 'Southerners' the indispensable flexibility. . . ."[306]

As for more explicit expressions, in the 1930s an analyst demanded that "the striving to plug even the smallest initial breach in

our defensive deployment must not find sympathy."[307] "Mobile defense," the *Field Manual* of 1936 declared, showing reluctance, "is applied when it is possible to sacrifice part of the territory . . ."; "maneuvering defense," the *Field Manual* observed in the same spirit, "has the aim of . . . allowing losses of space. . . ." But, in reminiscing about the War, clear references to movements-in-defense—plausibly, retrograde ones—are rare:

> *The fall of 1941:* "From the border troops, Captain V. N. Antsupov participated in the meeting. . . . He firmly stood for mobile defense. This was accepted"[308]—probably as a euphemism for "retreat."

> *The spring of 1942 in the area of Vyaz'ma:* "We went over to the mobile defense. . . ."[309]

It is rare to hear that "if the holding of positions is not the primary task, but the objective is to preserve personnel and equipment, defense can be conducted on the principle of mobile defense in a series of successive lines."[310]

On the other hand, mobile defense itself may be rejected. "In defense," an analyst declares, "the commander, ascertaining in what direction the offense prepares a strike, chooses the areas the firm holding of which leads to the breakup of the enemy's calculations."[311] Almost the only "depth" talked about is the enemy's, into which one penetrates, rather than one's own, into which one withdraws. "The principal point in defense," an officer says in passing, "is to hold the positions occupied."[312] In the Battle of Kursk, "the holding of the forward edge [of the Soviet defense] had an exceptionally important significance for the further course of the defensive battle." Thus, when "the enemy succeeded in pressing [a euphemism for "making to retreat"—NL] . . . our first echelon," it was "with the aim of reestablishing the defense on the forward edge."[313] The intervening retreats, one infers, were a sheer loss rather than the very device that allowed a satisfactory conclusion.

> *The evening of July 5, 1943, in the Battle of Kursk:* "Soon the Commander of the Sixth Guards Army, General Ivan Mikhailovich Chistyakov, appeared at the command post. I had never seen him so sombre. . . ." [The General describes the bad situation of his Army.] I tried to calm the Commander as well as I could. As a matter of fact, his position was not at all tragic. True, the divisions of the first echelon retreated under the assault of a stronger enemy. But every military man will understand . . . that there is nothing

> to be done about it if the enemy's strength exceeds your own many times! I expressed these considerations to Ivan Mikhailovich. I understood that this was small consolation for a commander accustomed . . . to be proud of the . . . battle traditions of his Army.
>
> . . . . I was glad to hear later that the Command of the Voronezh Front considered that the Sixth Guards Army had fulfilled its mission. Though it retreated, it retreated in an organized fashion, toward a position prepared in advance, and inflicting enormous losses on the Hitlerites.[314]

What seems to be rejected here is the normalcy of the defender initially retreating as the condition for his subsequently advancing.

> *The battle for Moscow in the second half of November 1941:* "I asked the Commander of the Front that he allow me to lead the troops back toward the line of the [river] Istra, that is, not to wait until the enemy would forcibly throw the defenders back to that line and then cross the river and the reservoir on the shoulders of the defenders.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Commander of the Front [Zhukov] rejected my request and ordered that we stay fast unto the death, retreating not even a step.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . I addressed myself to the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal V. M. Shaposhnikov. . . . He accepted my request.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . I received a telegram from Zhukov. . . .
>
> ". . . . I am annulling the command concerning the retreat to the reservoir of the Istra, and order you to defend yourself on the line you occupy. . . ."
>
> . . . . As we foresaw, the enemy . . . threw us back toward the east, crossing the Istra on the march. . . .[315]

A German commander might have agreed with Rokossovskii:

> *The action at Manuchkaya, January 25, 1943:* "From the Russian point of view, it would have been better not to dig in their tanks in the front line, but to concentrate them in reserve for a mobile counterattack."
>
> The . . . attack by the 11th Panzer Division was of decisive importance in smashing the Russian offensive against Rostov. . . .[316]

There is thus only one kind of rearward movement that the Authorities seem able and willing to view as a mere means with no

negative nature—namely, that which has deception as its short-run aim. The enemy wastes his resources in attacking what he believes still to be our forward line, from which we have, however, unbeknownst to him, withdrawn.

> *The fall of 1943:* "In that period the enemy often practiced luring toward our units, attempting to make us believe in his retreat so as subsequently to hit our flanks. We had to remember the deceptiveness of the Fascists every minute."[317]

> *1945 in Germany:* "One could expect . . . that the enemy . . . before the artillery preparation, would go back to his next line of defense, thus making us expend . . . ammunition on emptiness."[318]

Such luring of the enemy into one's depth for a *short* distance and *rapid* reward has always held an appeal:

> The counteraction to the breakthrough . . . has been found to be to withdraw the main forces toward another line of defense so that the enemy's . . . strike falls on an empty place. . . .[319]

A related earlier position is preserved in the continued attractiveness of luring the enemy into a "fire bag":

> Foreseeing an attack of the "enemy," Major E. Karimov led his unit away from the forward edge into the depth . . . leaving only a cover forward. And when the "enemy" penetrated into the defense, the powerful . . . fire of the main forces of the battalion fell upon him.
>
> Such a maneuver was often conducted in actual combat. Thus in March 1943 the Commander of the 46th Rifle Brigade near Staraya Russa led his unit away from the forward edge 500 to 700 meters into the depth of a forest, leaving only a cover at the earlier line of the unit. And when . . . the enemy went over to attack and seized the first and second trench, he fell into a "fire bag." A subsequent counterattack completed the crushing of him.[320]

> In an exercise the company commanded by Officer V. Ivanov was suddenly counterattacked by the "enemy." The Company had to go over to the defense at a disadvantageous point in space. This happened at the end of the day. At the coming of dusk, the senior commander communicated that the "enemy" was moving substantial forces forward and prepared for an attack during the night. The Company Commander . . . came to the conclusion that it would be

difficult to repel the attack of the fresh forces of the "enemy" on his present line. He decided to covertly lead the Company into the depth, giving the "enemy" the possibility of conducting an artillery strike against the established line, and then to meet him with sudden fire from an advantageous position.

Going over to the attack, the "enemy," as the Company Commander had expected, found himself in a "bag," came under the sudden crushing fire of all means of the Company.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Lt. Gen. M. Polokrov, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 53.
2. Col. Gen. M. Zaitsev, *KVS*, 1978, no. 9, 50.
3. *KZ*, February 3, 1976.
4. Col. Gen. Kh. Ambaryan, *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 5–6. Emphasis added.
5. Popel', 1959, 153.
6. Gorchakov, 11.
7. Eremenko, 1961, 295.
8. Degtyarev, 72.
9. Sidorenko, 4.
10. Reznichenko, 85.
11. Lt, Gen. V. Reznichenko, *KZ*, June 5, 1974.
12. *KZ*, July 12, 1975.
13. Quoted by Vasilevskii, 236.
14. Maj. Gen. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, June 5, 1979. Emphasis added.
15. Col. P. Galitskii, *VV*, 1978, no. 11, 39.
16. Katukov, 197. Emphasis added.
17. Col. Gen. A. Konstantinov, *KZ*, December 15, 1974.
18. Batov, 1962, 85–86.
19. Quoted by Vasilevskii, 337.
20. Eremenko, 1964, 480.
21. Grechko, 1976, 50–51.
22. Rokossovskii, 112–113.
23. Ibid., 150.
24. Popel', 1959, 118–119.
25. Voronov, 234–235.
26. Tyulenev, 147–148.
27. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 270 and 284. Emphasis added.
28. M. I. Kazakov, 193.
29. Quoted by Zhukov, Vol. 1, 373.
30. Krainyukov, 88.
31. Rokossovskii, 22.
32. Biryukov, 124.
33. Shtemenko, 186–187.
34. Batov, 1962, 85–86.
35. Rokossovskii, 17.

36. Gulyaev, 29.
37. Rokossovskii, 74–75.
38. Gen. I. P. Korchagin, quoted by Gulyaev, 109.
39. Biryuzov, 78–80.
40. Rokossovskii, 174–175.
41. M. I. Kazakov, 138–139.
42. Gulyaev, 54.
43. Konev, 1970, 61.
44. Biryukov, 186.
45. Col. V. Ermakov, *VV*, 1979, no. 1, 20.
46. Shtemenko, 182–183.
47. Galitskii, 1973, 71.
48. Rokossovskii, 75.
49. Grechko, 1976, 135–136.
50. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 196.
51. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 4.
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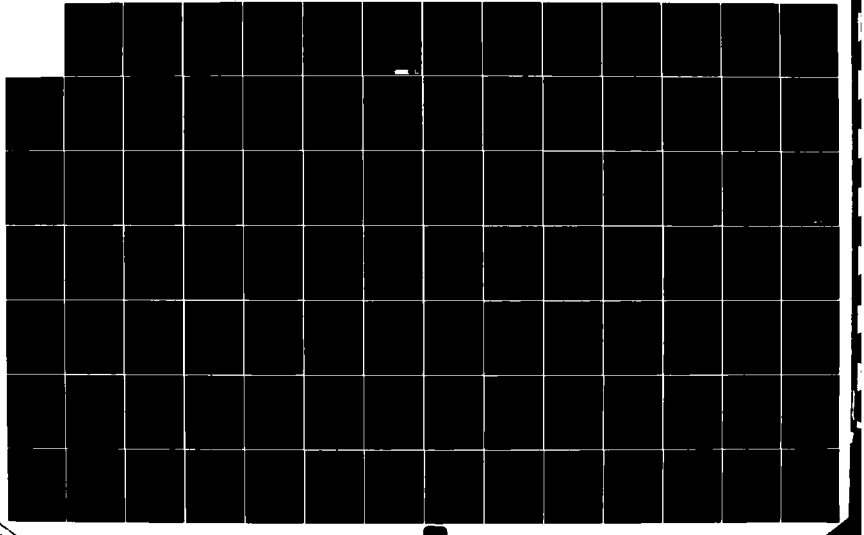

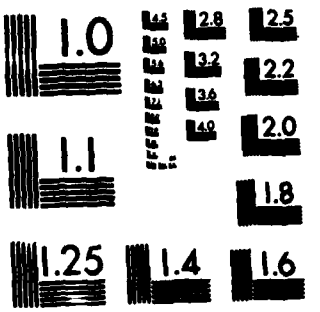

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150. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, May 14, 1974.
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Chapter V
ENHANCING ONE'S COHESION AND REDUCING THE ENEMY'S

Warring by Oneself

In peacetime "Captain Nedorezov saw that in the company everybody was concerned with what seemed necessary to him, but in a so-called personal plan."[1] In war,

> Worse than anything else was that people worked in separation, everybody put out effort only for himself.[2]
>
> *A military leader to a general subordinate of his:* "But you are not acting separately, but rather within the Front!"[3]
>
> *A German commander:* It is a "peculiarity of middle and lower Russian commanders to limit their interest strictly to their own sector."[4]

The quantity and technical quality of such persons' work may well be adequate, or even high. "Senior Lieutenant V. Krivchik works not badly, but often it turns out that he works only for himself."[5] He is one of those "soldiers who, when fulfilling a common task with comrades, orient themselves exclusively on their own possibilities." Strange, "one cannot reproach them for a dishonest relationship toward the fulfillment of their obligations"; in fact, "such soldiers deploy much effort."[6]

Yet the larger enterprise to which they should contribute suffers:

> How can one obtain cohesion *(slazhennost')* in the actions of the missile men? In the unit commanded by Lieutenant Istonin, for instance, all the soldiers, viewed separately, fulfilled their obligations excellently, substantially exceeding the norms of military work. But the fulfillment of norms by the unit is sharply lower.[7]

For "such soldiers . . . shut themselves off from the common task, forget to coordinate their efforts with those of their comrades."[8] During the War a commander "understood," as he recalls thirty years later, "that in battle every man firing often strives above all to annihilate that target that is close to him and, it so happens, does not think of the task set for the entire platoon"[9]—a circumstance that is taken not as expected and harmless, but rather as shocking and grave. "Senior Lieutenant N. Zhorov violated one of the basic laws of combat. . . . One must include into one's calculations not only one battery, but the entire arms system of the ship."[10]

> *A letter from Stalin and Vasilevskii to Front commanders, "in the period of the preparation of the Stalingrad counteroffensive":* "In offensive operations commanders of Fronts and Armies sometimes consider their demarcation lines as if they were a fence, a partition that cannot be violated. . . .
>
> As a result, our Armies in attacking go forward looking straight in front of themselves, within the limits of their demarcation lines, paying no attention to their neighbors . . . without mutual help. . . ."[11]

The point is confirmed by a German commander according to whom the limits of division sectors during the War were holy walls beyond which concern did not extend.

That one will acknowledge the existence of others is, then, assured only if one's own task results in no physical yield without their contribution:

> Artillery units, tank crews were more firmly united . . . than riflemen employing an individual weapon. This observation of mine was indirectly confirmed by an old peasant in a village near the front. I asked him:
> —Father, did our people pass by?
> —Artillerists came through the wood.
> —How do you know they were artillerists? Did they carry artillery pieces?
> —No. They came with a bucket: Father, put some potatoes into it. If it had been infantry, everybody would have asked for three potatoes, but not for a bucketful. It means these were artillerists. They take for a whole unit.[12]

Individuals and units are, it is hinted, disposed to be unconcerned with comrades and "neighbors" because they are not sure of the latters' skill or will: they might "let you down." "One of the important

conditions for the successful activity of fighters under a deficit of time," an analyst advances, "is mutual trust. . . ." It is indeed "the certainty that the other team members know their business faultlessly and will not spare energy for the fulfillment of the common task" that "makes people cohere," whereas "the slightest doubt in the mastery or the spiritual forces of one of the fighters will sharply reduce cohesion."[13]

One then may neglect the damage that an action useful to oneself may impose on others:

> "The Stavka . . . considers your withdrawal of almost half of a division into the reserve of the Front as a striving to take into account only the interests of your Front, not caring for the situation of your neighbor. . . ."[14]

One may equally neglect the potential benefit to oneself from the accomplishments of another:

> *The area of Orel:* "I visited the 308th Division on the evening of August 2 [1943] to rebuke its commander, General Gortev, usually a most energetic man, because he had not done enough to exploit the gains of neighboring divisions."[15]

One may forget about one's dependence on others. "Is it really," asks an observer in apparent puzzlement, "of no import for a pilot of the leading aircraft to know what goes on in a crew with which he will have to act in combat, wing by wing?"[16] Only acute need may bring awareness:

> In exercises one sometimes has to observe the following situation: an officer determines missions for units and attached means in precise fashion, coordinates their actions thoroughly; that is, everything seems to be in good order. But when the battle begins, the all-arms commander forgets about attached and supporting means. He does not update their tasks, does not concern himself with changing their location or communicating with them. Something of this kind happened to Captain R. Avgurov. He remembered the AA battery attached to him only when he received information about the approach of "enemy" aviation. He then tried to bring the Battery closer to his unit; but this turned out to be not so simple. The AA people occupied their new position only when the "air attack" was already ending. The unit bore substantial "losses."[17]

In view of the disposition to be self-centered even at cost to

oneself, the Authorities point out that one had *better* concern oneself with the other person because he impinges on oneself. "It is indispensable," an analysis shows, "to maintain uninterruptedly the contact with neighboring units because . . . zones of radioactivity, emerging in the neighbor's sector, can cover the area of one's own advance."[18] "The defeat of the neighbor," as the front fighters' proverb goes, "is your defeat."[19]

What may dominate instead is a sense of a solitary encounter with the enemy, an illusion that may be asserted to be the norm:

> Whoever has been in battle knows that . . . in such minutes or hours it always seems that you are conducting the battle alone. You notice nobody because your entire will, energy, mind are directed toward the annihilation of the enemy, and it seems to you then that all his forces are concentrated only on you. This is felt most acutely in small units. . . . Comrade Klement'ev [division chief of staff], finding himself in the heat of battle, running from one artillery piece to another, firing on tanks at a distance of only a few hundred meters, undoubtedly was so swallowed up by the battle in his sector that it really seemed to him that he alone supported the entire bridgehead [—a belief that a famous commander finds worth refuting: "If he only had seen how the 539th, the 444th, and the 407th Regiments conducted themselves in battle, how steadfastly the infantry fought, and how fearlessly they went to the counterattack!"]. Only the totality of all the means of the Division—infantry, divisional artillery, support by the corps artillery, the Army group, and the tanks—made it possible for the 108th Regiment honorably to endure the trials in the Narev bridgehead.[20]

The point may be made implicitly:

> Speaking of the successful offensive of the 36th Guards Rifle Corps in the assault on Königsberg, it must be noted that it was favored by the actions of other units of the Army, which diverted the basic forces of the enemy toward themselves. Of course, the Commander of the Corps, General P. K. Koshevoi, led the battle well. Undoubtedly, he is an experienced, decisive, and bold military leader. But in the present case, the success of his Corps depended to a considerable extent on those units that received the main strikes of the Germans. The insistent attacks of these units threatened the enemy with being split up and destroyed in the southern sector of the Königsberg grouping. The Germans understood this and took countermeasures, directing reserves there and weakening other sectors of the front.[21]

Not only may the orientation toward one's peers, on whatever level, be insufficient, there may also be a lack of interest in producing cohesion among one's subordinates. "Some commanders," it is noted, "are excessively concerned with . . . the separate preparation of specialists. But questions of cohesion are being worked out in haste without due exactingness."[22] "The experience of combat exercises shows," according to an anonymous authority, "that some commanders and staff officers when organizing cooperation between units, not rarely content themselves with routine indications . . . or merely paraphrase combat missions with a few comments, without taking any account of concrete conditions"; while clearly "indications on cooperation between units should complete and specify combat orders."[23]

> Approaching a water barrier, the unit of Lieutenant Colonel N. Gorbatyuk overcame it only with great difficulty. But at the same time nearby means for crossing were lying idle, as the sappers had not received the mission of securing the crossing by the troops.[24]

> *The area of Stalingrad, the attack on Marinovka and Atamanski by the 21st Army on December 19, 1942:* "The actions of the artillery, the infantry, and the tanks were to such an extent uncoordinated that involuntarily the question arose whether the operation had been thought through at all and whether there had not been haste in preparing it."[25]

Usually, though, as we shall see, lack of cohesion on any given level is presented as if it were due to decisions made on that very level rather than to orders, or the absence of orders, from higher up. Or, when the latter is noted, the former is added, as in a case just cited:

> Approaching a water barrier, the unit of Lieutenant Colonel N. Gorbatyuk overcame it only with great difficulty. But at the same time nearby means for crossing were lying idle, as the sappers *had not received the mission* of securing the crossing by the troops. *More than that*, Lieutenant Colonel Gorbatyuk did not know what artillery support he had. In one word, the cooperation between infantry, tanks, artillery, engineer and other units had not been organized before the beginning of the battle.[26]

* * * * * * *

"There was no reliable *communication (svyaz')*," an officer reports on an event in simulated combat, "between the commander of the

battalion and the commanders of the companies."[27] In the conduct of a company that, during the War, "held its area of defense for three days" and whose "soldiers and officers were rewarded with distinctions and medals," there was only one "deficiency that it is appropriate to note": "the fact that the commander of the company did not in the course of three days establish communication with his neighbor at the left."[28]

The beginning of the War: "Communication with the neighbors was often absent, and often nobody tried to establish it."[29]

The Stavka to the Bryansk Front in the summer of 1942: "That which is worst and most inadmissible in your work consists in the absence of communications with the Army of Parsegov and the tank corps of Mishulin and Badanov."[30]

The Caucasus in the summer of 1942: "Among the defects of the defensive battles in the area of Krasnodar one may name the following: . . . a complete absence of communication with units acting to the right and to the left."[31]

The Caucasus, 1943: "At the end of January 6, the troops of the Northern Group had advanced 25 to 60 kilometers during three days. However, already in the first days of pursuit, the leadership of the troops was impaired. The Staff of the Group and the Staffs of the Armies lost contact with the troops and did not know where they were. Thus, on January 5, the Staff of the Group lost contact with the 58th Army. This led to that Army lagging behind its . . . neighbors and finding itself in the second echelon. The loss of contact with the 44th Army also led to confusion in the leadership of troops. For two days there was no contact between the Staff of the Group and the 5th Cavalry Corps, as well as with the tank group of General Labonev. All this had an unfavorable impact on the speed of pursuit."[32]

In Hungary: "Carried away by the rapid advance, we, the Commanders of the 21st, the 6th, and the 20th Corps, three neighbors, somehow forgot about . . . maintaining personal contact. For a whole week of battle, we did not meet for a single time. The same thing happened with the commanders of the divisions. And here is the result—at one time I drove through about three kilometers, not finding even a single soldier between the left flank of the 69th Divis n and the right flank of the 7th Division."[33]

The very equipment and the very understandings that make communication possible may be lacking:

> *November 8, 1942, at the attack on Gizel' in the Caucasus:* "Between the tanks and the artillery there were no arrangements to call for fire and to request its end; the tank brigades, upon meeting the strong antitank defense of the enemy, could not call for artillery fire. As a result, after the loss of seven T-34s, they were forced to retreat."[34]

If the possibility for communication exists, it may be all too readily relinquished for the sake of other objectives, such as speed:

> According to calculations, the advance detachment should already have seized the mountain pass. But whether it had done so the Commander did not know: contact with the advance detachment had been interrupted. . . .
>
> It turned out that the communications specialists bore no responsibility for that. . . . The radio station had been turned off and left at the mountain pass because its vehicle was stalled. Such was an order by Officer A. Antonov, striving to preserve the high speed of the attack. He hoped . . . to justify this temporary impairment of contact by merely technical reasons. . . . [But in reality] the Commander . . . was guided by the principle: it is the communications specialists who are responsible for contact, my business is tactics.[35]

The possibility of communicating may even be renounced in the absence of a competing military objective:

> It happens that commanders in tactical exercises abandon command vehicles and transfer themselves to light vehicles which are more comfortable. But separating oneself from means of communication is to lose the direction of the unit.[36]

> A commander of an Army suddenly decided to change his command post and move forward. I asked him whether his communications were working reliably, how precisely the leadership of troops from the new command post was arranged. Verifications were undertaken and established that contact with the troops had not yet been arranged there. It became necessary to forbid the commander to leave his present place before he had organized precise leadership from the new command post. . . .
>
> I had to demand of artillery commanders, too, that in the course

> of a developing offensive, they show special solicitude for the uninterruptedness of contact with the leadership of other units.[37]

> *The Baltic in the summer of 1944:* "In some cases, staffs changed their command points . . . and did not leave in *the old place* an officer who would continuously know the situation and could inform the senior staff."[38] July 6 [1944] the Stavka sent a message to the Commanders of the First Baltic and Belorussian Fronts. . . .
>
> It was first of all noted that . . . in preparation for the change of emplacement of staff and command points . . . [often] no liaisons with subordinates and higher staffs are organized at *the new place*. . . .[39]

Absence of communications means that commanders will act without *being informed*. Contending that "the smallest lack of coordination in the actions of the unit is . . . fraught with serious consequences," an analyst discovers therein the reason "why it is inadmissible that subordinates do not know the situation of their neighbors, and particularly of those units with which or in whose interests fire cooperation is organized; or that they do not know the signals of communication with them. . . ."

> One cannot reconcile oneself with . . . air defense units essentially deciding only their own special questions, acting separately from the general tactical situation, without taking into account . . . changes in the . . . deployment of the units they cover.[41]

> *The summer of 1941:* "Some commanders, instead of . . . maintaining contact with their neighbors, the staff of the Front and the Air Force . . . issued orders not knowing about the situations on other sectors of the Front."[42]

> *Northwest of Stalingrad, November 23, 1942:* "A disagreeable incident occurred. In the sector of the Division the tanks of the 16th Tank Corps, approximately 50 vehicles, were to enter into battle. Our sappers cleaned the approaches of mines . . . our units prepared themselves for being thrown into battle after the tanks. However, we succeeded in finding neither the Commander of the Tank Corps, nor any of his staff workers, so as to organize cooperation. They themselves conducted no reconnaissance of the terrain and did not ascertain the location of our forward edge. During the morning of November 23, the tanks of the 16th Corps deployed into battle formation far from our forward line. As it turned out later, they took our trenches to be the enemy's defense."[43]

One may replace information that might have been obtained by communication by convenient assumptions:

> Calculating that the battle for the hamlet would be led by the company commanded by Popov, acting on the ledge on the right, I decided to move ahead as quickly as possible. Popov replicated my mistake, also detouring the hamlet and continuing the attack. He forgot about one of the basic laws of cooperation, mutual information.[44]

Rather than being ill-informed, owing to a lack of communications, one may be *ill-informing:*

> *The 9th Army in the Caucasus in the fall of 1942:* "The cooperation between infantry and tanks was impaired, particularly between the 140th Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel N. T. Petrenko and units of the 3rd Mountain Rifle Corps of Colonel G. N. Perekrestov. Thus, on November 26 and 27, parts of the Corps were taken away from the Brigade's sector of offensive, a fact of which the Commander of the tank brigade was not informed."[45]
>
> *The winter of 1944 in the Ukraine:* "Two brigades from the corps of V. V. Grigor'ev, leaving the heights west of Ocheretnya, moved east, giving no indication of that fact to the Staff of their Corps."[46]
>
> *A commander of a tank Army (Katukov) about a subordinate and friend (Babadzhanyan), in the winter of 1945:* "He has broken forward and away. . . . I know why he is silent at present, he fusses about somewhere, he has forgotten about everything. For three days I repeated endlessly: remember, Armo, that the most important thing is contact, keep contact. . . . There must be contact . . . from below and from above."[47]

In contrast, the enemy:

> [The Germans] also had strong sides. With them communications of infantry with tanks and aviation were well arranged. The German infantrymen met their aviation with tens and hundreds of flares indicating where their battle deployment was.[48]

The same commander may, of course, be both not informed and not informing:

> The Supreme Commander I. V. Stalin telegraphed January 8 [1943] to the Commander of the Trans-Caucasian Front, I. V. Tyulenev,

> and to the Commander of the North Caucasian Grouping, I. I. Maslennikov: "For the third day you are not furnishing data about the fate of your tank and cavalry groups. You have broken off from your troops and lost contact with them. . . . I demand that you reestablish contact with the mobile parts of the Northern grouping and regularly twice a day inform the General Staff about the situation on your front. . . ."[49]

Several themes of the Authorities about insufficiency of communication seem to indicate the seriousness with which they view it.

One may *stress* that there is *no* such lack. "Contact was uninterrupted," say the headlines of a report in the armed forces' daily, on simulated combat.[50] When, in another such combat, "the strike group charged with destroying the enemy's tanks rise into the air," true, "its leading elements do not see each other," but nevertheless they assuredly do "keep reliable contact among each other."[51] In yet another exercise, "the intelligence obtained was immediately transmitted to the senior commander—radio contact was not interrupted even for a minute. . . ."[52] Enunciating "the necessity of maintaining contact," an officer cites as a good example in this respect the actions of "the commander of a motorized rifle battalion, Lieutenant Colonel G. Zanki and of the commander of an artillery battalion, Major Tereshchenko"; indeed, "in the course of attacking in great depth, the officers constantly maintained radio contact among themselves."[53]

One may *elaborately* require the *obvious*:

> Moving toward joining with a landing from the air or the sea, the battalion, in order to attain cooperation with the troops landed, must know . . . the signals of mutual identification. Contemporary aviation is capable of supporting the actions of detached units [the subject of the article—NL]. . . . Hence, the entire personnel [of the detached unit] must be acquainted with the signals of identification of its aviation, the designations of the units, and the signals of cooperation.
>
> So as to obtain a close cooperation with detached units acting in neighboring directions, it is indispensable for the commander to know their direction and mission, the order of maintaining contact and the signals of designation.[54]

One may attribute extreme importance to the factor about whose sufficiency one harbors doubts:

> The cause of that miracle . . . the holding of Stalingrad by our troops . . . was precisely the uninterrupted contact between the

> troops that did not discontinue even for a minute; the contact of the troops in the city with all other troops defending the region of Stalingrad. . . .[55]
>
> *Encircling at Stalingrad:* "The personal contact of commanders . . . had . . . great significance. It was particularly precious that our staffs were, as one says, in tune. I. S. Glebov (Chief of Staff of the 65th Army) quickly established . . . cooperation: constant live contact, exchange of data, everything agreed on the map, organized encounters at the junction; in one word, both armies went to the breakthrough feeling a friendly, firm elbow of the neighbor."[56]

* * * * * * *

Because of insufficient communication, there may be insufficient coordination in operations. In an exercise, "each specialist of the unit, taken separately, had both the indispensable knowledge and habits. However, as a whole, the collective recalled an orchestra of capable musicians playing without coordination."[57] "In general," another observer judges, "the motorized riflemen and tankmen did not by themselves act badly in the dynamic of the [simulated] battle." Yet, "one did not feel that there was coordination, a firm cohesion between them."[58]

> In one exercise the commanders of two companies—Senior Lieutenant V. Voronov commanding a motorized rifle company, and Senior Lieutenant V. Es'kov commanding a tank company—entered the same situation onto their maps. The units were neighbors on the training ground and often met in the field.
>
> But apparently it is not enough to live in neighboring barracks . . . to know each other really.
>
> "I convinced myself that each of the companies is by itself not badly prepared," remarked the officer of a higher staff in reviewing an exercise. "But in combat they supplement each other weakly. . . . That is, each taken by itself, the companies could aspire to a good evaluation. But I cannot evaluate their common actions highly."[59]

"The airmen," reports a senior officer about a simulated combat, "were warring according to their laws . . . and the ground units according to theirs. Such was, it seemed, the peculiarity of this cooperation."[60] "In the first period of the War," a general officer discloses, in the mid-1970s, in a book intended to present lessons for the present, "cooperation in combat was in part unskillfully organized.

