

BLITZ OPERATING PHILOSOPHY

Key Point

- o Each level from simple to complex (platoon to theater) has their own observation-orientation-decision-action time cycle that increases as we try to control more levels and details of command at the higher levels. Put simply, as the number of events we must consider increase, the longer it takes to observe-orient-decide-act.

Idea

- o This brings out the idea that faster tempo, or rhythm, at lower levels should work within the slower rhythm but larger pattern at higher levels so that overall system does not lose its cohesion or coherency.

Raises Question

- o How do Blitzers harmonize these differing tempos/rhythms so that they can exploit the faster rhythm/smaller pattern (of the lower-level units) yet maintain the coherency of the rhythm/pattern for the larger effort?

Response

- o Give lower-level commanders wide freedom, within an overall Mind-Time-Space scheme, to shape/direct their own activities so that they can exploit faster tempo/rhythm at tactical levels yet be in harmony with the larger pattern/slower rhythm associated with the more general aim and larger effort at the strategic level.

Shaping Agents

- o Shape overall scheme by using Mission Concept or sense of Mission to fix responsibility and shape commitment at all levels and through all parts of the organism. Likewise, use Schwerpunkt concept through all levels to link differing rhythms/patterns so that each part or level of the organic whole can operate at its own natural rhythm -- without pulling organism apart -- instead of the slower pace associated with a rigid centralized control.

BLITZ AND COUNTER-BLITZ

Main Features and Emphasis

- o Intelligence and recce Action
- o Infiltration/penetration and isolation
- o Ambiguity, deception, speed, and violence to generate surprise and ~~shock~~ 
- o Mission/Schwerpunkt philosophy
- o Acceptance of "gaps" and (related) "risks" in support of mission/schwerpunkt philosophy
- o Echelon-in-depth (offense and defense)
- o Reserves reconstituted and accumulated (at all levels) to support or generate success
- o Posture of positions, alternative positons, dummy positions and roving positions to mask maneuvers and intentions

MESSAGE

Expose individuals, with different skills and abilities, against a variety of situations--whereby each individual can observe and orient himself simultaneously to the others and to the variety of changing situations.

? - WHY - ?

In such an environment, a harmony, or focus and direction, in operations is created by the bonds of implicit communication and trust developed by repeatedly sharing the same variety of experiences in the same ways.

BENEFICIAL PAYOFF

A command and control system, whose secret lies in what's unstated or not communicated to one another (in an explicit sense)--in order to exploit lower-level initiative yet realize higher-level intent, thereby diminish friction and compress time, hence gain both quickness and security.

RESPONSE

Infiltration fire and movement schemes can be viewed as Napoleon's multi-thrust strategic penetration maneuvers being transformed into multi-thrust tactical penetration maneuvers down to the lowest operational/organizational level--the squad.

POINT

Until the rise of the infiltration tactics (and the use of tanks by the allies) in the latter part of WWI, neither the 19th century nor the 20th century commanders were able to evolve effective tactical penetration maneuvers that could offset the massive increase in weapons lethality developed during this same period.

WHY

The aristocratic tradition, the top-down command and control system, the slavish addiction to the "Principle of Concentration", and the drill regulation mind-set all taken together reveal *an* "obsession for control" by high-level superiors over low-level subordinates that restrict any imagination, initiative, and adaptability needed by a system to evolve the indistinct-irregular-mobile tactics that could counter the increase in weapons lethality.

