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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

4 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Commitment of an Army to Battle in Conventional Warfare

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 a CPX of the Ural Military District to discuss the commitment of an army to an engagement under conventional warfare conditions. The creation of the army strike groupings and their timely advance to selected axes during the initial period are the focus of the article. The authors warn that the measures taken to prepare the army for commitment are carried out under the constant threat of an enemy nuclear attack. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (88) for 1969.

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.

[Redacted Signature]

David H. Blee
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

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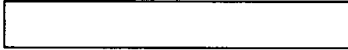
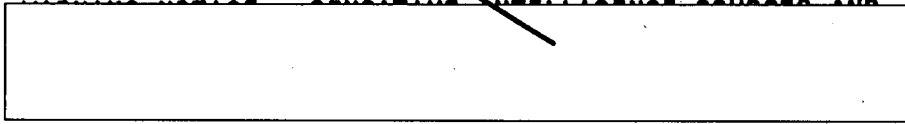
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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Late 1969

DATE 4 February 1974

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Features of the Organization of the Commitment of an Army into an Engagement Under Conditions in Which Conventional Means of Destruction Are Employed (From the experience of a command-staff exercise of the Ural Military District)

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (88) for 1969 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are General-Major I. Yakovlenko and Colonel N. Aksenov. This article draws on a CPX of the Ural Military District to discuss the commitment of an army to an engagement under conventional warfare conditions. The creation of the army strike groupings and their timely advance to selected axes during the initial period are the focus of the article. The authors warn that the measures taken to prepare the army for commitment are carried out under the constant threat of an enemy nuclear attack.

End of Summary

Comment:

Gen-Major Yakovlenko was First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Ural Military District in 1969. He wrote an article in reply to letters from junior officers who were dissatisfied with their career prospects, "Not for the Sake of Appointments and Ranks", Red Star, 24 August 1969. 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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Features of the Organization of the Commitment of an Army into an Engagement Under Conditions in Which Conventional Means of Destruction Are Employed

(From the experience of a command-staff exercise of the Ural Military District)

by

General-Major I Yakovlenko, Colonel N. Aksenov

There are a number of features that are unique to the organization of the commitment of an army into an engagement under conditions in which conventional means of destruction are employed. For example, at the time the front directive is received to commit an army into an engagement, its troops may still be located at a considerable distance from the area of the forthcoming actions. Another feature is the creation of a strike grouping of troops capable of overcoming enemy resistance by achieving the necessary density of conventional means of destruction. This leaves a distinctive imprint on the organization of troop control and troop coordination.

The most important feature, however, is the constant threat of an enemy nuclear strike, which makes it essential to anticipate the moment of transition to the use of nuclear weapons and to take effective defensive measures. }

As training exercises have demonstrated, an army will, as a rule, receive its order for commitment into an engagement at a time when its large units and units are in an unloading area, or are concentrated in an assigned area. When this occurs, the situation confronting the troops more often than not turns out to be inadequately defined and unclear to the army staff. Additional measures must be taken to speed up the troop movement and to increase their readiness for commitment into the engagement from the march. Most often the troops will move out by their own means as organic large units over a large number of routes. There

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may be only an extremely limited period of time available to formulate a plan and to organize the commitment of troops into an engagement under conditions of a rapidly changing situation at the front.

The creation of troop strike groupings and the assurance of their timely advance to selected strike axes require the very close attention of the commander and staff of the army. This is a complex problem, because an army does not always have the necessary quantity of forces and means at the time of its commitment to an engagement.

In connection with this, experience derived from command-staff exercises and war games conducted in the Ural Military District demonstrates that in order to successfully commit an army into an engagement and achieve superiority over the enemy it is advisable to have the majority of the available forces in the first echelon. At the time the army receives its mission, it may have only one or two (less often two or three divisions; the remaining divisions will arrive at intervals of two to three days. There will not be enough forces for the formation of strike groupings. In this case, it is advisable to transfer to the army one or two of the divisions of the first echelon of front troops. In a command-staff exercise in 1965, a front troop commander acted in a similar manner. He transferred two motorized rifle divisions to the army being committed into an engagement; and one of the tasks assigned them was to destroy the enemy and seize the army line of commitment into the engagement. A total of four motorized rifle divisions and one tank division were committed into the engagement in the first echelon of the army, while one division was allotted to the combined-arms reserve. As a result, superiority over the enemy was achieved in the breakthrough sectors in a short time. In this case, the army was able to deliver two strikes on converging axes in order to surround and destroy the defending groupings. The further buildup of efforts by the strike grouping is possible as army large units and units arrive from the interior or as reinforcements arrive from the front.

