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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

4904

22 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Improvement
of Officer Training

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article draws on the training experience of the Kiev Military District to make recommendations for the improvement of officer training. Several exercises are described. The author feels that insufficient time is devoted to officer training, especially active training in the field. He recommends that regulations on training be prepared in order to standardize Soviet officer instruction. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (89) for 1970.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies.

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William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

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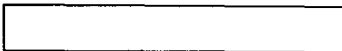
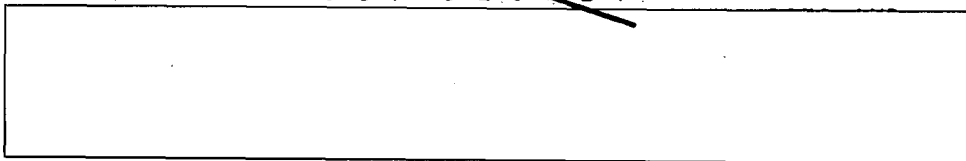
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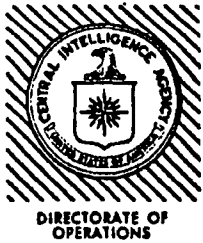
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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Early 1970

DATE 22 January 1974

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Operational Training of Generals, Senior Officers and Staffs (From the Experience of the Red Banner Kiev Military District)

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (89) for 1970 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is General-Lieutenant N. Volodin. This article draws on the training experience of the Kiev Military District to make recommendations for the improvement of officer training. Several exercises are described. The author feels that insufficient time is devoted to officer training, especially active training in the field. He recommends that regulations on training be prepared in order to standardize Soviet officer instruction.

End of Summary

Comment:

Gen.-Lt. Volodin has been Chief-of-Staff of the Volga, Carpathian and Kiev Military Districts. He wrote the article "The Problem of the Organizational Structure of Front and Army Field Commands", Military Thought, No. 4, 1961. Military Thought has been published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three versions in the past -- TOP SECRET, SECRET, and RESTRICTED. There is no information as to whether or not the TOP SECRET version continues to be published. The SECRET version is published three times annually and is distributed down to the level of division commander.

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The Operational Training of Generals,
Senior Officers and Staffs

(From the Experience of the Red Banner Kiev
Military District)

by

General-Leytenant N. Volodin

The constant development of the means of armed combat and the introduction into the forces of new types of weapons and combat equipment have led to a change in the nature of modern operations and the methods by which they are conducted; this in turn demands a higher level of operational training of generals, senior officers, and staffs.

Over the past years, the staff and formations of the Red Banner Kiev Military District have acquired a certain body of experience in organizing and improving the methods of operational training. In this article we would like to share this experience.

* * *

The operational training of generals, senior officers, and staffs in our district is designed to study the methods in the preparation and conduct of modern operations; to further improve their practical skills in organizing the control of troops while they are being brought to combat readiness; to mobilize large units and units within established time limits; to concentrate troops in a theater of military operations; to prepare and conduct an offensive operation to the full depth of a theater of military operations; and to control troop groupings while carrying out operational missions under different conditions at the outset and during a war in which nuclear weapons and conventional means of destruction are employed. The operational training also includes the study of combat equipment and weapons and the most effective methods of

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using them in combat and operations, the study of theaters of military operations, and the study of the skilful exploitation of the experience of past wars and postwar training exercises.

The goals and methods of operational training are specified in a plan drawn up on the basis of directives and orders of the Ministry of Defense, the Organizational Instructions of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, and instructions of the troop commander of the district.

Fulfillment of the established goals has been provided for by organizing courses of instruction for generals and senior officers and exercises for commanders.

Courses of instruction for the command personnel of the district, of armies, and of large units usually take place at the beginning of the training year or instruction period. During these courses the generals and senior officers focus their attention on a deeper understanding of the tasks confronting troops in the training year or instruction period; on a study of the new and more complex problems of operational training; on a study of new combat equipment and the principles of its use in combat; on an examination of the organization, armament, and methods of combat, employment of our own and enemy formations and large units; and on increasing the systematic training of command personnel. The participants in these courses receive instructions on fundamental and key problems of conducting combat actions and on the goals of operational training; and they work out an agreed approach to the conduct of operations and the training of troops.