MISSION

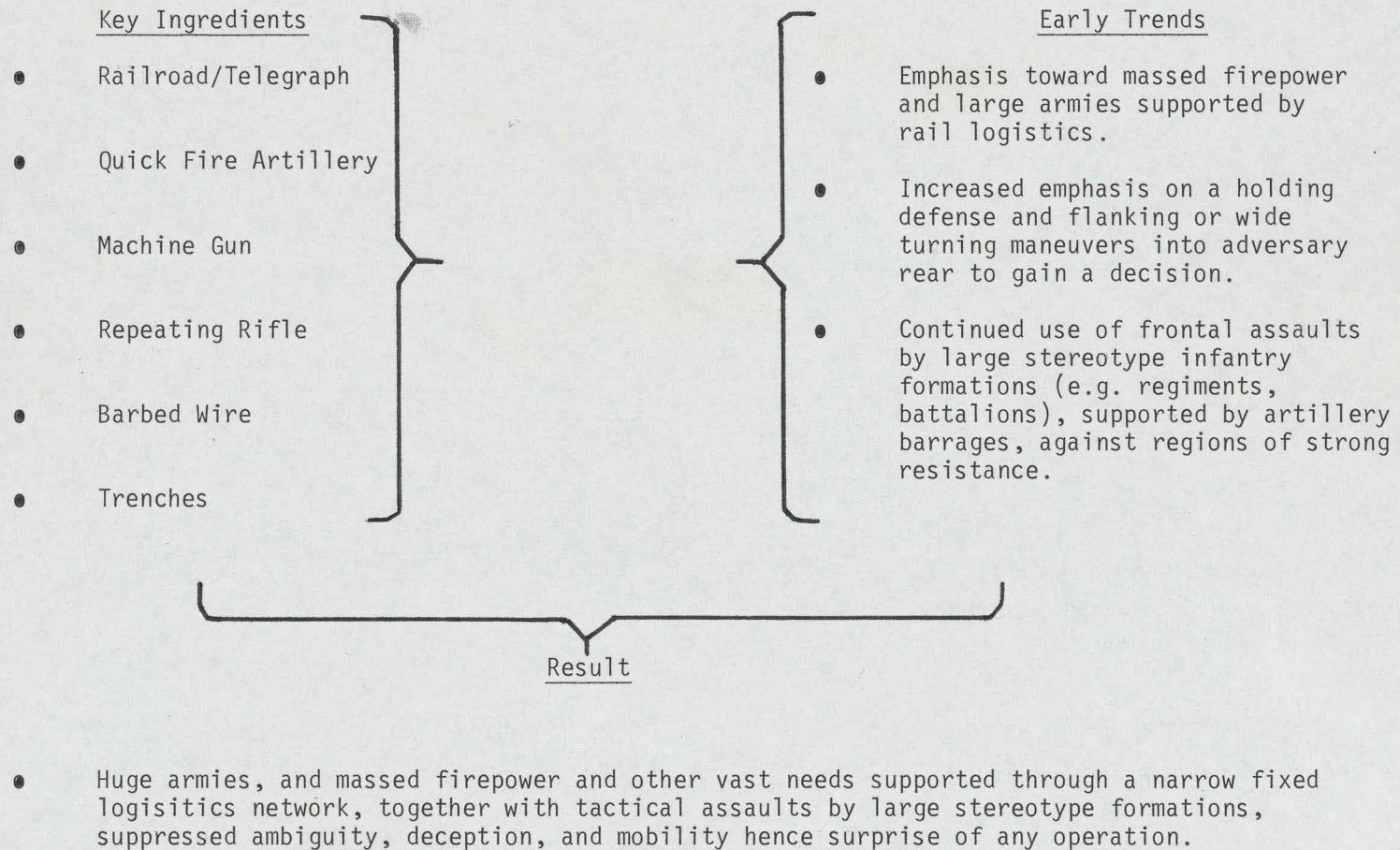
Message

- o The German concept of mission can be thought of as a contract, hence an agreement, between superior and subordinate. The subordinate agrees to make his actions serve his superior's intent in terms of what is to be accomplished, while the superior agrees to give his subordinate wide freedom to exercise his imagination and initiative in terms of how intent is to be realized.
- o As part of this concept, the subordinate is given the right to challenge or question the feasibility of mission if he feels his superior's ideas on what can be achieved are not in accord with the existing situation or if he feels his superior has not given him adequate resources to carry it out. Likewise, the superior has every right to expect his subordinate to carry-out the mission contract when agreement is reached on what can be achieved consistent with the existing situation and resources provided.

Limitation

- o While this concept of mission gives form and expression to what is expected between an individual superior and subordinate, it does not suggest ways to coordinate or harmonize activities among many superiors and subordinates as a collective group.

