

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 15
Number 1 *Parameters* 1985

Article 9

7-4-1985

THE NATURE OF SOVIET OPERATIONAL ART

David M. Glantz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

Glantz, David M.. "THE NATURE OF SOVIET OPERATIONAL ART." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 15, 1 (1985). <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol15/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

THE NATURE OF SOVIET OPERATIONAL ART

by

DAVID M. GLANTZ

© 1985 David M. Glantz

War attracts the attention of all nations, but particularly those whose historical development repeatedly has hinged on it. Few nations have experienced the effects of armed struggle more than the Soviet Union and its historical ancestor, the Great Russian state. The realities of geographic location and the existence of neighbors whose strength or weakness made them either potential threats to Russia's existence or potential victims of Russian expansionism contributed to that long history of warfare. Russia's immense land area and population produced conflicts of vast scope and often epic proportions. Frustrations born of long and bitter wars yielded to Russians and their foes alike a ferocity of combat seldom matched in other wars. These ferocious struggles reinforced the natural Russian penchant for the study of war.

In the 20th century, ideology has provided further impetus for Soviet study of the nature of war and has shaped the form of that study. The dialectic process of Marxism-Leninism recognizes struggle at all levels as an inherent aspect of historical change. Moreover, Marxism's faith in the inherently scientific nature of the dialectic implies that most aspects of man's historical development are subject to scientific investigation. That scientific approach recognizes no distinct gap between past, present, and future. Hence war, as a major manifestation of that development, is a valid and logical area of study. The Soviets have systematized the study of war and have created a distinct hierarchy of terms both to legitimize and, by

creating a frame of reference, to facilitate the scientific investigation of war.

The field of Soviet military science "investigates the objective laws governing armed conflict, and elaborates questions pertaining to the theory of military art, which is the basic component of military science."¹ Military art, the main field of military science, investigates "the theory and practice of engaging in combat, operations, and armed conflict as a whole, with the use of all the resources of the service branches and services of the armed forces, and also support of combat activities in every regard."² Military historical experience provides a context for military art by generalizing past military experience and by serving as another source for the development of military science.

The growing complexity of war in the 20th century has led to the refinement of terminology describing the levels and scope of military art. Thus the Soviets subdivide military art into three component parts: strategy, operational art, and tactics. Each of these components "constitutes an organic entity," and all are interdependent. Components are distinguished from one another according to the "presence of specific peculiarities of conducting armed struggle on different scales."³ Hence each describes a distinct level of warfare measured against such standards as mission, scale, scope, and duration.

Military strategy, the highest level of military art, investigates the nature and laws of armed conflict.⁴ It includes:

- The preparation and conduct of strategic operations for a war as a whole.
- The conditions and character of future war.
- Methods of preparing for and conducting war.
- The types of armed forces and the basis of their strategic use.
- Questions of strategic support of combat operations.
- Leadership.

Strategy is derived from military doctrine, past military experience, and an analysis of contemporary political, economic, and military conditions. (The Soviets define military doctrine as the nation's officially accepted system of scientifically founded views on the nature of wars and the use of armed forces in them.)

Operational art encompasses the theory and practice of preparing and conducting combined and independent operations by large units (fronts, armies) of the armed forces. It occupies an intermediate position between strategy and tactics. "Stemming from strategic requirements, operational art determines methods of preparing for and conducting operations to achieve strategic goals." Operational art in its turn "establishes the task and direction for the development of tactics."⁵ At the lowest level of military art, tactics studies problems relating to the preparation and conduct of combat by subunits (battalions), units (regiments), and formations (divisions) of various types of forces.

The operational level of war emerged as a distinct category of military art in the 20th century as a result of the changing nature of war in the preceding century. Until the 19th century, political and economic realities dictated that each nation possess primarily one army. The issue of victory or defeat in war was settled by the outcome of battles between the two forces. Battles constituted a single large engagement of short duration between relatively small armies on rather limited terrain. In these circumstances, strategy primarily involved the movement of a nation's army against an opposing army. Tactics governed the actual employment of

the army on the battlefield in the presence of the enemy. Thus war, a series of battles, was the object of study for strategy, and battle was the object of study for tactics. Successful battle, resulting in the destruction or incapacitation of the enemy, permitted successful achievement of the strategic goals of the war.