The basic form of instruction in the courses consists of games or group exercises, during which generals and senior officers personally prepare a series of combat documents. Each document completed is evaluated by the instructors.

Experience has shown that it is advisable to conduct courses for command personnel of the district, and of the armies and large units subordinate to the district, over a period of six to seven days at the beginning of the training year; and to conduct courses for the command personnel of large units of army subordination over a period of five to

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six days at the beginning of each instruction period, under the direction of the army commander.

We sometimes organize more expanded courses which include command personnel of the district, armies, large units, military schools, and individual units. In these courses the officers familiarize themselves with new types of armament and combat equipment not yet issued to the lower command levels; demonstration exercises are conducted with missile launches, field artillery and tank fire, and aerial bombing; group exercises are carried out; reports are given on questions of the theory of operational art; and new methods of preparing and conducting operations are studied.

Constructive results are also produced by courses in which officer-specialists study the fundamental theoretical concepts for using new equipment and for achieving a unity of views on special problems. For this purpose we conduct annual operations courses for command personnel of the air army and its large units and training schools; army courses for officers of the radio-electronic countermeasures service; and others.

The advisability of conducting such courses is obvious: in the first place, we can thereby achieve a high rate of training of generals and officers; second, the courses have a long enough duration (five to seven days) to enable the participating generals and officers to work out a whole series of problems simultaneously within the training period, to develop a unanimous opinion concerning the most important parts of operational training, and to focus on the resolution of basic problems; third, the courses usually include commanders, commanding officers, and senior staff officers, who immediately put into practice the knowledge and orientation which they have acquired and thus bring about overall improvement in the training of staffs and troops; and finally, fourth, the courses make it possible to organize studies, conduct demonstration exercises, and familiarize the participants with new combat equipment through the use of a model material-technical base.

Exercises for commanders occupy an important place in the system of training generals and officers. In our district two days each month are allotted for these exercises (140 hours per year); of this time, 50 hours are devoted to Marxist-Leninist training, 60 to 70 hours to

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operational-tactical training, and the remainder of the time to other types of training. Experience has shown, however, that this amount of time is inadequate. It is evident that we must find a way to increase the number of hours allotted to exercises for commanders. Well-organized exercises, conducted systematically, and using the latest materiel and equipment, assist the participants in developing a correct understanding of questions of operational art, and in showing initiative and creativity in the daily fulfilment of their official duties. The content of exercises for commanders must correspond to the main problems of operational training and to the specific problems to be resolved by subordinate staffs within the training year.

In order to raise the level of field training of generals and officers, we must improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the entire system of exercises for commanders. On this question we are in full agreement with the views of General S. Bashuk, Lieutenant-Colonel M. Fedulov, and Lieutenant-Colonel V. Plk.* In addition, we consider it advisable to specify clearly the knowledge, capabilities, and skills mandatory for each category of officers and to work out quantitative criteria and norms for testing the knowledge acquired against the total achievement envisaged by the training programs. In our opinion, these programs should be drawn up for an extended period (two to three years).

It is also clearly advisable to effect a decided reduction in the number of lectures and other passive forms of instruction and to give preference to active forms - group exercises, practical studies, short exercises, regular exercises, and games. The operational training plans for generals and senior officers in our district over the past three years allotted 80 percent of the operational training time to these active forms.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1968, No. 1 (83), No. 3 (85).

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Operational training experience over an extended period of time has given rise to the following basic procedures: independent work; information sessions, briefings, and lectures; the conduct of group exercises, short exercises, staff training, and command-staff, staff, and special exercises; games; and operational field trips.

Independent work by generals and officers, as their main form of training, has for the most part included the study of regulations, manuals, textbooks, materials from the periodical press, theoretical works, and the experience of past wars; and it has also included the fulfillment of individual assignments and the working out of particular theoretical problems. We have allotted one day per month for this purpose. Organizationally, independent work is initiated with an independent training plan prepared by each general and officer and approved by his immediate superior.

The independent work of generals and officers is monitored by their immediate superiors through individual and group consultations and discussions, through examinations on the study materials, subject matter, and individual assignments, and through daily activities.