IMPACT OF 19th CENTURY TECHNOLOGY ON WAR



TECHNOLOGY AND THE ART OF WAR

- The legacy of Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Jomini's tactical regularity and the continued use of large stereotype formations for tactical assault, together with the mobilization of large armies and massing of enormous supplies through a narrow logistics network, "telegraphed" any punch hence minimized the possibility of exploiting ambiguity, deception, and mobility to generate surprise for a decisive edge.
- In this sense, technology was being used as a crude club that generated frightful and debilitating casualties on all sides during the:
 - American Civil War (1861-65)
 - Austro-Prussian War (1866)
 - Franco-Prussian War (1870)
 - Boer War (1899-1902)
 - Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)
 - World War I (1914-15)

POINT

- Evolution of tactics did not keep pace with increased weapons lethality developed and produced by 19th century technology.

? - RAISES QUESTION - ?

- Why were the 19th century and early 20th century commanders unable to evolve better tactics to avoid over a half century of debilitating casualties?

WORLD WAR I

Infiltration Tactics

Note

- Such classic descriptions, often repeated, create in listeners or readers minds vivid images of the infiltration technique.

Critique

- Unfortunately this depiction does not address how and why infiltration fire and movement schemes work.

WORLD WAR I

Infiltration Tactics

Key Points

- Fire at all levels by artillery, mortars, and machine guns is exploited to hold adversary attention and pin him down hence --
- Fire together with gas and smoke (as well as fog and mist) represents an immediate and ominous threat to capture adversary attention, force heads down and dramatically obscure view, thereby cloak infiltrators movements.
- Dispersed and irregular character of moving swarms (as opposed to well defined line abreast formations) permit infiltrators to blend against irregular and changing terrain features as they push forward.
- Taken together, the captured attention, the obscured view, and the indistinct character of moving dispersed/irregular swarms deny adversary the opportunity to picture what is taking place.

Result

- Infiltration teams appear to suddenly loom-up out of nowhere to blow thru, around, and behind disoriented defenders.

WORLD WAR I

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Essence

- Cloud/distort signature and improve mobility to avoid fire yet focus effort to penetrate, shatter, envelop and mop-up disconnected or isolated debris of adversary system.

Intent

- Exploit tactical dispersion in a focused way to gain Tactical success and expand it into a Grand Tactical success.

Implication

- Small units exploiting tactical dispersion in a focused way -- rather than large formations abiding by the "Principle of Concentration" -- penetrate adversary to generate many non-cooperative (or isolated) centers of gravity as basis to magnify friction, paralyze effort, and bring about adversary collapse.

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Shaping Agents

- Shape overall scheme by using Mission Concept or sense of Mission to fix responsibility and shape commitment at all levels and through all parts of the organism. Likewise, use Schwerpunkt concept through all levels to link differing rhythms/patterns so that each part or level of the organic whole can operate at its own natural rhythm -- without pulling organism apart -- instead of the slower pace associated with a rigid centralized control.

? - RAISES QUESTIONS - ?

- What does an overall Mind-Time-Space scheme imply or presuppose?
- How do Mission and Schwerpunkt concepts give shape to this overall scheme?

OVERALL MIND-TIME-SPACE SCHEME

Message

- According to General Gunther Blumentritt, such a scheme presupposes a common outlook based upon "a body of professional officers who have received exactly the same training during the long years of peace and with the same tactical education, the same way of thinking, identical speech, hence a body of officers to whom all tactical conceptions were fully clear."
- Furthermore, a la General Blumentritt, it presupposes "an officers training institution which allows the subordinate a very great measure of freedom of action and freedom in the manner of executing orders and which primarily calls for independent daring, initiative and sense of responsibility."

Point

- Without a common outlook superiors cannot give subordinates freedom-of-action and maintain coherency of ongoing action.

Implication

- A common outlook possessed by "a body of officers" represents a unifying theme that can be used to simultaneously encourage subordinate initiative yet realize superior intent.

? - RAISES QUESTION - ?

- Very nice, but, how do the German Concepts of Mission and Schwerpunkt give shape to this scheme?