Forces unleashed by the political, social, and economic turmoil of the French Revolution altered the face of war. The use of mass, multiple armies, the economic mobilization of the state for war, and the more unlimited objectives of war—including outright destruction of opposing political, economic, and social systems—complicated traditional methods for analyzing and understanding war. Nineteenth century military theorists recognized and wrestled with those changes. Clausewitz pondered aspects of war hitherto subject to little concern (absolute war, moral elements of war, etc.), while Jomini addressed the complexity of war by describing a new realm of "grand tactics." Technological innovations of the 19th and early 20th centuries facilitated the mobilization and employment of ever larger armies and the application of increased firepower on the battlefield. The development of railroads, the telegraph and telephone, and new weaponry (long-range, rapid-fire artillery; machine guns; magazine rifles; and new

Lieutenant Colonel David M. Glantz is the Director of Soviet Doctrine in the Center for Land Warfare of the US Army War College. He is a graduate of Virginia Military Institute and holds a master's degree in modern European history from the University of North Carolina. He is also a graduate of the Russian Language School and the US Army Institute for Advanced Soviet and East European Studies, and he has taught at the US Military Academy. He has also served with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, Europe, and with the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The author of several studies on Soviet military subjects including the Soviet Manchurian Operation, August 1945, and Soviet airborne forces, he has just completed the first of a series of detailed studies of Soviet offensive operations in World War II.



classes of warships) combined with a "democratization of war" to produce larger wars, fought by multiple mass armies. The Austro-Prussian War, the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Russo-Japanese War, and finally World War I demonstrated this increased scale and complexity of war. Military operations evolved on a grand scale in the form of a series of consecutive and mutually related battles conducted over a protracted period of time. No longer could strategic victory be attained in a single battle, for destruction of but one army would not ensure an end to a war. Strategic goals could now only be achieved by success in operations as a whole.

Soviet theorists maintain that no nation prior to the end of World War I understood the changing nature of war. Thus "bourgeois military science could not evaluate correctly the new phenomenon in the conduct of armed struggle and the armies of almost all governments entered World War I with old views on the methods of its conduct."⁶

A practical manifestation of the growing dilemma of military art was the inability of modern armies in World War I to achieve more than tactical or temporary operational successes on the battlefield. Given the course of World War I, according to Soviet theorists,

objective reality advanced the requirement for the creation of a new branch of military art which would encompass questions of the theory and practice of operations, i.e., operational art. Thus the operational art was a logical consequence of change in the character of armed struggle, reflecting the appearance of its new phenomenon—operations.⁷

The Soviets claim credit for being the first nation to recognize the changing nature of war and the first to adjust their military art to those changes. Thus, "to its credit, Soviet military-theoretical thought, having first succeeded in seeing these tendencies in the development of military affairs, correctly

perceived and revealed the new component part of military art—operation art."⁸ In fact, that perception emerged during the 1920s and 1930s as Soviet military theorists pondered the nature of modern war and the specific puzzles posed by World War I, the most important of which was how to restore mobility and maneuver to the battlefield. Although the distinct field of operational art was not readily apparent to Soviet commanders during the civil war, conditions Soviet commanders experienced in that war gave rise to reflection on matters which would, in the future, become the operational level of war. Soviet employment of limited forces over vast areas of Russia and the relatively unsophisticated weaponry of the combatants gave the war more of a maneuver character. The use of cavalry corps and cavalry armies and the creation of shock groups permitted rapid penetration of thin enemy defenses and exploitation into the operational depth of a defense. In these circumstances it was natural that in the postwar period Soviet theorists would turn their attention to applying the lessons of the civil war to solution of the dilemmas of high-intensity positional war.

During the immediate postwar years, works appeared which sought to redefine the nature of war. Articles by S. S. Kamenev and M. N. Tukhachevsky challenged the importance of one climactic battle and instead emphasized the importance of conducting successive operations. Kamenev, commander of the Red Army from 1919 to 1924, pondered civil war experiences and concluded:

In spite of all victorious fights before the battle, the fate of the campaign will be decided in the very last battle Interim defeats in a campaign, however serious they may be, subsequently will be viewed as "individual episodes." . . . In the warfare of modern large armies, defeat of the enemy results from the sum of continuous and planned victories on all fronts, successfully completed one after another and interconnected in time The uninterrupted conduct of operations is the main condition for victory.⁹

Tukhachevsky, drawing upon his experiences on the Vistula in 1920, concluded that "the impossibility on a modern wide front of destroying the enemy army by one blow forces the achievement of that end by a series of successive operations."¹⁰ By the mid-1920s most theorists accepted the view that army operations would flow continuously from the plans and concepts of the wartime front commander. Of more importance, "the study of successive operations to a great extent created the prerequisites for subsequent development of deep operations."¹¹

Rejection of the concept of a single battle of annihilation and acceptance of the necessity for successive operations focused the attention of theorists on the realm between traditional strategy and tactics, the realm that would become operational art. Slowly terminology evolved and theorists defined the limits of the operational level of war.