In particular, the fire of artillery and of the tanks. . . . Rifle battalions attacked without appropriate fire support and suffered undue losses. The cooperation with neighboring units was badly organized or entirely lacking." For instance, "[according to] the order of the commander of the 20th Army [in the fall of 1941] . . . the infantry did not know the tasks of the artillery, the artillery did not know where the infantry was acting."[61]

> When later the lessons of the battle for Kotel'va were analyzed, one had to conclude that we could have seized the place from the march if a precise coordination between units of the Corps and the tankmen supporting us had been arranged. However, such a cooperation was established only after a day, when it was already late—the Fascists had succeeded in drawing into Kotel'va parts of the motorized division "Great Germany" and of the tank division "Death Head."[62]

> *The beginning of the War:* "In the area of Baranovichi the river Shara favored the organization of a defense line. However, the troops finding themselves there (up to three divisions), acted without coordination . . . the tank units of the enemy easily crossed that line. . . ."[63] "In the course of my whole first day of commanding troops at the front [June 29, 1941], the thought did not leave me for a moment that it was necessary to . . . force the troops to fight not without coordination but . . . with coordination between all kinds of troops. I understood with complete clarity that only troops that were connected among themselves by a single idea for the battle could stop the forward movement of the enemy. . . ."[64]

> The conditions for breaking the blockade of Leningrad in September 1942 required that the 54th Army act . . . in full cooperation with the Leningrad Front. However, we did not succeed in resolving the questions concerning common actions in the manner required by the situation.[65] What were the basic factors which led to the failure of the attempt to break the blockade of Leningrad in 1942?
>
> . . . . One of the major causes was . . . that we were not able to organize . . . the cooperation not only between Fronts but also between Armies, within Armies between divisions, and within divisions between regiments.[66]

> Thus began on November 19 [1942] the battle . . . on the central sector of the breakthrough [in the area of Stalingrad], the battle in which the commanders of our strike divisions had to undergo an examination in cooperation.[67]

> *The Stalingrad area, January 1943:* "The Army Commander reproached us, the commanders of neighboring divisions, for the absence of firm contact and cooperation. The Army Commander was right. . . ."[68]
>
> *The Caucasus in the spring of 1943:* "From the beginning of the attack the infantry advanced in disunited fashion."[69]
>
> *The winter of 1944:* "In those days I often failed to understand: where has our rich experience in the close coordination between the basic kinds of arms—infantry, artillery, tanks, and aviation—gone?"[70]
>
> *A moment in Eastern Prussia:* "It remained unclear why the cooperation between the troops disintegrated so quickly."[71]

In contrast, the enemy:

> You cannot dispute that the enemy coordinates his actions. . . .[72]

Several themes of the Authorities seem to express their concern with this matter.

That coordination was satisfactory on a certain occasion seems worth stressing. When on one occasion during the War the enemy's major effort was directed against the gap between two rifle companies, their fire was "united."[73] When, on another occasion, "the enemy . . . concentrated all his attention on the 2nd Rifle Company," and, "utilizing this, the 1st Rifle Company . . . attacked the enemy . . . ," it did so, again, "in united fashion."[74] A unit may be presented as relieved and buoyed up by the fact of another unit cooperating with it, though their respective capabilities would seem to render this an evident necessity: "At Stalingrad, fighters of the 3rd Rifle Regiment, when they were to act together with the 422nd Artillery Regiment, announced: Now the Fascists are not going to pass, for the artillerists are with us."[75]

> The actions of these units in place and in time were precisely coordinated.[76]

By noting adequacy here, one may imply insufficiency elsewhere. "Yes," exults an observer, "in the exercises in this company everything was *different*": "Senior Lieutenant Sedykh . . . constantly required from his entire personnel . . . an uninterrupted close cooperation between platoons."[77]

One may elaborate on the obvious, indicating that one cannot take it for granted.

Thus one may attempt to prove that lack of coordination can be harmful. "If," it seems worthwhile pointing out, "within the staff due cohesion is not attained, the staff is simply not capable of furnishing the commander help to a full extent."[78] "If a tank crew performs a maneuver of evading ATGMs," an analyst explains, "the issue of that maneuver will depend on the degree to which the activities of the commander, the mechanic-driver and gunner are precisely coordinated. In case their actions are insufficiently closely meshed between themselves. . . ."[79] "It is difficult," an anonymous authority teaches, "to overestimate the importance of uninterrupted cooperation with neighbors"; for "flanks and gaps are the most vulnerable places where the enemy most often attempts to strike." Hence, "if actions between neighboring units are not thoroughly coordinated, if by a common effort gaps are not covered by fire . . . one may suffer defeat."[80] "It is not difficult to understand," a general officer believes it necessary to recall, "in what situation the attacking forces will find themselves if artillery does not open fire at the moment at which they arrive at a given line, if the forward edge of the defense is not attacked simultaneously."[81]

A similar effort is made to show that adequate cooperation helps. When on one occasion during the War "the antitank means of the enemy . . . were suppressed by our infantry, and our tanks thus freed from the battle against antitank weapons," when thereupon "the tank crews hastened to destroy enemy machine guns in the interest of our infantry," such a mutual fire "facilitated the most rapid advance of the infantry. . . ."[82]

Indeed, the degree of cooperation attained may be presented as the *crucial* factor:

> *The exercise Berezina in 1978:* "Here it is—the impressive picture of precise collaboration! Here it is—the turning point of the decisive battle!"[83]
>
> *The War:* "General Biryukov [commanding the 214th Division] conducted a sandbox game with his commanders and the commanders of the attached artillery and tank brigades. The main thing was present: the mutual understanding and the united action of the different kinds of troops."[84]

In the face of substantial deviations from standards, the mere absence of defects may be considered excellence:

> *A distinctive mark of elite troops:* "Full cooperation of tanks with motorized infantry and artillery, coordination of tank ambushes with tank strike groups, cooperative action . . . of personnel."[85]

> November 29 [1941] the Army Commander [Meretskov] and I arrived at the 65th Rifle Division. . . . P. K. Koshevoi [the division commander] reported about the beginning of the attack.
>
> —By what are you going to *gladden* us today? the Army Commander asked him not very amiably.
>
> —Until now, only by the fact that the regiments rose to the attack in *coordinated* fashion![86]

> I remember with great satisfaction these last days of November [1942 in the area of Stalingrad]. The mutual support of the rifle divisions . . . the real acting together of different kinds of troops.[87]

The elementary may be judged outstanding:

> The 27th of January [1943] began the battle for the destruction of the enemy grouping [at Stalingrad] . . . through the cooperation of three Armies: the 64th . . . the 57th . . . and the 21st. . . .
>
> . . . . Here we succeeded in establishing good cooperation so that there was not even a single case where this or that Army struck its neighbor.[88]

In contrast, in the face of a disappointing reality, perfection may be alleged to reign. "Precisely, *splochennost'* [cohesion]—that is the first thing that anybody feels who comes to the regiment."[89] One may present officers as "meshed one with the other."[90] "In the course of the attack, the BMPs and the tanks were united as if by invisible threads; in so coordinated a manner did they act";[91] those threads may be "unbreakable."[92]

In a compromise between reality and wish, cohesion is presented as not perfect, yet steadily rising. "Interest in how things stand with a neighboring unit is rising,"[93] "the unit has become more united, more cohesive,"[94] "unity (*druzhba*, literally, friendship) grows from day to day."[95]

> *1944:* "The infantry *learned* how to keep advancing just behind the shellbursts of their own artillery, and the gunners how to . . . shift their fire in accordance with the movements of infantry and tanks. A real fighting friendship *grew up* between the various branches of the Army."[96]

This was no doubt because great effort had been expended with this objective in mind. It is "a grave error," applying a pervasive Bolshevik point, to rely on "the very structure of army life fostering the togetherness of people, the emergence of contact between them."[97] "Comradely relations between people" is a state to be "achieved through hard and protracted effort," the meaning of the omnipresent verb *dobit'sya*.[98] As in so many other respects, "special attention" must be directed toward "making military collectives cohere, toward the formation in them of a feeling of military comradeship."[99]

And that objective, an anonymous authority informs us, "is now considered to be one of the most important indicators of the effectiveness of the work of the commanders and political cadres, of Party and Komsomol organizations."[100]

An objective on behalf of which persuasion is, of course, to be applied, "Both during the preparation of a march and in its course," a general officer reports in (and for) the mid-1970s about the War, "commanders, political workers, Party and Komsomol organizers strove for battle cohesion, harmony, coordination [of units] . . ." through "the systematic clarification of the unity of aims and missions, of the significance of mutual rescue, comradeship, and friendship . . . in all conditions of combat."[101] When, before the first exercise of young marines in a stormy sea, their commander arranges for an evening with their seniors, what was "the main thing that the experienced marines tried to transmit to their comrades"? Well, "their personal experience of . . . maintaining in difficult conditions an atmosphere of mutual help."[102]

Yet persuasion is not enough. "It is useful," judges an analyst about personnel, "periodically to give them tasks in the fulfillment of which it is *impossible* not to collaborate."[103] One may recommend for "socialist competition" an arrangement where exercise scores were computed for small groups, "which led to an increased cohesion of personnel, forced them to help each other."[104]

Insufficiency of coordination may concern *space*:

> Strikes were conducted . . . in varying directions, as if by spread fingers. . . .[105]

> *The summer of 1941 in the Ukraine:* "The absence of precise cooperation put the 21st Army into a very difficult situation. Its troops acted in opposed . . . directions (toward the East and West). . . ."[106]

> It was not rare [during the Battle of Moscow] . . . and in the beginning of the War it was very frequent, almost the rule, that

> Armies acted as autonomous . . . organisms, without . . . mutual contact with other Armies that were fulfilling the same or a similar task. We recall, for instance, in the first period of the War, the offensive of the 4th Strike Army in the direction of Andreapol', Toropets, Velizh. At the same time as the 4th Strike Army, the 3rd Strike Army of the Northwestern Front (of which the 4th Strike Army was also a part) and the 22nd Army of the Kalinin Front were to enter battle. In the design of the operations, it was stated that all three Armies would fulfill a common task in close cooperation.
>
> However, . . . a real cooperation failed to be obtained. The neighboring Armies lagged behind the 4th Strike Army for more than 100 kilometers, which made it impossible for the two Fronts to fulfill their tasks in full measure.[107]

Or it might be a matter of *time*:

> *A message of Stalin to Vasilevskii in the Stalingrad area, December 4, 1942, on the relationship between the commanders of sub-areas:* "Your task consists in . . . uniting the actions of Ivanov [Eremenko] and Dontsov [Rokossovskii]. Until now there is among you rather disunion than union. On the second and third Ivanov attacked, but Dontsov was not in a position to attack. The enemy received the possibility of maneuvering. On the fourth Dontsov is going to attack, but Ivanov is going to find himself incapable of attacking. Again, the enemy will receive the possibility of maneuvering. . . . Before issuing an order concerning a common attack by Ivanov and Dontsov, it is necessary to check whether they are capable of attacking."[108]
>
> *December 1942, the area of Stalingrad, according to a German commander:* "The Russians rarely succeeded in organizing an all-arms attack. Again and again, first their infantry, then (after it had been repulsed) their tanks by themselves, and finally their artillery alone struck. Or the same pattern in another sequence. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]"[109]
>
> *The winter of 1943 in the Caucasus:* "The basic task, the crushing of the enemy grouping in the area of Novorossiisk and the expulsion of the enemy from Novorossiisk, was not accomplished."
>
> This occurred for a series of causes. . . . Second, there was a divergence in the timing of the strikes of the 47th Army and of the naval landing, which permitted the enemy to maneuver with his forces.[110]

One component may be "late." An article in the armed forces' daily on *The Art of Cooperation* begins as follows: "The motorized

rifle battalion commanded by Senior Lieutenant N. Ilyushichkin was charged with crushing the 'enemy,' who had reinforced a favorable position. The battalion received support by tanks, artillery, air defense, mortars and engineers-sappers. These were sufficient for the rapid solution of the task set. However, the battle turned out to be protracted [which, as we know, no combat should be—NL] and ended quite differently than had been planned." Why? "Because there was insufficient coordination between the actions of the units. It took the sappers, for instance, longer to prepare passages through mine fields than had been foreseen in the plan; the artillerists, not having received the signal agreed upon, were slow to open fire; and the motorized riflemen themselves made haste slowly and began to lag behind the tanks."[111]

> In an exercise the company of Senior Lieutenant I. Sukhoyraskii accomplished an envelopment so as to arrive in the rear of the "enemy's" strongpoint. Calculating the time for this movement, the Commander did not take account of the terrain and weather. As a result, the speed of the maneuver turned out to be lower than foreseen because some machines got stuck. The Company, acting from the Front, began attacking, not waiting for the strike in the rear of the "enemy" [it is implied that such waiting was infeasible or would have been unprofitable—NL]. The mission turned out to be unfulfilled.
>
> Clearly, the Senior Lieutenant should not have spent time on the pulling out of the tanks that had got stuck, but should have arrived at the intended line at the planned time, even without two or three vehicles. In that case, the sudden strike together with the unit acting from the front would undoubtedly have brought success.[112]

> *1944 in the Southwest:* "It is easy to imagine with what impatience we waited in the Staff for the beginning of the offensive of the 4th Tank Army set for July 27. Common actions were to furnish finally that superiority in forces necessary for crushing the enemy's resistance."
>
> Our expectations were not fulfilled. . . . As late as 16 hours on July 27 only 17 tanks from one of the brigades of the 22nd Tank Corps of the 4th Tank Army had crossed over to the western shore of the Don.
>
> It is a pity that the 4th Tank Army did not succeed in beginning the attack at the same time as we did, already on July 25. It is an even greater pity that it could not come forward, even on July 27, at the time indicated in the Front's directive.

Thus, the 4th Tank Army was late from the beginning of the offensive. . . .[113]

1944 in the Baltic: "The 200th Division of the 100th Corps on July 19 began only two hours after the start of his retreat to pursue the enemy, and because of that behind the 21st Guards Division to the extent of 6 to 7 kilometers, opening the latter's right flank."[114]

In particular, the artillery may be late with regard to the infantry:

Sometimes the artillery, intended to accompany the infantry "with fire and wheels," lagged behind. Thus, the artillery unit of the 100th Division was to support the rifle regiment at the time of its attack in the area of Trostyanets, but was late in occupying firing positions and, essentially, failed to support the infantry.[115]

According to a German commander, "the Russian artillery was not versatile enough to keep pace with the advancing infantry and armor. The guns followed slowly and often remained glued to their original emplacements, so that the attacking waves . . . were left for a long time without artillery support."[116]

Or the infantry may be late with regard to the artillery, creating a pause between the end of the artillery preparation and the advance of the infantry—a pause that the enemy may utilize for recovery and reinforcement (see Chapter II).

The infantry was late in arriving at its line of attack. It attacked a substantial amount of time after the suppression of the fire system of the enemy [by artillery] who . . . during that time succeeded in organizing himself anew.[117]

The same targets may be unwittingly covered more than once:

In this [simulated] combat, the artillerists were supporting the motorized riflemen. Firing, they took account of our aviation. They chose trajectories for their ammunition which would be without danger for it. On the other hand, for the artillerists the air strikes against the "enemy" seemed to carry no results. The ammunition they sent over often hit targets that had just before been "worked over" from the air. Thus the rocket battery commanded by Senior Lieutenant A. Kireev sent a salvo on a target that had already been destroyed by helicopters. The duplication was not at all due to the striving to obtain the maximum suppression of the "enemy," but rather to a lack of coordination.[118]

The offensive against Berlin: "We had a strong Air Force, but it was used to striking at the positions on which the artillery was firing."[119]

There may be solitary enterprises of one kind of troops, doomed to failure (and based on an underestimation of the obstacles, as discussed in Chapter III):

When "a commander of a motorized rifle battalion did not organize . . . collaboration with the tank men," a military leader observes "And here they go 'warring' by themselves."[120]

On June 30 [1942], I. V. Stalin spoke with the commander of the Bryansk Front, F. I. Golikov, who was to conduct a counterstrike with a tank corps against the flank of the . . . enemy: ". . . . Everything depends now on your ability in directing these forces in a manner befitting an intelligent human being. . . ."

The tank corps entered the battle . . . without artillery or air support. The troops of the Bryansk Front did not succeed in fulfilling their mission.[121]

General Galanin commanding the 24th Army undertakes an offensive with tanks only in the area of Stalingrad, November 24, 1942: "The style of leadership remained the same: every kind of troop and weapon acted by itself."[122]

Before the war Kulik was marshal of the Soviet Union, but when in the fall of 1941 he came out of encirclement without documents and without men, he became major-general, and in the summer of 1943 he received the title of lieutenant-general. . . .

. . . . . .

Seeing me and Katukov in the mirror, Kulik, without turning, shouted:

—Who has come?

We named ourselves.

—For what purpose have you come?

. . . . . .

Mikhail Efimovich . . . answered that he had come to agree on cooperation.

—I will manage without you. . . . Tomorrow I shall be attacking myself. My boys will be rushing forward. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.][123]

The Chief of artillery of the Front in the Leningrad area inspects

a division in the winter of 1942: "And which artillery units except your own are to take part in the suppression of the strongpoint?"

—Nobody has talked to me about that, said Gurin, troubled.

—But how so? the General spread his arms. For you are not to act alone. That is cooperation between artillery units for you!

. . . . Vladimir Erastovich [Taranovich] insistently taught us that the "basis of bases" of success in the solution of any combat task is a well-thought-out cooperation worked out in detail. The Chief of Artillery of the Division tried to justify himself: "With us everything is planned." To this, Taranovich only smiled:

"What is the price of planning if the commander of the battery does not know who, apart from himself, is going to fire on the target and when? . . . ." [ellipsis in the text—NL.][124]

The Caucasus in the winter of 1943: "The land forces were to swing round the city [Novorossiisk] in the northwest, while the seaborne forces landed in two places. . . . The timing of the landings was made dependent on the progress of the 47th Army; they were to take place after the land forces had punched a hole in the defense to the north of Novorossiisk and taken the Markotkh Pass."

On February 1, the 47th Army assumed the offensive, but had no success. *Nevertheless*, the commander of the Trans-Caucasian Front ordered the seaborne forces to land.[125]

The 52nd Guards Division in the area of Poltava, in the summer of 1943: "Marshal Zhukov . . . [told me]: 'How many of the enemy will be facing you? One division? Two? Three? After all, at Khar'kov there were four or five of them. But you want to make the weather with your one 52nd Guards Division. . . .' "

. . . . . .

Before attacking, one must know the enemy well and not push oneself forward with one division, and even one that is not up to full strength.[126]

The temptation to go it alone seems to be especially great for tanks. Hence "the *Field Manual* categorically demands"—it could be said today as it was in 1944—"that in the case of common actions with rifle units, the tanks do not tear themselves away from the infantry, do not lose cooperation with it, do not throw themselves at the enemy defense without . . . artillery and aviation support." Three decades later, in an exercise, while the armored personnel carriers slowly "move from cover to cover," "the tanks succeed in advancing far forward." Thus their "commander lost contact with his neighbor. . . . He erupted forward, he put his denuded flank under stabbing fire, and the whole platoon perished."[127]

1942: "The Stavka drew the lessons from the employment of tank and mechanized units. . . . It turned out that the tanks were being thrown against the enemy's defense without due artillery support."[128]

The fall of 1942 in the Caucasus: "In the course of the operation in the area of Gizel' the tanks often broke off from the infantry and acted in solitary combat with the artillery, the infantry, and the tanks of the enemy. Thus, for instance, on November 8 the 4th Guards Rifle Brigade, attacking after the 2nd and 52nd Tank Brigades, was met with strong machinegun and mortar fire at the northeastern rim of Gizel' and laid down. The tanks, however, not waiting for the suppression of the fire means of the enemy by artillery fire, went ahead and were thus forced to give solitary combat not only with the antitank means of the enemy, but also with his tanks dug into the earth."[129]

The artillery commander of the First Baltic Front on the failed offensive begun February 3, 1944: "Tanks were not connected with the corresponding rifle units, which explains the following:
(a) Tanks erupted into Derevshchina, Koziki, Kuryatinki, smashed the entire fire system of the enemy, but infantry arrived at these points only after several hours.
(b) Tanks systematically advanced on the battlefield far ahead of the infantry and suffered large losses."[130]

The 11th Panzer Division in December 1942, according to a German commander: "The fighting on the Chir River was made easier by the methods adopted by the Command of the Russians' Fifth Tank Army. They sent its various corps into battle without coordinating the timing of their attacks and without the cooperation of . . . infantry divisions. Thus, 11th Panzer Division was able to smash one corps after the other until the hitting power of the Fifth Tank Army had been weakened to such an extent that it was possible for the Division to withdraw and start the game all over again with another Russian tank army."[131]

The same propensity is asserted to exist in the infantry:

The 28th Army in the winter of 1943 in the Caucasus: "Attacks were often conducted without artillery preparation or artillery support."[132] "The attacking infantry was often not furnished with artillery fire and cooperated weakly with other kinds of forces. It approached the enemy within the range of his rifle machine gun fire and was thrown back with large losses."[133]

"They will not let you down,"[134] thus members of one unit, in a standard locution, reassure themselves about "neighbors" upon whom they depend—thus warding off the opposite possibility:

> Major Timokhin looked at them, shook his head and said once more: "They will let you down! By God, they will let you down!"[135]

Against such somber predictions, one raises obvious requirements, such as that for "an uninterrupted and effective fire support of attacking troops throughout the entire depth of the attack," as well as a benign forecast: "Precisely, Soviet troops have worked out a method of artillery and aviation attack that guarantees a close and uninterrupted coordination of the attacking infantry and tanks with artillery and aviation."[136] In reality, though, it may happen that:

> The artillery commanders did not always have contact with the commanders of the rifle battalions, and therefore, the artillery often fired on unsuitable objects.[137]

Those who should be supporting us may be "doing nothing" (see Chapter I):

> *The counteroffensive in the area of Moscow:* "Our operational group was to be supported by the 28th Air Division which included fighters. But it was based far from the Front and we had no contact with it. Only at the end of December representatives of the Air Division and of a regiment of U2 appeared. I gave them missions, but even after that, the situation did not improve. Our aircraft were not visible.
>
> . . . . One night I was traveling toward the village Podkopaedo. . . . Suddenly . . . I saw the remnants of a transport train destroyed by enemy aviation. . . .
>
> ". . . . I sent . . . a radiogram to the Commander of the Aviation Group, General Nikolaenko in Tula: 'Stop being neutral, start fighting.' "[138]
>
> *A ground attack of the North Caucasian Front, April 14, 1943, in particular the attack of the 10th Guards Rifle Corps:* "The aviation did not fulfill its mission to bomb the enemy's defense position."[139] "April [1943] . . . the main forces of the Northern and Southern Strike Groups of the 56th Army went over to the attack . . . [which failed]. The causes of the unsuccessful attack were . . . [also] that when the infantry went into the attack, the artillery fire noticeably weakened. In some sectors the infantry was left entirely without fire

> support."[140] "When the strike grouping of the 47th Army attacked north of Novorossiisk, the units on the other sectors did not show any activity. And when the landing of the naval infantry took place, the strike grouping stopped its actions."[141]

Or those who should be supporting us may be doing their own thing. If an offensive force is composed of several kinds of elements with different capabilities for speed, each of them may use its own potential without regard for the other's movements. "Instead of moving forward after the motorized troops and supporting their attack with fire, the BMPs went ahead with great speed."[142]

> Lieutenant Makarov took the correct decision: to speed the advance of the infantry and to conduct the battle on foot in cooperation with the tanks. . . .
>
> Everybody knows that in such a very difficult situation . . . all participants in the battle are obliged to act as a unitary, excellently coordinated collective in which everybody knows what to do, where to do it, and how.
>
> . . . . Nothing resembling that happened. . . . The tanks broke away from the motorized riflemen. Their crews concentrated attention only on striking "their own" targets and were little interested in how things were going in the company they were supposed to support; while Lieutenant Makarov was unable to force the tankmen to act in the interest of the fulfillment of the common task.[143]

As to "mutual assistance in emergency," again, several themes used by the Authorities seem to express dissatisfaction with the level attained.

One may stress that propriety in the matter in question is a necessary condition of victory. "Cooperation will become the key to victory *only when* units . . . will be ready to furnish mutual help."[144]

One may find the absence of impropriety worth noting:

> To the commander of the company [landed by air] the route he was supposed to follow appeared impossible. He turned his vehicle around and lost his way in the fog. Then Lieutenant-Colonel Kuz'min, recognizing the situation, *decided* to help the air-landed unit with his own forces.[145]

> Motorized infantry attacked a strongpoint of the enemy. The company commanded by Senior Lieutenant Vladimir Yakuba had to attack in particularly difficult conditions. . . . *Nevertheless*, it was not only the actions of his own subordinates that preoccupied the

> Senior Lieutenant. Nearby the motorized infantry company commanded by Lieutenant Aleksandr Kulabukhov was attacking. This officer had entered the service only recently. . . . The situation of the Lieutenant and his troops would have been difficult had not their neighbor on the right furnished them . . . help. . . . In the unexpected maneuver Senior Lieutenant Yakuba diverted the attention of the "enemy" upon himself. The latter was obliged to divide his forces. And this Lieutenant Kulabukhov utilized: his company swiftly attacked the strongpoint.[146]

—presumably the very same strongpoint that the helping unit had been unable to take in the first place, and which will now fall to the helped ones, to the (it is implied) unenvious joy of the helpers.

> *The enemy, in the War, has destroyed the head tank of the Second Tank Platoon:* "The commander of the [First Tank] Platoon *did not* fulfill the order given him in a merely formal manner. He followed the developing situation attentively . . . understood in what condition the Company was after the destruction of the head tank by the enemy. He felt the indispensability of *vzaimovyruchka* [mutual assistance in emergency], strove for the common success. All this inspired him to show creative initiative. . . ."[147]

One may emphatically require the elementary. "It would," one finds it necessary to declare, "be criminal to do nothing when the neighbor strains his last forces and the enemy 'does not touch us.' "[148]

> A remarkable man, Filip Sofronovich Gnatyuk [political propaganda instructor of the unit]. . . . He understands better than others how important it is to carry a wounded comrade away from the field of battle. How hot was his indignation when it became known that Gulyi left the wounded Commander of the unit on the field! . . . After this dishonorable case, the editors of the divisional newspaper issued a leaflet that said: "Everybody who, saving his skin, leaves his wounded comrade on the field of battle, commits a crime that will remain a dark spot on his conscience during his entire life."[149]

One may also ask for very high degrees of performance:

> *Suvorov's precept:* "Perish yourself, but rescue your comrade."[150]

And one may allege conformity to such exacting standards:

> The battle was bitter. We won it because . . . every soldier . . . was willing to give his own life so as to help a comrade.[151]

At the same time, and more importantly, one may be so apprehensive of misconduct that its very absence becomes excellence:

> A remarkable people, the naval infantry. . . . They never abandon each other in misfortune.[152]

> In memory and in documents many episodes of . . . mutual aid between infantry and artillery have been preserved. For instance, immediately after the artillery preparation, the commander of a battery of the 7th Guards Artillery Regiment, Captain Shabel'nik, noticed that the rifle battalion, the action of which he was to support with fire, did not leave its foxholes. He crawled toward the commander of the battalion and saw that he had been killed. Quickly evaluating the situation which had emerged, Shabel'nik himself led the riflemen to the attack. By its bold thrust the Battalion broke through the first zone of the enemy's defense and advanced three kilometers. Only after such a success did Shabel'nik transfer his command of the battalion to one of the commanders of the companies, returning to his battery. The artillerists continued to suppress the firepoints and the infantry of the enemy that hindered the advance of the Battalion. There were not tens or hundreds, but many thousands of such examples at the Front.[153]

> *January 1943 in the area of Stalingrad:* "A small artillery unit had to advance its guns on deep snow. . . . This was entirely beyond their forces, but the infantrymen did not abandon the artillerymen in their hour of distress and hauled the artillery pieces together with them. They also helped them to carry the shells and to fire on the enemy."[154]

> The cavalrymen turned out to be good comrades. And not only when everything went well, but also in the difficult moments of battle.[155]

> Lieutenant-General I. M. Chistyakov . . . always strove to help his neighbor in any way possible. . . .[156]

> *October 23, 1941, in the area of Volokolamsk:* "The Commander of the 1077th Regiment asked for help from his neighbor, the Commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Cadet Regiment. . . . The Battalion Commander promised to come to the rescue. Colonel Mladentsev approved: 'It is unimportant whose sector it is. Help is needed.' "[157]

Stressing the requirement of contact within the armed forces, the

Authorities have always banned any public acknowledgment of their own aversion to horizontal contacts between their subordinates. It is only incidentally that we glimpse the reality:

> *The area of Vyaz'ma, the winter of 1942:* "Lieutenant-General Efremov [commanding the 33rd Army] and I regularly exchanged information by radio and considered that it would be expedient for us to create a common Front, joining our flanks. In that case, we would maneuver freely. But we were not allowed to unite. The Staff of the Front gave me a strange instruction: 'Direct contact with infantry [the author commands a cavalry division—NL] is not necessary for you. . . .' The dispersion of forces finding themselves in the rear of the enemy became one of the causes of the catastrophe of the entire strike grouping of the 33rd Army and its commander."[158]

Not only may a higher level object, but also a peer may feel invaded:

> *The area of Stalingrad, December 1942:* "A directive of the Stavka arrived concerning the transfer of all troops acting with regard to Stalingrad to the Don Front [commanded by the author]. . . . Immediately, we proceeded to the establishment of contact with the 57th, 64th, and 62nd Armies. More correctly, we already had these contacts beforehand. The question concerning the unification of the forces of the two Fronts [the Don and the Stalingrad Fronts] had been worked out by our staff . . . and while we had not achieved much, we had done something. Long before, Vasilevskii had told me that the Commander of the Stalingrad Front was complaining: Rokossovskii's staff infiltrates its officers, attempts to establish some kind of contact: Eremenko was extremely dissatisfied with this."[159]

Splitting the Enemy

Corresponding to the attempt to enhance one's own cohesion is the effort to reduce that of the enemy.