MISSION

Message

- The German concept of mission can be thought of as a contract, hence an agreement, between superior and subordinate. The subordinate agrees to make his actions serve his superior's intent in terms of what is to be accomplished, while the superior agrees to give his subordinate wide freedom to exercise his imagination and initiative in terms of how intent is to be realized.
- As part of this concept, the subordinate is given the right to challenge or question the feasibility of mission if he feels his superior's ideas on what can be achieved are not in accord with the existing situation or if he feels his superior has not given him adequate resources to carry it out. Likewise, the superior has every right to expect his subordinate to carry-out the mission contract when agreement is reached on what can be achieved consistent with the existing situation and resources provided.

Limitation

- While this concept of mission gives form and expression to what is expected between an individual superior and subordinate, it does not suggest ways to coordinate or harmonize activities among many superiors and subordinates as a collective group.

? - RAISES QUESTION - ?

- With this limitation in mind how does Schwerpunkt play into or add to this concept?

SCHWERPUNKT (FOCUS OF MAIN EFFORT)

Message

- Schwerpunkt acts as a center or axis or harmonizing agent that is used to help shape commitment and convey or carry-out intent, at all levels from theater to platoon, hence an image around which:
 - Maneuver of all arms and supporting elements are focused to exploit opportunities and maintain tempo of operations,
 - and
 - Subordinate initiative is harmonized with superior intent.
- In this sense Schwerpunkt can be thought of as:
 - A focusing agent that naturally produces an unequal distribution of effort as a basis to generate superiority in some sectors by thinning-out others,
 - as well as
 - A medium to realize superior intent without impeding subordinate initiative, hence a medium through which subordinate initiative is implicitly connected to superior intent.

Implication

- Schwerpunkt represents a unifying concept that provides a way to rapidly shape focus and direction of effort as well as harmonize support activities with combat operations, thereby permit a true decentralization of tactical command within centralized strategic guidance--without losing cohesion of overall effort.

or put another way
- Schwerpunkt represents a unifying medium that provides a directed way to tie subordinate initiative with superior intent as a basis to diminish friction and compress time in order to generate a favorable mismatch in time/ability to shape and adapt to unfolding circumstances.

GERMAN OPERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Impression

- The German operational philosophy based upon a common outlook and freedom-of-action, and realized through their concepts of mission and schwerpunkt, emphasized implicit over explicit communication.

which suggests

- The secret of the German Command and Control System lies in what's unstated or not communicated to one another--in order to exploit lower-level initiative yet realize higher-level intent, thereby diminish friction and reduce time, hence gain both quickness and security.

Result

- The Germans were able to repeatedly operate inside their adversary's observation-orientation-decision-action loops.

or as stated by General Blumentritt

- "The entire operational and tactical leadership method hinged upon...rapid, concise assessment of situations,...quick decision and quick execution, on the principle: 'each minute ahead of the enemy is an advantage.'"

WORLD WAR II

Blitzkrieg

Key to Success

- Emphasis on a common outlook and freedom-of-action that are exploited by Mission and Schwerpunkt concepts to fix responsibilities as well as to rapidly shape, focus, and shift operations and support at all levels.
- Flexible command -- based on a common outlook and freedom-of-action that are exploited by Mission and Schwerpunkt -- that encourages lower-level combat leaders (forward) to exploit opportunities generated by rapid action within a broad loosely woven scheme laid down from central command.
- Intelligence, reconnaissance (air and ground) and stratagem emphasized before and during combat operations to unmask and shape patterns of adversary strengths, weaknesses, moves, and intentions.
- Broad use of Schwerpunkt concept coupled with fast tempo/fluidity-of-action of armored teams and air support permit Blitzers to repeatedly reshape strength and rapidly shift it against, or through, weaknesses thereby generate doubt and uncertainty which magnify into panic and chaos.
- Superior mobile communications to maintain cohesion of overall effort and to enable higher command levels to allocate reserves and support and to reshape as well as shift focus of main effort.
- Essential and only essential logistics tail (using airlift when appropriate and necessary) to support high speed movement and rapid shift among routes of advance.