In 1926, Tukhachevsky built upon his earlier investigation of successive operations to ponder operations as a whole. He wrote:

Modern tactics are characterized primarily by organization of battle, presuming coordination of various branches of troops. Modern strategy embraces its former meaning, that is the "tactics of a theater of military operations." However, this definition is complicated by the fact that strategy prepares for battle, but it also participates in and influences the course of battle. Modern operations involve the concentration of forces necessary to strike a blow and the inflicting of continual and uninterrupted blows of these forces against the enemy throughout an extremely deep area. The nature of modern weapons and modern battle is such that it is an impossible matter to destroy the enemy's manpower by one blow in a one day battle. Battle in a modern operation stretches out into a series of battles not only along the front but also in depth until that time when either the enemy has been struck by a final annihilating blow or when the offensive forces are exhausted. In that regard, the modern tactics of a theater of military operations are tremen-

dously more complex than those of Napoleon and they are made even more complex by the inescapable condition mentioned above: that the strategic commander cannot personally organize combat.¹²

Tukhachevsky's remarks clearly enunciated the need for further refinement of terminology and set the stage for practical work along these lines.

The following year, a work entitled *Strategy (Strategiya)*, by A. A. Svechin, a former Russian army general staff officer and in 1927 a member of the faculty of the Frunze Academy and General Staff Academy, placed operations in a strategic context. Svechin described strategy as "the art of combining preparations for war and the grouping of operations to achieve aims, put forth in war for the armed forces. Consequently, "strategy decides questions concerning both the use of the armed forces and all resources of the state for the achievement of final military aims."¹³ In essence, strategy dictates the basic lines of conduct for operational art.

Svechin built upon the earlier concept of successive operations to develop a definition of operational art. Thus he said,

Combat actions are not self sufficient but rather are the basic materials from which operations are composed. Only on a very few occasions can one depend on one engagement to secure the final objectives of military actions. Normally, the path to final aims is broken up into a series of operations, . . . subdivided in time, by more or less sizeable pauses, comprising differing territorial sectors of a theater of war and differing sharply as a consequence of different intermediate aims.

This led Svechin to the judgment,

We call the operation that act of war, during which struggling forces, without interruption, are directed into a distinct region of the theater of military operations to achieve distinct intermediate aims. The

operation represents an aggregate of very diverse actions: the compilation of operational plans; material preparations; concentration of forces in jumping off positions; the erection of defensive structures; completion of marches; the conduct of battle by either immediate envelopment or by a preliminary penetration to encircle and destroy enemy units, to force back other forces, and to gain or hold for us designated boundaries or geographical regions.

If strategy dictates the aims of operational art, then operational art similarly affects tactics. Svechin declared,

The material of operational art is tactics and administration: success in the development of an operation depends both on the successful resolution by forces of distinct tactical questions and on the provision to those forces of material supplies Operational art, arising from the aim of the operation, generates a series of tactical missions and establishes a series of tasks for the activity of rear area organs.

Thus, "tactics make the steps from which operational leaps are assembled; strategy points out the path." Svechin's work and the theoretical work of others in the 1920s created the realm of operational art as a new category of military theory.

While successive operations remained as a centerpiece and foundation for the analysis of the operational level of war, industrial backwardness and the lack of a well-developed armaments industry (and auto industry) forced Soviet reliance on basic infantry, artillery, and horse cavalry to conduct major operations. Hence, successful successive operations would develop slowly and would be costly, especially against a better-equipped foe. Consequently, by the late 1920s theorists began to ponder the potential impact of industrial development on military operations. The 1929 Field Regulation injected the concept of future mechanization and motorization into offensive warfare. The regulation established the aim of conducting deep battle (*glubokii boi*) to secure success to the tactical depth of

enemy defenses by simultaneous use of infantry support tanks and long-range-action tanks with infantry, artillery, and aviation support.¹⁴ The 1929 regulation was a statement of intent which could only be implemented once industrialization took place. Stalin's forced collectivization and industrialization of the Soviet Union soon created conditions necessary to translate that intent into reality.

