Twitter Thread by Jakub Janovsky



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/thread/ It has been almost 2 months since the end of the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war and after observing it from the start and talking about it with (or listening to) some really smart people, here are IMO important lessons (new or old) from that conflict:

1. Even in smaller conflicts, U(C)AVs are making achieving air superiority, or at least denying it to the opponent, a lot more important than it used to be.

2. Effective distribution of real-time data from U(C)AVs (and loitering munitions, which can be launched to perform recon when other assets are not available) can significantly increase the effectiveness of even relatively old artillery systems.

3. While airpower is getting incredibly deadly and can quickly inflict massive material damage, you still need units on the ground with a strong will to fight despite taking casualties (and political will to accept that in serious modern wars, significant losses are inevitable).

4. Soldiers need to be aware that on a modern battlefield there are not really any "safe areas" and TTPs (tactics techniques procedures) need to be changed to reflect this.

5. In order to limit the effect of enemy firepower, armies need to obtain (and actually use them - too many armies rarely train and never deploy with this gear) a large number of realistic decoys for heavy/sophisticated equipment, make redundant well-camouflaged positions, etc.

6. BVR (beyond visual range) loitering munitions have great potential and IMO they could be especially effective in defensive wars because of their ability to quickly inflict substantial losses against targets in the open from a relatively safe distance.

7. Tanks/IFVs are still viable on a modern battlefield, but they need to be equipped with effective hard-kill APS (like Trophy) to protect them from RPGs, ATGMs, and loitering munitions. To operate them effectively you also must prevent the enemy from achieving air superiority.

8. Infantry units are likely to greatly benefit from having an increased amount of ATGMs both against enemy mechanized units but also because air/artillery support won't always be available and they can be very effectively used against valuable but distant targets of opportunity.

8. Short-range air defenses need to excel at shooting down incoming PGMs (preferably at a decent distance to also protect nearby units) - otherwise, they are just expensive practice targets for enemy stand-off weapons.

9. Countries need to avoid buying weapons systems that they would be unwilling to deploy for the fear of losing them - it effectively makes them expensive parade ground toys.

10. When buying weapons, they need to be evaluated under harsh battlefield conditions - relying on manufacturers' claims and exercises/tests conducted under ideal conditions is dangerous and stupid.

11. Offensive and defensive electronics warfare (and where appropriate cyber warfare) and communication assets need to be properly integrated across the military.

12. Plausibly expected (material and manpower) losses need to be accounted for when training specialist troops and purchasing material and spare parts.

13. Large quantities of munitions and spare parts need to be in local dispersed storage (in a way that minimizes their vulnerability to the enemy's first strike), otherwise, you risk running out during a war.

A lot of these lessons are things that we already knew before this conflict, but in many armies fixing these issues has been a relatively low-priority.

Opinions and feedback about this topic are welcomed.

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