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COUNTER-GUERRILLA CAMPAIGN
(a la Mikhaïl Tukhachevsky and Ramon Magsaysay)

Action

- Undermine guerrilla cause and destroy their cohesion by demonstrating integrity and competence of government to represent and serve needs of people -- rather than exploit and impoverish them for the benefit of a greedy elite. *
- Take political initiative to root out and visibly punish corruption. Select new leaders with recognized competence as well as popular appeal. Ensure that they deliver justice, eliminate grievances and connect government with grass roots.*
- Infiltrate guerrilla movement as well as employ population for intelligence about guerrilla plans, operations and organization.
- Seal-off guerrilla regions from outside world by diplomatic, psychological, and various other activities that strip-away potential allies as well as by disrupting or straddling communications that connect these regions with outside world.
- Deploy administrative talent, police, and roving counter-guerrilla teams into affected regions to: inhibit guerrilla communication, coordination and movement; minimize guerrilla contact with local inhabitants; isolate their ruling cadres; and destroy their infrastructure.
- Take and keep initiative by relentless pursuit. Employ (guerrillas' own) tactics of reconnaissance, infiltration, surprise hit-and-run, and sudden ambush to: keep roving bands off-balance, make base areas untenable, and disrupt communication with outside world.
- Emphasize capture and conversion to government cause -- instead of harsh anti-population reprisal measures and "body count" -- as basis to undermine guerrilla influence.
- Visibly identify central government with local political/economic/social reform in order to connect government with hopes and needs of people, thereby gain their support and confirm government legitimacy.

Idea

- Destroy guerrilla cohesion, break their hold upon the population, and bring about their collapse via political initiative that demonstrates moral legitimacy and vitality of government and by relentless military operations that emphasize stealth/fast-tempo/fluidity-of-action and cohesion of overall effort.

* If you cannot realize such a political program, you might consider changing sides!

OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO MORAL CONFLICT

Gen. Hermann Balck

Theme

- No fixed recipes for organization, communications, tactics, leadership, etc.
- Wide freedom for subordinates to exercise imagination and initiative -- yet harmonize within intent of superior commanders.
- Heavy reliance upon moral (human values) instead of material superiority as basis for cohesion and ultimate success.
- Commanders must create a bond and breadth of experience based upon trust -- not mistrust -- for cohesion.

How is this Atmosphere Achieved?

- By example leaders (at all levels) must demonstrate requisite physical energy, mental agility, and moral authority to inspire subordinates to enthusiastically cooperate and take initiatives within superiors intent.