Spurred on by a barrage of written works, the promise of 1929 was quickly realized in regulations and in the Soviet force structure. In February 1933 the Red Army gave official sanction to deep battle in its *Temporary Instructions on the Organization of Deep Battle*. New and more explicit instructions appeared in March 1935, and the *Field Regulation* of 1936 made deep battle and deep operations established tenets of Soviet military art. The concept of deep operations, like its predecessor, successive operations, represented a focal point for Soviet understanding of the operational level of war. The 1936 regulation prepared under the supervision of Tukhachevsky and A. I. Egorov defined the deep operation as:

Simultaneous assault on enemy defenses by aviation and artillery to the depths of the defense, penetration of the tactical zone of the defense by attacking units with widespread use of tank forces, and violent development of tactical success into operational success with the aim of the complete encirclement and destruction of the enemy. The main role is performed by the infantry and the mutual support of all types of forces are organized in its interests.¹⁵

The full articulation of deep operations marked the pinnacle of Soviet operational art in the interwar period, for while the definition of operational art underwent few changes, the dynamism with which theorists investigated operational theory suffered a severe reverse.

The purges of 1937-38 liquidated the generation of officers who gave definition to operational art and who formulated the theory of deep battle.

Tukhachevsky, Egorov, Kamenev, Uborovich, Svechin, and a host of others—the cream of the crop of innovative military theorists—were purged and killed. Inevitably, their ideas and theories fell under a shadow, and those officers who survived the purges were generally conservative and reluctant to embrace the ideas of their fallen predecessors.¹⁶

As the shadows of World War II spread over Europe, the price the Soviet Union and the army paid for the purges became apparent. While Soviet military analysts still used the term “operational” as a framework for analysis, that analysis was thin, and the results of the analysis were acted upon slowly.

Soviet neglect of operational art cost them dearly after June 1941. While still claiming that the war confirmed the correctness of earlier Soviet theories on the preparation and conduct of front and army operations, in a masterful example of understatement the Soviets admit that

commanders and staffs were not fully familiar with all the theories of conducting deep battle and there were shortcomings in the material base that hindered its realization. Thus, during the war it was necessary to reassess and clarify some aspects of preparing and conducting offensive operations and decide anew many questions on the conduct of defensive operations on a strategic and operational scale.¹⁷

Those questions were addressed anew under the immense pressure of combat conditions and as part of a quest for survival. The German attack in June 1941 benefitted from surprise and an only partially prepared Soviet defense. Moreover, Soviet commanders at higher levels displayed an ineptness only partially compensated for by the fervor of junior officers and the stoicism of the hard-pressed troops. Front and army commanders were often unable to construct coherent defenses against German armored thrusts, and they displayed an alarming propensity for launching costly un-

coordinated counterattacks predestined to failure. Looming disaster drove the Soviet High Command to action. Slowly the command structure was purged of inept commanders and the Soviet army sought to reeducate itself on the conduct of war, in particular defense at the operational level. Front commanders and the STAVKA, the headquarters of the High Command, played a major role in this reformation by issuing regulations and directives pertaining to the proper use of forces. Hence STAVKA Directive No. 3 of 10 January 1942 mandated concentration of forces and the use of shock groups to achieve success in offensive operations; STAVKA Order No. 306 in October 1941 required use of single-echelon formations whenever possible to bring maximum force to bear on the Germans; and STAVKA Order No. 325 of 16 October 1942 established guidelines for use of the fledgling tank forces, including operational use of tank and mechanized corps.¹⁸

Growing STAVKA concern for constructive (and necessary) study of all aspects of war, but primarily operational aspects, was evidenced by a STAVKA directive issued on 6 November 1942 entitled *Instructions Concerning the Study and Application of War Experience in Front and Army Staffs*. Declaring that “the timely study, generalization and application of war experience is an important task of all commanders and staffs,” the instructions mandated collection of war experiences by elements of front and army operations sections, stating,

The basic task of these working groups is, under the orders of the chief of staff and under the direct supervision of the chief of operations section, to carry out on a daily basis for the entire command the collection, study and generalization of war experience, and to make timely distribution by various media of the generalizations and conclusions of the study.¹⁹

The General Staff collected and published multiple detailed volumes of war experiences. These provided the basis for innumerable orders issued to field

headquarters concerning the conduct of operations, and also a basis for the Field Regulations of 1942, 1943, and 1944. Paragraph 29-C, chapter 1, part 1, of the 1942 regulation incorporated the requirement to collect war experiences into the duties of the operations staff section.²⁰ The *Field Regulation of 1944*, without specifically resurrecting the early watchword of deep battle, nevertheless stated, "the regulations conceive of tank operations as that of a group of direct support for infantry and cavalry and as an echelon for exploiting successes into the strategic depths with the support of powerful aviation."²¹ The 1944 regulation's concept of battle and its assignment of tasks to units marked the full realization of the aims of the 1936 Field Regulation. A central theme of the regulation was the achievement of tactical penetrations and the exploitation of those penetrations by mobile groups into the operational depths of the defense.

