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EIGHT PRINCIPLES AND TWO STRATEGIES FOR WINNING THE MODERN WAR OF ATTRITION

Abstract. The properties and numerical characteristics for a modern war of attrition are described. Eight principles for victory are given: "readiness for total mobilization and horrific losses", "readiness for total destruction", "defense is first of all", "territories do not matter", "a combat-ready soldier is the basis of victory", "minimizing their losses", "emphasis on firepower", "small arms are bad, artillery is acceptable, aerial bombs are good". Two victorious strategies in a war of attrition have been developed.

Keywords: war, military strategy, total war, defense, military economy, mobilization, infantry, military aviation

Introduction

Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War*: "... a victorious army first recognizes the conditions of victory and then seeks battle; a losing army first fights and then seeks victory. " [1] This study focuses on understanding and then formulating the principles and strategies that lead to victory in any war of attrition.

Properties of a war of attrition

A war of attrition is characterized by the following properties:

1. It is impossible to penetrate enemy defenses to a strategic depth.
2. It is impossible to prevent the mobilization of the enemy.
3. It is impossible to prevent the supply of military cargo to the enemy from abroad and (or) it is impossible to destroy industrial production in the enemy country.
4. There is no tactical nuclear weapon or no desire to use it.

Numerical characteristics of a war of attrition

1. Long life expectancy: from 4-5 years to 10 years.
2. A huge level of upcoming mobilization: from 8-15% (and even up to 20-25%) of the initial population of the country [2].
3. The horrifying level of upcoming irretrievable losses: 1-3% (sometimes 5-10%) of the entire pre-war population of the country [2].

It is known from history that a country can go to such a high level of tension at most twice within a century.

It often happens that a country has never waged a serious war of attrition in a century.

The main emphasis in the war of attrition is placed on the destruction of enemy personnel.

Military production and supply of military cargo from abroad

If it is possible to complicate the supply of military cargo to the enemy from abroad, or if it is possible to partially destroy military-industrial production in the enemy country, then this can be done in two ways:

1. From the air-bombing, rocket attacks, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles.
2. Encirclement of the theater of military operations – encirclement by land and (or) blockade from the sea.

Use of tactical nuclear weapons

Waging a war of attrition implies a high level of casualties, so the probability of using tactical nuclear weapons, if one or both sides of the conflict have them, is significant.

The use of tactical nuclear weapons allows you to limit the theater of military operations, and also makes it possible to quickly inflict high losses on the enemy.

Conventional war of attrition is characterized by a high level of military violence, with the use of tactical nuclear weapons raising the level of military violence from high to extreme [5].

It is better not to use any nuclear weapons at all in any war, because if you use them once, you will definitely be tempted to use them a second or third time – in the end, it may well happen that the previously blooming territory will turn into a radioactive desert, and no victory is worth it!

Principles for winning the Modern War of attrition

Principle № 1: "Readiness for total mobilization and horrific losses."

Unwillingness to carry out total mobilization and unwillingness to face horrific losses opens up opportunities for States teetering on the brink of open armed conflict to realize the terrible severity and destructiveness of the upcoming war of attrition and agree both before the start of hostilities and to interrupt the already begun war of attrition with peace negotiations.

Principle № 2: "Readiness for total destruction".

In a war of attrition, any population center that is being fought for turns into ruins, so the fighting parties must be prepared for this level of impending destruction.

Principle № 3: "Defense comes first."

Infantry suffers heavy losses during the offensive, so, in the most general case, you should not attack. It is better to surrender unimportant territories than to lose soldiers in counterattacks!

The function of one's own infantry during a war of attrition is to occupy foreign territory defended by small groups of already virtually incapacitated enemy infantry.

The function of tanks and other armored vehicles during a war of attrition is to support their infantry (stage № 3 of tank history), although until relatively recently, in World War II, tanks were the basis for strategic encirclement operations (stage № 2 of tank history) [4].

Principle № 4: "Territories don't matter."

For a war of attrition, it doesn't matter what territories are occupied and by whom, because large areas and large settlements cannot be captured. Territories should be occupied at the end of a war of attrition, when the enemy will have a catastrophic shortage of infantry, or taken away as a result of post-war peace negotiations.

Principle № 5. "A combat-ready soldier is the foundation of victory."

For a war of attrition, the most important thing is to maintain the number and combat capability of your troops, so the infantry:

I. It must have reliable individual protection (bulletproof vests, hard hats, etc.).

II. It should be located in convenient and protected fortified areas.

III. Must receive prompt and high-quality medical care.

IV. It should often be relegated to the rear for recreation.

V. Must receive a high-quality and varied diet aimed at maintaining the health and combat capability of the soldier for 5-10 years.

VI. It must use weapons, surveillance equipment, communications equipment, first aid equipment, and other means professionally.