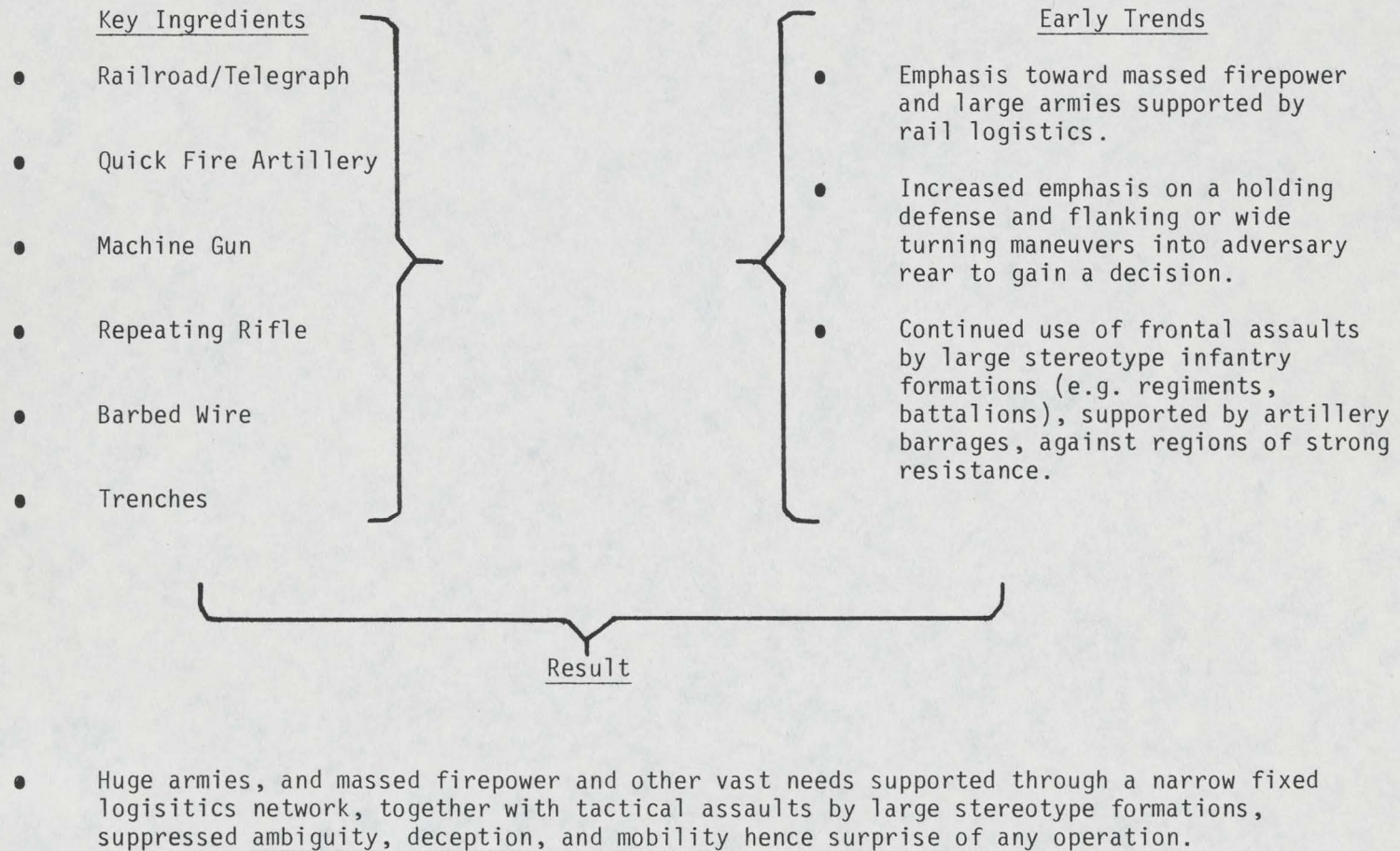
What is the Price?

- Courage to share danger and discomfort at the front.
- Willingness to support and promote (unconventional or difficult) subordinates that accept danger, demonstrate initiative, take risks, and come-up with new ways toward mission accomplishment.
- Dedication and resolve to face-up to and master uncomfortable circumstances that fly in the face of the traditional solution.

Benefit

- Internal simplicity that permits rapid adaptability.

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- Wide freedom for subordinates to exercise imagination and initiative -- yet harmonize within intent of superior commanders.
- Heavy reliance upon moral (human values) instead of material superiority as basis for cohesion and ultimate success.
- Commanders must create a bond and breadth of experience based upon trust -- not mistrust -- for cohesion.

How is this Atmosphere Achieved?

- By example leaders (at all levels) must demonstrate requisite physical energy, mental agility, and moral authority to inspire subordinates to enthusiastically cooperate and take initiatives within superiors intent.

What is the Price?

- Courage to share danger and discomfort at the front.
- Willingness to support and promote (unconventional or difficult) subordinates that accept danger, demonstrate initiative, take risks, and come-up with new ways toward mission accomplishment.
- Dedication and resolve to face-up to and master uncomfortable circumstances that fly in the face of the traditional solution.

Benefit

- Internal simplicity that permits rapid adaptability.

WORLD WAR II

Blitzkrieg

Key to Success

- o Emphasis on a common outlook and freedom-of-action that are exploited by Mission and Schwerpunkt concepts to fix responsibilities as well as to rapidly shape, focus, and shift operations and support at all levels.
- o Flexible command -- based on a common outlook and freedom-of-action that are exploited by Mission and Schwerpunkt -- that encourages lower-level combat leaders (forward) to exploit opportunities generated by rapid action within a broad loosely woven scheme laid down from central command.
- o Intelligence, reconnaissance (air and ground) and stratagem emphasized before and during combat operations to unmask and shape patterns of adversary strengths, weaknesses, moves, and intentions.
- o Broad use of Schwerpunkt concept coupled with fast tempo/fluidity-of-action of armored teams and air support permit Blitzers to repeatedly reshape strength and rapidly shift it against, or through, weaknesses thereby generate doubt and uncertainty which magnify into panic and chaos.
- o Superior mobile communications to maintain cohesion of overall effort and to enable higher command levels to allocate reserves and support and to reshape as well as shift focus of main effort.
- o Essential and only essential logistics tail (using airlift when appropriate and necessary) to support high speed movement and rapid shift among routes of advance.