Considerable difficulty is encountered in building up sufficient artillery density to effectively neutralize the enemy defenses. The magnitude of the task our artillery faces is increased because of the great numerical strength of some of the infantry divisions of our probable enemy

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(even when they are relatively poorly equipped). Calculations show that the effective neutralization of one Infantry division on a 15-kilometer front requires 850 to 1300 guns and mortars for preparatory fire of 30 to 60 minutes. And if the division is defending on a 20-kilometer front, 660 to 1000 guns and mortars will be needed. Given presently authorized artillery strength, a combined-arms army which is composed of only five divisions (taking into account the inadequate strength and the losses in the divisions transferred to the army) will have about 700 guns and mortars which can be employed for preparatory fire. Consequently, in order to have even the minimum density with the maximum duration of preparatory fire (and this is extremely undesirable) when the army is committed into an engagement, an artillery division will have to be used as reinforcement, with the rest of the firepower supplied by the artillery of the armies of the first echelon of the front and by indirect tank fire. ||

The following special feature characterizes troop control--the work methods of the commander and staff will depend on the conditions of the situation. Judging by training exercise experience, it is advisable that the commander formulate his plan on the map and then refine it on the terrain of the axis of the main strike; assign tasks to subordinates; and organize coordination. Of proven value is the practice of sending in advance to the chiefs of the arms of troops and services the list of questions on which they are required to report the latest information to the army commander before he formulates the final plan. Under modern conditions it is most probable that the commander and a small group of officers will drive to the axis of the main strike in one or two staff combat vehicles, refine the questions, and amend the plan. An alternative possibility is that after receiving the mission, the army commander will go by helicopter with the operations group (of the forward command post) to the area of anticipated combat actions and there formulate his plan and assign the troops their tasks. In all cases it is essential to endeavor to accomplish the work at the army level in a short period of time and to give more time to subordinates.

It is of paramount importance that the troops be assigned their tasks promptly. Experience demonstrates that preliminary combat orders can be issued within 20 to 30 minutes after the army receives the front directive. The

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basic combat orders should be prepared while the commander is formulating his plan and should set forth the combat tasks and the amount of time allotted for their execution, the boundaries between large units, and the basic measures to be taken in support of the commitment. This method enables the commanders of large units and of army units to formulate their plans and organize combat actions within a short period of time.

The systematic advance of the army and its successful commitment into the engagement depend to a considerable extent on firm control. This is achieved along with other factors by carefully planning the allocation of army staff personnel and communications means among the control posts and the timely relocation of the control posts. During the conduct of operations in which nuclear weapons are not used, the control posts can be located close to the forward units and should not be frequently relocated for reasons of protection; and this creates conditions favorable to the use of line communications.

Control becomes considerably more complicated when the army delivers two strikes on separate axes, especially if a portion of the forces and means is still located on the approach route to the area of the commitment into the engagement. The forces and means that are prepared and equipped to use nuclear weapons also require constant attention. Under these conditions, successful control is guaranteed by the strict centralization of the control of combat actions by the army and by the judicious display of initiative by subordinates in carrying out their assigned tasks.

As training exercises demonstrate, in this situation it is advisable to divide the army command post, which constitutes the basic element of the control system, into two positions. The army commander controls the troops from the first one, which is located 20 to 40 kilometers from the forward units. The forces and means that are to be deployed at the second position are located under cover at a sufficient distance, from the standpoint of defense, from the first position, ready to move out and deploy in a new area. The first deputy chief of staff usually heads the forward command post, and located there with him are the deputy chiefs of the main departments and of the arms of troops and services, plus one or two officers. When combat



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actions begin, the forward command post is deployed on the axis of the main strike at a distance of 10 kilometers from the forward units. The rear control post is located 10 to 15 kilometers from the command post.

The procedure may vary for the relocation of command posts during the advance of the army and its commitment into the engagement. For example, prior to the beginning of the advance, the army staff sends its officers with communications means to the staffs of the first-echelon armies in whose zones the army will be committed into the engagement. Simultaneously, if possible, the forward command post deploys to the area of commitment and it controls the approaching troops and the large units being transferred from the forces of the first echelon of the front. The forward command post also exercises troop control during the commitment into the engagement. The army command post is relocated together with the main troop grouping and exercises control over it.

Experience confirms the advisability of relocating the commanding officers of control posts by air. During training exercises the army commander frequently used air transport for personal liaison with the commanders of the divisions on the axis of the main strike. He was usually accompanied by: the chief of the operations department or his deputy; officers from the rocket troops and artillery, the operations group of the air army, and the intelligence department; communicators; and code clerks. The communications means (the personal radio set of the commander) were sent to the designated area in advance.

