

ON THE MODERN DESIGN OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR: IN THE FIGHT FOR THE INITIATIVE

Almost eighty years separate us from the last battles of World War II, which became the basis of the strategic vision of the wars of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Despite the rapid development of weapons and equipment, namely: aviation, missiles and space assets, the development of communications and electronic warfare, the victory strategy was to destroy the enemy and capture or liberate the territory. At the same time, the forms and methods by which this was achieved directly depended on the level of development and the number of weapons used.

Of course, knowledge of the basics of strategy, operational art, tactics should accompany the career growth of military specialists and serve to solve two main tasks.

The first one is probably secondary. It consists in training of the commander directly for the upcoming war with the task of predicting the situation of war that will be at the beginning of hostilities. It is such a super-difficult task in the event of a solution that allows you to rise to an occasion and give a worthy rebuff to the enemy, bleed his strike forces and thereby buy time to seize the initiative. This whole process involves huge risks and doubts, which are due to the presence of only one chance to give decent resistance to smaller forces with limited resources.

The second task, in my opinion, is the main one – to find out in time the requirements put forward by the war related to the development of technological progress, and, as a result, the rapid development of weapons and equipment, the political situation both in the world and in the state itself, the economic situation, etc. And, therefore, for each war it is necessary to find only its own unique strategy and logic, which will allow in new conditions to find the way to the Victory.

Speaking of our own particular strategy, we can in no way reject fully existing doctrines that describe the process of preparing and conducting operations. We just have to realize that they will be constantly changing and filled with new content.

The principles of operational art will remain unchanged.

Therefore, taking into account the requirements of today, our most important task will be to adopt a new point of view on the forms and methods of using the Defence Forces to achieve the Victory.

The main reason for the change in the strategy, forms and methods of employment of forces, of course, is the development of weapons and equipment, especially unmanned systems, the use of which has become widespread and allows to perform a wide range of tasks, which is constantly growing. Therefore, unmanned systems, along with other advanced types of weapons, are almost the only tool for withdrawing from military operations of a positional form, which are not beneficial in terms of time for Ukraine for a set of reasons.

At the same time, in the current situation, there are still a number of factors that undoubtedly influence the decision to search for new forms of employment of defence forces. Here some of them:

unstable political situation around Ukraine, which leads to a reduction in military support;

high probability of Russia provoking a number of conflicts following the example of Israel and Yemen and distracting key partners from supporting Ukraine;

exhaustion of our partners' stocks of missiles and ammunition for artillery and air defence due to the high intensity of hostilities in Ukraine and the impossibility of their rapid production against the background of the global shortage of propellant charges;

insufficient effectiveness of the sanctions policy, resulting in the deployment of the capacities of the military-industrial complex in Russia and its partner states, which allows at least successfully waging a positional war of attrition;

a significant advantage in the mobilization of human resources of the enemy and the inability of state institutions in Ukraine to improve the state of manning of the Defence Forces without a use of unpopular measures;

"imperfection of the regulatory framework governing the military-industrial complex in our country, and partial monopolization of this industry lead to difficulties in the production of domestic ammunition, as a result - the deepening of Ukraine's dependence on the supply of allies;

uncertainty of the further nature of the armed struggle of such a scale as a consequence of the complexity for our allies in determining the priorities of support;

The experience of combat operations by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, especially in 2022-2023, is unique, and still remains only our heritage, and therefore, constantly looking for a way to the Victory, obliges us to constantly conduct an audit of existing capabilities, on which the result of combat operations depends and look for ways to gain an advantage over the enemy. Moreover, using the concept of the result of hostilities, we understand the conditions under which the enemy will refuse further aggression, and it is the creation of such conditions that is perceived as an effective use of the capabilities that are available in the arsenal of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In view of the mentioned above, as well as in accordance with the conditions of war today, perhaps the main option for gaining an advantage is to master the entire arsenal of relatively cheap, modern and extremely effective assets that are rapidly developing. It is the attempt to take advantage of the progress in the development of new technologies that will allow to win the scientific, technical, technological and tactical battle and will lead not only to the unconditional Victory, but also to savings and conservation of resources both by Ukraine and our partners.

The need to significantly increase the capabilities of unmanned systems and other advanced technological systems, to positively influence the course of hostilities, as a consequence, encourages the search for new forms and methods of use, which, in turn, will certainly affect the structure of both the Armed Forces and other components of the Defence Forces of Ukraine.

It is possible to increase the impact of the UAS and other newest systems on the effectiveness of combat operations due to:

- continuous improvement of situational awareness of commanders and the possibility of maintaining it in real time in the area of the operation both day and night, in all weather conditions;

- round-the-clock maintenance of fires and strikes in real time;

- providing intelligence for the strikes in real time;

- inflicting accurate and high-precision strikes against the enemy and its targets both at the forward edge of the battle area and in depth.

Consequently, it is necessary to create a new design of operations based on existing technological capabilities, which will be based not only on the spatial and temporal indicators of military (combat) operations, but also mainly on the creation of decisive conditions and the achievement of appropriate effects that will contribute to the realization of the purpose of the operation.