Information sessions, briefings, and lectures are conducted in directorates, departments, services, and the entire staff; they usually last from thirty minutes to an hour and a half. They serve as a means of acquainting generals and officers with new combat equipment and future development plans, with problems of operational art, with the characteristics of, and changes in, the organization, groupings, and operating tactics of foreign armies, etc. The holding of information sessions (briefings and lectures) promotes the optimum mastering of the subject matter of command training, furthers the opportune study of past experience in tactics and operational art, and makes it possible to increase the relevance of independent work. Our experience indicates that the most advisable approach is to hold one information session (briefing, lecture) per month for all officers and generals of the staff, and one per month in departments on special problems.

Group exercises are widely used for studying problems of the organization and conduct of operations. However, an analysis of the results of operational training shows that it is still not being used adequately for perfecting the

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practical skills of generals and officers, and that the methodology according to which the exercises are conducted does not provide fully for the independent acquisition, in actual practice, of the information necessary for drawing up plans and issuing assignments to executors under unfavorable working conditions. In many cases group exercises do not fully prepare generals and officers to carry out their responsibilities; for the most part, their operational-tactical thinking is improved, but their training for practical activity under field conditions is completely inadequate.

We consider that in conducting group exercises we must make use of all available methods in order to simulate actual combat conditions as closely as possible. To introduce the trainees into a situation, we must make wider use of technical means of communication and previously prepared dispatches, reports, etc. The trainees must learn to obtain situation data independently. The instructor must therefore not provide all of the required data but must stimulate the trainees to recognize what information is lacking and how to find methods and sources for obtaining and checking this information under specific conditions. In transmitting orders use must be made of technical means of communication and the system of coding and deciphering operational documents. Trainee reports (clarification of tasks, timetables, situation estimate plans, orders) should be required only in the initial phases of instruction after which they should actually issue orders and outline the action to be taken. Group exercises in the field must be conducted at an appropriate control post with strict observance of camouflage measures, and the ability to operate under unfavorable conditions (during moves and other difficult conditions) must be perfected.

Short exercises are being used increasingly as independent study assumes a greater role in the training of generals and officers. Short exercises are conducted to develop operational thinking by generals and senior officers; to train them to formulate decisions clearly and quickly, to issue terse combat orders, to make rapid operational estimates, and to test the general level of operational and specialized competence they have acquired.

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We most often conduct short operational exercises on maps, on which we usually work out one or two training problems. Depending on the makeup of the student body and the nature of the problems, short exercises have been divided into the categories of command, staff, rear services, and special.

On the basis of our experience, we have reached the conclusion that short exercises must be held in the field to the greatest extent possible and must deal not only with problems of organizing combat actions but also of troop control in fluid combat situations requiring immediate and independent decisions by the trainees.

Staff training may be held in separate or combined form depending on the training goals, the problems to be resolved, and the makeup of the student body. They are conducted either on maps or in the field and are designed to improve the accomplishments the trainees achieved during the exercises for commanders, to develop practical skills in carrying out functional responsibilities, and to increase teamwork in directorates, departments, and services and within the field command as a whole.

As a rule we conduct staff training at the beginning of the training year for directorates, departments, staffs of the arms of troops, and services, under the command of the immediate commanding officers. During the training the trainees prepare documents according to their functional responsibilities and report to the instructor, who corrects them and analyzes them in the presence of the whole class. In addition to perfecting the capabilities of generals and officers to carry out their functional responsibilities, such training also improves the interchangeability of officers and achieves teamwork in the operation of departments, directorates, services, and staffs of the arms of troops.

Separate staff training is designed to give officers practical skills for working with communications means under radio jamming conditions. Mobile control posts or their units take part in such exercises, as well as communications subunits.

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After two or three separate staff training sessions we conduct one or two combined staff training sessions for the field commands of the district (armies), using communications means and lasting up to two days. This is followed by one or two combined staff training sessions in the field for the commands of the district, armies, and large units, under the command of the chief-of-staff or the troop commander of the district (2 to 3 days); and this involves the use of communications means and the actual relocation of control posts. The training sessions usually begin by alerting the staffs and having them proceed to alternate or other areas of concentration.

These combined training sessions provide the greatest opportunity for perfecting the practical skills of officers and generals to carry out their functional responsibilities and to increase teamwork in the field commands of the front, the armies, and the staffs of large units and units in the planning and conduct of combat actions.