Thus, Soviet operational practices developed and used during the war years found full theoretical expression in the orders, directives, and instructions of the STAVKA and General Staff, and in regulations and military writings. While those practices reflected the spirit of the deep battle theory of the 1930s, the Soviets avoided specific references to deep battle and the creators of deep battle. The renaissance in Soviet military thought during the war years was driven by the reality of war and accomplished only because the specter of military and political collapse forced Stalin to permit it to occur. A primary question in 1945 was whether Stalin would permit that renaissance to continue.

In the immediate postwar years Soviet concern for the operational level of war continued despite the outward appearance of extreme atrophy in Soviet military science. Most general books and articles paid deference to Stalin's role in military science and the universal application of Stalin's permanent operating factors to matters of war. Nevertheless, Soviet military theory developed on the basis of World War II experiences; operational art evolved in logical consequence to that experience; and the armed forces were restructured and reequip-

ped in consonance with the evolving operational art and technological changes.

Although specific reference in Soviet military literature to deep operation was absent, overall offensive concepts still echoed the nature of deep operations. Representative of this trend was a 1947 article on offensive combat which virtually parroted the 1936 and 1944 regulations, stating "offensive combat consists in suppressing the enemy by mighty fire of all means, and a blow in his entire depth of defense, and is conducted by a decisive offensive of the entire combat order."²² A Frunze Academy lesson on rifle corps offensive operations declared that modern offensive operations were characterized "by the decisive nature of the actions, fast pace, great depth and wide and impetuous maneuver." Moreover,

The rapid seizure of the tactical zone of the enemy defense by the large rifle units makes it possible to commit in the penetration the mobile groups (tanks, mechanized and large cavalry units) which carry out, in cooperation with the large rifle units and aviation, the decisive maneuver for the destruction of main enemy groupings.²³

A 1945 article by Lieutenant General Zlobin articulated the role of the front as the premier operational-level organization created to perform both operational and strategic tasks. He described front operations as "a series of army operations executed either simultaneously or successively" and emphasized the deep aspect of operations:

The operational possibilities of these new weapons increased the depth and range of operations; made it possible to split the operational structure of the enemy along the front and in depth into separate isolated pockets and destroy them one by one The ultimate objective of this maneuver is to encircle and defeat the resisting enemy forces in a given direction with the envelopment of the whole depth of his operational organization.²⁴

These, and a host of other theoretical works attested to the fact that operational art

remained a major concern in the postwar Soviet army. Moreover, specific operational techniques still sought the attainment of deep operations, although the terminology itself was avoided for obvious political reasons.

While the Soviets refined their theories for the conduct of operations within the overall context of Stalin's permanent operating factors, the precise definition of operational art remained consistent with those objectives set forth by Svechin in 1927. A 1953 survey of Soviet military art described operational art as a component of military art, interconnected and interrelated with the other components, strategy and tactics. Operational art had the function of "working out the principles of organizing and conducting army and *front* operations . . . in a theater of military operations which most closely correspond to the given stage of war, while governed by the dictates of strategy and the aims of strategy."²⁵

The death of Stalin in 1953 and the growing prospect that future war would be nuclear had an enormous effect on Soviet military thought and the structure of Soviet military forces. Stalin's death permitted Soviet military theorists to strip off the veneer of Stalinist principles which insulated that theory from outside examination and which prevented more active and open discussion of operational questions. It also allowed those theorists to ponder more fully the likelihood and nature of nuclear war. Theoretical debates grew in intensity, culminating in 1960 with full Soviet recognition of the existence of a "revolution in military affairs," a revolution created by prospects that future war would be nuclear. Stalin's death also presaged Zhukov's wholesale reorganization of the Soviet armed forces and the subsequent reorganization of 1960-62 aimed at creating a force capable of fighting and surviving in a nuclear war.

In general terms, the revolution in military affairs did not alter appreciably the definition of operational art. It did signal a de-emphasis of operational art with regard to questions of strategy and, in particular, it evidenced decreased concern for con-

ventional operational techniques and greater concern for strategic nuclear concepts. This shift in emphasis was apparent in the works of V. A. Semenov, V. D. Sokolovsky, and A. A. Stokov, and in the relative decrease in the number of articles analyzing the operational techniques of World War II.