Based on the experience of combat operations and the forecast of the development of armed struggle, such decisive conditions are the following:

achieving absolute superiority in the air, especially at altitudes that provide effective fire engagement, ISR, and logistics;

depriving the enemy of the ability to conduct offensive or defensive operations;

increasing the mobility of own troops and completely limiting the mobility of enemy troops;

safe access to certain lines, taking control of important areas of the terrain;

depriving the enemy of the ability to restore the lost position and bolster efforts.

At first glance, these are absolutely conservative and classical conditions, the achievement of which serves long-standing forms and methods. But this is only at first glance, since the means of achieving them have already changed, and the old assets, unfortunately, are increasingly a dream for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the ways of achieving them are changing first of all.

In accordance with the presented idea of creating defining conditions, the process of achieving them, of course, will be ensured by solving a number of operational tasks, and during the solution of each operational task, the necessary effects will be created, due to the involved assets. And it is they who, at the expense of technological superiority, should act differing from the template and in accordance with at least the current doctrine.

The creation of the necessary effects, no doubt, today already radically leads to changes in the system of employment. Thus, to implement the conditions for creating the necessary effects, today it is necessary to consider as separate the following:

digital field creation operation

radio-electronic situation control operation;

combined attack operation of unmanned aerial vehicles and cyber assets;

logistic operation.

All listed operations are already being mastered and developed. They are conducted according to a single concept and plan, coordinated and interrelated, but differ in content.

Regarding the conduct of direct operations to achieve effects, presumably in their content, they will essentially be defensive and offensive, but in terms of the method of execution they might be the following:

- operation to reduce the economic capabilities of the enemy;
- operation of complete isolation and attrition;
- robotic search and strike operation;
- robotic operation to control a crisis area;
- psychological operation by attack assets;
- defensive technological contactless operation.

This list of operations will grow steadily with the development of the assets themselves, and of course, will encourage changes in doctrinal documents and the formation of an entirely new philosophy of preparation and conduct of hostilities. The emergence of new independent operations or their combination leads to the necessity to create a new table of organization . All this will be possible with a flexible and rapid response of state institutions to changes.

Thus, there are changes in the essence and content of classic defensive, offensive and stabilization operations, the approach to planning and conducting of which was usually linear and template-based. At the same time, these operations were combined in essence, including according to the views of partners. Along with this, the long-known concept of network-centric warfare in new conditions, due to high-tech assets of armed struggle, finds its interpretation not through the operations of troops, but through the creation of effects and the achievement of decisive conditions with the help of appropriate capabilities.

In addition, I would like to note that in addition to improving the effectiveness of combat operations, unmanned and other advanced technological systems are able to solve a number of key problems in the organization and conduct of combat operations of the Defence Forces of Ukraine:

- increase the degree of non-contact conduct of hostilities and, as a result, reduce the level of losses due to the possibility of remote control of these assets;

- reduce the degree of involvement of traditional weapons in combat missions;

- ensure the conduct of hostilities with limited use of heavy military equipment;

- despite the lack of navy vessels, defeat both surface and submarine forces of the enemy and its coastal infrastructure to almost the entire depth of the theater at sea with high efficiency and minimal risk to personnel;

- inflict massive sudden strikes against critical infrastructure facilities, important communications without the use of expensive in operation and production missiles and manned aircraft.

This list of advantages is incomplete and will undoubtedly change, expanding the range of effective employment. Of course, on the battlefield, the enemy will look for ways to protect and try to seize the initiative. Therefore, with the development of the capabilities of attack systems, including unmanned ones, it is extremely necessary to improve protection and counteraction systems. Thus, in order to master new forms and methods, the Defence Forces need to create a completely new state system of technological rearmament, which will include the following subsystems:

- development and scientific support;
- production and maintenance;
- training of personnel and generalization of combat experience;
- use of troops (forces)
- flexible financing;
- logistics.

Most likely, each of the subsystems will need separate research and development in the future, but now it is safe to say that the system should be holistic and at the same time flexible both to the entities that can be involved and to finance and change production.

Undoubtedly, all this will take time, but it is the time that is decisive.

Taking into account the already existing system of employment, the technical solutions found and the already established command and control system and the experience gained, as well as according to the views of partners in modern conditions, the creation of such a system with the required volume of production can take up to five months. This term is due to the need to create appropriate tables of organization and their manning and equipping, personnel training, resource support, creation of the necessary infrastructure, logistics and development of a doctrinal framework.

With this in mind, in 2024 we need to focus our main efforts on:

- creation of a system for providing the Defence Forces with high-tech assets;
- introduction of a new philosophy of preparation and conduct of hostilities, taking into account restrictions;

as a result, in the shortest possible time to master the new capabilities for the conduct of hostilities.

So, we are talking about the fact that in modern conditions, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, together with other components of the State Defence Forces, have capabilities that allow not only to destroy the enemy, but also ensure the

existence of statehood itself. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new conditions of war to maximize the accumulation of the latest combat capabilities, which will allow less resources to inflict maximum damage on the enemy, stop his aggression and protect Ukraine from it in the future.