According to our experience in operational training, the best results are obtained by combined staff training conducted in the field jointly with those elements which are customarily used in command-staff war games, lasting 2 to 3 days and dealing with a composite problem. For example, one of our combined staff training sessions for directorates of the district and the armies in 1968 was conducted in the field and included the use of communications means; its theme was "Bringing the Troops of the District to Full Combat Readiness and Concentrating Them in a Theater of Military Operations". About 500 generals and officers participated, and more than 300 radio sets of all types were used. The following problems were worked out: the alerting of troops; the move of field control posts of the district and armies to alternate areas, and their actual deployment and subsequent regrouping; the establishment of communications; an estimate of the chemical and radiation situation; the withdrawal of troops from zones of contamination; the planning of troop concentration in the theater of military operations; and others.

Most of the time was devoted to working out the administration of staff work regarding communications means, to information collection, and to the assignment of tasks to troops. This led to a considerable increase in the efficiency of generals and officers, greater teamwork

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between directorates and departments, and better field training for these elements. The experience gained enabled operations staffs to successfully solve the problems in operational-strategic exercise VESENNIY GROM (Spring Thunder).

Staff exercises, as the highest form of operational training for staffs, were conducted in our district for the purpose of creating and increasing combat readiness in directorates, in departments, in the staffs of the arms of troops, and in the field commands of the front (district) and the army. Under the more complex conditions which obtained here, officers improved their practical skills in collecting situation data, formulating decisions, working out plans for operations, assigning tasks to troops, and deploying and relocating control posts and organizing their work. Staff exercises served as a preparatory measure for command-staff exercises. They may also be conducted as a form of testing.

In our district, staff exercises for the commands of formations are organized every year. Thus, in 1969 one of these exercises took place in the field, including the use of communications means, and with the theme: "Bringing the Army to Full Combat Readiness. Advancing from the Interior of the Country Toward the Front Under Conditions of Serious Disruptions of Communications and Radioactive Contamination of Terrain. Commitment to Combat from the March Before the Concentration of Forces Is Complete." Participating in this exercise were commands of large units, communications units and subunits, service units and subunits, and a great deal of equipment. In all, 463 automotive vehicles, up to 90 radio sets of various types, four helicopters, and one aircraft were used.

During this staff exercise, the participants worked out problems of bringing an army field command to full combat readiness, with full mobilization of a security and service battalion; problems of planning a long-distance move and of troop control with actual relocation of headquarters over a distance of 220 to 400 kilometers and with a distance of 55 to 125 kilometers between control posts; problems of committing an army to combat with incomplete concentration of forces; and problems of troop control during an offensive operation. In all, the participating staffs received a great deal of experience from all of the problems worked

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out, especially in controlling advancing troops with realistic distances between control posts.

Command-staff exercises and war games - the most advanced, instructive, and effective forms of combined training of the command and staffs - are conducted by our district as the culminating phase of their training. The most profitable exercises are two- or three- stage CPX in which "friendly" and "enemy" forces are designated, and combined CPX with combined-arms tactical and special exercises. These forms of training make it possible to achieve significant results within short periods of time. They help the trainees to develop their operational thinking, their ability to analyze a situation rapidly, and independence, boldness, and initiative in solving their training problems.

In 1969, almost all the CPX in our district were in two or three stages with the designation of participating troops as "friendly" and "enemy"; control posts were relocated over realistic distances; wide use was made of radio jamming, designation of "enemy" forces, and simulation. The three-stage front CPX, ZARYA, included tactical training of a missile brigade and divisional tactical training of a tank division, training in which combat artillery fire and missile launches were carried out across the combat dispositions of friendly forces without moving the troops from their positions. In addition, aviation units were actually rebased over a distance of up to 700 kilometers under adverse weather conditions.

Experience shows that CPX or war games are sometimes reduced to nothing more than making a succession of decisions in accord with the hypothetical problems of the training theme. This makes it impossible to train officers in the continuous control of combat actions. Too little time is devoted to the painstaking organizational work needed to implement decisions. In order to train staffs not only to work out expedient decisions but also to make comprehensive provisions for their implementation, we conduct simulated combat actions. In doing this, the duration of the operational period is usually extremely long, the situation being built up in such a way as to compel the trainees to make a series of individual decisions for developing the main decision. Such an approach helps to give officers and staffs the skills needed for continuous

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control of troops in a complex and constantly changing operational situation.