Soviet stress on *infiltrating* the enemy's combat deployment, and skill in doing so, may be distinctive. According to a German commander, infiltrating was a preferred Soviet mode of combat. Even if one observed with close attention the terrain separating one's forward edge from the Soviets, suddenly they were in one's midst, without anybody knowing how they had gotten there and how long they had

already been there. Such a development would also occur where the terrain had been judged impassable. Strong Soviet units succeeded during the night in consolidating themselves behind the German lines; again and again this was a surprise.

> Practically every Russian attack was preceded by large-scale infiltrations, by an "oozing through" of small units and individual men. . . . The Russian was suddenly there, in the very midst of our positions, and nobody had seen him come. . . . In the least likely places . . . there he was, dug in and all, and in considerable strength. . . . In spite of everybody being alert . . . during the whole night, the next morning entire Russian units were sure to be found far behind our front line, complete with equipment and ammunition and well dug in.[160]

> *The winter of 1942 in the area of Lovat':* "The German command believed that small reconnaissance teams had infiltrated, but in fact more than one hundred riflemen had."[161]

Beyond infiltrating the enemy, there is, for the Soviets, the task of fragmenting him. The primacy of fragmenting the enemy—"the . . . strike . . . fragmenting the enemy's troop system . . . is the basic maneuver of ground troops"[162]— is a point of long standing. "At the basis of maneuver in the meeting encounter," declares the *Field Manual* of 1936, "must be the striving to split the columns of the enemy. . . ." "In the meeting encounter," declares the *Field Manual* of 1944, "one must strive for a rapid . . . tearing asunder of the enemy deployment into separate disconnected groupings . . ."; "one must strive for the isolation of the several columns of the enemy from each other. . . ."

There is a profusion of verbs for splitting the enemy: "strikes . . . fraction *(drobit')* the enemy's defense,"[163] "fraction *(razobshchit')* the enemy's reserves,"[164] "fraction *(razdrobit')* the enemy's groupings."[165] "On January 13 – 14 [1945] the Third and Second Belorussian Fronts went over to the attack against the East Prussian groupings of the enemy. . . . First they cut off . . . the East Prussian groupings of the enemy from the rest of his forces, and then they cut them into three isolated groupings."[166] There are also the verbs "to isolate *(izolirovat')*," "to split *(raz'edenit')*," "to fraction *(raschlenit')*," "to tear to pieces *(razryvat')*."

To do so, one subdues one's preference for concentration (see Chapter I) in favor of a plurality of strikes, designated by the expression *po napravlenyam:* literally, in directions. "On the operational scale,"

a leading analyst recalls, "the breakthrough is, as a rule, accomplished simultaneously in a number of directions."[167] "It is useful," writes another analyst, "to undertake an offensive by . . . a [tank] grouping in a number of directions simultaneously."[168]

To compensate for the reduction of massing in any one direction, there is the gain in surprise. "The attack from various directions also has the advantage of leading the enemy into error"[169] as to which of the directions is that of the main strike. "The superiority of delivering strikes in a number of directions . . . [consists also in the fact that] this facilitates the attainment of surprise."[170] On one occasion during the War, "the simultaneous offensive of . . . groupings of Soviet troops in three directions led the enemy into error concerning the true intention of our command and secured . . . surprise. . . ."[171] More explicitly, "with the establishment of a continuous fixed front in the First World War, the commands of all armies held that a breakthrough can be accomplished only on one narrow sector of the front." To be sure, "the strong aspect of this form of breakthrough consisted in the fact that it allowed . . . the massing of forces." But "experience showed that if a strike were made in one direction and there were passivity in the rest of the front, it became difficult to keep the preparation of the operation hidden and the defense could take countermeasures . . . and localize the breakthrough. . . ." On the other hand, "when the offensive began with a series of strikes . . . the enemy . . . found it difficult to determine the direction of the main blow"; a stratagem "first applied by the troops of the Russian Southwestern Front under the command of General A. Brusilov in June 1916. . . ." "In the Stalingrad operation, there were breakthroughs on seven sectors. In the Belorussian operation, the defense of the enemy was broken through on six sectors, in the Baltic [operation] on eight sectors . . . in the Berlin one on seven. . . ."[172]

Then one could be sure that, in the same analyst's words, "the rest of the front" was not "passive" (we have learned how the Authorities feel about *that*)—another compensation for the restriction on massing.

The point is not simply to fragment the enemy's force in any feasible way, but rather to split it into its various arms. "The essential efforts of the infantry," on one occasion during the War, "were directed toward cutting off the enemy infantry from his tanks"[173]—an endeavor facilitated by the German propensity, in the words of a German commander, "to fight on two separate battlefields: in front the . . . tanks, behind . . . the infantry"—"the biggest German mistake of 1941–1942, according to the Russian High Command, which

oriented the conduct of the battle on this 'split in the German army.' "[174]

> Let us let the German tanks through and let us direct all our fire against the infantry, let us cut it off from the tanks . . . and at night we shall hunt down with bottles the vehicles that have broken through.[175]

> *Stalingrad:* "The defenders of the city learned to let the German tanks pass. . . . Then they . . . cut off the infantry from the tanks by fire, and by this destroyed the battle order of the enemy. The infantry was destroyed separately, and so were the tanks that had broken through. . . ."[176]

Having fragmented the enemy, one annihilates him piecemeal. "The basic means for the annihilation of the enemy," observes an analyst in the past tense, while he might as well have used the future one, "was to . . . dismember the encircled [enemy] forces into isolated groups and to crush them piecemeal."[177]

For this, encirclement is not *required*. "Characteristic in the decision of the battalion commander," at a certain occasion during the War, "was the piecemeal destruction of the enemy. In the beginning the design was to destroy the column withdrawing in the West while holding the enemy advancing in the East with a part of the forces; then to attack and destroy the latter":[178] piecemeal destruction without encirclement.

The most powerful and obvious effect of fragmenting the enemy is, of course, to change the ratio of the forces contending at any given moment, and hence to increase the chance of victory over a superior enemy.

In addition, fragmentation deprives the enemy of singleness of command, to which, needless to say, the Authorities attach extreme importance. An analyst calls attention to "the impairment of cooperation between the fragmented groupings of the enemy."[179] "Isolated groups of the 'enemy,' " one may report about simulated combat, "not connected by a single system of fire, by a single leadership, fell into despair and attempted to avoid being fully crushed. . . ."[180]— while, on the other hand, "the training of parachute troops must be such that even the separation of the airborne landing into small groups will not affect sureness in the fulfillment of the mission."[181]

What holds for the enemy's armed forces—that the way to defeat them is to split them—applies equally to the coalition of enemy governments. An objective of the offensive, an analyst explains, is "to

rapidly push particular countries out of the enemy coalition."[182] The direction of the main blow, it will be said, must secure first of all the withdrawal from the war of particular countries of the enemy coalition.

Apart from the precedent of the War and the singular importance in a possible future war in Western Europe of a particular country of the Western coalition, the Federal Republic of Germany, this orientation is nourished by a Bolshevik belief that the certainty of the "unevenness" within the enemy coalition is the principal cause of conflicts within that camp in peace and war. The omnipresence of "unevenness" within "imperialism" is, it will be said, shown by the fact that the readiness for war of the various countries of the "imperialist" bloc and that of their armed forces is far from being the same everywhere.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Col. E. Babynin, *KZ*, March 4, 1977, cf. Goldhamer, 106.
2. Fedyuninskii, 30.
3. Rokossovskii, quoted by Batov, 1962, 366.
4. Middeldorf, 113.
5. Capt. I. Kikeshev, *VV*, 1976, no. 7, 64.
6. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 58.
7. Capt. A. Petrov, *KZ*, May 21, 1978.
8. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 58.
9. Adgamov et al., 125.
10. Navy Capt. A. Prolov, *KZ*, December 4, 1974.
11. Quoted by Vasilevskii, 597–598.
12. Chistyakov, 51.
13. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 57.
14. A communication of the General Staff to the Commander of the Fourth Ukrainian Front, November 11, 1944, quoted by Vasilevskii, 482.
15. Gorbatov, 191.
16. Maj. A. Drozdov, *KZ*, September 22, 1976.
17. Editorial, *VV*, 1968, no. 6, 6.
18. Novikov and Sverdlov, 72.
19. Maj. Gen. I. Skorodumov and Lt. Col. V. Rudoi, *VV*, 1977, no. 3, 24.
20. Batov, 324–325.
21. Galitskii, 1970, 465–466.
22. Lt. Gen. K. Babenko, *KZ*, October 6, 1978.
23. Editorial, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 4.
24. Gen. of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1968, no. 7, 9.
25. V. I. Kazakov, 128.
26. Gen. of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1968, no. 7, 9. Emphasis added.
27. Col. A. Adgamov, *KZ*, November 2, 1976. Emphasis added.
28. Marchenko, 1974b, 158–159.
29. Fedyuninskii, 27.

30. Quoted by M. I. Kazakov, 116.
31. Grechko, 1973, 89.
32. Ibid., 272.
33. Biryukov, 251.
34. Grechko, 1973, 214.
35. Maj. L. Golovnev, *KZ*, April 15, 1977.
36. Maj. Gen. S. Semenov, *KZ*, September 5, 1978.
37. Voronov, 279.
38. Eremenko, 1969, 378. Emphasis added.
39. Vasilevskii, 479. Emphasis added.
40. Col. N. Shishkin, *VV*, 1965, no. 8, 26.
41. Col. Gen. P. Levchenko, *KZ*, August 16, 1978.
42. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 284–285.
43. Biryukov, 30.
44. An officer quoted by Col. R. Dukov, *KVS*, 1968, no. 7, 47.
45. Grechko, 1976, 339.
46. Babadzhanyan, 1975, 151.
47. Quoted from Popel', 1970, 172.
48. Chuikov, 1962b, 8.
49. Grechko, 1976, 394–395.
50. *KZ*, July 30, 1976.
51. Lt. Col. A. Paimenov and Major V. Kraev, *KZ*, October 22, 1976.
52. Col. F. Gredasov, *KZ*, January 14, 1972.
53. Maj. D. Olitov, *KZ*, January 25, 1972.
54. Col. P. Konoplya, *VV*, 1978, no. 8, 46.
55. Eremenko, 1961, 287.
56. Batov, 1962, 41–42.
57. Lt. Gen. K. Babenko, *KZ*, October 6, 1978.
58. Capt. V. Gorgavin, *KZ*, February 2, 1977.
59. Lt. Col. A. Sokharenko, *KZ*, October 5, 1976.
60. Lt. Col. A. Zakharenko, *KZ*, August 5, 1977.
61. Radzievskii, 1974, 67.
62. Biryukov, 83.
63. Eremenko, 1964, 75.
64. Ibid., 82.
65. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 405.
66. Fedyuninskii, 109.
67. Batov, 68.
68. Biryukov, 45.
69. Grechko, 1976, 481.
70. Voronov, 416.
71. Galitskii, 1970, 252.
72. Popel', 1959, 79.
73. Marchenko, 1974a, 206.
74. Ibid., 86.
75. Marchenko, 1974b, 170.
76. Biryuzov, 216.
77. Maj. V. Vozovikov, *VV*, 1972, no. 4, 33. Emphasis added.
78. Maj. Gen. V. Mikhailov, *KZ*, July 13, 1976.

79. Col. A. Kitov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 57.
80. Editorial, *VV*, 1968, no. 6, 6.
81. Lt. Gen. V. Bukharenko, *KZ*, October 21, 1976.
82. Marchenko, 1974a, 127.
83. Lt. Cols. G. Kashub and A. Zakharenko, Ja. G. Miranovich and Capt. V. Gabrilenko, *KZ*, February 10, 1978.
84. Batov, 132.
85. Lobachev, 230.
86. Degtyarev, 92. Emphasis added.
87. Batov, 88.
88. Chistyakov, 125.
89. Lt. Col. N. Chizh, *KZ*, January 21, 1976.
90. *KZ*, April 4, 1976.
91. Capt. V. Goryavin, *KZ*, February 2, 1977.
92. Capt. A. Petrov, *KZ*, May 21, 1978.
93. *KVS*, 1976, no. 2, 58.
94. *KZ*, July 18, 1976.
95. *KVS*, 1976, no. 10, 36.
96. Shtemenko, 253. Emphasis added.
97. Colonel General P. Gorchakov, *KZ*, July 4, 1976.
98. *KVS*, 1976, no. 10, 32.
99. Colonel I. Samokhin, *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 51.
100. Editorial, *KVS*, 1975, no. 7, 8.
101. Marchenko, 1974a, 189.
102. Lt. Commander V. Shirokov, *KZ*, March 29, 1977.
103. Col. A. Kitov, KVS, 1976, no. 2, 58. Emphasis added.
104. Capt. P. Labutin, *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 71.
105. Fedyuninskii, 109.
106. Grechko, 1976, 44.
107. Eremenko, 1961, 286–287.
108. Quoted by Vasilevskii, 263.
109. Scheibert, 1956, 131.
110. Grechko, 1973, 328.
111. Lt. Gen. V. Bukharenko, *KZ*, October 21, 1976.
112. Col. V. Savel'ev, *VV*, 1976, no. 9, 37.
113. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 275.
114. Eremenko, 1969, 378.
115. Sevast'yanov, 153.
116. Mellenthin, 293.
117. Voronov, 413.
118. Lt. Col. A. Zakharenko, *KZ*, August 5, 1977.
119. Chuikov, 1967, 142.
120. General of the Army P. Belik, *VV*, 1975, no. 9, 24.
121. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 246–247.
122. Batov, 85.
123. Popel', 1960, 184–185.
124. Degtyarev, 140–141.
125. Shtemenko, 84. Emphasis added.
126. Chistyakov, 189–190.

127. Maj. V. Vozovikov, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 33.
128. Voronov, 248.
129. Grechko, 1973, 214.
130. Voronov, 412–413.
131. General Balck, Commander of 11th Panzer, quoted by Mellenthin, 180.
132. Grechko, 1976, 401.
133. Ibid., 472.
134. Sandalov, 14.
135. Abramov, 225.
136. Maj. Gen. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, November 22, 1977.
137. Eremenko, 1969, 331.
138. P. A. Belov, 151.
139. Grechko, 1973, 364–365.
140. Grechko, 1976, 491.
141. Ibid, 446.
142. Lieutenant Colonel B. Gadalin, *VV*, 1976, no. 10, 42.
143. Lt. Col. B. Gudymenko, *VV*, 1974, no. 12, 51.
144. Lt. Col. K. Korzun, *VV*, 1961, no. 11, 34. Emphasis added.
145. Lt. Col. P. Khomchuk, *KZ*, September 21, 1974. Emphasis added.
146. General of the Army N. Lashchenko, *KZ*, November 14, 1974. Emphasis added.
147. Adgamov, 110–111. Emphasis added.
148. Kirin, 48.
149. Khizenko, 38–39.
150. Rokossovskii, 169.
151. Ibid., 332.
152. An officer, quoted by Kalashnik, 42.
153. V. I. Kazakov, 166.
154. Ibid., 173.
155. Biryuzov, 44–45.
156. Batov, 1962, 41.
157. Lobachev, 220–221.
158. P. A. Belov, 206.
159. Rokossovskii, 166.
160. Mellenthin, 180–181.
161. Haupt, 1963, 40–41.
162. Kozlov et al., 361.
163. Sidorenko, 89.
164. Savkin, 256.
165. Ibid., 257.
166. Marshal A. Babadzhanyan, *VIZh*, 1975, no. 4, 67.
167. Reznichenko, 241.
168. Babadzhanyan, 1970, 259.
169. Reznichenko, 298.
170. Savkin, 299.
171. Colonel. S. Petrov, *VIZh*, 1974, no. 7, 37.
172. Sidorenko, 15–18.
173. Radzievskii, 1974, 248.
174. Middeldorf, 124.
175. Dragunskii, 47.

176. Chuikov, 1962a, 178.
177. Sidorenko, 1974a, 71.
178. Marchenko, 1974a, 71.
179. Radzievskii, 1977, 42.
180. Col. K. Titikov, *VV*, 1971, no. 12, 21.
181. Col. I. Belov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 19, 25.
182. Lomov, 139.

Chapter VI
ENHANCING ONE'S CAPACITY TO CALCULATE AND DEGRADING THE ENEMY'S

If personnel manage to avoid inactivity (Chapter I), they may still be active in an unproductive fashion. "Look at an officer," a peer-observer noted, "he is busy from the early morning until the late evening. But when you ask him to draw the results of the day, it suddenly turns out that the coefficient of useful action is so low as to astonish himself. He was twirling around as a squirrel in the wheel, but the yield was minimal."[1] Thus there are those who "do not run away from the job, but don't do it either."

The High Command discerns in its forces a tilt toward busy inefficiency—"muddle-headed bustle masquerading as efficiency"[2]—which it combats frontally as well as indirectly. "It is necessary for everybody to be deeply aware of the following," an officer may explain. "The struggle for economy in POL [petroleum, oil, lubricants] is not only a struggle for the saving of kilograms of the people's wealth, a lengthening of the time of service of combat equipment." Rather, "this particular struggle also exercises a big educational influence on personnel, accustoms people to precision, order, discipline. . . ."[3]

The Disinclinatior to Calculate

Aimlessness

> Talking with me, platoon commander Senior Lieutenant M. Kuznetsov complained about the insufficiency of time.
>
> —Exercises, preparing for them, establishing outlines, and now I have to go to the barracks, too. . . .
>
> —With what aim?

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> The officer looked at me with evident incomprehension: "Well, to look around in general, to talk a little with the soldiers. . . ."
>
> I remember how my former superior, Major M. Zhelezovskii, gave it to subordinate officers if they appeared in barracks simply so, without a definite aim, coming "in general. . . ."[4]

Bestel'nost' (aimlessness) is a familiar word in the language of the High Command, designating a major vice. So are *tseleustremlennost'*, *tselenapravlennost'* (aim-directedness), naming a weighty virtue.

Personnel, the Authorities perceive, are disposed to act not so much to achieve goals to discharge feelings. "It is necessary," the *Field Manual* of 1936 insisted in a vein that still prevails today, "to educate every commander and fighter in the firm knowledge that only precise, organized, disciplined fire will defeat the enemy; and that, inversely, disorderly fire, apart from entailing waste of ammunition, is merely an expression of one's own anxiety and weakness."

Several themes of the Authorities express their concern. To induce personnel to work for objectives is itself an objective of commanders:

> We strove to instill in people the wish for and the skill of working in an aim-directed fashion. . . .[5]

It seems worth enunciating, not so much the requirement of *not* acting *without* regard for an aim, as that of operating *solely* with a view to one. "*Aktivnost'* . . . must serve an objective."[6] "Every superfluous maneuver, every combat action which is not inevitably indispensable for the attainment of the objective of the operation hides an enormous danger," an analyst of the 1920s explained (in more literate fashion than he would today): "the danger of carrying us away from the objective. . . . In an operation, there must be nothing superfluous; it must be the incarnation of aim-directedness. The form of the operation . . . must recall not . . . the rococo . . . but a Greek temple."[7] Thus, "every exercise . . . must have a clear and concrete aim . . .";[8] in simulated battle "each directive must pursue a definite aim. . . ."[9] While "a special place among the requirements for intelligence is occupied by uninterruptedness" (see Chapter II), "with uninterruptedness is closely connected aim-directedness. Aim-directedness consists in subordinating . . . intelligence-gathering to . . . the fulfillment of a concrete combat task."[10]

> In war, "one must always take account of the peculiarities of the terrain and utilize them, but do all this in the interests of fulfilling the combat task, and not for the sake of maneuver."[11]

A strong sense that operations are a mere means to a military objective is excellence. "The aim-directedness of the decision," thus runs the *Field Manual* of 1944, "is a basis of leadership." It is "in the commander" that "the aim-directedness of the actions of the unit is concentrated."[12] Beyond the home truth that it is the commander who sets the unit's aim, what may be implied here is that it is the commander who prevents his subordinates from succumbing to the bent for aimlessness. "The actions of troops," a senior officer teaches, "receive . . . directedness after a precise and clear objective has been given to them and . . . the manner of conducting the combat has been determined." Once more, "such directedness is conferred upon all actions of subordinates by the decision of the commander. . . ."[13]

It is to illustrate its excellence that one will say of a unit: "In its actions one feels a precise calculation of the commander."[14]

It seems worth pointing out that pursuing a goal is a necessary condition for success: "all these forms of work [never mind which—NL] have a very high yield because they are all aim-directed."[15] It appears also worth observing that goals are actually being pursued. "In the course of exercises there reigned at the command point an extreme . . . businesslike atmosphere."[16]

Unreality

As Chapter III has attempted to show, the Authorities attribute to personnel an inclination to disregard constraints set by the relationship of forces.

> Twice the company attacked the positions of the "enemy," and each time without success. Lieutenant K. Sviridov . . . [acted] without taking account of the fire and maneuver possibilities of the unit. He did not even try to discover the fire system of the "enemy. . . ." In one word, the company expended its forces in vain. . . .[17]

> *The attack on Abinskaya in the Caucasus in the winter of 1943:* "The direction of the main strike was chosen without taking account of the state of the enemy's defense, the . . . terrain, the forces and means of the attacking units."[18]

"Some [commanders in exercises]," an analyst observes, "not bothering with estimates of the enemy, put before their subordinates tasks which do not in realistic fashion take account of the sides' combat

possibilities. Then units receive a task beyond their power, or, inversely, beneath it."[19]

> Commanders who have to fulfill a combat task must absolutely know well the battle deployment of the enemy . . . so as to utilize the weak sides of his deployment and direct their main strike toward them.[20]

As to estimates of one's own side, "can the commander," it seems appropriate to ask, "adopt a correct decision . . . if he does not know precisely where his troops are at a given time?"[21]

Indeterminateness

Estimates and plans/orders may be *incomplete*.

A commander may, for example, fail to issue those rules that the Regulations leave it to him to determine. For "on a series of questions, the Regulations leave a certain independence to the commander. His task consists of . . . taking the most appropriate decisions on these questions. To them belong, for instance, the distribution of activities during the day, the time for reviewing equipment, the rules for handing out weapons, etc." Now "sometimes this is done with insufficient thoroughness. In some units, for instance, the rules for safeguarding and handing out keys for firing locks are not determined, the mode of relieving men on duty is not fixed, the time for check-ups in the battalion and in the regiment, as also the days on which to leave for exercises and on which to return from them, with the orchestra playing, are not determined"; while "all this should . . . be regulated in precise fashion."[22]

One may forget to set boundaries of time.

> Private V. Gol'tyapin was visited by his wife. The soldier asked the officer for permission to accompany her to the station. Gol'tyapin returned to barracks at a very late hour.
>
> "Why did you not return in time?" the captain asked severely.
>
> "How 'not in time?' " the soldier answered, astonished.
>
> And only then did the officer remember that he had not indicated to the subordinate the length of the leave.[23]

> I ordered Private V. Dumler to go to the equipment yard and to fetch accumulators. I wait and wait, but he doesn't come. I send yet another soldier. It turns out that V. Dumler on the way en-

> countered a friend and lingered on. "I didn't know," he said, "that the matter was urgent, so I stayed on for a minute; it was a long time I had not seen this friend."
>
> Perhaps this is a typical pretext, but it is not excluded that V. Dumler really decided not to make haste with the fulfillment of the order only because I had not indicated the required time.[24]

"Exercises," an analyst observes, "show that . . . incompleteness of combat orders . . . is . . . widespread. . . ."[25]

As the High Command perceives in its forces a disposition toward *ambiguity* in orders, it becomes pertinent to observe that "a lack of clarity in the meaning of a combat order entails grave sequels"; "it is pernicious when subordinates receive . . . confused indications of the senior commander."[26]

"Giving a command," then, "the commander must know how to set forth its content so that there is no lack of clarity concerning the mission in the minds of the subordinates." That is, "one must avoid words which subordinates can interpret variously."[27] "The senior commander," concurs an anonymous authority, "must attempt to exclude any possibility of diverging interpretations of his order."[28]

The High Command spots a tendency to think and talk "in *general* terms,"[29] "to limit oneself to general indications." "The talk at the exercise," notes an observer, "bore on everything and on nothing."[30] "Some senior commanders, when teaching subordinates," General Kulikov remarks, "are carried away by general theories and omit those questions which are most of all indispensable in practical conduct."[31] "In its decisions the Party bureau of a unit demanded of the communists to 'strengthen' the education of the personnel, to 'improve' guard duty." However, "such recommendations brought no change." Why? "Only because they bore a general declaratory character,"[32] resembled "extended reports the essence of which is not immediately clear,"[33] and violated the principle of "absence of general considerations" in orders.[34]

One's own plan may be as vague as one's estimates of the enemy, or of oneself. In simulated combat it may occur that "the directions of attack of every tank were not thoroughly studied, the procedure for overcoming the minefield not thought through."[35] "One can't say," General Pavlovskii remarks with moderation, "that our regimental commanders have no plans. . . . But they often lack concreteness. . . . The main tasks and aims are not determined."[36]

So it goes with *orders*. "One still finds commanders," Marshal Batitskii notes, "who are incapable of precisely determining the tasks

of their subordinates."[37] "Field exercises disclosed," writes an observer, "that Senior Lieutenant Stepanov posed tasks to his subordinates in a manner which lacked concreteness," and that "some officers issue instructions in an imprecise manner."[38] "The leader of the exercise," in a frequently mentioned type of case, "did not specify against which targets and when the artillery would direct its fire, how radio contact was to be utilized, which signals for the indication of targets and for commands were to be used."[39] Indeed, "there are cases in which . . . tasks are put imprecisely and sound about as follows: 'to acquire and track targets [enemy aircraft] in a broad spectrum of altitudes. . . .' "[40] Again and again it occurs in exercises that "combat missions were indicated in a fashion lacking concreteness. Instructions from commanders consisted often merely in orders such as 'forward,' 'increase speed,' 'take to the right.' "[41] "Lieutenant N. Vasil'ev," an analyst observes, "addressed essentially one demand to his subordinates. 'Forward! Fire!' What kind of fire, on what concrete targets remained unclear. As a result, some targets were literally riddled, while others stayed unstruck."[42]

> *The area of Stalingrad, the attempt of the 21st Army to seize Marinovka and Atamanski, December 19, 1942:* "On a narrow sector of the Front 172 artillery pieces were concentrated. . . . Almost 150 artillery pieces did not receive concrete tasks. As a result, some pieces shot at the same target without any necessity, only interfering with each other. At the same time, many important targets were not fired at."[43]

So we see that "any imprecision in a command may cost dearly."[44] That "it is . . . pernicious if subordinates receive instructions which are not entirely concrete."[45]

Hence the stress on the requirement of a "thorough elaboration of tasks,"[46] excluding mere approximation. When giving an order, one may say, do not forget to determine the following: who is responsible for what, which forces and means are assigned to the mission, its extent and the time by which it is to be accomplished. One may describe a plan for simulated combat with a wealth of detail which might be omitted in the West as all too evident. The commander of a motorized battalion, Major S. Petrishchev, we learn from a general officer,

> prepared himself for breaking through a prepared defense of the "enemy." He accorded particular attention to the breaking of the enemy system of antitank defense. With this objective, he deter-

> mined the order of the suppression of ATGMs and tanks, precisely determined the targets which ought to be destroyed by the artillerists, the motorized riflemen, and the attack tanks, in the attack from the front and also on the flanks and in the depth. . . . The battalion commander indicated the lines of protective artillery fire. He indicated which positions respective to each other the motorized riflemen and tanks should occupy at each stage of the battle, and particularly during the maneuver aiming at the flank and the rear of the defense. He directed attention to which targets were the most dangerous ones for the tanks and the infantry, and determined the order of their annihilation by accompanying and supporting weapons. Major S. Petrishchev clarified to his subordinates in detail which targets . . . in the direction of the attack of the Battalion would be suppressed by aviation and combat helicopters, he indicated the means of identification of aircraft, infantry, and tanks.[47]

In these conditions it can be a matter for praise that "Lieutenant Lazarenko gave precise combat assignments"; that recently "commanders—that is an indubitable fact—*began* to direct the actions of their subordinates more precisely. . . ."[48]

But:

> In the development of battle in the depth, commanders of rifle regiments and battalions sometimes did not put tasks concretely before the supporting artillery: they did not precisely indicate targets and the sequence in which they should be struck.[49]

> The commanders of the units did not receive concrete missions, and hence could not convey them to their fighters.[50]

To overlook nothing is also not to neglect what may appear as *melochy*, trifles.