Semenov's definition of operational art echoed definitions of the 1930s, and his cautious approach to nuclear weaponry's impact on operational art characterizes the writings of the late 1950s. While recognizing the existence of atomic weaponry, Semenov played down its effect, stating, "in contemporary conditions the use of weapons of mass destruction in operations can achieve greatest success only in combination with artillery fire and aviation strikes." Moreover, "the use of atomic weapons considerably lessens the requirements for artillery in the conduct of an offensive operation, but that new weapon cannot entirely abolish or replace artillery and aviation, which will play a large role in the course of an operation."²⁶ Semenov warned that the appearance of new weapons always required careful reassessment of operational art, and the development of powerful nuclear weapons made such study essential.

By 1962 that further analysis was complete, and the Soviets accepted that a "revolution" had occurred in military affairs. That "revolution" recognized the preeminence of nuclear weapons in war, elevated the importance of strategy (signified by the establishment of and emphasis on strategic rocket forces), and diminished the importance of operational art. The work most illustrative of this changing emphasis was V. D. Sokolovsky's *Military Strategy (Voennaya Strategiya)*. In it he maintained that "both gigantic military coalitions will deploy massive armies in a future decisive world war; all modern, powerful and long range means of combat, including multi-megaton nuclear-rocket weapons will be used in it on a huge scale; and the most decisive methods of military operations will be used."²⁷ Strategic nuclear forces could decide the outcome of war in themselves without resort to extended ground operations. If

ground operations were required, they would be conducted in close concert with nuclear strikes. Ground forces would exploit the effects of nuclear strikes, defeat enemy forces, and conquer and occupy territory. In this nuclear environment, ground forces played a distinctly secondary role to that of strategic rocket forces. And strategy became more dominant over operational art:

All this shows that the relationship between the role and importance of armed combat waged by forces in direct contact with the enemy in the zone of combat actions, employing simultaneously tactical, operational and strategic means of destruction on the one hand and the role and importance of armed combat waged beyond the confines of this zone by strategic means alone on the other hand has shifted abruptly towards an increase in the role and importance of the latter.²⁸

A. A. Stokov, writing in 1966, noted the increased stature of strategy: "Nuclear-rocket weapons have emerged as strategic means. The arming of large units and formations with them has produced a change in operational art and tactics."²⁹ Specifically, the use of such weapons could achieve strategic results "independently from the conduct of operations and battles (operational art and tactics)." In general war, operational art was only an adjunct to the use of nuclear weapons, although it did regain its importance in "local" wars.

Soviet preoccupation with nuclear war began to erode after the mid-1960s. Although theorists couched their investigation of military art in a clear nuclear context, they began paying increased attention to operational art and operational techniques. Theoretical works such as V. G. Reznichenko's *Tactics*, A. Kh Babadzanyan's *Tanks and Tank Forces*, and A. A. Sidorenko's *The Offensive*, while retaining a strong nuclear context, devoted considerably more attention to operational techniques. Simultaneously, a wave of comprehensive studies began appearing on virtually every aspect of the Soviet army's operational ex-

perience, most of them concentrating on World War II (in particular its later stages).³⁰ As if to keynote these new concerns, the Soviets published an anthology of works written by preeminent prewar military theorists. This volume, entitled *Questions of Strategy and Operational Art in Soviet Military Works (1917-1940)*, signalled the rehabilitation of the purged generation of Tukhachevsky and renewed interest in deep operations and the techniques necessary to achieve it.

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s the importance of operational art has grown, as evidenced by the degree of importance attached to operations in theoretical writings and by the increased focus on theater, front, and army operations, often in a conventional environment.

In carefully chosen words, the Soviets now qualify Sokolovsky's comments on the nature of war, stating:

In nuclear war, if it is unleashed by aggressive countries, simultaneous nuclear strikes on the enemy and skillful exploitation of the results of those strikes is most important. During combat with only conventional weaponry, skillful concentration of superior forces and weaponry is required to deliver blows on selected axes and also rapid dispersal of those forces after fulfillment of the combat missions.³¹

By adding the statement, "further development of army aviation and other mobile means attach to the operation a more dynamic and maneuverable character," Soviet theorists again raise the issue of deep operations. Specifically, "the possibilities of defeating the enemy in the entire depth of his operational combat formations have increased. Motorized rifle and tank forces, in coordination with other types of armed forces and branches of forces, can perform very complicated combat tasks with decisive aims, at great depths and at a high tempo."³²

This modern reaffirmation of earlier principles of deep battle is indicative of renewed Soviet interest in that subject. The burgeoning amount of research and writing

on the theory of deep operations and the mechanics of its implementation testify to the dominant position deep battle occupies in current Soviet operational art. In this regard, Soviet theorists heeded the words of former Chief of Staff M. Zakharov, who wrote in 1970, "The theory of deep operations has not lost its significance today. It can serve as a basis for the creative work of command cadres when resolving the many-sided and complex problems of today."³³

The intense and ongoing concern for operational art, paralleled by Soviet restructuring of the armed forces to improve their operational capabilities, has elevated the importance of that field from its relative position of neglect in the early 1960s to a foremost area of concern.