VII. It should not receive orders like "die, but do it" or "don't take a step back."

The implementation of points VI and V is very important, because the military-political leadership (which is usually aimed at a short-term conflict lasting 1-2 years) always fulfills other points to a greater or lesser extent, but the implementation of points VI and V becomes particularly important precisely in conditions of continuous war lasting 3-5 or more years.

Principle № 6. "Minimize your losses".

The long-term duration of combat operations means that the country is forced to constantly mobilize, throwing soldiers of all new ages into the war, and the number and size of the mobilization reserve is always a finite value. In addition, the fewer new soldiers the front needs, the better for the country: both for its economy and for maintaining the morale of the civilian population.

Principle № 7: "Focus on firepower".

The firepower of an army is a numerical characteristic that shows the striking ability of a given army per unit of time [3, p. 81].

The law on the victory of an army with greater firepower [3, pp. 82-83]

An army with more firepower will win if it can inflict an unacceptable level of casualties on the enemy before it itself suffers unacceptable losses.

Corollary №1. About losing to an army with more firepower

An army with more firepower will lose if it suffers an unacceptable level of losses before an army with less firepower approaches an unacceptable level of its losses.

Corollary №2. On winning an army with less firepower

An army with less firepower will benefit if it inflicts an unacceptable level of casualties on the enemy before it itself approaches an unacceptable level of losses.

Tens and hundreds of thousands of aerial bombs dropped on the enemy and kamikaze drones launched at them, along with millions of projectiles fired – this is the basis for success in the war of attrition!

Principle № 8: "Small arms are bad, artillery is acceptable, aerial bombs are good."

This principle is the embodiment of the desire to minimize their own losses and increase the losses of the enemy, for which it is necessary to use weapons that have the

maximum destructive power with the minimum probability of a retaliatory attack from enemy infantry.

Advantages of using aerial bombs

I. Cheapness.

An aerial bomb is basically steel plus explosives.

II. High destructive power.

Modern settlements are made mainly of stone, reinforced concrete and steel, that is, cities and towns are actually fortresses, and the presence of basements and underground utilities makes such fortresses partially underground. Only heavy aerial bombs can crush stone and reinforced concrete, which are the basis of modern fortress cities.

III. Safe reset option.

Planning bombs can be safely dropped over their own territory, in the area of their own air defense, after which the bombs will fly 30-100 km and fall on enemy territory.

IV. Possibility of adjustment.

Gliding bombs are equipped with flight correction tools that increase the accuracy of the hit.

V. Direct infantry support.

Almost all infantry losses are incurred on the front line, so defeating the enemy with aerial bombs radically reduces the losses of their own infantry both in defense and during the assault.

Two strategies for a war of attrition

Based on the above eight principles, you can use two strategies to win.

The first strategy: strong defense and the desire to reduce losses among their soldiers, while defeating the enemy is a secondary task.

If this strategy is implemented, the losses among the population of all parties to the conflict are huge, with the infrastructure generally intact. Example: The First World War.

A different strategy can be applied if a militarily stronger country has the ability to launch missile and bomb attacks on the entire enemy territory. In this case, ***the second strategy looks like this: strong defense, the desire to reduce losses among their soldiers and the destruction of the enemy's military infrastructure from the air throughout their country*** (since a significant part of the civilian infrastructure is used by the military in combat conditions, this means that it also becomes a military target). This strategy allows you to lead the war to victory without inflicting incalculable human losses on the enemy. Example: US and NATO operations using overwhelming air superiority, such as the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.

The second strategy looks more humane to the population of the losing side, but it is not always possible to apply it (however, like any other victorious strategy), as Sun Tzu wrote in the Art of War thousands of years ago:

"Invincibility lies in itself; the possibility of victory depends on the enemy.

So someone who is successful in war can make themselves invincible, but they can't necessarily make the enemy submit.

Therefore, it is said that the strategy of defeating the enemy can be learned, but it is not always possible to apply" [1].

Conclusions:

1. Properties and numerical characteristics for a modern war of attrition are described.

2. Eight principles for winning a modern war of attrition are given:

Principle № 1: "Readiness for total mobilization and horrific losses."

Principle № 2: "Readiness for total destruction".

Principle № 3: "Defense comes first."

Principle № 4: "Territories don't matter."

Principle № 5: "A combat-ready soldier is the foundation of victory."

Principle № 6: "Minimize your losses".

Principle № 7: "Focus on firepower".

Principle № 8: "Small arms are bad, artillery is acceptable, aerial bombs are good."

3. Two victorious strategies in the war of attrition have been developed:

3.1. The first strategy: strong defense and the desire to reduce losses among their soldiers, while defeating the enemy is a secondary task.

3.2. The second strategy: strong defense, striving to reduce losses among its soldiers and destroying the enemy's military infrastructure from the air throughout its territory.

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