The High Command perceives a high incidence of "a contemptuous attitude toward so-called trifles."[51] "Comrade V. Kochetkov," a typical estimate goes, "in no way reacted to many mistakes, considering them insubstantial, not meriting attention."[52]

Yet inattention to "trifles" is the path to catastrophe:

> After an . . . exercise the staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel A. Kostylev, approached Captain Kiselev: "Which mistakes were made by the trainees?"
>
> —They worked well. Now there were a few small details. . . .
>
> —But account must be taken of them too. . . . In battle, every "petty detail" can become a disaster.[53]

Care for detail is the road to success:

> In his early years as an officer, Navy Captain of the First Rank, Lyulin . . . considered that the faultlessness in judging people which his commanders showed comes with rank. It turned out that it does not come by itself, but is conquered . . . [also] by the analysis of such small traits which in an ordinary view are considered trifles.[54]

"One must not forget," demands a senior officer, "that sometimes a measure which is small by its scale and the number of participating personnel has a decisive significance for the fulfillment of a cardinal task."[55]

"In the air force," goes a slogan of that service—and so should go, according to the High Command, the motto of every service—"there are no trifles; everything is important."[56]

In the presence of the penchant to neglect detail, there cannot be too much concern for it. "One can say of Major Yu. Artamonov that he is a pedant in the best meaning of the word": such is the praise bestowed by a fellow officer for a "trait" that deserves "in reality" the supreme rank of being *partiinyi*, of the Party's spirit.[57]

Failure to Think Through

According to the Authorities, personnel are disposed to adopt plans that are not "thought through *(produmannyi)*." A senior officer notices a "low ability of some pilots to think logically, to plan their actions . . .";[58] according to General Altunin, there is among officers an inclination "to take decisions on the spur of the moment, without a sufficiently thorough analysis of the situation and of calculations."[59] (See Chapter III.)

Unless constrained, the ordinary human being just will not calculate. "Many officers," one may note, "do not yet know how to create in exercises a difficult tactical situation which would force the trainees to reflect before asking this or that decision."[60]

Spontaneity merely leads to "all kinds of *avos'* (perhaps), *davai* (let's), *tak poidet'* (it will turn out all right)."[61]

Many, it seems implied, may err outrageously. Thus the cautionary tale of how in simulated combat "the platoon commander indicated distances from targets with regard to *his* tank" and how then "the commanders of the other tanks mechanically accepted this indication for themselves, though the distances, in their case, were, in reality, different."[62]

The path from the heart's desire to the unit's objective may be short:

> Once Major Nabiev was conversing with Captain Bondarev. The Company was just preparing to undertake socialist obligations for the new training year. Bondarev remarked with a proud smile: We count on shortening the time for bringing equipment to combat readiness by 25 percent. He waited for praise, but Nabiev was silent, clearly turning something around in his head. Finally, he asked: "How did this obligation originate?"
>
> "Our neighbors undertook to shorten that time, some by 10 percent and others by 15," explained Bondarev—"Are we any worse? We decided to outstrip them. . . ."
>
> "Give a basis for your obligation," asked the Commander. "With what reserves are you going to fulfill it?"
>
> And here the smile definitely disappeared from the face of Bondarev. It turned out that the obligation was undertaken by eye.[63]

> Already in 1935 we created tank corps, and advanced in this respect ahead of all armies of the world. But two years later . . . we dissolved the tank corps. In the period of the cult of the personality of Stalin, many . . . questions were resolved without proper thought.[64]

> *The offensive of the Southwestern Front in the spring of 1942:* "The planning of the offensive was insufficiently thought through. . . ."[65]

> *The area of Stalingrad in mid-January 1943, the 21st Army*: "This time the artillery fire of the Army was planned, to say the least, thoughtlessly."[66]

Particularly, the time-horizon of calculations may be narrow:

> In the unit they decided not to "lose" time, forces, and equipment for the training of instructors, but rather to utilize the means put at the unit's disposal only for the training of pilots. . . . This they attained. But when it then became time to assimilate a more complicated program of combat conduct, the lack of skillful instructors immediately made itself felt.[67] When the question was decided: What would be more useful: to concentrate efforts to begin with on the training of instructors, or to introduce young fliers into activity so that they would master as quickly as possible the various kinds of combat procedure, the latter was thought more useful. . . . Mistakenly.

> The selected direction of work appeared as the only correct one merely for an initial period. . . . As soon as clouds covered the sky, flights immediately diminished sharply. For many pilots had not mastered flying the aircraft in question in difficult meterological conditions. And it turned out that there was nobody to teach them at that point; the officers, G. Kileev and I. Belozor, as well as the other instructors, had lost the required skills.[68]

> *The area of Stalingrad, the battles for Kazachii Kurgan:* "Attempts to seize the height were made on December 5, 9, and 19, but all ended in failure. . . . Neither the commanders of the rifle units nor those of the artillery had thought through how to hold the height once it would have been taken.[69]

Several themes seem to indicate the Authorities' concern with *neprodumannost'* (as well as *nepredelennost'*, indefiniteness and what may be called unreality).

One may detail what it is. "To calculate thoroughly," an analyst explains, "means to correctly estimate the factors' time and locality, to compare the combat potential of one's own units with those of the enemy, to discern the relationship of forces and means, the probable dynamics of their change."[70]

One may think it appropriate to be emphatic in requiring a thinking through of an operation in advance:

> One must not begin the execution of such a serious matter without having thought it through from all sides.[71]

It does not seem awkward to insist that one should act only *after* having thought: "We wartime commanders," a senior officer proudly recalls, "made, every time, an all-sided evaluation of the forces of the enemy, divined his calculations, found the weak spot in his defense. *Only after that* did we take a . . . decision to attack him."[72] "Think first and order subsequently" appears to be a rule that young officers should keep in mind.

It seems worthwhile to point out the damage from not calculating:

> Decisions which are not thought through are useful to nobody.[73]

> If . . . supplies are organized thoughtlessly, a unit may find itself without ammunition and fuel at the most critical moment.[74]

On the other hand, "if thought through in advance, the fire of even a single weapon can inflict serious losses on the enemy. . . ."[75]

> It is not the first day that we are fighting the Hitlerites; only when we have organized the battle in a thoughtful fashion have we . . . obtained success.[76]

One may stress that commanders *are* calculating:

> *The Commander of the 31st Tank Corps:* "He never took a decision in headlong fashion. . . ."[77]

Mere absence of defect may be tantamount to excellence, as shown by science: "Soviet military psychology has proved that in the measure in which man's psyche is getting strong, he acquires the habit . . . of thinking through his conduct."[78] To have a "reflective approach to the solution of every question," always to remember that "here it is important to think everything through" is excellence. "For the foremost military collective it is characteristic that combat . . . preparation is planned in a well thought-out way."[79] "Before giving any order to a subordinate, the *experienced* commander will have weighed all aspects well."[80] It is something to marvel at that certain officers "never acted at random."[81] "Such a direction of the counterattack," one may insist, "was not chosen by accident." Rather, "it was based on the terrain and the area of deployment of the company."[82] Having made the point that "in exercises in this company everything was different," an observer recalls one more thing: "in the course of training the commander [saw to it] that every fighter acted deliberately *(soznatel'no)*."[83] *Soznatel'nost'*, consciousness, is a virtue the fight for which never ends.

The inclination to *neprodumannost'* implies an indifference to minimizing costs. "Are not the mistakes in a decision glossed over," General Altunin asks, "when the unit fulfills its task on the whole?" That is, "do we always think of the price with which victory in real battle would be purchased if the decision taken by this or that commander were executed?"[84] Commanders are apt to express a pervasive indifference to economy in the very shape of their orders. "Like weeds in the field," an analyst observes, "there are often, in an order given by mouth, empty, *unnecessary words:* 'so to say,' 'if possible,' 'if the situation allows,' 'act without any restraint,' 'this can be increased, or, in another case, reduced,' etc."[85]

Or an order may *repeat* one already issued. Hence the need for General Pavlovskii to insist that "the commander must not issue the same order twice,"[86] and for the standard requirement of "extreme brevity" of commands. Given the contrary penchant, "it is indispen-

sable to *teach* commanders and staff officers in exercises . . . to formulate combat orders with extreme brevity," "in laconic fashion."[87] "When he sits down at his desk," one may remark about a *model* commander, "it is a pleasure to see how he works. Not one superfluous movement . . .";[88] he is free from the "fuss" of "nervousness."

Just as unusual as the commander's economy of movements at his desk is, apparently, his economy of casualties in battle. It is uncommon (and recent) to recommend certain conduct as a means for victory not only with smaller forces but also at reduced cost:

> *The close of an article advocating the modifiability of initial plans:* "This is also one of the . . . means for attaining victory in battle with minimal losses."[89]

> The history of the combat actions of the Soviet Army . . . furnishes a multitude of examples when, having recourse to deception . . . one succeeded in obtaining victory with little blood, with smaller forces than those of the enemy.[90]

> The [commander's] decision . . . must be calculated so as to fulfill the mission with a minimal expenditure of forces and means. *This is not unimportant.* Even with a multiple superiority over the enemy, a frontal attack, for example, is not justified.[91]

There were (equally *rare*) predecessors of this attitude in the War:

> *A commander:* "Sending men into battle, he above all strove to provide for an attack so that it would both be a success and that the least blood would flow."[92]

> In meetings and conversations I often speak of our task of annihilating Hitlerism. Much more rarely do I speak of the necessity and the art of preserving our people—that goes without saying. However, it may be that one should repeat this, too, every day at every occasion.
>
> I heard from one colonel: "A battle is going on, one must think of victory, but not of its price."
>
> Or should one? The price—that is victory, too.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In those days of the difficult winter offensive [1941–42] I developed . . . a new attitude toward many commanders. The price with which they obtained victory, their view of . . . blood spent became much more important to me than before.[93]

> Gorelov values Gavrishko, his capacity . . . to preserve people and equipment. When combat results are computed, it invariably turns out that Gavrishko's battalion bore fewer losses, but did not fight any worse than others.[94]

The Vulnerability from Within of the Capacity to Calculate

According to the Authorities, reason in human beings is incessantly threatened by mood. Should the latter overwhelm the former, the sequel, in war, is apt to be annihilation.

Several themes convey this concern.

One may stress the damage from feelings getting out of control. "Persons who have not learned to master their feelings perfectly cannot lead." [95] Their emotion will degrade their own performance; the infectiousness of that emotion will spread faulty conduct:

> Belyaev [crew member of an interceptor] got excited, the steering wheel became, as it were, disobedient. Usually impassive, confident in himself, Private V. Darevich also got excited. It became necessary for a more prepared specialist to interfere with the actions of these operators so as not to let the "enemy" get away with impunity.
>
> Detailed analysis . . . showed that failure in this case almost resulted from the weak psychological tempering of the soldiers, sergeants, and even of Captain Panin. His lack of sureness, his excitement transmitted themselves to his subordinates. . . .
>
> *On the same occasion, when the enemy aircraft to be intercepted is first located and then disappears:* "The target signal was suddenly lost . . . the 'enemy' was maneuvering. . . . Firing, Captain Panin did not contain himself and raised his voice. . . ."
>
> "The signal of the target was lost. . . . A soldier charged with firing who has been trained in difficult conditions and has mastery over himself would not raise his voice. He would take all measures so as to inspire calm and sureness in his subordinates."[96]

> Emotions are, of course, an obligatory property of the human character. But to permit them to take the upper hand over reason is to condemn an operation to failure.[97]

On the other hand, "the reports made by [my fellow] operators [in simulated air defense] sounded so assured that it became instantly clear to me: The target will not escape. . . ."[98] In the victorious submarine "a calm, businesslike atmosphere reigned."[99] "His [Cap-

tain N. Marchenko, ground control] precise commands sound in the ether. A former pilot, he knows how even the tone of commands exercises an influence on the crew, gives the pilots calm and confidence. . . ."[100]

One may insist on not experiencing or not expressing strong feelings—feelings whose strength could make them overwhelm reason: "The . . . commander must . . . in no case make his subordinates nervous";[101] he must "be capable of remaining calm in critical situations."[102]

> Ending my discourse on the commander's capacities to take . . . the correct decision, I should like to repeat: one of the essential components of this capacity is cold, precise reason. We military men simply do not have the right to be governed by feelings only. Particularly in war.[103]

To be imperturbable is excellence:

> Captain Koshelev was famous among us for being imperturbable.[104]
> Colonel I. A. Gorbachev was imperturbable even in the most difficult circumstances.[105]

The model commander is calm, hence all together *(sobrannyi),* hence concentrated on his work, hence performing it well. "To work calmly and precisely"—the former a base for the latter—is a standard formula for efficient conduct. When a submarine commander in unusual and risky circumstances gives the order to launch a torpedo, "his face expressed extreme *sobrannost',*"[106] the contrary of *rasteryannost'* (see below), being all together rather than all lost. How such a stance remains forever astonishing may be gleaned when an observer discovers that his suspicions were unfounded, as with regard to this pilot:

> He works calmly and precisely. On the ground he is moving around a great deal, does not stay at the same place. To start with, it seemed to me that he might find it difficult to concentrate in the air. But I was wrong. Vladimir Shabartsin knows how to be all in his work.[107]

It is in this vein that we hear of Sergeant of the Second Rank V. Sisov and Senior Sailor S. Litvin being "calmly concentrated."[108] "The more difficult the situation grew," it will be said of a model officer, "the more gathered in thought the commander became."[109]

> Senior Lieutenant Kurdenkov's voice carries his precise commands. His calm communicates itself to the whole unit.[110]

> Many among us [naval commanders], for instance, envied the mastery with which Captain of the First Rank V. Sedel'nikov always berthed. . . . Unexpectedly I discovered the secret of his success. Sedel'nikov, in a situation which was tense . . . conducted himself entirely . . . calmly. I promised myself that I would behave precisely in that way in similar situations: even, calm, without outbursts and hustle which appear to others a sign of being businesslike. The result turned out to be astounding. With the same crew, without supplementary training, we began to berth more quickly and better.[111]

"Calm" is obtained, if it is, in hard struggle to contain one's excitement. When decision in simulated combat approached, "I made an effort to 'remove myself' from all sufferings of the soul."[112]

> On the eve of firing exercises Captain N. Zukov suffered much nervousness. . . . However, as soon as combat work began, the officer was able . . . to "remove himself" from all jamming from the soul.[113]

> Battery Commander Lieutenant Victor Kapitanov prepared himself for artillery combat. He went from one combat post to the other, giving last indications. His voice sounded calm and businesslike. The subordinates of Kapitanov . . . could, none of them, suppose that in reality the Lieutenant was truly upset. And there were serious grounds for that.[114]

Up and Down

According to the Authorities there is a disposition toward unevenness of conduct through time. "The column," an observer notes, "moved unevenly: at moments it extended itself, at moments it became shorter. There could be no question here of a stability of speed."[115]

Against this propensity stands the requirement of evenness. One demands of commanders that their "level of exactingness be always the same."[116] The same military leader recalls that "it is important . . . to maintain a precise rhythm in all troops links;"[117] While another deems it "important to develop among officers, generals, and admirals the capacity . . . to bring rhythm *(ritmichnost')* into the work of the

entire military collective,"[118] that word connoting smoothness-by-evenness.

Unevenness of conduct is apt to derive from fluctuations of mood:

> *The beginning of the War:* "In those days and later I saw more than once how easily enthusiastic optimism turns into panic.[119]

The High Command discerns in its forces a disposition to fluctuate between very high and very low levels of activity. "Storms and all hands' jobs are the rule in the life of some . . . units."[120] The other side of that is that "some acted strenuously only in the moments in which 'enemy' aircraft appeared in the air, but for the rest of the time they often aimlessly wore out their seats near their weapons and equipment."[121] "There are still comrades," a general officer observes, "who are not accustomed to work, to set all hopes on some final spurt."[122]

While low action is manifestly unproductive, intermittent peaks of activity not commanded by conditions are equally fruitless; for they are apt to issue from anxious excitement, whereas calm is a necessary condition of success.

Thus " 'flows' and 'ebbs' in combat training lead to nothing good."[123] When discipline in a sub-unit did not improve, "the cause of this was above all the fact that in the commander's efforts in this domain, there was an insufficient insistence. His exactingness was uneven with 'flows' and 'ebbs.' "[124]

Hence "the communists of the Battalion are struggling for *stable indicators of the fighters'* [*performances*]. . . ."[125] While, "naturally, it is possible still to do much in the remaining weeks of the training year," the truth is incontrovertible "that only rhythmical [presumably, even—NL] training in the course of the entire year, high daily exactingness can lead to stable success."[126]

To be sure, in a model unit "all programmed themes are worked out . . . evenly during every week, every month, and every training period."[127] For:

> Does not the requirement enunciated by Leonid Il' ich [Brezhnev]—to learn to work rhythmically, without jerks, without breaks—oblige us to many things. . .?[128]

Namely, avoiding unevenness or even an alternation between doing and not doing at all something that should be done all the time. One should be able to say, "this work is conducted permanently in the regiment . . . it does not know flows and ebbs";[129] it is neither discontinuous, not fluctuating in level, nor changing in quality.

For changes in level of action are apt to be accomplished by variations of quality:

> Mikeladze . . . was a good commander when he wanted to be that, but he conducted himself in a very uneven manner. At one time he distinguished himself . . . , at another time he received censures for lack of discipline.[130]

"It occurs," observes a general officer, "that an officer 'with a hot hand' announces a punishment, and then . . . 'thinks it over.' "[131] A military leader portrays a "commander of a regiment who one day, let us say, tolerates serious defects and another day is a stickler for every trifle";[132] while, of course—or, rather, *not* as a matter of course—"every commander . . . must be principled not in an episodic but [in a] constant manner."[133]

To and Fro

In contrast to the propensity to go stubbornly through with a decision once made and to repeat a certain action in the face of failure (Chapter III) stands an inclination, equally perceived by the Authorities, to shift from one decision to another. Thus commanders, having given "preliminary instructions" to subordinates, "begin sometimes, even after a considerable time, to transmit all kinds of supplements which . . . reduce to naught all the previous work of the subordinates."[134]

> In bustle and . . . haste . . . orders were given which were often changed ten minutes later.[135]

> The exercise was led by the battalion commander, Captain A. Lyashenko. In the very heat of battle, he received from the Staff of the Regiment the order to terminate the exercise and to "change the objective" of the company in favor of the fulfillment of a task which had no connection with preparation of the unit for combat.
>
> Well, army service does not exclude forced circumstances in which plans are changed. Regrettably, similar "changes of objective for the unit happened rather frequently during the winter. . . . Breaks in exercises . . . were . . . rampant. . . ."[136]

> In the evening of October 5 [1941] I received a telegram from the staff of the Western Front. It said: "Immediately transfer your sector with the troops to General F. A. Ershakov. Arrive yourself on

October 6 in Vyaz'ma with the staff of the 16th Army and organize a counterstrike in the direction of Yukhnov." It was indicated that in the area of Vyaz'ma we would receive five rifle divisions with means of reinforcement.

All this was completely unintelligible. To the north of us, in the sector of General Lukin, the situation became critical; what was happening on the left flank of the Front and to the south was unknown. . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]

Here were comrades Lobachev, Kazakov, Malinin, Orel. In them as in myself this wire provoked suspicion. I remember how the Chief of Staff [Malinin] said: "To leave the troops at such a time? The mind cannot grasp it."

I asked that the order be repeated by a document with the personal signature of the Commander of the Front.

At night an airman obtained the order with the signature of I.S. Konev and of the member of the Military Soviet, N. A. Bulganin.

The doubts vanished. But understanding did not increase.[137]

January 1942: "For the third time during the War, our staff took over the direction of new units at extremely short order."[138]

On January 2 [1942] we seized the airport of Yukhnov. . . .

. . . . . .

What was necessary was above all to surround and crush the German troops in the area of Yukhnov, to occupy or to blockade that town. . . . But soon after I had sent to the Command of the Front a plan of action in this sense, a new order was received. Not only did it not take account of the consideration put forward, but it in many ways contradicted the directive of January 2 received a few days ago. . . .

. . . . . .

With great distress we were forced to stop a battle nearing a successful conclusion and turn toward Mosal'sk. . . .

To seize Yukhnov became the mission of the troops of the 50th Army of General Boldin. . . .

. . . . . .

However, before units of the 50th Army arrived near the city, the Germans succeeded in strengthening their defense. . . . The task which our group was capable of resolving rather easily and quickly in the first days of January, the 50th Army could now not fulfill, as time had been wasted. . . . Yukhnov could be liberated only on March 4, 1942, that is, after two months. . . . The possibility of encircling and crushing the Fourth Field Army of the Hitlerites was

lost. The Ninth Field Army of the Germans escaped encirclement. We failed in killing [either] of the two hares.[139]

April 10 [1942] . . . a directive to the troops of the Southwestern Front was issued. It prescribed in particular that the 38th Army transfer to the newly formed 28th Army four rifle divisions with their defense sectors, one motorized rifle brigade, a cavalry corps, and almost all means of reinforcement which we possessed [the writer was the commander of the 38th Army—NL]. This meant that we lost precisely those sectors of the Front . . . in which our Army had attacked in March. . . .

. . . . . .

I was entirely perplexed, for the command and the staff of the 38th Army had during months of offensive combat not only learned the strong and weak sides of its troops well, but also studied the enemy it faced and his system of defense. We had acquired experience in organizing offensive combat on this sector of the front. . . . The staff of the 28th Army disposed of none of these advantages. Yet it was now precisely up to this staff to lead the main strike in the sector. . . .[140]

Shortly afterwards, the mission of the 38th Army having again changed radically: "We had already almost reconciled ourselves to the Army going over to the defense [in the forthcoming offensive] when everything was changed again";[141] the Army is made a component of an offensive after all.

January 13 [1943] . . . on the basis of the indications of the Command of the North [Caucasus] Group, Lieutenant-General Kirichenko stopped the offensive of the tank groups of General Lobanov so as to strike at Kursavka together with the tank groups of Lieutenant-Colonel Filippov. . . .

Fulfilling that order, General Lobanov stopped pursuing the enemy and concentrated his group in the area of Petrovka. But on *January 14* the Commander of the Northern [Caucasus] Group changed his intent and ordered the tank group to continue pursuing the enemy in the previous direction. This forced regrouping lowered the speed of pursuit of the enemy and gave him the possibility of organizing resistance at the line of Kalinovskoe, Severnoe, Poltavskii. Two days of effortful battle were necessary for breaking through the defense of the enemy on that line.[142]

The Bryansk Front in the fall of 1943: "I saw Markian Mikhailovich [Popov, Commander of the Front], somberly pacing up and down the room:

—Here, read this!

. . . .This was a telegram from the Stavka. I hastily went over it and could not believe my eyes. We were ordered to transfer almost all troops to the Central Front, and to transfer the Front Command together with the 11th Guards Army and the 15th Air Army, the Artillery Corps and special units immediately to the area north of Velikie Luki.

"Now, how does that please you?" asked Popov.

—I don't understand anything.

—Nor do I. Why, just now, when we successfully advanced, suddenly take such a decision?. . . [ellipsis in the text—NL.]

The liquidation of the Bryansk Front appeared to us a measure which had not been thought through. . . . After the operation in the area of Orel and the crushing of the strong enemy groupings in the Bryansk Forest, our troops had broken out into the operational width and . . . were chasing the enemy toward the Dnepr.

The Commander was already considering how best to seize Rogachev, and suddenly we were to go to Velikie Luki.

. . . . . .

. . . .[I said to Antonov, Chief of the General Staff, over the phone]: "If you consider the present Command of the Bryansk Front incapable of leading the troops competently . . . why not change merely the Command? Why transfer together with us the whole enormous apparatus of the Front and even a part of the troops?"[143]

"Here they go again," the military overlord said, in his usual half-joking manner, M. E. Katukov [*Army Commander*]. "You must understand, the Army has unexpectedly received a new task: the direction of the attack is changed, now we go for Shmerinsk. . . ."

. . . . . .

. . . .[A colleague of the author is speaking], "Katukov himself is not pleased by all these turns."[144]

When the Commander of the Division arrived and I began to report to him the mission just received, he waved this aside, annoyed:

"I know! But it is already out of date. On the way the Chief of Staff of the Corps, Colonel Malinin, succeeded in reaching me. We are ordered to attack toward Beshenkovitsa."

. . . .I swore from the heart. Five Fridays in a week.[145]

Besides change of command and of mission, there is "regrouping:"

Frequent regroupings . . . and changes in lines of delimitation

between units render the conduct of successful offensive operations more difficult for Armies.[146]

The summer of 1943 in the area of Orel: "Frequent and sharp changes of missions, substantial regroupings over long distances . . . unfavorably influenced the results of the offensive of the 3d Guards Tank Army."[147]

The operation in the area of L'vov-Sandomir: "Such a large regrouping of forces and means of the Front [as that foreseen in the plan for this operation] immediately appeared to me as not entirely justified. I was particularly worried by the impending transfer of the 38th Army [commanded by the author] to [an] . . . unknown sector of the Front immediately before the beginning of the offensive. Would it not have been simpler to realize a less complicated regrouping of certain rifle units and means of reinforcement so as to have the offensive conducted by the joined flanks of the 60th and 1st Guards Armies? All the more as these Armies . . . well knew the conditions of the sector in which the new strike was to be conducted . . . [ellipsis in the text—NL]."[148]

The decision changed may be that of one's predecessor:

Naturally, a new commander . . . will revise something in the style and methods of work of even a gifted and experienced predecessor. However, it happens that "the old order" is broken . . . without this being indispensable. . . . There are those who in haste change what . . . should have been strengthened.[149]

In 1944, the Second Belorussian Front is handed over to a new commander: "Zakharov, as we had expected, promptly declared everything unsatisfactory and said he would have a great deal to do putting right other people's mistakes. He immediately produced arguments against launching the main attack in the prepared direction."[150]

The change made may be "to dash from one side to the other," to "throw oneself out of one extreme into another."

Already in 1935 we created tank corps and advanced in this respect ahead of all armies of the world. But two years later . . . the tank corps were dissolved. . . .

. . . . . .

Those responsible for the organization of the armed forces dash

> from one extreme to the other. First, large tank formations were fully liquidated, and then with the same absoluteness the tank units of immediate support to the infantry were abolished.[151]

Nothing is said about what makes for such a disposition to fluctuate between all and nothing. The chances are that it is attributed to emotions having once more won out—with disastrous effect—in the never-ending struggle between man's urge to *express* what is *within* him and his aspiration to *change* what is *outside* him.

The Vulnerability from Without of the Capacity to Calculate: "Losing One's Bearings"

The Authorities expect that personnel may become *rasteryannyi*, may lose their bearings, may be overwhelmed by painful feelings.

Freedom from this weakness is a prime requirement. "We need," a general officer quotes Frunze himself, "commanders who do not lose their bearings in any situation. . . ."[152] —which has become a formula for which no authority needs to be cited. "We need a corps of commanders who do not lose their bearings in any situation."[153]

What is elementary is at the same time an indication of excellence: a model officer is "one who does not lose his bearings under any circumstances."[154]

Losing his bearings, an officer is not "together within" himself, not "sure of" himself, which robs his action of power. "He lost his bearings and acted with insufficient sureness in himself."[155] "However, the officer did not lose his bearings. Sure of himself, he. . . ."[156]

"Sureness *(uverennost')*" is probably a veiled name for absence of fear *(strakh)*, an almost avoided word. One who loses his bearings is probably one who lacks "the capacity to suppress in himself fear in the critical moment,"[157] in contrast to the model commander as he is portrayed in simulated combat.

> Neither the jamming nor the speed [of the attacking aircraft] disturbed in any way the calculations at the Command Post. A tiny interval between the targets was observed. Which of them is going to enter the zone of fire first? Will the missile troops find the time to shoot at the second target?. . . . Looking at Captain A. Mozorov, commanding the troops, one might have thought that for him these questions did not exist. In cold blood and with precision, he chose the moment for the first launch, gaining seconds for the second.[158]

Loss of bearings, the Authorities believe, degrades conduct in one or more of several directions.