Soviet operational art today provides a framework for studying, understanding, preparing for, and conducting war. Together with strategy and tactics, it makes the study of war an academic discipline requiring intense research and scholarship on the part of those who write about and who would have to conduct war. As such, operational art performs distinct tasks associated with the conduct of war. These, then, are the functional tasks of operational art:

- Investigate the rules, nature, and character of contemporary operations (combat action).

- Work out the means for preparing and conducting combat operations.

- Determine the function of large units (fronts, armies) and formations (divisions) of the armed forces.

- Establish means and methods for organizing and supporting continuous cooperation, security, and command and control of forces in combat.

- Delineate the organizational and equipment requirements of large units of the armed forces.

- Work out the nature and methods of operational training for officers, and command and control organs.

- Develop recommendations for the operational preparation of a theater of military operations (TVD).

- Investigate enemy views on the conduct of operational combat.

This systematic approach clearly defines the scope and limits of the operational realm, provides direction for research, and presents a comprehensive methodology for achieving a better understanding of preparing for and conducting war at the operational level. It produces in the mind of each Soviet officer an understanding of the distinct differences between warfare at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, and it provides him with an improved capability for coping with the intricacies of planning and conducting contemporary military operations.

NOTES

1. A. A. Grechko, "Voennaya Nauka" (Military Science) *Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1976) II, 183-84. For a detailed elaboration of the nature of military science, see: S. N. Kozlov, ed. *O sovetskoi voennoi nauke* (Concerning Soviet Military Science) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1964).

2. S. P. Ivanov, A. I. Evseev, "Voennoe Iskusstvo" (Military Art) *Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1976), II, 211.

3. *Slovar' osnovnykh voennykh terminov* (Dictionary of Basic Military Terms) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1965), translated and published by the US Air Force, 1977, p. 39.

4. N. V. Ogarkov, "Voennaya strategiya" (Military Strategy) *Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia) (Moskva: Voenizdat 1979), VII, 255.

5. V. G. Kulakov, "Operativnoe Iskussta" (Operational Art) *Sovetskaya Voennaya Entsiklopediya* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1978), VI, 53.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

7. V. G. Reznichenko, *Taktika* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1966).

8. Kulakov, p. 55.

9. S. S. Kamenev, "Ocherednye voennye zadachi" (Successive military objectives) *Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh (1917-1940 gg)* (Questions of strategy and operational art in Soviet military works, 1917-1940) (Moskva: Voenizdat, pp. 149-152) (hereinafter cited as *Voprosy strategii*).

10. M. Zakharov, "O teorii glubokoi operatsii" (Concerning the theory of deep operations), *VIZh* (October 1970), p. 12. For a view of how Tukhachevsky expanded this view into a broader concept of deep battle, see: M. N. Tukhachevsky, "Voprosy sovremennoi strategii" (Questions of modern strategy), "Voyna" (War), and "Novye voprosy voiny" (New questions of war) *Voprosy strategii*, pp. 90-144.

11. *Ibid.*

12. M. N. Tukhachevsky "Voyna" (War) 1926, *Voprosy strategii*, pp. 104-05.

13. A. A. Svechin, "Strategiya" (Strategy) 1927, *Voprosy strategii*, p. 220.

14. V. Matsulenko, "Razvitie taktiki nastupatel' nogo boya" (The development of the tactics of offensive battle) *VIZh* (February 1968), pp. 28-29; Zakharov, pp. 10-13.

15. V. Daines, "Razvitie taktiki obshchevoiskovogo nastupatel' nogo boya v 1929-1941 gg" (The development of the tactics of combined arms offensive battle in 1929-1941), *VIZh* (October 1978), p. 96.

16. Zakharov, *Voprosy strategii*, p. 22. The Chief of Staff of the Army in the 1960s said of the purges:

The repression of 1937 and successive years brought to the army, as well as the rest of the country, tremendous harm. It deprived the Red Army and Navy of the most experienced and knowledgeable cadre and the most talented and highly qualified military leaders. It had a negative impact on the further development of military-theoretical thought. The deep study of military science problems . . . became narrow . . . Strategy in military academies ceased to be studied as a science and academic discipline. All that resulted from not only unfounded repression but also from an impasse in science, in particular military science. Military theory, in essence, amounted to a mosaic of Stalin's military expressions. The theory of deep operations was subject to doubt because Stalin said nothing about it and its creator was an "enemy of the people." Some of the elements like, for example, the independent action of motor-mechanized and cavalry formations in advance of the front and in the depth of the enemy defense were even called sabotage and for that foolish reason were rejected . . . Such measures attested to the about face in military theory—back to the linear form of combat on an operational scale.