One of the most important problems in preparing for the commitment of an army into an engagement is the organization of coordination. The foundations for coordination are laid at the same time the troops are assigned their tasks, and it is organized by tasks, axes, targets, methods of actions, and times, for the entire depth of the operation; and in the greatest detail, for the depth of the task of the first day. In an army command-staff exercise conducted in our district, the organization of coordination was accomplished at the same time as the formulation of the plan and the planning of the operation and was refined by the army commander during reconnaissance. The commanders of the large units of the army being committed into the engagement and the front personnel who were to be subordinate to them were required

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to participate in the reconnaissance. Selections on the terrain were made of attack lines and of the areas where the enemy was to be neutralized and destroyed by artillery fire and air strikes; and refinements were made on the axes of the strikes; the types of maneuvers, and the combat makeup of the large units during the breakthrough and in the depth of the defense. It was anticipated that from the moment nuclear means were employed all efforts would be concentrated on decisively defeating the enemy by delivering nuclear strikes and by having the large units of the combined-arms army exploit the results of the strikes to the greatest possible degree.

One should keep in mind that because of the limited amount of time available for the preparation of the commitment and because of the separation of the elements of the operational makeup of the army, the commander will not be able to solve all coordination problems personally. Therefore, the role of the staff and of the chiefs of the arms of troops and services will increase, and they must arrive at a common understanding of the tasks and of the methods to be used by their subordinates in carrying them out, and do so without curbing the initiative of their subordinates. Coordination problems are reflected on the army commander's map of the plan and, when time is available (as the experience of the last war demonstrated), the army staff can work out the coordination plan. However, in our opinion it should not be as detailed and cumbersome as it has been in the past. Coordination, like the plan of the operation, must be constantly refined in conformity with the developing situation.

During the organization of the commitment of an army into an engagement under conditions in which only conventional means of destruction are used, there always exists the constant threat of an enemy nuclear attack. This circumstance necessitates carrying out extremely important measures to maintain the readiness of army forces and means for actions under the conditions of nuclear warfare. Among these measures priority should be given to reconnaissance for the purpose of discovering enemy preparations for a nuclear attack; the precise definition of targets to be destroyed in the first nuclear strike; the allocation of tasks to the rocket troops and aviation; the maintenance of constant readiness to deliver nuclear strikes; and the

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organization of protection for the army troops against weapons of mass destruction.

It is impossible to ensure reliable control during modern operations without anticipating events, and certainly not without estimating the moment of transition to the use of nuclear weapons. To aid in making this prediction while the operation is in progress, it is essential to study and analyze the situation methodically and in depth and to consider in advance possible alternative plans so that at the critical moment it will be possible to formulate the final plan and refine the tasks for the troops or assign them new ones.

Operational training experience during the last two to three years leads us to the conclusion that in order to gather timely and precise information on the situation, to swiftly formulate the plan, and to refine the tasks of the troops and render assistance to them, it is advisable to have a single control center at the army headquarters. As in the formations of the Air Defense Troops of the Country, all the information required by the commander to formulate the plan will be permanently concentrated in this center. This center should prepare all the basic orders for the army troops.

It is not a question of breaking up the organization of the field command of the army, but of altering its work methods in order to avoid duplication and a multiplicity of stages. It is advisable that the personnel of the control center include the army commander, the chief of staff, the chiefs of the operations and intelligence departments, the chief of rocket troops and artillery, and the chiefs of components for the large units. The directorates and departments of the army command post should be located near the control center at distances which permit ease of communication between the chiefs of the arms of troops and services and their officers, and which also permit the organization of selective circuit communications. The personnel, functions, and procedures at the control center require further study during the course of operational training.

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During combat operations employing only conventional means of destruction, a somewhat different problem is posed by the collection and evaluation of information needed for the determination of the moment of transition to actions employing nuclear weapons and by the very crucial task of preparing the first nuclear strike. In our opinion, it is advisable that the field command of the army have a nuclear planning group to do this work, and that it include generals and officers from the operations and intelligence departments, the staff of the rocket troops and artillery, the operational group of the air army, and others. On the basis of the instructions from the army commander, this group continually prepares information for use in the refinement of nuclear planning and, as the operation develops, maintains the forces and means designated for the first nuclear strike in the highest possible degree of readiness. This permits the swift implementation of the plan of the commander for the employment of nuclear weapons in the event of the transition to their use; and it enables the army staff to more purposefully exercise troop control during non-nuclear operations. // // *

Experience gained in command-staff exercises demonstrates that it is possible to control army troops during their commitment into an engagement only on the basis of a single centralized army communications system that meets the control requirements of all the arms of troops, the special troops, and the rear services, and that consists of the central communications centers at the control posts, axial and lateral lines, auxiliary communications centers, monitoring and test points, and the appropriate radio nets and radio links. A communications system structured in this way permits the most economical possible use of the forces and means and permits moving them to ensure uninterrupted control.