It may induce "fussy *bustle*," instability in diverging actions rapidly replacing each other (see above). Suddenly, in simulated battle, an air defense unit finds itself in difficulty: "Orders and reports began to deafen each other. . . ."[159]

Or loss of bearings may provoke *inaction*, paralysis. When "the situation became more difficult" in simulated combat, "the commander [of a fighter squadron] . . . lost his bearings. While the chronometer implacably read off the seconds, the commander could not tear his eyes away from the screen with the incessantly moving indicators of . . . the ill-fated targets."[160] When in another simulated battle the 'enemy' unexpectedly, to Major Prikhod'ko, began using chemical weapons, "he did not instantly react to this." Rather, "he conducted himself passively. Nor did the [missile] guidance officer show activity. . . . He assumed a position of waiting."[161] "The staff [monitoring submarine exercises]," a high naval officer reports, "observed cases where, when circumstances were unusual, commanders were indecisive."[162] "When in the analysis of the exercise the officer was asked why he had acted indecisively, Senior Lieutenant Ivut' candidly admitted: 'Well, the situation had become unusual.' "[163]

Loss of bearings may *slow* down one's reaction: a capital danger in the Authorities' eyes (Chapter II). "The commander of the ship, Captain of the Third Rank A. Gurin," one may then insist, "did *not* lose his bearings, did *not* delay."[164] On the other hand:

> The first thing which put the motorized rifle unit into a difficult position was the "mine field." It was discovered unexpectedly. The commander of the company and the other officers did not immediately orient themselves in the situation which resulted. Their unsureness transmitted itself to their subordinates. . . .[165]

Or a *mistake* may be committed when bearings have been lost. When serious errors in their conduct in simulated combat are discovered, commanders may put forward this "justification": "Well, it never happened to us to get into such situations!"[166] "He lost his bearings, he committed mistakes."[167]

Particularly, having lost one's bearings, one may cling to the only fixed object in sight, one's *routines*. "In an unexpected situation," it is stated about the conduct of an officer in a simulated battle, "he was unable to go beyond the 'frames' of . . . schemata of combat, of . . . tactical stereotypes."[168] "In difficult situations the young officer often lost his bearings, adopted routine decisions."[169]

Or, denying the pertinence of the disturbing change in the situation which has provoked the loss of bearings, one may *persevere* in what one did before.

* * * * * * *

"Usually," an observer reports about simulated combat, "the subordinates of Senior Lieutenant V. Kobalyuk managed this work in fully assured fashion. But in this exercise they were required to *shorten the time* for deploying the complex. Then it seemed as if somebody had transformed the personnel. . . . Bustle began, the missile men got nervous, mutual reproaches abounded."[170] A sudden and sharp increase in time pressure is apt to provoke loss of bearings.

Hence the stress on the requirement "instantly to evaluate the situation and to take the only correct decision *in conditions of an acute deficit of time.*"[171]

Second, loss of bearings seems likely when one's current plan has become inapplicable. "The battalion commander, having convinced himself that *the combat plan which he had elaborated could not be executed* because of sharply changed weather conditions, did *not* lose his bearings, and took a new . . . decision."[172] Observing that "Russian soldiers are not insensitive with regard to surprise," a German commander elaborates: "If the course of battle as it is laid down, usually according to a rigid schema, is disturbed . . . then the Russsian soldier suddenly is seized by a moment of crisis."[173] That is, deprived of a plan already in operation, one may be unable to conceive of another one with sufficient rapidity and realism—or to produce another one at all:

> When the officer finally convinced himself that he had committed a mistake, he simply lost his bearings: all his plans had collapsed, and he was not ready to take a new decision.[174]

> The Commander of the submarine, having discovered the target, prepared for delivering a torpedo strike on it. All was calculated. . . . It appeared as if success was certain. . . . But then, whether he had divined the calculation of the submariner or whether he was simply adopting a normal precautionary measure, the "enemy" unexpectedly and sharply performed a maneuver which led him out of the threat of receiving a torpedo. The position of the submarine now appeared extremely unfavorable for an attack. What then did the Commander of the submarine undertake? To speak candidly, he lost his bearings. Precious minutes flowed, and there was no new decision.[175]

Third, there is the impact of high danger. Yet as danger mounts, the then more probable loss of bearings also becomes more dangerous.

> *October 17, 1942, in Stalingrad:* "The smallest . . . loss of bearing of commanders could lead the entire Army group into a catastrophe."[176]

But, as noted, as danger rises, loss of bearings becomes more likely:

> This Army Commander had one . . . peculiarity: when everything was going well, he was unusually cheerful and was capable of moving mountains, as one says. But *when he suffered a setback,* he was immediately distressed, he was lost.[177]

One may begin by minimizing the incidence of loss of bearings among commanders, and then proceed to a case of it:

> *The crossing of the Western Oder, April 20, 1945:* "In the fire and smoke I saw the commanders. . . . In this hell they knew how to subject everything to precise calculation. . . ."
>
> First I had to witness [General V.S.] Popov [Commander of the 70th Army], who had lost his phlegmatic demeanor. He was noticeably nervous and excited. The reason was that artillery had been unable to suppress a strongpoint in the area of Greifenberg across the destroyed bridge over the Western Oder. . . .
>
> . . . . It became necessary for me to interfere and to calm Vasilii Stepanovich, who was breaking out all over the place. By the way . . . an attack of infantry supported by air . . . seized the . . . strongpoint.[178]

Sobrannost', being all together, "manifests itself the more strikingly, the more difficult the situation is."[179] A military leader expresses "the hope that the commander in training will not lose his bearings even in a combat situation which develops unfavorably. . . ."[180] According to him, a major objective in the training of commanders is that "they do not lose their bearings when events develop unfavorably."[181] Indeed, "the main thing is not to lose one's bearings upon a failure";[182] "the commander does not have the right to lose the mastery over himself, however difficult his position may be."[183] It is customary to note in reports of real or simulated battle that in a "complicated"—the euphemism for critical—situation the commander did *not* lose his bearings. "In a tense moment of counterattack a part of his tanks found themselves in a critical situation," we read in one report of a simulated battle; still, "the young officer did not lose his

bearings."[184] "The commanders and the personnel of the company fought boldly and skillfully, not tolerating losing one's bearings in the difficult phase of battle."[185] "The commander of the 9th Rifle Company, when he found himself cut off with his company, did not lose his bearings. . . ."[186] "Despite the fact that the battalion was encircled, its commander did not lose his bearings, [but] evaluated the situation correctly. . . ."[187] A model officer, "Lieutenant A. Volkov does not lose his bearings even in the most difficult situations. . . ."[188] Indeed, immunity against loss of bearings in danger lies at the heart of the commander's excellence.

A colonel is received by a general unknown to him, whose arrival has been delayed: "The general laughed. Only persons with an open soul know how to laugh in that fashion.' "

Later I was told that General Zakharkin had been late because his car had hit a mine. His adjutant had been wounded. The general and his driver had carried him to a medical station on their hands. Yet, Zakharkin during our conversation held himself calmly, as if nothing had happened.[189]

Telkov proved himself to be a remarkable commander [of a division] . . . preserving at least the appearance of calm when the nerves of many did not hold.[190]

A moment in the battle for Gumbinnen, October 21, 1944: "I must admit that in the war years . . . sentimentality . . . came to occupy second place with me. But this conversation with General Pronin [facing a German counterattack] really moved me. No, not the report of the Division Commander itself, but its cold-bloodedness and endurance."[191]

Lieutenant-General N. S. Shumilov: "Already in the first battles of the War he showed himself to be a commander who in the most difficult and menacing situation does not lose presence of mind and does not succumb to panic."[192]

Leonid Mikhailovich Sandalov . . . was the model of the staff officer of a large unit. . . . He did not lose his presence of mind in the most difficult situation.[193]

When our staff was in a difficult position, when there were enemies on almost all sides, I did not once hear an officer or fighter pronounce the panicky word, "encirclement". . . .

This was the great merit of K. K. Rokossovskii, who in the most difficult situation did not lose his presence of mind, invariably

> remained imperturbably and remarkably cold-blooded. Those around him were infected by his calm and felt themselves assured. In his presence it was perfectly impossible to manifest signs of disquiet or, even worse, loss of bearing. One would simply have been ashamed. [194]

So improbable does composure in crisis seem that it may appear to be a sufficient condition of victory:

> At nine o'clock in the morning of June 23 [1941], we arrived at the command post of the commander of the 8th Mechanized Corps, Lieutenant-General D. I. Ryabyshev. . . . Into the tent entered the Chief of Staff of the Corps and other staff commanders. They had not finished introducing themselves when one heard the characteristic sound of a Stuka which was immediately followed by explosions of bombs. I looked at D. I. Ryabyshev and the commanders present. Only businesslike concentration was visible. They felt exactly as if they were in field exercises. "Good fellows," I thought, "with persons of such quality, the war is not going to be lost . . ." [ellipsis in the text—NL].[195]

In the fourth place, *unfamiliarity* provokes loss of bearings. "I remember," writes an officer, undramatically illustrating this connection, "we promoted a worthy officer to the command of a division. I had known him for a long time. I had seen him more than once in action at the command point of a division providing guidance for fire. He has the rank of *master,* knows his complex of tasks perfectly . . . sure of himself when he leads a combat unit. . . . And suddenly on the reviewing ground before his division, when he had to give some commands [concerning matters *other* than combat] the shadow of *rasteryannost'* appeared on his face. Subsequently, when he had to resolve what seemed to be the simplest service questions, he did not have that inner togetherness and sureness which had distinguished him in combat work." The reason is evident to the narrator: "The captain, having given himself entirely over to the organization of *combat* work, did not accord due importance to the fulfillment of requirements imposed by *service* regulations; requirements which he encountered more and more frequently," he who had neglected all that concerns "the life, the instruction, and the service of the soldier."[196] There are indeed familiar "cases in which persons having fallen into unfamiliar conditions lost themselves, made decisions which were not the best."[197] "As experience shows," observes a senior officer about the frequent training procedures in which "routine" reigns, "the typical trainee

loses his bearings at the occasion of the smallest deviation from the conditions in which firing exercises are habitually conducted. . . .''[198] ''I had to observe,'' states a general officer, remembering his visits to units, ''how soldiers and their commanders were utterly at a loss when senior commanders made them exercise in an unknown locality where they knew nothing about the 'enemy's' forward edge, where the landmarks were different from those they had 'learned by rote.' ''[199]

Finally, there is the unexpected: ''Everything unexpected is stressful.''[200] ''It is impossible,'' one may recall, ''to adduce many examples which testify to the fact that in a difficult situation, faulty actions, loss of bearings, inhibition of mental activity derive not so much from the feeling of personal danger or the difficulty of the flight mission as from the *unforeseen development of events.*''[201] ''For the lieutenant . . . this command sounded unexpected. On his face appeared the expression of *rasteryannost'*.''[202] ''When it became necessary . . . to take a new decision . . . literally from the march . . . the company commander lost his bearings. . . .''[203] ''Not so long ago the task was suddenly put in an exercise to a unit of motorized infantry to annihilate an 'enemy' who had landed from the air in the rear. Such a task turned out to be unexpected for those engaged in the exercise''—which ''provoked *rasteryannost'* in them.''[204]

''Here is Private First Class D. Natinadze,'' as presented by two officers. ''In easy conditions, he manifested skill, endurance, ability to carry through.'' However, ''when the situation got complicated, this soldier lost his bearings. . .'' In fact, ''it needed not a few special training arrangements and individual conversations before Natinadze learned to keep himself under control in a sharply changing situation.''[205]

> . . . .The ''enemy'' began a mass attack [with aircraft]. . . .Everything, it seemed, portended success. However, suddenly the ''enemy'' changed course sharply. It then became too late to attack him in the area foreseen. For this the fighters would have had to engage in a lengthy pursuit at high speed. . . . There wouldn't have been sufficient fuel left to return to base.
>
> The situation became more difficult. So what did the Commander decide? Frankly speaking, he lost his bearings. . . . Yet the Commander could have fulfilled his task: the fighters could have used their full range and then landed at another base.

What this commander lacked was ''the capacity . . . to modify his decision in circumstances sharply differing from the ones expected.''[206] ''The moment he was thrown off his scheme,'' an observer notes about a commander in a simulated battle, ''he lost his bearings. And when

unexpected information from the navigator followed, he definitively lost the thread of the battle." The point is that "the young commander found it difficult to conceive models of action of submarines [his 'enemy'] other than the most general ones. But Captain of the Second Rank Kozlov [the 'enemy] was precisely a partisan of untypical . . . tactical variations."[207]

> *The German offensive west of the Donets in the winter of 1943 according to a German commander:* "It is interesting to see how the Russians reacted to this surprise attack. The Russian soldier . . . is . . . not able to endure a sudden change from a triumphant advance to an enforced . . . precipitous withdrawal. During the counterattack we witnessed scenes of . . . panic among the Russians, to the astonishment of those who had experienced the . . . stubborn resistance the Russians put up in well-planned . . . defensives. . . . The Russians can be superb in [planned] defense and reckless in . . . attacks, but when faced by . . . unforeseen situations, they are an easy prey to panic. . . . The weakness of the Russians lies in their inability to face surprise. . . ."[208]

Even if something unexpected is expected, and even if one's day-to-day activity is oriented toward meeting it properly, one may fail to do so. Consider the personnel of a submarine scouring the ocean for a target in simulated combat:

> The moment of battle always arrives unexpectedly. Of course, the whole crew knows that earlier or later there will be an attack . . . But when will this happen? Immediately or ten hours later? At night or during the day? In such conditions the factor of suddenness, as it were, becomes flattened out. This prevents some crew members from mobilizing themselves in the short seconds of the attack to rapid and faultless action. They turn out to be psychologically unprepared for the swift change of the rhythm of war.[209]

When one is faced with the unexpected, one's capacities may decline:

> It occurs that . . . a unit develops its attack rapidly. But . . . it only has to be asked to change it direction for its speed to fall by a factor of 2 or even more.[210]

One's reactions may be slowed (while from the outset they may have been too slow for the new situation: see Chapter II). "However," it is noted in a report on a simulated battle, "Lieutenant-Commander

Shchur did not react to the sharp change in the situation in timely fashion."[211] A general surveys the corps of subordinate commanders: "When the air situation sharply changes, the majority of officers adopt the . . . correct decision rapidly," but "some manifest . . . sluggishness"[112]—a type of event that lends force to the rejection of slowness-of-reaction:

> Colonel Morozov: "Very calm, somewhat slow, by which trait he often aroused annoyance in me. . . ."[213]

and adds strength to the requirement for rapidity-of-reaction:

> [Major-General] Dovator: I like his skill in evaluating a situation quickly and correctly and [in taking] proper decisions.[214]
>
> The battery commanded by Senior Lieutenant S. Kokin prepared for defending itself against an "enemy" coming from the air. Unexpectedly, the men were attacked by tanks. In this complicated situation, the officer . . . was unable to rapidly rebuild the battle order of the unit, to put before his subordinates a new task, to make the necessary calculations.[215]

This may occur even when the unexpected event is not clearly unfavorable:

> At dawn the battalion commanded by Major Nibodazhed went over to the attack. Its strike was directed against an empty place. For Nibodazhed that was, as it were, thunder from the clear sky. . . . Discovering the absence of the "enemy," Nibodazhed lost his bearings and searched long and in torment for a way out from the situation which had arisen.[216]

> *A moment in the War, according to a German commander:* "The Russians . . . did not continue to push forward, although they must have perceived that no substantial forces were facing them. As I often noticed, they did not rapidly adjust to the situation."[217] "The mass of the Russian forces lacked initiative in exploiting situations. . . ."[218]

> *The Crimea at the end of 1941:* "If the enemy had exploited the situation, the whole 11th Army would have perished. A resolute enemy would have . . . cut off the Army's entire supply. . . ."[219] (See Chapter III.)

One's reaction may be correct, but deprived of effect by its slowness (see Chapter II):

> Evaluating the new factors in the changing situation and taking measures so as to improve his position, Petr Klement'evich did this . . . in sensible fashion . . . but with sufficient rapidity. . . . In contrast to Kharlanov, who knew how to seize everything literally in flight, understanding the situation from one or two details and immediately taking the necessary decision, Timofeev ascertained the situation thoroughly, weighing all its possibilities . . . and only after that gave the necessary orders. As a result, some happy ideas of his were realized belatedly and did not have the expected effect.[220]

Against the disposition to have one's conduct degraded by the unexpected, the Authorities insist on obvious and difficult requirements. The commander should, first of all, "evaluate" any new situation "instantaneously,"[221] "orient himself" in it "quickly," "without delay," perform "a rapid mental penetration into the situation,"[222] avoiding any "sluggishness and delay in the evaluation of conditions";[223] just as "the Central Committee of the Communist Party was able to orient itself quickly in the situation created as a result of the grave setbacks of the Red Army at the beginning of the War. . . ."[224] When "conditions suddenly changed, which is so characteristic of contemporary combat rich in sharp turns," a general officer reports on a simulated battle, "it needed literally only a few seconds for the pilots to orient themselves to the situation."[225] "The change in the situation did not find Captain Fedorov helpless"[226]—both an excellence and a necessity, as, for instance, "in contemporary dynamic all-arms battle it is often necessary for helicopter pilots to choose optimal routes and the direction of attack in the very course of flight."[227]

"Schemata" should be replaced by observation of the unique circumstances at hand. In the standard words adopted by a military leader speaking to his subordinates, the battle should be fought in "literate" fashion (though the point is to leave books, finally, behind)—taking account of the concrete situation (see Chapter III).

Having quickly reassessed, one should rapidly devise an appropriate change of conduct, avoiding the familiar "schemata." When encountering an unforeseen situation, "the submarine commander in a simulated battle "did not lose his bearings" and "without vacillation renounced 'well-worn' variants of conduct. . . ."[228] Otherwise, he would no doubt have suffered the fate of a colleague who found it "difficult to get the better of a competitor 'who did not play according to the rules.' "[229]

* * * * * * *

Aware of the unfavorable impact of the unexpected, commanders strive to eliminate it in ways that the Authorities reject.

Commanders may *hope* against hope that they will always encounter familiar situations. An officer, we are told, who will have to command in tomorrow's simulated battle, inquires—against regulations—what today's scenario was like, "apparently assuming that it would be difficult to change the target system overnight." But this happens, and "he is incapable of adapting himself."[230]

> Captain of the Second Rank A. Shakun evidently decided that the impending task differed little from those which he had to solve earlier. . . .
>
> But as a matter of fact, the situation turned out to be unusual.[231]

Conscious of their limits in reacting properly to the unexpected, such officers may manage to *deny* its prominence in contemporary war. "There are commanders," the military daily observes, "who remove from their sight the fact . . . that in the course of battle a change in the relationship of forces may occur."[232]

Accordingly, they will *arrange* simulated battles in the course of which no profound alteration of conditions occurs. "Training," a general officer reports about a certain unit, "proceeded . . . by a plan which did not include sharp changes in the situation"[233]—"the conduct of exercises on the so-called production-line scheme, at one and the same place and with an unchanged tactical environment."[234]

Or roughly the same battle may be simulated in successive exercises. An editorial of the military daily observes about training procedures that "often the approach [of aircraft] to the target or the line of missile launch has been known [to those training] for a long time; the directions of flight are always the same. . . ."[235] "At times," adds an officer, "exercises, particularly with live fire, recall a well-rehearsed spectacle. A standard battle plan, a long-known target system. . . "[236] Training then becomes, according to the observations of a general officer, "sheer routine, practiced by all since eternity, seen and seen again,"[237] "milling around on the same spot,"[238] "going over ground that had already been traversed."[239]

> The officers in training . . . did not have to reflect much at which target to fire, which angle of fire to choose, etc. All this was known to them in advance, as also the actions of the "enemy," the flight profile of enemy aircraft, their routes and other data.[240]

When scenarios are changed—for example, by raising the nuclear

level of the exercise—"the Battalion Commander worries that the new procedures will," in their turn, "become stereotyped." "The explosions occur in the same places. Running, a man knows beforehand where he has to turn so that no abyss opens before his eyes."[241]

If there is a change, it may be made known beforehand. "There are cases where the officer [in charge of an exercise] makes the activities of the unit proceed according to a scenario already made known to it."[242]

> But can one seriously speak of the perfecting of the tactical training of airmen if at the command post there is previous knowledge of the route of flight of enemy aircraft, of the time of their arrival at the line at which interceptors are going to be introduced into the battle?[243]

Commanders thus trained may come to expect recurrence so much that they *do not notice* a variation (which would only unsettle them). A general officer reminisces:

> Somehow I found myself included in the tactical exercise conducted by the company of Lt. K. Aleksandrov. . . . . Having acquainted myself with the situation, I ordered . . . that the counterattacking group of the "enemy" be shifted from the left flank to the right.
>
> At first the tank company acted in well-coordinated and confident fashion. But then the counterattack from the right flank began. Nobody even noticed that the "enemy" was in a new place. The company failed in its task.
>
> . . . .The day before, the company had conducted two exercises on the same field. Each time the counterattacking "enemy" had been at the left.[244]

Or the commander may refuse to believe that an unexpected event has occurred:

> The battle was transferred to the depth of the defense. And here the commander leading the exercise . . . ordered that the units of the second echelon be led into the breakthrough . . . earlier and at a nearer line than had been foreseen before.
>
> Captain Terskov received the command in question. But it caught him by surprise and provoked a feeling of losing his bearings. Being certain that some misunderstanding had occurred, the officer ordered [continuation of] the movement in a column to the line noted on his map. The commander leading the exercise understood that matters went in a direction disrupting the task set, and decisively

> demanded that Terskov fulfill the order. The captain understood his mistake and began in haste to issue orders. But it was already too late. It became necessary to make a partial retreat. . . .[245]

Or a commander may not notice the pertinence for his planning of variations that have occurred. In an exercise "the commander copies a variant which he had learned the day before, but which, in the changed battle situation, serves no purpose."[246]

> Major A. Osin found himself in that joyously excited mood which comes to a human being from the consciousness of a task fulfilled with excellence. The officer had just submitted to a superior his decision on an order of march. . . . He did not doubt the correctness of his decision: it resembled point for point a decision which he had taken once in the past. . . . Then the senior commander had presented Major Osin as an example to the other officers. Anatoli Antonovich was sincerely convinced that the same thing would happen this time.
>
> Unfortunately, this turned out not to be the case. . . . In the determination of the order of march of the battalion, Major Osin had deployed artillery in the manner of that old decision mentioned before. He did not take account of the new tactical situation, of the locality in which his subordinates had to act.
>
> In the past case the march occurred with the forecast of meeting the "enemy" in rather even terrain, and placing artillery in front of the infantry was fully justified. . . . Now, however, meeting with the ground "enemy" was, according to the intelligence data, excluded; and the route of march led through difficult mountainous terrain. The deployment of artillery . . . at the head of the column in no way served the accomplishment of the main goal—a high speed of march.[247]

The effect of a training in which the commander has to face only a limited number of problems with known solutions is, the Authorities fear, to incapacitate him in contingencies outside of this set. "Having been systematically trained to attack targets with a fixed emplacement on the training ground," a general officer observes, "some pilots delayed when they had to search for small and mobile targets."[248] When a unit, so a military leader reports, trained in such a manner that "day in, day out variants of the same battle were worked through" and when it was then exposed to "a difficult situation which clearly . . . did not fit the standard schemes to which the missile men had become accustomed," what occurred? "Deficiencies, a hitch."[249]

> A young officer explained failure in an exercise by the fact that he had to fire not from the path at his right to which he was accustomed, but from one at his left.
>
> Yes, if in . . . simulated battle no unexpected events were to occur, if there were no deviations from the "scenario" of past exercises, the result . . . would be better.[250]

Confronted with such penchants, the Authorities oppose "senseless repetition,[251] "the blind copying of tactical procedures."[252] "Not every repetition is a mother of learning," jokes (a rarity) a headline in the military daily.[253] When soldiers appear so strongly drawn to comfort at the expense of utility, an analyst may deem it worthwhile to counsel that "it is best to conduct exercises in conditions which vary each time,"[254] while a military leader enjoins that in training "one must not admit repetition . . . of the same task, in the same place and same tactical situation."[225] While in fact "tactical preparation . . . often occurs in the same terrain," one must "obtain a situation in which each exercise of tactical preparation occurs in an unknown environment. . . ."[256]

Not only is there (the Authorities seem to sense) a disposition to forget that different situations call for varied conduct, there is also a penchant to forget that changing one's approach to the enemy is a necessary condition for surprising him. "The frequent application of one and the same form of maneuver," it seems worth recalling, "allows the enemy to discover it and to oppose his countermaneuver to it."[257]

In an effort to escape the unexpected, a commander may, the Authorities observe with dismay, decree, as it were, what the future will be for which he then prepares. That is, he may unthinkingly rely on the capacity for foresight which is *also* required of him, but in a reflective manner:

> A meeting engagement was imminent. Taking a decision, the commander of a tank battalion, Captain L. Siliverstov, based himself on this: the "enemy" would deploy his main forces along the edge of a wood ten kilometers from the head of the column of the advancing battalion. In accordance with this he took measures for the advance units to hold the "enemy" in the moment of his deployment at that line. . . . In actuality, however, things happened very differently. The "enemy," contrary to the Commander's expectation, arrived at the wood significantly earlier. This got the plans of the battalion Command all entangled. On the very march, he had to make new calculations, take a new decision and organize the supply

for combat actions. All of which led to loss of time and initiative and naturally had a negative influence on the outcome of the meeting engagement.[258]

The fall of 1943: "It would have done no harm . . . to draw up an alternative plan for crossing the Dnepr in the Kiev area in case the attack from the Bukrin Bridge had failed.

"Unfortunately, neither the General Staff nor the Front command drew up such a plan."[259]

In contrast, the Authorities demand that the commander prepare himself for "variants" of his future. "One may object," an officer concedes, "is it possible to take account of all varied situations? Of course, there can be no recipes for all cases. But the larger the arsenal of variants of battle actions which have been foreseen [in training] . . . the more rapidly will the commander orient himself, the less will any maneuver which the enemy might undertake appear unexpected."[260]

Captain of the Second Rank A. Karlov . . . prepared several variants . . . of battle. Of course, the Commander understood that . . . it is impossible to model a battle precisely. However, typical variants, easily subjected to correction, were not only thought through, but also worked through by the submariners.

It was in another fashion that Captain of the Second Rank A. Shakun prepared himself for the exercise. He did not deem it indispensable to consider several variants of the impending . . . action. Basing himself on his experience and intuition, this officer chose the case which in his opinion was the most probable and with regard to which he worked out . . . decisions. . . .

Shakun, it is clear, relied above all on his . . . creativity in the very course of the battle. He gave little importance to the preparation of the decision to be made.

. . . . . .

In reality, the situation turned out to be more difficult. And Captain of the Second Rank A. Shakun was not able to reorient himself quickly.