17. Kulakov, p. 55.

18. Contents of Directive No. 3, Order No. 306 and Order No. 325, described in A. Radzievsky, "Proryv oborony v pervom periode voiny" (Penetration of a defense in the first period of war), *VIZh* (March 1972), pp. 17-18; "Prikaz NKO No. 306 ot 8 oktyabrya 1942g" (Order of the Peoples Commissariat of Defense No. 306 of 8 October 1942), *VIZh* (September 1974), pp. 62-66; and "Prikaz NKO No. 325 ot 16 oktyabrya 1942" (Order of the Peoples Commissariat of Defense No. 325 of 16 October 1942), *VIZh* (October 1974), pp. 68-73.

19. "Directive of the General Staff Concerning the Study and Application of War Experience, 9 November 1942, No. 1005216, Inclosure: Instructions Concerning the Study and Application of War Experience in Army Group (Front) and Army Staffs," translated by US Army General Staff G-2, p. 277.

20. *Polevoi ustav krasnoi armii 1942* (Field Regulation of the Red Army 1942) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1942), translated by the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, GSUSA.

21. *Polevoi ustav krasnoi armii 1944 (Pu-44)* (Field Regulation of the Red Army 1944) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1944), translated by Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, GSUSA.

22. M. Burshtynovich, "Bases of Offensive Battle of a

Rifle Regiment and Battalion," *Voennyi Vestnik* (January 1947), as quoted in R. Gartoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1953), p. 69.

23. N. P. Polev, *Nastupatel'nyi boi strelkovogo korpusa* (Offensive battle of the rifle corps) I. V. Frunze Military Academy of the Red Army, Lesson, translated by Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, GSUSA, 24 May 1954, pp. 2-3.

24. Z. Zlobin, "Sovremennaya frontovaya operatsiya" (Contemporary front operations) *Voennaya Mysl'* (April-May 1945), translated by the Directorate of Military Intelligence, Army Headquarters, Ottawa, Canada, p. 3.

25. I. V. Maryganov, *Peredovoi kharakter sovetskoi voennoi nauki* (The advanced character of Soviet military science) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1953), pp. 100-01.

26. V. A. Semenov, *Kratkii ocherk razvitiya sovetskogo operativnogo iskusstva* (A short sketch of the development of Soviet military art) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1960), p. 289.

27. V. D. Sokolovskiy, *Voennaya Strategiya* (Military Strategy) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1968), translated by Foreign Technology Division (FTD), pp. 192-93.

28. Ibid.

29. A. A. Stokov, ed., *Istoriya voennogo iskusstva* (History of Military Art) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1966), p. 612.

30. See the following works, all published in Moscow by Voenizdat: P. A. Kurochkin, ed., *Obshchevoiskovaya armiya v nastuplenii* (The combined arms army in the offensive) (1966); A. I. Radzievsky, ed., *Armeiskie operatsii* (Army operations) (1977); I. E. Krupchenko, ed., *Sovetskie tankovye voiska 1941-45* (Soviet tank forces 1941-1945) (1973); P. A. Rotmistrov, *Vremya i tanki* (Time and Tanks) (1972); A. I. Radzievsky, *Tankovyy Udar* (Tank Blow) (1977); A. I. Radzievsky, *Proryv* (Penetration) (1979); O. A. Losik, ed., *Stroitel'stvo i boevoe primeneniye sovetskykh tankovykh voisk v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny* (The formation and use of Soviet tank forces in the years of the Great Patriotic War) (1979); I. I. Lisov, *Desantniki-vozdushnyi desanty* (Airlanding troops - airlandings) (1968); D. S. Sukhorukov, *sovetskie vozdushno-desantnye* (Soviet airlanding forces) (1980); I. Kh Bagramian, ed., *Istoriya voyn i voennogo iskusstva* (History of War and Military Art) (1970); and V. E. Savkin, *Osnovnyye printsipy operativnogo iskusstva i taktiki* (The basic principles of operational art and tactics) (1972).

31. Kulakov, p. 57.

32. Ibid.; F. Graivoronski, "Razvitie sovetskogo operativnogo iskusstva" (The development of Soviet operational art) *VIZh* (February 1978), pp. 24-25.

33. M. Zakharov, "teorii glubokoi operatsii" (Concerning the theory of deep operations) *VIZh* (October 1970), p. 20.