A very effective technique in training staffs has been the extensive practice of working out problems of organizing an operation (battle) directly in the field (or using a mockup of the terrain). As indicated by the front CPX, ZARYA, conducting reconnaissance, organizing coordination, and assigning missions to troops in the field significantly raise the quality of trainee solutions to training problems, are of great benefit to the trainees, and play an important role in the overall improvement of the field capability of the staff.

In previous operational exercises, staffs frequently received insufficient practice in organizing coordination with adjacent units, particularly with fronts and armies operating ahead; and this had a negative effect on their study of the specific conditions involved in committing troops of the front (armies) to combat from the march. This is because the district cannot set up operations groups to simulate forces operating ahead. To create favorable opportunities for staffs to acquire practical skills in organizing coordination, we believe that it would be advisable to include operations groups from adjacent districts in front exercises.

A front formed on the basis of internal military districts will have to be advanced to the theater of military operations upon the outbreak of war, and this theater may include the territory of contiguous socialist countries. Therefore, to increase the combat readiness of operations staffs for carrying out this mission, it would be advisable, in our opinion, to provide them with more information on these countries; we have in mind information on the communications system and its capabilities, air defense, availability of rolling stock on the railroads, water-crossing means, rear services bases, etc.

The organizing of actual work at control posts, and the simulation of enemy action against them, are of great importance in providing staffs with a training situation close to combat reality. To accomplish this, we try to place control posts at realistic distances from each other, as decided by the participants. In working in the field, all measures of camouflage and security are observed, as

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well as measures for defense and for protection against weapons of mass destruction. The trainees are periodically subjected to the simulated effects of conventional fire, chemical, nuclear, and other means, with individual officers, units of the control organ, and service personnel put out of action. These measures prepare departments (directorates) to operate understaffed in accord with the procedure worked out for interchanging officers and to be able to use communications means when radio countermeasures are being applied.

At present we are having a certain amount of difficulty with the procedure for evaluating the work of a staff in an exercise. The overall evaluation sometimes depends on subjective factors, since there are no set standards at the present time. For example, how much time should the staff of a formation (large unit) spend in drawing up the plan of the formation commander (commander) to move out or to launch an offensive operation, in order to be rated "excellent" or "satisfactory"? The same applies to the time needed for drawing up a combat order and getting it to the staffs subordinate to the commanders on a given axis. These questions are still unanswered.

The activities of staffs are extremely varied and are carried out under various dissimilar conditions, but there must be specific criteria for evaluating their basic aspects. We believe that the development of such criteria and their adoption into the actual practice of operational training will have an immediate beneficial effect.

We have taken the first steps in this direction. In 1969, the staff of the rocket troops and artillery of the district developed a methodology for evaluating CPX of rocket brigades (battalions). Using this methodology, the overall evaluation is put together from several individual ones: evaluations of the tactical training, the control of missile strikes, the quality and timeliness of documents prepared, the coordination between a rocket brigade and a mobile technical repair base, the tactical-special training of a control battery, and others. Time, quantity, and quality criteria have been established for making these individual evaluations.

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Operational field trips, conducted under the command of the troop commander of the district, have been used more and more widely in recent years. We prepare and conduct them in accord with a previously worked out plan, taking into account the overall role of the district. The methods of implementing them are varied. The trainees are usually divided into groups, each of which studies a particular set of problems. During operational field trips, the most important problems are worked out in short operational exercises and group exercises in the field. The results of each field trip are carefully collated. This material is subsequently used in studying theaters of military operations and during operational exercises and war games. A field trip of this type took place in our district in 1968, and another is planned for 1970.

We point out in conclusion that a great body of experience has been built up in the forces for perfecting the methodology of operational training, experience which is set forth from time to time in the periodical press. Training materials are published on the organization of operational training, primarily intended for students of military academies. These materials are not official and are published in the form of discussion, the same problems often being treated in different ways. The result is that many advanced forms and methods of training find only slight adoption into actual practice.

It appears to us that in order to collate beneficial experience and translate it into actual practice, and to establish common principles for conducting operational training, it is now necessary to prepare and publish a Regulation for Conducting Maneuvers, Operational and Command-Staff Exercises, and War Games.

This will contribute to a significant increase in the purposefulness of the operational training of generals, senior officers, and staffs.

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