Subsequent analysis showed that one of the previously thought-through variants turned out to be very close to what really happened. This liberated the commander and the entire combat unit of the ship from laborious "black" work, from spending forces on the initial analysis of the situation, and allowed their attention to be addressed to the . . . execution of maneuver in the attack itself.[261]

The directive of April 18, 1945, issued by the Command of the First

> *Ukrainian Front for the offensive against Berlin:* "This directive posed a new task—a strike against Berlin in contrast to the previous plan, which aimed at attacking in the direction of Dessau. Such a turn of events did not appear unexpected for us. We in the staff of the Army had considered it already before the beginning of the operation. It is therefore that we could establish a new task without much loss of time. . . ."[262]

Still, there are limits to this remedy. "The company commander, Senior Lieutenant S. Khomachuk, prepared himself well for the attack upon a strongpoint of the 'enemy.' He thought through the plan of attack and prepared the personnel of the company." But "battle is battle. You will not be able to foresee everything."[263] "Combat," one may note, "calls not for mechanical learning by rote of possible variants, but rather for the creative analysis of the . . . situation."[264] After all, in the War "it was difficult to foresee the most probable variants of the enemy's actions."[265] From the outside, to be sure, "it may appear that all the peripatetics into which Lieutenant-Colonel Matlashevskii and the unit commanded by him fell in the course of the firing exercise were known to him and that he had prepared himself beforehand for each of them, working out the appropriate actions in detail." But in reality, "as is known, the multitude of variants occurring in contemporary battle is infinitely large, and no commander is capable of seizing and assimilating all of them."[266]

Or, precisely, is he? After all, the capacity of foresight is strenuously affirmed in Marxism-Leninism. "In the course of several hours, the company commanded by Captain P. Stepanov conducted a tense [simulated] combat. In its most critical moments, one did not feel even a shadow of loss of bearings in the actions of the officer." How so? Simple: "He foresaw . . . how events might unfold, and their sharp turn did not appear unexpected to him."[267] It is the rejected Russian peasant who, as the proverb has it, never crosses himself until he hears the thunderbolt of impending Judgment Day; it is the rejected commander who took action only when a crisis appeared before him which would never have occurred had he foreseen early rather than recalled late. It was only because "on the map of Captain Lunin the necessary calculations were missing" that "his meeting with the 'enemy' in the area of the height called Zarechnaya became a surprise for him." This officer's contention that "the situation was nuclear" was "not well founded." For "already when organizing the march, he should have determined the line of the possible meeting with the 'enemy' . . ."[268] "All combat actions," a German commander recalls about his Soviet counterparts, "were preceded by plans . . . which were to guarantee

success with the certainty of arithmetic."[269] "Of the commander," a senior officer declares bluntly, "is required . . . the ability . . . to foresee the changes in the situation and to work out beforehand the necessary measures. . . ."[270] "Of the commander it is required," affirms a peer of this officer (disclosing by the near-sameness of his words that a formula is being applied), "that he foresee the course of events, make forecasts about the battle. He must in advance work out measures for the case of possible changes in the situation. . . ."[271] "The commander is," in fact, "a person . . . capable of divining how events will develop and capable of taking on that basis a decision which will give him the possibility of winning the battle."[272]

> Foresight . . . allows [one] to correctly ascertain the most probable actions of the enemy, on the basis of which one can take measures so as to disrupt or reduce to the minimum his attempts to obtain surprise.[273]

> *Taking a correct decision rapidly:* "One can [achieve] this when . . . all the actions of the commander are based on . . . foresight of the course of the battle. . . . The capacity of the commander to model the impending combat actions, his capacity to peer into the future, to conceive in full measure the . . . probable sequels in the battle—this is the mark of his high professional maturity."[274]

—which allows one to have one's risk, too:

> One can *risk* such a step when one is capable of foreseeing the course and issue of events and of calculating all.[275]

The Authorities vacillate between this requirement and another one: to expect the unexpected, to be prepared for being unprepared. "Everything was going well in the submarine, but Captain of the Third Rank Kravchenko . . . waited for things to change," neither extrapolating from the present nor pretending to predict. In fact, the Captain waited for changes which, he knew, would be "quick, sudden, not at all foreseen."[276] What he had learned was "to develop inventiveness in difficulty."[277] An officer reports on the novel conduct of an SSBN commander who had found his way out of a seemingly hopeless situation, and whose maneuver was made into an example. "Of course," he observes, "sometimes there is a reason for repeating a procedure which has been successful. . . ." But "it is much more important, when assimilating the bold actions of a commander, to understand what precisely allowed him and the crew to adopt an unusual . . .

decision." [278] "Surprise," it is said, "can be unlike surprise." For "in some cases the soldier knows which event may occur, and he has a ready program of action worked out in advance. Only one factor is unexpected here—the time of occurrence of a given situation. Such is, for instance, surprise for soldiers on duty with regard to the announcement of muster or alert. . . . The basic direction for heightening readiness toward this type of surprise is the automatization of the system of action which has to be performed." But "the situation is different when what suddenly occurs is an event which the soldier . . . could not foresee. For instance, if a target appears on the radar screen which has never before been observed. . . . Here the soldier cannot count on a ready program of action. . . . For this situation it is important to create . . . a habit for the non-habitual"[279]—to be sure, without a *habit* there is no efficiency! Speaking of "a habit for the non-habitual" becomes itself a habit, for an officer repeats in 1977 the words of 1976 just quoted.[280] "What," in fact, "had been the most difficult aspect of the work" in the training of a tank unit? "To prepare the tankmen for action in non-habitual conditions. For many it turned out to be the most difficult thing to become accustomed to the sudden appearance of targets. . . ."[281]

> Contemporary combat is always full of unexpected things. And though the young officer had not yet learned to divine them as one must, nevertheless in his soul he disposed himself toward a sudden change of the situation.[282]

Against the spontaneous disposition to project the present into the future, the Authorities require a state of feeling in which a "sharp turn" is as expected as a continuation of the current state of affairs:

> Learning about the cyclone [predicted by the meteorologists], Captain of the First Rank Lyulin [commanding a submarine] frowned, though nothing around him pointed to danger. . . . There are cases when far from the shore the calm mirror of Neptune so peacefully duplicates the immobility of the heavens that it is difficult to believe in the proximity of storm. Only experience warns: do not believe, seafarer, in the sleep of spontaneity—it is brief.[283]

But there is always a chance that the enemy may have succumbed to that sleep, a circumstance that can be exploited:

> The ship traversed the sea during the day. The risk of being discovered was great. But the commander of the *Skoryi* counted pre-

cisely on the certainty that for the "enemy" such conduct was impossible.[284]

Degrading the Enemy's Capacity to Calculate

By Number or by Skill?

Recommending, as we have seen (Chapter I), reliance on "massing" for attack, the Authorities nonetheless seem disturbed by a disposition to aim at success by the quantity of men and weapons rather than by the quality of their physical capacities and tactical, "operational," and strategic employment. Such an inclination has even found expression on a high level in the past, as when Tukhachevskii in 1920 recommended that "one must not rely on the heroism of the troops. *Strategy must furnish tactics with tasks easy to accomplish* [emphasis in the original—NL]. This is obtained in the first place by the concentration in the place of the main blow of forces many times superior to those of the enemy. . . ."[285]

One may prefer a direct to a (less costly) indirect path in dealing with the enemy:

> *The Crimea in the fall of 1941, according to a German commander:* "The [Soviet] 44th Army, landed at Feodosia, at first merely sent out prudent feelers in the decisive directions west and northwest. But stronger forces were employed toward the east against the [German] 51st Army. Evidently, the enemy . . . perceived only the objective of annihilating our forces on the Kerch Peninsula and lost sight of the possibility of cutting the lifeline of the [German] 11th Army [the railway Zhankov-Sinferopol]."[286]

"In some cases," a military leader observes, "the attention to training officers in conducting battle with *superior* enemy forces has been weakened. . . . With whatever calculations in training you become acquainted, everywhere you see that the commander, for instance, in attacking . . . enjoys a manifold superiority in forces." But "this will not always be the case," and, anyhow, "why not train our officers to win a battle by . . . maneuver, secret envelopment of flanks and rear, deceiving the enemy . . . forestalling him in deploying into battle order and opening fire. . .?"[287] "Contemporary war," it may be useful to recall, "is also a contest of minds."[288]

More particularly, there is an inclination toward relying on area fire and the multiple coverage of targets. "If a given combat is considered in isolation from the development of the operation," Tukhachevskii had already pointed out in the twenties, "one can come to the conclusion to bury the enemy with ammunition without counting, but win the battle." "Indeed, it is 'indisputable' that . . . unlimited expenditure of ammunition . . . resolves the problem of combat tactically." However, "such conduct sometimes, even usually, leads to unavoidable difficulties in the entire dimension of the deep . . . operation."[289] "Soviet artillery practices differ," an American analyst points out, "from those of the United States, in that the United States has a tradition of accurately aimed fire. . . ." Very rarely has the United States used the kind of fire which the Soviets seem not at all adverse to using: to lay a given number of rounds in an area and rely upon . . . [this] pattern of fire to produce the desired effect."[290] "The rules of engagement," another American observes about Soviet firing practices, "are for maximum rates of fire until destruction is achieved." Thus "missile units are authorized to expend multiple rounds at attacking helicopters without waiting to see results of the first rounds."[291] "The Soviets," observes a Western analyst, "have used overprogramming . . . redundant actions to hedge against . . . uncertainties":[292] for example, weakening the strength of an attempted river crossing by trying to cross at several points, accepting, as a worst case, failure at all of them but one.

What is feared in such an orientation is not mindless excess, but misplaced economy. As the analysis of an exercise points out, "the firing might have been more effective if Captain Koren' had allotted to the suppression of the target not a platoon but the whole battery."[293]

> "Why did you fire only a single round?" the lieutenant colonel heard the young sergeant give a private a dressing-down.
>
> —Well, because, Comrade Sergeant, single-round firing is more correct. . . .
>
> "But I do not agree with you," the battalion commander approached the private.
>
> The submachine gunner rose, looking astonished at the lieutenant colonel, who took off his glove and in the 40-degree cold calmly held a lump of snow in his hand.
>
> —Look, I strenuously aim at this snow fence and throw the lump. Here it goes!
>
> The lump missed the target.
>
> —Let us assume that your fire was of that kind. You may not

have the time to fire once more. But now I take at the same time a few lumps . . . now there!

"Two hits," answered the soldier.

—You have understood![294]

In simulated air defense "calculations showed that for the destruction of the targets, more forces were necessary than what the commander allocated"; he displayed a frequently encountered "tendency to an 'economy' of means." Now, "of course, the aspiration of the commander to a sniper-like precision is worthy of approval. [That the Authorities' demand for such precision, discussed below, is apt to have been weighing on him is conveniently overlooked—NL.] But in real battle . . . the destruction of the target appears as a far from simple matter, and that must find expression in the decision."[295] That is, "for the sake of reliability," it is preferable that "each target . . . [be] suppressed . . . by fire from several kinds of weapons."[296] Such a recommendation may throw some light on the well-known Soviet penchant for procuring several types of missiles with similar characteristics; or on the fact noted by a German commander that "Russian artillery . . . sometimes fired heavily at zones in which German deployments were suspected with insufficient probability."[297]

While themselves tending to rely on area fire and multiple targeting, the Authorities also oppose it, requiring precision in locating targets (see Chapter III) as well as accuracy in firing: The very first shot should already allow one to take the target off one's list. "The point is not merely to annihilate the target," in one of the many formulations of this theme, "the point is to hit it with the first shot, the first burst, the first missile, the first salvo or strike,"[298] to obtain victory, in the standard phrase, "not by numbers, but by skill."[299]

Stunning

Relying on skill is achieving in the enemy precisely what one aims at preventing in oneself: a reduction in the efficiency with which he uses undestroyed resources.

"In order to obtain success," a military leader observes, "the regimental commander must know how to . . . provoke *loss of bearings* and *panic* among the enemy. . . ."[300]

It is unusual, however, that the words emphasized, so important in application to oneself, be used for the enemy. Their place is taken by a term denoting a physical impact—*oshelomlyat'*, to stun—and, for a lesser level of degradation, by *zameshat'*, to confuse, or its synonyms:

> I remembered the principle of Suvorov: "To astonish is to vanquish." I did not count on victory in this case [the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, September 14, 1942], but I hoped to cause confusion in the Fascist command.[301]

Confused or stunned, the enemy will reduce or abandon *organizovannost'*, the capacity to act with cohesion and in a manner conforming to regulations—a property, for the Authorities, of very high yield and a very fragile one, the attainment of which is excellence:

> The Corps of General Bakharev acted . . . in an organized manner.[302]

Degrading the enemy's efficiency by *reducing the time available to him for acting* is an important design, but mainly in the context of surprising him (see below).

Achieving the same effect by *rendering his current design inapplicable* is strongly intended just as one's own capacity for changing plans in mid-operation is strongly doubted (see Chapter III). Arguing that "those are wrong who believe that an attack does not exercise a depressing impression on an enemy," Frunze recalls that "every one of us knows from his personal experience how an opponent taking the initiative, though he be much weaker, confounds all calculations of his enemy, ruins his plans. . . ."[303] "M. V. Frunze [has] observed," a general officer notes in the late seventies, "that initiatives of a much weaker side that confound all calculations of the enemy and ruin his plans obtain victory."[304] "Creating disorder in the enemy's cards"[305] is a prominent objective because of its hoped-for impact on the enemy's mind. "This," one may say with satisfaction of any action taken, "wrecks the planned deployment of the enemy. . . ."[306] The main task in pursuit, an analyst suggests, "is not to allow the withdrawal of the enemy according to his own plan."[307] One of the numerous advantages offered by nuclear weapons is that they "render fully real the possibility of disrupting the enemy's design."[308]

But, in order to "disrupt the enemy's calculations," one has, of course, to uncover them in good time, which contributes to the stress on "deep penetration into the enemy's intentions"[309] One will then want to believe—or make believe—that one is superior to the enemy in this regard. If "the enemy did not succeed in [a certain action] . . . [in a battle of the War]," this happened because "he was unable to . . . uncover the Soviet command's calculations," while "the Soviet command knew how to uncover the enemy's calculations correctly and in good time"[310]—protecting its own all the while:

> *The offensive at Stalingrad:* "The secrecy in preparing the operation . . . did not allow the enemy to divine our plans, not only before the start of the offensive . . . but also during its course. For instance, the 57th Army initially attacked in a southerly and southwesterly direction, and the 13th Mechanized Corps acted at that time in the same direction. Afterwards, they made a sharp turn toward the west and even later toward the northwest, and then toward the north; when arriving at the river Chervlennaya, the troops' front was turned toward the northeast. An almost as complicated path was traversed by the strike group of the 51st Army. Its first attack developed quickly in a westerly direction; it seemed to the enemy that its objective was Kotel' nikov; but at the arrival at the railway in the area of Abranerovo, the group sharply turned toward the north and the northwest. . . . In this fashion . . . the enemy could not understand our design. . . ."[311]

While one fears the impact of *danger* on the quality of one's own calculations, one apparently refuses to bank on a similar sensitivity on the part of the enemy: for him, this factor is little mentioned. The same is true of *unfamiliarity* of situation.

But to the unexpected, to *being surprised*, the enemy appears as little immune as oneself. One readily presents, in simulated battle, an " 'enemy' stunned by the sharp change in the situation. . . ."[312] "Surprise," declares the *Field Manual* of 1936, "stuns." "The interceptor . . . stuns the 'enemy' by a novel combat procedure," relates an officer about simulated combat in 1977.[313] "The attack," on one occasion during the War, "was accomplished with maximal speed, which secured surprise and produced a stunning effect on the enemy. . . ."[314] It is standard to demand "the . . . utilization of such sequels to a surprise attack as confusion among the enemy, his . . . loss of bearings. . . ."[315] For "it is well known that the aim of surprise is to stun the enemy, to carry panic into his ranks, to paralyze his will . . . to break up his organized resistance."[316] The action of troops "uninformed about their enemy" and hence in a position to "be attacked suddenly from any direction" acquires a spontaneous, unorganized . . . character."[317] "Commanders," it is recalled about the War, "always strove to attack the enemy with surprise"—so as to destroy more of him in the act of surprise itself? No, "to deprive him of the possibility of offering organized resistance."[318]

Thus, one instrument for reducing the surprised enemy's efficiency is to deprive him of *intelligence* about the new situation in which he has to counter the strike delivered upon him. Those surprised, according to an analyst, "have . . . to change their prior plans without

having sufficient information about the state of their forces''[319]—and the Authorities are aware how difficult this task is for their own forces. (This calculation may be in part behind the Soviet preference for attacking at night.)

Surprise sharply increases *time pressure* on its victims, a factor to which, as we have seen, the Authorities are sensitive. Delivering an unexpected strike produces a ''deficit of time'' for the enemy to take a decision; this may lead him to make a mistake, which one can then utilize. ''Seized unawares,'' an analyst writes, ''the enemy is forced to change his measures *in haste* . . . he will be forced to seek measures counteracting the surprise assault in haste, as a consequence of which they will often be ineffective.''[320] ''Without making precise estimates . . . of the composition and emplacement of the sides,'' the surprised enemy, according to another analyst, ''will . . . *in haste* have to introduce modifications into his previous plan, which will turn out not to correspond to the situation at all''; countermeasures ''insufficiently thought through . . . will very often turn out to be of low effectiveness.''[321]

Just when the enemy has less time available, he will *need more;* being surprised will slow him up. In other words, surprise ''deprives the enemy of the possibility of taking effective countermeasures *quickly*.''[322] ''The application of modes of action unexpected by the enemy . . . as a rule deprived him of the possibility of adopting quick responses.''[323]

The enemy's being surprised may lead him to self-destructive actions. When, on one occasion, ''the Hitlerites lost their bearings,'' they ''began to throw bombs on their own troops.''[324]

Or he may become inactive. ''When surprise is obtained,'' in the unsurprising words of an analyst, ''by striking the enemy at places and times where and when he does not expect it,'' one ''paralyzes the will to resist.''[325] ''Stunned by the surprise and the rapidity of the attack; [on a German strongpoint], the enemy was paralyzed and could not show serious resistance. 'We did not fire a single shot against the Russians,' declared a Hitlerite officer made prisoner. 'The appearance of the Russians was so unexpected that [an] . . . instant hypnosis took place. . . .' ''[326]

> *The seizure of Stolp by a tank unit of the First Belorussian Front:*
> ''The appearance of our tanks on the streets stunned the Hitlerites, so that they could not really offer resistance.''[327]

In this context surprise comes to be so highly valued that one

may, despite the Soviet reluctance to acknowledge tradeoffs, recommend sacrificing other positive chracteristics of action on its behalf:

> The periscope above the water . . . there are situations in which submarine commanders consciously adopt this extreme measure. . . . Recently Captain of the Second Rank N. Balakirev, . . . searching for the enemy, raised his periscope. He knew . . . that he thus lost many chances of success. But . . . Captain of the Second Rank Balikirev chose the right stake in the given situation—the stake on actions . . . unexpected by the "enemy."[328]

On behalf of surprise, one may give up not only the maximization of the strength of one's strike, but also the minimization of obstacles offered by the terrain. Since "the enemy usually fortifies those sectors of a water barrier convenient for crossing, and defends them with larger forces," an analyst shows, "for obtaining surprise it often appears advantageous to cross at a *difficult* sector where the enemy's defense is weak, where he expects a crossing least of all and can be taken unawares."[329]

What is appreciated in inflicting *high losses* on enemy units is not so much the ensuring shortfall of their resources as the degradation of the survivors' performance. The point is more discreetly dealt with—as "combat capacity" preserved—with regard to one's own side:

> But our troops, though they bore heavy losses, were far from having lost their capacity for combat.[330]

> Despite heavy losses, the unit preserved its combat capacity.[331]

"Having discovered the beginning of the enemy's retreat," an officer writes in standard fashion, "the attackers deliver on him a powerful fire strike"—so as to reduce his force? No, "striving to disorganize his actions."[332] Indeed, "the enemy suffered large losses, as a consequence of which he fell into confusion. . . ."[333]

> And then a powerful 15-minute fire attack was conducted against the Hitlerites by our artillery. The leadership of the enemy was paralyzed. . . .[334]

Incapacitating

The enemy leadership may in this case have been not only "paralyzed"

by the impact on souls, but also physically incapacitated by that on bodies and equipment providing command-control-communication-intelligence (C^3I): a crucial matter treated with *reticence* in public. Statements such as these are rare:

> On the occasion of an attack from the march . . . it is useful to direct the first mass strike [of aviation and artillery] against the most distant means of the enemy—his missile-launching installations, his artillery, but also his command points, his radio location system and means of intelligence—so as to "blind" the defense, impair its system of leadership.[335]

> *The crossing of the Weichsel:* "Command and communications in the units of the enemy were destroyed. But for us this was not an accident. We had planned this, ascertaining beforehand all observation and command points of the enemy. These and the whole system of leadership and communication of the enemy we struck especially in the first minutes of artillery fire and of the air strike."[336]

The Germans were hardly more communicative:

> *The Soviet attack on Naro-Fominsk on the approaches to Moscow:* "Three colossal tanks disregarded our camp, rolled on. Later we learned that the first aimed at destroying the Battalion Staff in our rear."[337]

> Particularly dangerous were the tree snipers who aimed at officers. . . . The leader of a company was the most endangered man.[338]

> The Russian artillery bombardments . . . singled out command posts and battle headquarters.[339]

The same reticence prevails with regard to defending oneself against enemy attempts against one's own C^3I system. Again, even discreet mentions such as this are rare:

> *The German offensive in the area of Lake Balaton:* "All was done so that in case of a breakthrough the uninterrupted leadership of the troops would be preserved. For this is the question of questions, already in the offensive, but particularly on the defense. When I look at the past and search for the cause of this or that unsuccessful operation, as a rule, it is the loss of leadership. Experience shows that in the most difficult situation, a commander may hope for

> success as long as he preserves communication with his troops. Even in difficult retreat."[340]

Utilizing the Enemy's Temporary Degradation

Once one has struck the enemy in a fashion that not only depletes his "forces and means," but also reduces the efficiency with which he uses those that have survived, one has also facilitated the task of crushing the enemy.

However, here, once more, time works for the enemy; one must be rapid in utilizing the sequels to one's debilitating strike.

At first, to be sure, the side thus struck is in a state where it does not even address itself to the task of "bringing itself back to order"; it has not yet "come to its senses." But then—soon—it starts recovering. Thus, on one occasion during the War, "the enemy, stunned by the unexpectedness of the strike, was unable to offer resistance"; but soon, "recovering from the unexpected attack, the enemy began to offer . . . resistance. . . ."[341] Another time, "the enemy did not expect . . . [the] attack and, to begin with, offered almost no resistance. However, soon the enemy opened fire. . . ."[342] Though "our . . . attack surprised the enemy" and "he fell into confusion," he also "rapidly began to offer . . . resistance."[343] Yet another surprised enemy did not at first offer organized resistance; however, "in the measure of the advance of our units into the depth of his defense, he began offering stubborn resistance. . . ."[344] Indeed, in one encounter "the forces of the enemy grew with every minute" as "the factor of surprise . . . gradually lost its significance."[345]

> But the factor of surprise operated, naturally, only for a short time. Regaining mastery of self, the enemy . . . strengthened his resistance. . . .[346]

> The enemy evidently, did not expect . . . the attack. . . .

> It seemed that everything was going in the best manner possible: we attack, the Hitlerites flee. . . . But this continued only until the moment when the enemy straightened himself up from his initial confusion.[347]

Faced with such evanescence of the initial effect, the side that has secured it should aim—with appropriate swiftness—to complete

the exploitation of the enemy's confusion before his recovery renders this infeasible; to *dobit'*, finish off, the enemy while there is still time; to overcome the temptation to believe, complacently, that the early destruction wrought by surprise is sufficient:

> Surprise does not by itself secure victory. It merely creates a favorable situation which one must skillfully utilize, developing the success obtained by surprise action and utilize it for the full crushing of the enemy.[348]

"Their calculation," an analyst observes about the Germans in the first phase of the War, "was simple: to provoke loss of bearings and panic in the ranks of our fighters and to obtain success *before* our troops would recover from the strike and be able to organize counteraction."[349] In simulated combat a submarine commander is trying to break through the "enemy" antisubmarine warfare (ASW) deployment, and launches a torpedo against the hunter/killer submarine threatening him: "A surprise strike always stuns the 'enemy.' It is on this that Captain of the Third Rank Kravchenko counted. . . . The [enemy] antisubmariners did not immediately understand whether they had hit a minefield or had been attacked from the depth. This confusion was full, *sufficient* for Captain of the Third Rank Kravchenko [to break through]."[350] "First," on one occasion during the War, "the 7th Rifle Company broke into the enemy trench," which "created confusion among the enemy." Thereupon, "*making use of that,* the other companies of the first echelon of the battalion also broke into the first trench."[351]

> The attack [of infantry] . . . is successful if it is conducted during that period when the enemy has not yet recovered from the artillery strike. The art of attacking [with infantry] is the capacity to utilize that moment.[352]

> There was not a minute to spare; we had to act before . . . he [the enemy] recovered from the state of shock caused by the collapse of operation Citadel [Kursk].[353]

Failing such a rapid consummation within the limited initial period during which the enemy has not yet recovered from the blow he has received, one must attempt to prolong the enemy's degradation—that is, to extend the time limits for reaching one's own objective. One must "not tolerate the enemy's reestablishing his troops' combat capacity,"[354] "not give the enemy the possibility of reestablishing his

impaired leadership system." When, on one occasion during the War, "with the infantry and the tanks going over to the attack, our fire attained maximum force," the task was "not to give the enemy the possibility to come to his senses and to reestablish his impaired fire system."[355]

Notes to Chapter Six

1. Col. Yu. Galkin, *KZ*, July 3, 1976.
2. *KVS*, 1975, no. 19, 33.
3. Capt. V. Matveev, *KZ*, April 2, 1977.
4. Col. Yu. Galkin, *KZ*, July 3, 197. Ellipsis in the text.
5. Lt. Col. M. Seferbekov, *KZ*, November 29, 1978.
6. Maj. V. Vozovikov, *VV*, 1972, no. 4, 33.
7. A. A. Svechin, 1927, in Kadishev, 1965, 246.
8. Col. Gen. P. Levchenko, *KZ*, August 16, 1978.
9. Col. N. Shishkin, *VV*, 1978, no. 6, 27.
10. Editorial, *VV*, 1978, no. 4, 3.
11. Korovnikov, 146.
12. Editorial, *VV*, 1972, no. 6, 3.
13. Maj. Gen. I. Podoved, *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 60.
14. Lt. Cols. G. Kashub and A. Zakharenko, and Maj. G. Miranovich, *KZ*, February 9, 1978.
15. Lt. Col. V. Polezhaev, *KZ*, March 20, 1977.
16. Col. V. Yaroshenko, *KZ*, March 24, 1978.
17. Col. V. Savel'ev, *KZ*, April 24, 1976.
18. Grechko, 1976, 475.
19. Col. V. Savel'ev, *VV*, 1977, no. 1, 28.
20. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 391.
21. Col. D. Shapovalov, *VV*, 1965, no. 2, 31.
22. Editorial, *VV*, 1971, no. 7, 4.
23. Col. A. Petrov, *VV*, 1969, no. 5, 61.
24. Lt. V. Nikolenko, *VV*, 1973, no. 3, 45.
25. Col. V. Savel'ev, *VV*, 1977, no. 1, 28.
26. Editorial, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 3–4.
27. Lt. Gen. K. Ganeev, *KZ*, January 21, 1977.
28. Editorial, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 4.
29. *KVS*, 1967, no. 9, 5.
30. Capt. Yu. Gudzenko, *KZ*, January 14, 1976.
31. *VV*, 1967, no. 2, 50.
32. Maj. M. Kotvikskii, *KVS*, 1967, no. 1, 36.
33. General of the Army, I. Tretiak, *KZ*, May 29, 1979.
34. General of the Army, G. Petrov, *KZ*, August 2, 1978.
35. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 5, 3.
36. *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 4.
37. *KZ*, January 16, 1976.
38. Maj. Yu. Soldatov, *VV*, 1970, no. 8, 66.

39. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 5, 3.
40. Lt. Col. O. Tret'yakov, *KZ*, Jan.
41. Editorial, *VV*, 1974, no. 3, 3.
42. Col. A. Agdamov, *KZ*, November 2, 1976.
43. Kazakov, 127–128.
44. Lt. Gen. K. Ganeev, *KZ*, January 21, 1977.
45. Editorial, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 4.
46. *KVS*, 1976, no. 10, 8.
47. Maj. Gen. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, November 22, 1977.
48. *KZ*, November 2, 1976. Emphasis added.
49. Grechko, 1970, 283.
50. Grechko, 1976, 342.
51. *KVS*, 1976, no. 3, 40.
52. Sr. Lt. V. Knyazev, *VV*, 1975, no. 3, 44.
53. Col. O. Pogrebtsov, *KZ*, July 1, 1976. Ellipsis in the text.
54. Sr. Lt. A. Tkachev, *KZ*, March 20, 1977.
55. Fleet Admiral G. Egorov, *KZ*, February 27, 1977.
56. *KVS*, 1976, no. 7, 52.
57. Lt. Col. A. Korobiv, *KZ*, February 26, 1977.
58. Col. Gen A. Koldunov, *KZ*, June 6, 1976.
59. *KVS*, 1970, no. 18, 46.
60. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 1, 4.
61. Popel', 1960, 21.
62. Lt. Col. A. Sychev, *KZ*, April 7, 1976. Emphasis added.
63. Col. A. Kulakov, *KZ*, January 9, 1977.
64. Eremenko, 1964, 105.
65. Grechko, 1976, 137.
66. V. I. Kazakov, 175.
67. Lt. Col. A. Zarubin, *KZ*, November 20, 1977.
68. Ibid.
69. V. I. Kazakov, 126–127.
70. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, January 27, 1976.
71. An officer quoted by Rodimtsev, 140.
72. Maj. Gen. V. Platov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 58. Emphasis added.
73. An officer to a subordinate, Aristov, 38.
74. Col. Gen. I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1964, no. 4, 6.
75. Col. Gen. A. Babadzanyan, *VV*, 1964, no. 8, 8.
76. An officer quoted by Rodimtsev, 140.
77. Katukov, 249.
78. Col. A. Petrov, *VV*, 1969, no. 5, 60.
79. Marshal B. Kutakhov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 1, 32.
80. Col. A. Petrov, *VV*, 1969, no. 5, 61. Emphasis added.
81. *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 58.
82. Lt. Col. P. Kudryavtsev, *VV*, 1962, no. 8. 22.
83. Major V. Vozovikov, *VV*, 1972, no. 4, 33.
84. Gen. Altunin, *KVS*, 1970, no. 18, 46.
85. Col. V. Savel'ev, *VV*, 1977, no. 1, 29. Emphasis added.
86. *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 5.
87. Editorial, *VV*, 1975, no. 10, 3–4. Emphasis added.