BLITZKRIEG

Action

- Intelligence (signal, photo, agent...), reconnaissance (air and ground), and patrol actions probe and test adversary before and during combat operations to uncover as well as shape changing patterns of strengths, weaknesses, moves, and intentions.
- Adversary patterns, and associated changes, are weighed against friendly situation to expose attractive, or appropriate, alternatives that exploit adversary vulnerabilities and weaknesses, hence help shape mission commitment and influence command intent.
- Mission assigned. Schwerpunkt (focus of main effort) established before and shifted during combat operations to bypass adversary strength and strike at weakness. Nebenpunkte (other related or supporting effort) employed to tie-up, focus, or drain-away adversary attention and strength (elsewhere).
- Special seizure/disruption teams infiltrate (by air or other means) enemy rear areas where, with agents already in place, they: seize bridges and road crossings, sever communications, incapacitate or blow-up power stations, seize or blow-up fuel dumps,...,as well as sow confusion/disorder via "false messages and fake orders".
- Indirect and direct air firepower efforts together with (any needed) sudden/brief preliminary artillery fires are focused in appropriate areas to impede (or channel) adversary movement, disrupt communications, suppress forward defensive fires, obscure the advance, and divert attention.
- Armored reconnaissance or stormtrooper teams, leading armored columns, advance rapidly from least expected regions and infiltrate adversary front to find paths of least resistance.
- Armored assault teams of tanks, infantry, anti-tank guns, and combat engineers as well as other specialists, together with close artillery and air support, quickly open breaches (via frontal/flank fire and movement combinations) into adversary rear along paths of least resistance uncovered by armored reconnaissance or stormtroopers.
- When breakthrough occurs, relatively independent mobile/armored teams led by armored recce with air support (recce, fire, and airlift when necessary), blow-through to penetrate at high speed deep into adversary interior. Object is to cut lines of communication, disrupt movement, paralyze command and envelop adversary forces and resources.
- Motorized or foot infantry further back supported by artillery and armor pour-in to collapse isolated pockets of resistance, widen the breaches and secure the encirclement or captured terrain against possible counter-attack.

Idea

- Conquer an entire region in the quickest possible time by gaining initial surprise and exploiting the fast tempo/fluidity-of-action of armored teams, with air support, as basis to penetrate, splinter, envelop, and roll-up/wipe-out disconnected remnants of adversary organism in order to confuse, disorder, and finally shatter his will or capacity to resist.

BLITZKRIEG AND GUERRILLA STRATEGY

Infiltration and Isolation

- Blitz and guerrillas infiltrate a nation or regime at all levels to soften and shatter the moral fiber of the political, economic and social structure. Simultaneously, via diplomatic, psychological, and various sub-rosa or other activities, they strip-away potential allies thereby isolate intended victim(s) for forthcoming blows. To carry out this program, a la Sun Tsu, Blitz and Guerrillas:
 - Probe and test adversary, and any allies that may rally to his side, in order to unmask strengths, weaknesses, maneuvers, and intentions.
 - Exploit critical differences of opinion, internal contradictions, frictions, obsessions, etc., in order to foment mistrust, sow discord and shape both adversary's and allies' perception of the world thereby:
 - Create atmosphere of "mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecisiveness, panic,"...
 - Manipulate or undermine adversary's plans and actions.
 - Make it difficult, if not impossible, for allies to aid adversary during his time of trial.

Purpose

- Force capitulation when combined with external political, economic, and military pressures
- or
- Weaken foe to minimize his resistance against military blows that will follow.