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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 August 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Collection and
Recording of Situation Data

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 describes communications problems in the collection and recording
of situation data in an air army, and ways of solving them. The authors
recommend holding specialized training sessions in the transmission of
reports and intelligence information, working out control problems in
detail, and utilizing a card index. This article appeared in Issue No. 3
(82) for 1967.

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. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been
assigned   .

William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Late 1967

DATE 11 August 1975

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Collection and Recording of Situation Data

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (82) for 1967 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are Colonel A. Mekko and Engineer Lieutenant Colonel L. Speshilov. This article describes communications problems in the collection and recording of situation data in an air army, and ways of solving them. The authors recommend holding specialized training sessions in the transmission of reports and intelligence information, working out control problems in detail, and utilizing a card index.

End of Summary

Comment:

The SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.

Collection and Recording of Situation Data
by
Colonel A. Mekko
Engineer Lieutenant Colonel L. Speshilov

The collection and processing of situation data often involves
considerable difficulties arising mainly from the breakdown of
communication and information sharing between departments and services,
overloading of the communications channels, and so forth.

We will examine, by relating to the experience of air army
command-staff exercises, how the collection of situation data can be
accelerated and processing improved.

In this connection we will note first that which frequently hampers
organizing the continuous collection of situation data and hinders its
accurate recording. In those cases when subordinate and cooperating staffs
are assigned to a command-staff exercise, the receipt of data from the
latter becomes highly complicated (especially with basing dispersal) by
several difficulties in attaining communications security. As we know,
manual coding tables are not a perfect means of making communications
secure, and do not reliably ensure secure control to the full extent.
True, coding machines have been developed in recent years. But speed and
reliability are not provided by transmission of a text recorded on
perforated tape. Active jamming is capable of completely precluding the
exchange of information. Even in a routine situation, high speed, secure
radio traffic cannot always be achieved; transmission of a text in letters
by telegraph sharply reduces the output of coding machines.

In the everyday performance of staff work, unfortunately, proper
attention is not always given to the rated load of the communications and
communications security means, which is why data collection is delayed. We
will explain this opinion with an example. Supposing a staff has available
all technical means of communication: telephone, telegraph, and radio, and
all means of communications security are operating -- ciphers, speech
security equipment, coding machines -- and manual coding tables are used,
then the load of all these means is not the rated one, but an arbitrary one
(as actually happens).

It is not difficult to estimate that in this case the probability of secure transmission of information within the prescribed time frame approaches zero, especially at peak hours. The experience of exercises corroborates the truth of what we have said: there have been quite a few instances when priority reports were much delayed in reaching the addressee, frequently arriving after the requirement for them had passed. Meanwhile the capabilities of the communications center are not fully utilized; when the speech security equipment is overloaded, the radio is inactive, although stacks of radiograms and perforated tapes have accumulated for the telegraph. There is no uniformity, brevity or simplicity in transmitted information, and the same data are repeated unnecessarily.

What steps should be taken to improve data collection and the recording of the situation? First, in our opinion, we should practice, in order to master in detail, all stages of the collection of situation data, without exception. It is desirable to systematically conduct specialized training sessions for this, since it does not at all require bringing a large number of people and equipment into the field.

We will tell how we dealt with this in our staff. At the beginning of the year we conducted a staff training session on the theme "Control of an air army when a combat alert reveille occurs". The communications between staffs were those in operation, and the combat strength and basing were actually those for the day of the exercise. The problem was for the subordinate units to send reports to the air army staff according to schedule, and for the air army staff to transmit intelligence information and combat instructions to subordinates.

The training session participants were convinced that there were certain shortcomings in control. Because of this the chief of staff decided to conduct the training session a second time. Subsequently, in the operational course of instruction, problems analogous to those in staff training sessions were worked out on maps during a war game. For this purpose the classes were equipped with radios and technical means for communications security.

As a technique, the detailed working out of all control problems also proves itself in command-staff exercises. The trainees should devote hour after hour, or even more time, to this in order to fully solve the problems of control. Furthermore, as much attention as possible should be given to developing in the officers the ability to utilize in practice the tactical-technical capabilities of all the secure communications means

available to staffs. This work can be conducted along two lines: work out the most advantageous rated load of communications means and resolutely reduce the volume of information circulating in the control system without detracting from its substance. To avoid uneven operation of communications security means, it is desirable to make the operations duty officer responsible for regulating their load. He through the communications duty officer has to regulate the precedence by which documents are transmitted by technical communications means, according to their priority. How and by what means to encode the text -- speech security equipment, coding machines, manual coding means, etc. -- this question must be decided not by the executor of the documents, but by the person loading all the secure communications channels. The priority of sending a document must be determined by the chief, who is fully responsible for control.

Standard documents provide a substantial advantage in reducing the volume of information. One characteristic principle in this is that those standard documents which have identical and invariable format at all levels of control are the most used.

We also suggest using this principle in the recording of situation data, for which we recommend using a card index. Our staff, with the help of a card index, recorded the situation data in all the exercises and games conducted in the last three years, which played an appreciable role in improving control. The point of this recording is that all basic situation data are put on record blanks (cards) and all changes are entered continuously.*

Situation data are recorded in the operations department of the air army staff, however the appropriate specialists are made responsible for filling in each column of the form. For example, changes in the aircraft inventory are recorded by the aviation engineer service, changes in the air crews, by the personnel department, basing and interairfield movement, by the operations department jointly with the airfield service, the attack and accomplishment of missions, by the flight control command post, etc.

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*The blanks of the card index are made out of separate sheets of heavy paper, size 420 x 290mm, filled in in pencil and kept in a special box by the operations duty officer (responsible command post duty officer).
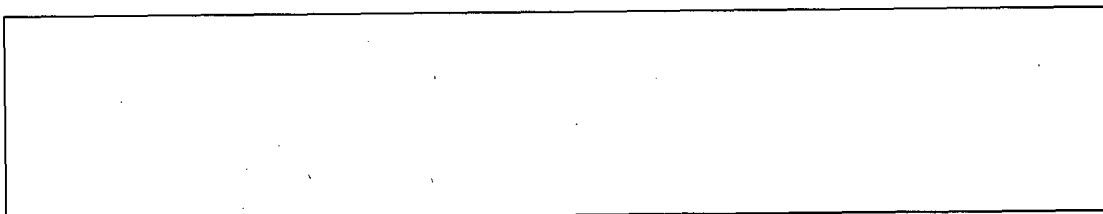
The simplicity and clarity of such recording facilitates all staff work: officer work productivity is increased, the use of computer equipment in any calculations is simplified, and developments are analyzed more accurately.