88. Col. O. Pogrebtsov, *KZ*, July 1, 1976.
89. Col. K. Titakov, *VV*, 1978, no. 10, 38.
90. Maj. M. Ziemin'sh, *KZ*, January 24, 1979.
91. General of the Army I. Tret'yak, *KZ*, May 29, 1979. Emphasis added.
92. Batov, 228.
93. Popel', 1960, 20–21.
94. Ibid., 212–213.
95. General of the Army I. G. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 9.
96. Col. A. Kantor, *KZ*, May 21, 1976.
97. Biryukov, 87.
98. Lt. V. Sil'yanov, *KZ*, November 7, 1976.
99. Capt. of the First Rank V. Tevyanskii, *KZ*, January 13, 1977.
100. Capt. A. Dudnik, *KZ*, December 7, 1977.
101. General of the Army I. G. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 7.
102. *KVS*, 1975, no. 16, 32.
103. Biryukov, 90.
104. Ibid., 12.
105. Ibid., 136.
106. Lt. Commander Yu. Timoshchuk, *KZ*, July 14, 1976.
107. Col. V. Peralytin, *KZ*, August 13, 1975.
108. Navy Capt. N. Buchinskii, *KZ*, June 2, 1977.
109. Col. R. Dukov, *VV*, 1968, no. 4, 32.
110. Sr. Lt. O. Balakin, *KZ*, November 12, 1976.
111. Navy Capt. M. Sokolov, *KZ*, November 12, 1976.
112. Lt. V. Sil'yanov, *KZ*, August 27, 1976.
113. Majors V. Kolvenkov and A. Bedzhanyan, *KZ*, November 17, 1976.
114. Navy Capt. L. Klimchenko, *KZ*, February 6, 1977.
115. Sr. Lt. Yu. Saltykov, *KZ*, August 27, 1976.
116. General of the Army I. G. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 6.
117. *KVS*, 1971, no. 1, 20.
118. General Epishev, *KVS*, 1977, no. 2, 21.
119. Popel', 1959, 110.
120. Editorial, *KVS*, no. 4, 6.
121. Col. V. Shatank'ko, *KVS*, 1966, no. 5, 45.
122. Lt. Gen. P. Shkidchenko, quoted in *KZ*, August 26, 1977.
123. Ibid.
124. Lt. Col. N. Minaev, *KZ*, November 24, 1977.
125. Maj. G. Shafikov, *KZ*, 1977, no. 13, 36. Emphasis added.
126. Lt. Gen. P. Shkidchenko, quoted in *KZ*, August 26, 1977.
127. Editorial, *VV*, 1977, no. 3, 7.
128. Lt. Col. V. Lazarev, *KZ*, May 28, 1978.
129. Lt. Col. M. Korotaev, *KZ*, 1967, no. 6, 34.
130. Biryukov, 138.
131. Maj. Gen. A. Volkov, *KZ*, April 15, 1976.
132. General of the Army I. G. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 6.
133. Editorial, *VV*, 1978, no. 5, 3.
134. Col. Gen. V. Yakushin, *VV*, 1976, no. 122, 16.
135. Popel', 1959, 196.
136. Col. V. Nagornyi, *KZ*, June 22, 1978.

137. Rokossovskii, 51.
138. Ibid., 107.
139. P. A. Belov, 164–169.
140. Moskalenko, Vol. 1, 174.
141. Ibid., 176.
142. Grechko, 1976, 398. Emphasis added.
143. Sandalov, 4–5.
144. Babadzhanyan, 1975, 143–145.
145. Gulyaev, 15.
146. Grechko, 1976, 463, quoting a document of 1943 about the Caucasus.
147. Yakubovskii, 147.
148. Moskalenko, Vol. 2, 373.
149. Navy Capt. V. Shutkin, *KZ*, May 4, 1977.
150. Shtemenko, 244.
151. Eremenko, 1964, 105.
152. Maj. Gen. A. Surchenko, *VV*, 1962, no. 5, 20.
153. Maj. Gen. Zh. Kereev, *VV*, 1975, no. 6, 52.
154. Maj. Gen. I. Podoved, *VV*, 1976, no. 3, 61.
155. *KVS*, 1974, no. 20, 38.
156. *KZ*, September 27, 1975.
157. Col. F. Gredasov, *KZ*, January 14, 1972.
158. Maj. Gen. Babenko, *KZ*, August 3, 1976.
159. Lt. Col. V. Zatitskii, *KZ*, October 3, 1978.
160. Col. A. Krasov, *KZ*, October 11, 1974.
161. Capt. A. Belostotskii, *KZ*, March 23, 1975.
162. Vice Adm. B. Gromov, *KZ*, April 13, 1976.
163. Lt. Col. I. Kurganevich, *KZ*, June 17, 1976.
164. Vice Adm. N. Lunev, *KZ*, July 22, 1973. Emphasis added.
165. Col. E. Grebenshchikov, *KZ*, July 29, 1977.
166. Maj. Gen. K. Babenko, *KZ*, August 3, 1976.
167. Vice Adm. A. Sorokin, *KVS*, 1976, no. 3, 39.
168. Lt. Col. I. Kurganevich, *KZ*, June 17, 1976.
169. Maj. A. Ozharenkov, *KZ*, July 28, 1977.
170. Capt. A. Mitronov, *KZ*, July 20, 1977. Emphasis added.
171. Col. V. Uryuzhnikov, *KZ*, April 18, 1978. Emphasis added.
172. Marchenko, 1974a, 108. Emphasis added.
173. Middeldorf, 232.
174. Col. Gen. Kh. Ambaryan, *VV*, 1973, no. 7, 5.
175. Navy Capt. V. Kortun, *KZ*, December 22, 1973.
176. Chuikov, 1962a, 225.
177. Biryuzov, 211. Emphasis added.
178. Rokossovskii, 357–358.
179. Maj. V. Karpov, *KZ*, October 14, 1976.
180. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *VV*, 1971, no. 1, 10.
181. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *KZ*, February 13, 1974.
182. Vice Adm. V. Ivanov, *KVS*, 1966, no. 1, 19.
183. Maj. Gen. A. Surchenko, *VV*, 1962, no. 5, 20.
184. Maj. R. Ol'khovoi, *KVS*, 1975, no. 15, 26.
185. Marchenko, 1974b, 51.

186. Ibid.
187. Marchenko, 1974a, 212.
188. Maj. Gen. V. Ogul'kov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 16, 39.
189. E. E. Belov, 118.
190. Sevast'yanov, 77.
191. Galitskii, 1970, 160.
192. Eremenko, 1961, 60.
193. Biryuzov, 42.
194. V. I. Kazakov, 24–25.
195. Zhukov, Vol. 1, 270–271.
196. Col. L. Lebedev, *KZ*, October 30, 1975. Emphasis added.
197. Lt. Col. V. Bogdanovskii, *KZ*, July 8, 1978.
198. Col. Gen. V. Merinskii, *VV*, 1977, no. 5, 4.
199. Lt. Gen. M. Polokhov, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 54.
200. Col. A. Filyakov, *KZ*, January 20, 1977.
201. Lt. Gen. P. Safronov, *KZ*, November 26, 1977. Emphasis added.
202. Lt. Col. F. Alekseev, *KZ*, August 25, 1977.
203. Maj. Gen. P. Butenko, *VV*, 1974, no. 4, 43.
204. Lt. Gen. A. Grivkov, *KVS*, 1975, no. 4, 46.
205. Lt. Col. M. Lashkevich and Maj. M. Karavaitsev, *KZ*, August 6, 1975.
206. Col. A. Krasnov, *KZ*, October 4, 1974.
207. Navy Capt. A. Bogdarets, *KZ*, December 24, 1975.
208. Mellenthin, 205.
209. Navy Capts. G. Efremov and A. Dyadyn, *KZ*, October 18, 1975.
210. Lt. Gen. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1976, no. 1, 36.
211. *KZ*, March 2, 1974.
212. Lt. Gen. P. Khomchuk, *KZ*, September 21, 1974.
213. Stuchenko, 242.
214. Katukov, 87.
215. Lt. Col. S. Golovin, *KZ*, September 24, 1975.
216. Col. R. Dukov, *KZ*, June 23, 1973.
217. Rendulic, 139–140.
218. Ibid., 126.
219. Manstein, 242–243.
220. Lashchenko, 57.
221. *KZ*, August 8, 1975.
222. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, January 27, 1976.
223. *KZ*, April 13, 1975.
224. Ivanov, 266.
225. Maj. Gen. L. Nosov, *KZ*, May 27, 1967.
226. Lt. Gen. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1976, no. 1, 34.
227. Col. V. Uglov and Lt. Col. A. Zakharenko, *KZ*, January 27, 1977.
228. Navy Capt. A. Bogdarets, *KZ*, December 24, 1975.
229. Lt. Commander Yu. Timoshchuk, *KZ*, July 14, 1976.
230. Col. R. Dukov, *KZ*, January 19, 1975.
231. Capt. of the First Rank V. Tevyanskii, *KZ*, January 13, 1977.
232. *KZ*, October 14, 1975.
233. Lt. Gen. A. Grivkin, *KVS*, 1975, no. 4, 46.
234. General of the Army G. Petrov, *KZ*, August 2, 1978.

235. *KZ*, October 14, 1975.
236. Lt. Col. S. Golovin, *KZ*, September 24, 1975.
237. Lt. Gen. M. Polokhov, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 51.
238. Capt. Yu. Gudzenko, *KZ*, January 14, 1976.
239. Col. Ye. A. Konstantinov, *KZ*, March 13, 1977.
240. Ibid.
241. Capt. N. Zhichkin, *KZ*, March 12, 1974.
242. Lt. Col. V. Sidorov, *KZ*, July 16, 1974.
243. Lt. Col. A. Krasnov, *KZ*, February 1, 1978.
244. Lt. Gen. M. Polokhov, *VV*, 1976, no. 4, 51.
245. Col. V. Andrianov, *KZ*, October 19, 1973.
246. Lt. Col. V. Rudoi and Senior Lt. M. Ziemin'sh, *KZ*, January 6, 1973.
247. Ibid.
248. Maj. Gen. L. Nosov, *KZ*, May 27. 1976.
249. Marshal S. Batitskii, *KZ*, May 17, 1974.
250. Lt. Col. V. Moroz, *KZ*, May 23, 1979.
251. Lt. Gen. K. Maksimov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 13, 31.
252. Editorial, *VV*, 1976, no. 1, 5.
253. *KZ*, March 19, 1974.
254. Lomov, 162.
255. General of the Army I. Pavlovskii, *KZ*, February 13, 1974.
256. Lt. Col. V. Rudoi and Senior Lt. M. Ziemin'sh, *KZ*, January 6, 1973.
257. Novikov and Sverdlov, 37.
258. Col. I. Vorov'ev, *KZ*, January 27, 1976.
259. Shtemenko, 185 – 186.
260. Col. A. Rol', *KZ*, May 14, 1975.
261. Navy Capt. of the First Rank V. Tevyanskii, *KZ*, January 13, 1977.
262. Lelyushenko, 367 – 368.
263. Maj. A. Goslev, *KZ*, March 6, 1975.
264. Maj. V. Tapkin, *KZ*, January 7, 1977.
265. Radzievskii, 1977, 46.
266. Col. R. Filyakov, *KZ*, January 20, 1977.
267. Col. R. Dukov, *VV*, 1968, no. 4, 32.
268. Col. K. Titikov, *VV*, 1971, no. 12, 22.
269. Middeldorf, 233.
270. Fleet Admiral G. Egorov, *KZ*, February 27, 1977.
271. Maj. Gen. V. Platov, *KVS*, 1976, no. 1, 57.
272. Col. Gen. I. Tret'yak, *VV*, 1976, no. 8, 12.
273. Col. V. Shein, *VV*, 1977, no. 6, 57.
274. Col. P. Simchenko, *KZ*, January 31, 1978.
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276. Capt. Lt. Yu. Timoshchuk, *KZ*, July 4, 1976.
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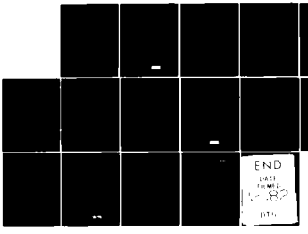

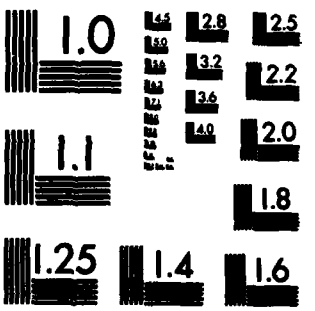

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

Chapter VII
INFERENCES FROM THE DISPLAYED TO THE HIDDEN: STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WAR

Soviet military men rarely talk in public about strategic nuclear war in the analytic manner that they adopt toward theater events. Yet from dispositions they display in the latter discourse, we may infer points about strategic conduct which they are likely to make in private, as well as some ways in which they are unlikely to calculate.

Counterforce in Pretense and Intent

"Naturally," declares a high authority about disarming the United States with regard to strategic nuclear weapons, in a tone indistinguishable from that which might be used about supplying Moscow with water, "the task of destroying the enemy's means of nuclear attack *must be* reliably provided for"[1]—which suggests that it *has been*. "These forces," one may say in a similar vein about the Strategic Rocket Forces, "can, if this becomes necessary, be used for . . . the annihilation of the means of nuclear attack of the aggressor. . . ."[2]

Because such pretense, so flagrantly at variance with reality, could hardly be thought useful for deterrence, and because the lack of prominence of such allegations would prevent them from contributing much to morale, they are likely to be lapses into self-indulgence (see Chapter III). One yields for a moment to what the Bolsheviks have always believed to be a distinctively Russian temptation: to blur the boundary between wish and fact, to attribute omnipotence to desire—the vice of "subjectivism" against which they posit "objective factors."

Such a pretense may be dropped in an instant if it hinders a changed purpose. For the Soviets' strategic posture to be splendid, air defense must be omnipotent:

> The high effectiveness of contemporary air defense allows solving

[illegible]

> successfully the . . . task of the *full* destruction of *all* attacking aircraft and missiles. . . .

But there is also passive defense to justify:

> However effective air and missile defense be, it is indispensable to have . . . civil defense for the rapid liquidation of the sequels to nuclear strikes.

Both passages on the same page.[3]

What one yearns for and knows one does not have, one may present as also desired by the enemy. Here one can stress that *his* aspiration is being frustrated.

Short of *asserting* that one is capable of disarming the opponent with regard to strategic nuclear weapons, one may *suggest* that this is the case—in formulations that could be interpreted as merely claiming the ability to change the strategic nuclear force ratio substantially to one's advantage. For example, one may observe that, with the help of strategic missile-nuclear weapons, one can *solve the basic tasks* of war; or that the delivery of a nuclear strike can in short order *radically change the strategic situation* in one's favor.

One may merely exalt the *benefits* that flow from disarming the enemy; perhaps the reader—or oneself—will feel that one would not bask in them if one believed oneself unable to procure them. Having noted the movement of the U.S. posture toward blue water, one may conclude that a task which has acquired an importance of the first rank is that of destroying atomic submarines: on the solution of this task depends the success of the disruption or maximal weakening of the nuclear assault of the enemy from the ocean. (This task may be made less daunting by being coupled with that of destroying aircraft carriers: as if SSBNs and carriers presented dangers of similar magnitude.)

One may also stress the intensity of one's *aspiration* toward the strategic disarming of the enemy; again, the reader—or again, oneself—may feel that the Authorities would not be emphatic about something they believed to be out of their reach. "The basic manner of conducting the war," declares (in the late 1960s) the high authority already quoted, "is massed missile-nuclear strikes, delivered with the aim of destroying the aggressor's means of nuclear attack. . . ."[4]

Yet, as we have already seen, if another purpose is hindered by intimations of an ability to disarm the enemy, if another objective requires the admission of one's incapacity in this respect, pretense is replaced by sobriety. Arguing for "the defense of the country's rear

line forces against nuclear strikes," one may affirm that "this aim is attained first of all by the destruction on their bases of the enemy's offensive nuclear weapons," but may then go on to disclose that "there is no guarantee whatsoever that we will succeed in destroying substantial aircraft and missile forces in their basing zones. . . ."[5] A prudent Bolshevik, like a cautious Westerner, is banking on the rarely mentioned worst contingency rather than on the loudly proclaimed best case.

Yet the Authorities may feel more hopeful than they do about disarming by destruction when it comes to incapacitating the enemy's strategic nuclear weapons by striking at the enemy's head: the inclinations presented in Chapter VI are likely to apply to strategic war. If one were to succeed in, say, disorganizing the enemy's system of governmental and military leadership, one would thereby also radically degrade his production function with regard to strategic nuclear weapons. If it were feasible to destroy, one may plan, all that determines the capacity of the enemy government, to what degree and with what effectiveness would even ample numbers of surviving strategic nuclear weapons be used?

In this indirect fashion, or directly, and *regardless of the degree of success foreseen, counterforce is the primary use of strategic nuclear force* (of course, on condition of a favorable exchange ratio), *once one acts on the prediction that the enemy will perform large nuclear strikes.* The most important objective of armed struggle, one may observe, is the disruption or the maximal weakening of the enemy's nuclear assault. This is the "serious" kernel of the flippant Soviet talk about disarming the enemy. Strategic nuclear war is still war. That damage suffered in it may be higher than in previous wars does not change the point that counterforce is a way to limit such damage; it merely obliges one to exercise "even greater" energy and skill in proceeding on that path.

Maximizing the Initial Strike or Husbanding Reserves?

"The basic . . . manner of conducting the future world war," declares a high authority, is "the massed missile-nuclear strike."[6] If we recall the prevailing beliefs about the conditions of high impact (Chapter I), we will be in a position to appreciate the conviction that this sentence, signed by Marshal Sokolovskii, carries. It is the laws of military science themselves, one recalls, which command the *massed* employment of strategic weapons.

The aversion to delay (Chapter II) requires a massed strike *right away*. "So as to obtain the most decisive results in minimal time," one explains about "the future world war," the main military effort should be made immediately at the war's beginning, even "literally in the first hours and minutes."[7] It is "the initial period of contemporary missile-nuclear war" which "predetermines the development and issue of the whole war."[8] In case of strategic war, there should be, one may say, a period of massed nuclear strikes in which a maximal quantity of means are used in as short a time as possible.

Thus, besides accuracy, "time remains the decisive condition for the successful employment of missile forces."[9] "An exceptional rapidity in delivering nuclear strikes will be required. . . ."[10]

Aware of the inclination to "build up" strikes over time (Chapter I), one may reject it, at least for the next strategic war. Today, in contrast with the past, one may observe, a situation in which the force of subsequent strikes is higher than that of preceding ones, and particularly higher than that of the first one, should be avoided. The first strike will now often also be the most powerful one, one in which the maximally possible amount of means and forces—above all, nuclear ones—will participate.

To act otherwise is to forgo victory. For a high authority, it is "clearly" the case that "in nuclear war, one can count on victory only if one's power is going to be used in the shortest possible time."[11]

Acting thus, one can avoid being drawn into a war that "drags on" with mounting costs and increasingly uncertain returns, in favor of quick victory. It is "the accumulation in times of peace of stocks of nuclear weapons and of delivery vehicles for them" which allows the warring sides to proceed rapidly "from the first minutes of the war on" toward "the destruction of the most important targets of the enemy in the whole depth of his territory" so as "to attain in a short time, [even] in the very beginning of the war, the basic political and military-strategic objective."[12]

Still, to declare outright that "nuclear war is in . . . its essence, brief"[13] is rare and bold, because, in a zone of uncertainty, it slights all too clearly an opposed preference, one whose watchwords are not *massirovanie*, massing, and *odnovremennost'*, simultaneity, but rather *narashchivanie*, building up, and *rezervy*, reserves, one that views it as an illusion to believe that great results are apt to be accomplished in a single act. Hence, the same analyst who at one moment may recommend maximizing the initial strike, so as to "break the enemy's leadership," will at another moment affirm the *impossibility of attaining* the definitive objective of the war by a single strike.

The way *may* be protracted, and then superiority in the capacity to withhold may procure victory. During the First and Second World Wars, one may show, reserves were increasing, and those who had more of them fared better; in missile-nuclear war, the enhanced role of the reserves will probably manifest itself increasingly. What will be needed during a nuclear war is the availability of reserves, particularly of offensive means: an availability that will most probably exercise a decisive influence on the ultimate outcome.

Probably, such beliefs are more important in classified than in public words. It is the stress on the initial strike which may seem more deterring in peacetime.

Drawn in incompatible directions, the Authorities may resolve to decide each case as it presents itself. Remembering that the decisive act of missile-nuclear war is the delivery of strikes with strategic nuclear forces simultaneously on the enemy's forces and on targets in his rear, one may content oneself with foreseeing that the time at which these strikes are made *can* coincide with the beginning of the war—rather than the usual *must*.

Banking on Asymmetries after the Initial Period of the War

In strategic nuclear war, it is conjectured that the issue will be determined in substantial measure by the capacity of a government to reestablish, more rapidly than the enemy, not so much plant and equipment as human resources and organization; and, on that basis, to support the combat capability of its armed forces, to regenerate its military strength. As the Authorities may be loath to display the prospect of protracted strategic war—presumably apprehensive of thereby reducing deterrence—they are more apt to make the point just stated with regard to theater nuclear war.

There, the opposing sides, the Authorities suggest, may not react in the same way to high losses and a degraded environment. Their capacity to prosecute the war, given equal damage in its initial period, may be impaired in different degrees.

The side less affected will win. "In nuclear war the side which has a stauncher morale and higher combat skill . . . will be the victor."[14] "As a result of nuclear strikes, units may bear substantial losses. . . . It will often seem to the subordinates that they are not capable of fulfilling the combat task. . . . In reality, however, the enemy, too, will have been put into an extremely difficult position. . . . In such a situation, that side will obtain success which shows courage, will,

and stubbornness. . . ."[15] In one variant with a starting point familiar from the preceding section, warring sides having quickly expended their stocks of nuclear weapons and incapable of producing them in the course of the war, will solve operational-strategic tasks with conventional means only. Then differences in dedication, *organizovannost'*, and skill may decide the outcome. Surprise in operations will be obtained by secrecy and rapidity of regrouping, the skillful and rapid overcoming of zones of contamination and destruction.

The side superior in such operations, the Authorities suggest, will be the Soviets. High performance, for them, comes "not by itself" but from high preparation: are the Soviet forces, in many ways, not more oriented toward nuclear war than their Western counterparts?

* * * * * * * *

"As a result of the broad employment of nuclear weapons," explains a leading analyst (in one of those unexpected passages that furnish relief for the patient reader of Soviet literature denying disagreeable probabilities), "both sides will bear substantial losses."[16] Indeed, after the exchange of massed nuclear strikes, the losses in troops may be so considerable that the bringing in of supplementary forces will in the best case only partially succeed in reestablishing the units' personnel level; it may even happen that organized combat will cease for some time.

Yet this will not be the end of the war; for the opposing coalitions have a considerable potential for replacing their losses. Both sides, one predicts, will immediately start working toward reestablishing the combat capability of troops that have been subjected to large nuclear strikes, so as to allow the continuation of the offensive, first with small forces in particularly accessible directions and subsequently with main forces.

That is, there will be what one might call a Restoration Race. The side that wins this race, wins the war. In the Civil War, according to the Soviet commander-in-chief, "the rapidity of the reestablishment of units which had been crushed was the principal condition for success in further combat."[17] In nuclear war, "superiority" will "be attained by the *rapid* reestablishment of the combat capacity of the troops subjected to nuclear strikes."[18] "If the results of applying nuclear weapons have been roughly the same on both sides," foresees a leading analyst, "forestalling the enemy in inflicting strikes by tanks and motorized infantry" will "frequently decide the issue of combat."[19]

Other things being equal, the Restoration Race is won by the side

entering it with the larger conventional reserves (see above). Because after the missile nuclear strikes it will be necessary to crush the enemy's conventional forces and to occupy his territory, and because these tasks must be done primarily by ground forces, superiority, one may say, will remain with the side that will have preserved reserves.

* * * * * * *

As the Restoration Race proceeds, so does the Race for the Prevention of the Enemy's Restoration.

If both the pertinent resources of the two sides and what one might call their combat production functions—the transformation of these resources into combat actions—have been similarly depleted and degraded by the initial period of nuclear war, one effort of each side—so a calculation of the Authorities seems to run—is to utilize the scarce time during which the enemy's combat production function has not yet been restored to deplete his resources further.

It is during this precious period that it is possible *rapidly* to inflict losses on the enemy which cannot be made good. "The [conventional] strike [following upon one with theater nuclear weapons] must," an analyst points out, "be delivered before the enemy regains his spirits and brings himself back into working order."[20] "Insofar as nuclear strikes have become the main means for defeating the enemy," a general officer explains, "the basic objective of maneuver consists in completing the enemy's defeat . . . before he can reestablish combat capability and draw fresh forces and means from reserves."[21] The point is "not to give the defense the possibility of reestablishing its impaired system of fire and cooperation [of the various forces]."[22]

On the other hand, "if the results of a nuclear strike . . . [are] not utilized, the enemy will recover quickly."[23] Hence—in accord with a disposition with which we are familiar (Chapter II)—"the delivery upon him of . . . [nuclear] fire must be concluded . . . by swift and strong attack by the troops."[24]

The goal is to *outstrip* the enemy in utilizing the results of nuclear strikes, the prize victory. "That side which *first* began utilizing . . . [the] results [of nuclear strikes] will know how to impose its will on the enemy who has not yet fully brought himself back into order after nuclear strikes. . . ."[25] It is by "rapidity in utilizing the results of suppressing the enemy with [nuclear] firepower,"[26] through "the swiftest utilization of the results of nuclear strikes,"[27] that one is victorious.

Beyond utilizing the period during which the enemy's combat production function remains degraded from nuclear strikes for the

purpose of further depleting him, one may, in this as in any other mode of combat (see Chapter VI), set oneself the aim of delaying or altogether preventing the restoration of that function by the enemy. One must exercise a continuous pressure on him "in order that he not succeed in coming to his senses," which will in turn prevent him from "reestablishing a system of fire and leadership" so as to "liquidate the effects of nuclear strikes."[28]

And thus one may still win by "military art" even where the levels of damage inflicted by the two sides on each other with nuclear weapons early in the war are high and equal.

This perspective is, I would judge, applicable to strategic nuclear war also.

Preemption?

The High Command's urge to "forestall" an enemy's attack (Chapter IV) applies to the supreme attack they envisage, a large U.S. strategic nuclear strike.

The Authorities' misgivings about a Soviet propensity to let oneself be surprised when struck massively are, of course, nourished by black June 21, 1941. For almost a quarter of a century the Party had stressed the imminence of an attack upon it, ringing the alarm on occasions—for example, with regard to Britain in 1927—when observers could find little basis for dramatic forecasts. But when the assault finally came from a regime which, to most outsiders, seemed more prone to do it than any other potential enemy of Moscow since the end of the "interventions," the Politburo *was* surprised: never again!

The "Safeguard" antiballistic missile system appeared in the United States as a defensive means against a Soviet attack. But the strength of the Soviet aspiration to forestall an enemy's attack made it easy to believe, or pretend, that it was an American countermeasure against being forestalled. "For the aggressors," explains an officer, "the principal instrument for attaining 'superiority' . . . is the creation of weapons ensuring 'the invulnerability' of the bases of offensive actions."[29] (The wicked purpose commands quotation marks around "invulnerability.")

While the U.S. posture has for so long been influenced by calculations tending to show that it would, all things considered, be preferable to "ride out" an attack rather than to attempt to preempt it, there seems to be among the Authorities a disposition to take the

opposite for granted. Have the feasibility and productivity of forestalling not risen from the First to the Second World War, from that war to contemporary conventional war, and from that to theater nuclear war? Surely forestalling will be even more advantageous in strategic war. "In the face of an enemy . . . pinning his hope on a first [nuclear] strike," a defensive strategy, so a crucial finding runs, "means subjecting the country and its armed forces to nuclear strikes."[30] The truth of this statement is indeed incontrovertible, but, alas, only because it follows from the meanings of the words uttered. The authors, however, may apply the assurance thus acquired on the cheap to a matter of the real world about which they desire to be certain—that it never pays to ride out an attack—perhaps just because obscure feelings drive them in a dreaded and opposite direction.

The Authorities aspire to more than avoiding being sitting ducks for the attacker, which launch-on-warning procures; they aim at destroying the attacker upon discerning that he is about to go; before he *does* go.

But how to become informed of the enemy's intent?

One attempts, or achieves, or pretends the conviction that there is no difference between strategic nuclear war and conventional conflict where, in the War, for instance, "the most important condition for the successful repulse of enemy counterattacks"—and surely often a feasible one—"was the timely discovery of their preparations." In fact, "the experience of the War has shown that, where an uninterrupted and active intelligence was skillfully conducted," and where thereby the calculation of the enemy was discovered in good time, "our troops usually were successful."[31] In the same vein, the timely discovery of the enemy's preparation for *strategic* attack is said to play an exceptionally important role; it appears to be, in suggestion at least, feasible. A high authority discerns "the chief problem" of the future war to be "the working out of procedures for the disruption of the aggressive intentions of the enemy by a timely delivery on him of a crushing strike."[32] Observing that "in contemporary conditions the number of tasks set before intelligence about the enemy has noticeably increased," an analyst proceeds to illustrate thus: "There appeared such important tasks as the discovery of the preparations made by the enemy for applying weapons of mass destruction. . . ."[33] If a task of such importance has not yet been "solved," its "solution" can surely not be far off! One may, indeed, inch closer to the affirmation that it has already been accomplished with the help of unnamed military specialists, who are said to observe that in the course of preparations for war, the aggressor will have to execute a series of measures, again

unnamed, which should not remain unobserved. Even when a phase of overt crisis prior to the outbreak of war is lacking, surprise, one will say, can be prevented by the active conduct of intelligence. "Tactical intelligence," it is flatly declared, "has the *task* . . . above all, of disclosing in good time the preparation of the enemy for a nuclear strike";[34] so does, it seems implied, strategic intelligence.

The difficult allegation of one's capacity to destroy the imminent aggressor *prior* to his launch of weapons may be followed by the easy assertion of one's ability to prevent the destruction of one's own force through launch *under* attack; the stress on the latter seems to express doubt in the former. "Contemporary means of intelligence," one reads, "are capable of uncovering in good time a substantial part of the enemy's preparation for nuclear attack. . . ." And then destroy his delivery vehicles before launch? No; rather, "contemporary means of intelligence" are also "capable," as indeed they are, "of ascertaining . . . in the first minutes a mass launch of the aggressor's missiles and aircraft"; this, in turn, furnishes "possibilities of not permitting a surprise attack of the aggressor," even "of delivering nuclear strikes on him in good time"[35]—though (and it is this the reader is expected to overlook) in time not good enough to prevent the enemy missiles from falling on their ground-zeros, and also in time not of one's own choosing.

* * * * * * *

The Authorities' *urge* to preempt would hardly make them *do* so if calculations were to present such conduct as *highly* disadvantageous; their extreme public stance is probably intended for deterrence only (see below). Still, that urge will make them exacting in asking for evidence favoring a distasteful and anguishing waiting to be struck, when the expectation of war is high.

Nonetheless, I believe that the Soviets are less divided than we about launching under attack—which might in part *explain their more favorable attitude toward fixed land-based missiles.*

They would then also *expect us to launch under attack.* Thus *they are not apt to attribute to themselves for the early 1980s the advantage that we often assign to them.*

Suppose, however, that they forecast that Minuteman would be waiting for them to be destroyed. In a frequent Western scenario, that act would be a means for compelling the President not to counteract a Soviet move against Japan and/or China and/or the Middle East and/or Western Europe, on pain of the Soviets striking nonnuclear targets

in the United States. Suppose they would consider exercising such compellence by striking *a few* such targets in the first place. I do not see why they would assign less compelling power to that move than to the strike against Minuteman.

If Any Nuclear Weapon, then All?

One encounters unmitigated expressions of the classic stance I allude to in the title of this section. One characteristic feature, it is said, of a war in which strategic weapons are employed will be the unlimited use of nuclear weapons.

Why is this rise in the nuclear level of a nuclear war, from just above zero (if that were the beginning) to the maximum, going to occur in *every* case? If one looks more closely at the pertinent texts, one discovers suggestions that this famous point expresses a desire to maximize deterrence more than a forecast—not to speak of a resolve.

Mechanisms of escalation are not described; instead, there is the sheer assertion that "if nuclear powers are drawn into a war, it *will inevitably grow* into general nuclear war."[36]

But, increasingly, "inevitability" is replaced by a probability falling short of unity. "Even if a conflict begins with a strike on a few . . . military objectives," one will say, "it will . . . quickly transform itself into general war, *incapable of* 'flexible regulation.' " However, by virtue of the words replaced by ellipsis dots, it will do so only "most likely."[37] Given the fact that "nuclear war has its own *law-governed patterns,*" will an analyst predict that, once "a limited exchange of strikes has begun," the war is bound to "reach unlimited proportions"? No, only that it "can" do so,[38] with which nobody would disagree.

When human actors replace *zakonomernost'* (conformity with a law of science) as agents of escalation, it is only the enemy who is accorded that role (to be sure, a disreputable one; but I wonder whether there is not more to it than that). When one says about "the nuclear threshold" that it is "the moment of transition to the unlimited employment of strategic nuclear means," it is a Western thesis that one pretends to describe.

More particularly, it is the losing enemy who will thus lash out in his agony. The point may be put politely in a publication intended also for the opponent: "Many U.S. researchers," it is recalled, "point out that it is very dangerous to count on the 'rationality' of the decision adopted by the sides during an exchange of 'limited' nuclear strikes."[39]

The most dangerous period in the war, one may say less considerately, will be that in which the threat of crushing the aggressor's armed forces becomes apparent, and when he therefore goes over to unlimited employment of the higher arsenal of nuclear means.

It is thus not the Soviets who decide to go all out, perhaps not only because saying so would be admitting to something that others might find questionable. After all, it is *we* who have been talking about the "all-out strike" or the "assured destruction attack" without indicating objectives for which they would be cost-minimizing means. In contrast, the Soviets force themselves to *tseleustremlennost'*, aim-directedness (Chapter VI). They are intent on not ever abandoning the stance, in Khrushchev's exclamation, of "always calculate, calculate, calculate!"

The point endlessly repeated in public that one ought not consider less than all-out employment of strategic nuclear weapons in case they are used, because doing so is attempting to make strategic nuclear war *less devastating*—that point is not serious. The Authorities' orientation toward that kind of war, as well as any other, pursues precisely that objective (see below.)

No single Soviet penchant considered in the preceding pages goes counter to the use of some weapons to induce in the target a forecast of more unless he complies. (In June 1941 Stalin's behavior was oriented on the forecast that a German attack would be preceded by an ultimatum, the acceptance of which could avert it; Khrushchev, in October 1962, seems to have entertained a similar belief, which turned out to be correct.)

The Soviets do not talk seriously about strategic nuclear war in public.

Taking Deterrence Seriously

Until recent years, Western analysts and policymakers have been advising people concerned with nuclear weapons not to forget a fundamental distinction. First, there are the nuclear strikes that we now insist we will launch if the Soviets attack. Second, there are those that we will then launch. The two are not the same. Anybody who forgets the difference flunks the course.

What we seem to have overlooked is that, by common sense, the utility of the difference might depend on hiding it: on trying to make the other side believe that what we are now threatening, so as to make it *sit still* ("deterrence"), is exactly what we will be doing if it moves ("war-fighting").

As in a few other ways, the Kremlin is in this regard more *serioznyi* than we. It is perhaps just because the Soviets are so interested in the distinction between deterrence and war-fighting that they have kept silent about it. The war not being yet begun, this is the hour of deterrence: deterrence by the prospect of a maximum initial strike, of preemption, and of the none-or-all character of nuclear war. Once the war is on, the Authorities may adopt that "controlled" conduct about which the West (in a possible Soviet estimate) is now so prematurely chattering.

Preparing for Strategic Nuclear War

Just because damage from strategic nuclear war is likely to be so high, one should make a maximum effort to limit that damage, as well as to procure (unlikely as it may be) gain from the outcome of such a war. That seems to be, as has often been surmised, the attitude in the Kremlin—an attitude to which those who hold it probably do not even conceive a "serious" alternative. To use a Western word, every level of damage appears "acceptable" if it cannot be reduced, even one *bordering* on "annihilation"—and, not *being* that, radically *different* from it. Conversely, even a modest level of damage is "unacceptable" if it can be avoided.

Other things being equal, the higher the Soviet nuclear posture, the Kremlin seems to forecast, the lower (though probably still very high) the Soviet damage from strategic nuclear war and the less bad its outcome (for instance, the better the initial postwar posture). To the Kremlin the marginal productivity of nuclear outlays, in the range envisaged, remains substantially above zero (see above, on counterforce orientation).

This reaction leaves unanswered the question: if a certain forward move entails a certain probability of strategic nuclear war, how large must be the averted loss versus the gain from the intended move to make the Kremlin adopt that course? In my guess, just as the Politburo is *much prepared for war* in the sense described in the preceding paragraphs, it is *little prepared for war* in the sense discussed at present. Very high estimates of gain or (above all, given the magnitude of risks) of averted loss would be required to make Moscow initiate a course of action predicted to make strategic nuclear war less improbable.

To illustrate by a scenario current at the time of writing: The Politburo is choosing between undertaking major domestic changes either in the early 1980s, without major advances abroad, or in the

later 1980s, after "cleaning up the international environment." [40] The domestic cost of "reforms" in the latter mode is smaller than in the former—but in that second case there is the cost increment of a certain probability of strategic nuclear war. Which will they choose? Possibly, it is proposed, the risk of war; the avoidance of war, I would surmise. Similarly, suppose that the Politburo perceives a choice between (1) improving its external position in the 1980s and thereby reducing the chance of being attacked in the 1980s (as well as improving its prospects if then attacked), but incurring a risk of strategic nuclear war, and (2) refusing that risk: which will it choose? For Henry Kissinger, perhaps the first;[41] in my belief, the second.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Sokolovskii, 350. Emphasis added.
2. Ibid., 235.
3. Ibid., 362. Emphasis added.
4. Sokolovskii, 255.
5. Ibid., 359.
6. Sokolovskii, 245. Emphasis added.
7. Ibid., 247.
8. Ibid., 248.
9. Savkin, 233.
10. Ibid., 332.
11. Sokolovskii, 355.
12. Ibid., 248.
13. Lomov, 7.
14. Reznichenko, 263.
15. Lt. Gen. V. Ivanov, *VV*, 1975, no. 3, 35.
16. Savkin, 334.
17. S. S. Kamenev, 1922, in Kadishev, 1965, 150.
18. Babadzhanyan, 1970, 257. Emphasis added.
19. Savkin, 334–335.
20. Babadzhanyan, 1970, 200.
21. Maj. Gen. A. Ryazanskii, *VV*, 1969, No. 6, 34.
22. Reznichenko, 282.
23. Loza, 31.
24. Ibid.
25. Savkin, 335. Emphasis added.
26. Sidorenko, 24.
27. Loza, 118.
28. Sidorenko, 90. See also Reznichenko, 258.
29. Col. N. Ponomarev, *KVS*, 1971, no. 13, 16.
30. A. S. Milovidov and V. G. Kozlov, eds., *The Philosophical Heritage of V. I. Lenin and the Problems of Contemporary War*, Moscow, 1972.
31. Radzievskii, 1974, 104.

32. Sokolovskii, 255.
33. Lomov, 156.
34. Maj. Gen. F. Dredasov, *KZ*, August 2, 1979.
35. Sokolovskii, 337.
36. Sokolovskii, 236.
37. M. S. Milshtein and L. S. Semeiko, *SSA*, 1974, 10. Emphasis added.
38. L. Semeiko, *KZ*, April 8, 1975. Emphasis added.
39. M. A. Milshtein and L. S. Semeiko, *SSLA*, 1974, no. 11, JPRS translation, 9.
40. Henry Kissinger, *U. S. News and World Report*, November 19, 1979.
41. *The Economist*, February 3, 1979.

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KVS	*Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil'* (The Communist of the Armed Forces).
KZ	*Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star).
VIZh	*Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (Military Historical Journal).
VV	*Voennyi Vestnik* (Military Herald).

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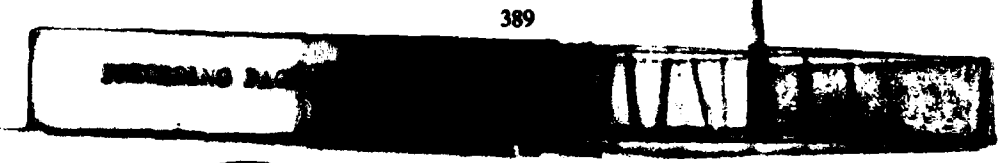
INDEX

Accumulation, in successive strikes, 45
Activeness, 53; of defense, 242; and success in battle, 206–207; victory for highest degree of, 233
Aimlessness, dangers of, 309–311
Air attack, artillery and, 295–296
Air defense in Soviet strategic posture, 367–368
Aktivnost'. *See* Activeness
Ammunition, expenditure of, 349–350
Annihilation: defensive action in, 242–243; and encirclement, 228–230
Antiballistic missile systems, 374
Antisubmarine warfare, 357
Anxiety, 208; and haste, 121–122
Artillery: and air attack, 295–296; in frontal attack, 219–220; and infantry, 357–358; in infantry/tank attack, 57–59; late with regard to infantry, 291; and need for competent intelligence, 156–157; Soviet and U.S. tactics compared, 349; utilizing maximum distant position, 28
Attack: continuing in same places, 193–195; entrapping oneself in own encirclement, 216; evaluating chances of success, 211–212; as a feint, 217; flank and rear vs. frontal, 218–219; frontal, 216–220; insisting on in face of failure, 214; preference for offensive, 205–208; resolving on risky, 212–213; seeking high position for operations, 157; speeds of, 130–131

Bestel'nost'. *See* Aimlessness
Boasting, 159; as replacement for work, 10
Boldness, and certainty, 6
Booty, 47
Boredom, 18
Breathing spells, 52–53, 63, 66, 70
Bridgeheads, 190; and delay, 98

C³I, 355–356
Calmness, need for, 93–94
Casualties. *See* Losses
Caution, overcautiousness and, 28
Certainty, need for feelings of, 6
Chemical strikes, 124
China, 376
Cities, use of large forces in seizing, 38
Civil War, 52, 372
Coalition, splitting enemy government, 302–303
Cohesion: and coordination of efforts, 273–299; degrading the enemy's, 351; of enemy, 299–303; and insufficient communication, 277–285; and trust, 274–275
Combat: modifying modes of, 180; skill in, 348–350
Command-control-communication-intelligence (C³I), 355–356
Commanding officers: and "losing one's bearings," 330–348; need to foresee future events, 345–346; need for evenness in, 322–325; unconcerned about orders, 11. *See also* Orders
Commands: changing, 325–328; im-



Commands (*cont.*)
portance of singleness of, 302; and minimizing losses, 320–321; need for brevity in, 112–113, 319–320; need for calmness in, 322–323. *See also* Orders
Communication: cohesive efforts and insufficient, 275–276, 277–285; renouncing, 279. *See also* Intelligence
Complacency, 159; and success, 168–175
Comradeship, 288, 297–298
Concentration of forces, 41, 42–43. *See also* Massing
Confidence, seen as indifference, 3
Cooperation, 283–289
Coordination: lack of, 32; space and, 289–293; time and, 289–292; underestimating obstacles and lack of, 292
Cost, indifference to minimizing, 319
Counterattack, in defensive action, 244–245, 247
Countermeasures, speed of offensive and, 128–129
Counteroffensives, 241; Stalin on, 259
Creativeness, in increasing speed, 125

Danger: and ability to calculate, 352; as cause of inaction, 25; of loss of bearings, 333
Decisionmaking: based on past decisions, 342; effect of losing one's bearings, 330–348; foreseeing future events, 345–346; modifying previous decisions, 179–191; need for rapid, 132–136; need for sufficient time in, 119–121; vacillation in, 6, 325–330. *See also* Indecisiveness; Orders
Decisions: need to follow through on, 6–16; on the impossible, 11
Defeat, as wages of waiting, 231
Defensive action: appropriateness of, 231–237; aversion to, 237–252; benefits from, 245–247; counterattack in, 244–245, 247; defeat acceptable in, 260; disrupting impending attack, 232–233; mobile, 261–262
Delay: disposition to, 94; justification of need for, 96; nuclear war and aversion to, 370
Deterrence, 376, 378–379
Discipline: and idleness, 21; inaction in carrying out, 8
Dishonesty, in enhancing estimates, 176–179
Distant battle, 207
Doctrine, going against established, 229–230
Doubts, as cause of vacillation, 6

Emotions: and the capacity to calculate, 321–323; and losing one's bearings, 330–348. *See also* Anxiety; Fear; Moods
Encirclement: and annihilation, 228–230; belief and reduced performance, 224–226; difficulty of renouncing, 229–230; not needed in piecemeal destruction, 302; retreat to avoid, 254; stubbornness and, 261
Enemy: degrading his capacity to calculate, 348–358; despising the, 164–168; disarming the, 368, 369; knowing the, 293; need to study, 159; reducing the cohesiveness of, 299–303; splitting the, 299–303; underestimating the, 164–168, 173, 184–185, 234, 311–312; utilizing his temporary degradation, 356–358
Environment, nuclear war and degraded, 371
Equipment, knowing potential of, 152–153
Errors. *See* Mistakes
Evenness, of resource distribution, 40–43
Exercises: need for preparation, 145–151; preference for offensive in, 205–206. *See also* Training
"Eyewash," 175–179

Failure, root of Soviet, 173
Fatigue, as reason for interrupted action, 64–65

Fear: as cause of interrupted action, 58; of changing initial plans, 185–186; of making a mistake, 133; the offensive and overcoming, 207–208; sureness and, 330; of taking action without orders from above, 135–136
Feeling, danger of, 93. *See also* Emotions
"Fire bag," luring enemy into, 264
Fire support, need for uninterrupted, 57–58
Firing while moving, 55–56
First strikes, 230–237; in nuclear war, 375–376
Flank and rear attack vs. frontal, 218–219
Forces, number of, 348–350, 372
Fragmentation, and simultaneity, 33–34
Fragmenting the enemy, 299–303
Frontal attack, 216–220
Fronts, importance of determiining main, 42–43

Goal, necessary pursuit of, 311
Governments, splitting coalition of enemy, 302–303

Halts. *See* Interrupted action
Haste, warding off slowness by, 119–122
Heights, importance in positioning for operations, 157
Helicopters, 183
High action: in combatting inaction, 26–31; masses of bodies and fire in, 29–31

Idleness, 16–21, 49
Illness no excuse for inaction, 13–16
Imagining enemy retreat, 215
Imperturbability, as excellence, 322–323
Improvisation, need to avoid, 145–151
Inaction: caused by danger, 25; caused by moods, 2–3; caused by not following through on decisions, 6–16; combatting with high action, 26–31;
Inaction (*cont.*)
at critical moment, 25; depressed, 2–3; idleness and, 16–21; and importance of uninterrupted action, 46–75; indecisiveness and, 5–6; indifference and, 3–5; insufficient simultaneity and, 31–34; intermittence and, 46–75; low levels of action in war, 21–26; provoked by loss of bearings, 331; responding with, 230–237; "running in place," 49–50; scattering forces and, 34–40; suspicion of, 1–2; warding off, 1–75; as wasted opportunity, 25–26; wasting time, 16–21
Indecisiveness: as cause of inaction, 5–6; caused by losing one's bearings, 331; *See also* Decision-making
Indeterminateness, danger of, 312–316
Indifference: about fulfilling orders, 11; as cause of inaction, 3–5; and listlessness in action, 20–21
Infantry: and artillery, 357–358; and fire support, 57–58; in frontal attack, 220–221; going it alone, 294–295; lateness in, 291; in nuclear war, 372; and tanks in simultaneous action, 33
Infiltration, as mode of combat, 299–300
Information. *See* Communication; Intelligence
Initial strike, importance of, 43–44, 46
Intelligence, 148; decisions and lack of information, 135; depriving enemy of, 352–353; importance of uninterrupted, 73–75; lateness in receiving, 108; need for, 154–159; in strategic nuclear war, 375–376. *See also* Communication
Intermittence, and inaction, 47–75
Interrupted action: justification for, 59–66. *See also* Uninterruptedness

Japan, 376

Khrushchev, Nikita, 378

Lateness: of attack, 94–95; and insufficient coordination, 289–292
Leadership, 171; need for aim-directedness, 311; quality of uninterruptedness, 72. *See also* Commanding officers; Commands; Orders
Listlessness, 20–21
Losses: and aversion to retreat, 260; indifference to in frontal attack, 217–218, 219, 220–221; lack of preparation and, 148; massing forces/means and, 39; minimizing, 320–321; and morale, 39; speed and, 128, 129, 130–131; in strategic nuclear war, 371, 372, 379–380
Loss of bearings, 330–348, 350, 357

Massing, 41, 42–43, 46; and avoidance of protractedness, 93; and speed of advances, 125; strategic weapons, 369
Massirovanie. *See* Massing
Meetings, conferences, and inaction, 8–10
Middle East, 376
Minuteman, 376, 377
Missile-nuclear strikes, 367–368, 369
Missiles, fixed land-based, 376
Missions, changes in, 325–329
Mistakes: better than indecision, 6; fear of making, 133; indifference provoked by, 4; loss of bearings and, 331, 332; repeating, 215–216
Mobile defense, 261–262
Moods: and ability to reason, 321–323; inaction derived from, 2–3; unevenness of conduct caused by, 324–325
Morale, effect of going over to defense, 243. *See also* Comradeship
Mountain fighting, speed in, 132

Naval actions: and available decision time, 136; nuclear, 368
Near battle, 207
Nereshitel'nost'. *See* Indecisiveness
Night fighting: benefits of, 56–57; daytime norms in, 114–115
Norms: exceeding established, 113–114; fulfillment of, 120–121
Nuclear conditions, need for speed in, 131
Nuclear missile strikes, 367–368, 369
Nuclear strikes, 124; "limited," 377
Nuclear war: counterforce in, 367–368, 369; decision to go all out, 377–378; intelligence in, 375–376; preparing for, 379–380; strategic, 367–380

Obligations, fulfilling, 4, 7, 8–10
Obstacles: exalting the self, 159–164; "eyewash," 175–179; fighting the neglect of, 145–197; hiding the negative, 175–179; impossible demands, 161–163; modifying plans, 179–191; persisting in conduct that has failed, 191–197; underestimating, 292
Odnovremennost'. *See* Simultaneity
Offensive action: based on enemy retreat, 215; defensive vs., 237–252; difficulty of, 207; and fear of encirclement, 224–226; heightening speed of attack, 125; importance of time in, 92–93; inappropriate, 208–221; merely pushing the enemy back, 227–230; preference for, 205–208; taking the posture of, 214–215
Orders: ambiguity in, 313; blindly following, 182; concealing violation of, 176; delayed, 108–109; emotions influencing, 321–323; importance of "trifles," 315–316; impossible, 117–119; imprecise, 313–315; incomplete, 312; need for realistic, 160–161; not carrying through on, 6–16; vacillation in, 325–330. *See also* Commanding officers, Commands

Passivity (*passivnost'*): and defensive action, 243; warding off, 205–265. *See also* Inaction
Pauses. *See* Interrupted action

Perfection, absence of indifference as requirement for, 5
Persistence, in conduct that has failed, 191–197
Planning: lack of attention to physical environment in, 153–154; modifying plans when needed, 179–191
Plans: expecting the unexpected, 345–348; incomplete, 312; thorough calculation of, 316–321. *See also* Orders
Power, feeling of, 191.
Preemption: appropriateness of, 231–237; in nuclear war, 374–377
Premature action, danger of, 93–94
Procrastination, 87. *See also* Slowness; Wasting time
Promises: carrying through on, 6–16; that remain on paper, 8–10
Protection, speed as means of, 130–131
Protractedness, 33
Psychological aspects of war. *See* Anxiety; Fear; Moods
Psychology, in understanding enemy, 159
Punctuality, success and, 95
Punishment, not carried out, 8
Pursuit, 351; importance of speed in, 127; need for uninterruptedness in, 72–73

Quality, sacrificed by haste, 119–121

Race for Prevention of Enemy's Restoration, 373–374
Radiation, speed and levels of, 126
Rapidity: at any price, 119–121; in nuclear war, 373
Ravnomernost'. *See* Evenness
Reasoning, and mood, 321–323
Regrouping, 116, 328–329; justified, 59–60; unnecessary, 47–48, 73
Reinforcements: allowed by time, 116; delay and, 98
Replacements, in uninterrupted action, 57
Reserves: in nuclear war, 372–373; role in missile-nuclear war, 370, 371
Resources, efficient use of, 348–351
Responsibility: feelings of, 27; for an assignment. *See also* Commanding officers
Rest: during combat, 64–65; in uninterrupted action, 69–70
Restoration Race, 372–373
Retreat: fear of, 252–265; and force ratio, 258; for gain, 258; imagining enemy, 215; luring enemy into "fire bag," 264–265; as means to deceive, 263–264; offensive and enemy, 215; as "strategic defense," 259–260; to avoid destruction, 261
River crossings, 53, 349
Routines, loss of bearings and need for, 331
"Running in place," 49–50, 55, 123–126

"Safeguard" antiballistic missile system, 374
Scattering, 41; forces among objectives, 34–40
Scheduling, and lateness, 110
Simultaneity: insufficient, 31–34; and maximum swiftness, 115; vs. successiveness, 46
Single strike, 370
Slazhennost'. *See* Cohesion
Sleep, need for, 64–66
Slowness: being slow in acting, 107–122; being slow to act, 93–107; caused by loss of bearings, 331, 337–339; danger of premature action, 93–94; excuses for, 124; in making decisions, 132–136; running in place, 123–136; and uninterruptedness, 53; warding off, 87–136; wasting time and, 87–93
Sokolovskii, V. D., 252, 369–370
Space, insufficient coordination and, 288–289
Speed: in advancing, 49–50; danger of lack of, 107–132; in decisionmaking, 132–136; economy and, 128; enemy's error in target location and, 131; excessive, 131–132; how it promotes victory, 128–131; im-

Speed (*cont.*)
portance of, 123–132; justifying reduction of, 126; maximizing attack, 125; in mountains, 132; sacrificing, 126; survival and, 130; victory and, 127–132
Spontaneity, 21
Stalin, I. V., 67, 110, 162–163, 191, 192, 209, 212, 215, 230–231, 254, 259, 289, 378
"Storming," in training exercises, 97
Strategic nuclear war, 367–380. *See also* Nuclear war
Strategic reserves, in high action offense, 30
Strategic Rocket Forces, 367
Strength, overestimation of, 162–163
Strikes: importance of initial, 43–44, 46; major or single, 42; nuclear or chemical, 124; surprising enemy by successive, 45–46
Striking first, 230–237
Stubbornness, 261; in going through with initial plan, 179–190, 196; in nuclear war, 371–372
Stunning, 350–354
Submarines: atomic, 368; preemptive action, 234–235
Success: complacency and, 168–175; overestimating, 176–179
Successiveness of strikes, 45–46
Sureness, need for, 330
Surprise, 357; achieved by delay, 67; achieved by rapid action, 116–117; aim of, 164; attack from various directions, 301–302; and enemy's ability to calculate, 352–354; need for changing approach, 343; need for new procedures, 166; in nuclear war, 372; speed and, 128; in strategic nuclear strike, 374, 376; surmounting nature as means of, 28; and uninterrupted action, 54, 68
Swiftness: concern with need for, 87–136; and frontal attack, 216–217

Tanks: air, artillery, and, 33; antitank weapons, 154, 155, 183; and fire support, 57–58; in frontal attack, 220, 221; going it alone, 293–294; and infantry in simultaneous action, 33; in nuclear war, 372; training and, 148
Terrain: lack of attention to, 153–154; surprise and surmounting effects of, 29
Time: exceeding established norms, 113–114; failure to set boundaries on, 312–313; gaining, 89, 92; importance in nuclear war, 370; importance in offensive operation, 92–93; indifference to, 110–111; insufficient coordination and, 289–292; loss of bearings and pressure of, 332; making up, 96–97, 122; need to consider in planning, 317–318; orders and insufficient, 117–119; surprise and pressure of, 353–354; value of, 87–93. *See also* Wasting time
Toptat'sya na meste. *See* Running in place
Training: idleness and, 16–20; making up time in, 97; need for unexpected events to occur in, 342–343; provision for changes in simulated battles, 340–341; uninterruptedness of, 70–72; wasting time in, 27. *See also* Exercises

Underestimating the enemy, 164–168, 173, 184–185, 234, 311–312
Unevenness: of conduct, 323–325; within enemy coalition government, 302–303
Unfamiliar conditions: and ability to calculate, 352; and loss of bearings, 335–337
Uninterruptedness: importance of, 46–75; of intelligence, 73–75; of leadership, 72; of pursuit, 72–73; and speed of attack, 125; of training, 70–72; in water crossing, 72
Unreality, in estimating enemy, 311–312

Vacillation, caused by indecision, 6
Victory: and reduction of effort, 171–173; and speed, 127–132

Waiting, for enemy to strike, 230–237
War and Peace, 151
Wasting time, 16–20, 87–93; human nature and, 88; in training, 27; with wordiness, 109. *See also* Idleness
Water crossing, 120; need for uninterruptedness, 72
Weapons, utilizing maximum range of, 28
Weather, surprise and surmounting effects of, 28–29
Western Europe, 376
Wordiness, 109; instead of action, 8–12; need for economy of words, 112–113

Zhukov, Marshal, 62, 161, 164, 183, 191–192, 212, 248–249, 263, 293

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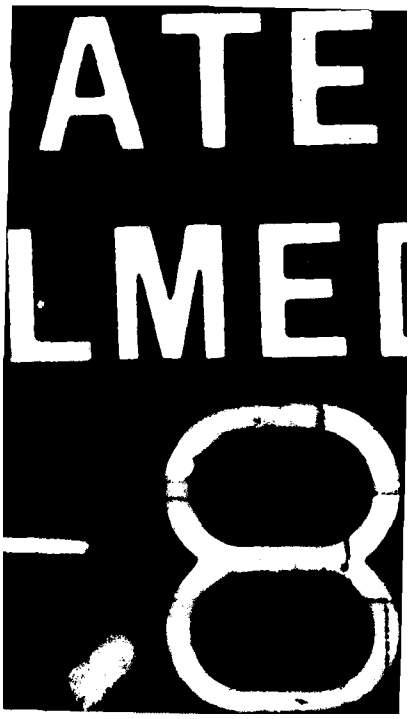
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