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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

10 January 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Nature of Limited Forces and the Special Features of Their Combat Actions

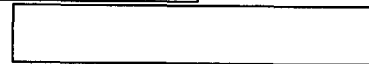
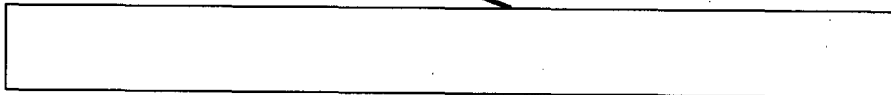
1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article comments on a previous article which classifies the combat effectiveness of troops which have been subjected to nuclear strikes, and analyzes the nature of their subsequent combat actions. The author here discusses the sequence for employing forces and means following nuclear strikes, emphasizing the need to determine the actual status of troops in order to assign tasks and reinforce them, as well as certain command measures, including conducting regroupings and restoring control, which will enable the troops to exploit the results of the nuclear strikes, maintain the initiative and defeat the enemy. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (86) 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. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

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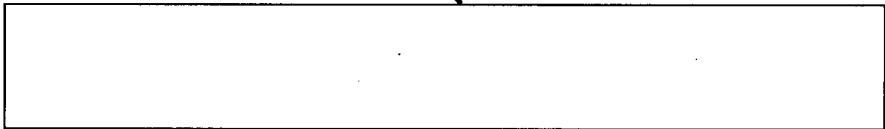
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# Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Early 1969

DATE 10 January 1977

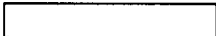

SUBJECT

**MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR):** The Nature of Limited Forces and the Special Features of Their Combat Actions

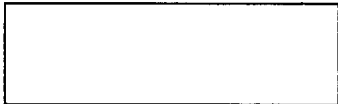
SOURCE Documentary Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (86) for 1969 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel S. Balandin. This article comments on a previous article which classifies the combat effectiveness of troops which have been subjected to nuclear strikes, and analyzes the nature of their subsequent combat actions. The author here discusses the sequence for employing forces and means following nuclear strikes, emphasizing the need to determine the actual status of troops in order to assign tasks and reinforce them, as well as certain command measures, including conducting regroupings and restoring control, which will enable the troops to exploit the results of the nuclear strikes, maintain the initiative and defeat the enemy.

End of Summary

 Comment: 

 The article to which it refers was



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The Nature of Limited Forces and the Special Features  
of Their Combat Actions

by  
Colonel S. Balandin

An article by Colonel L. Semeyko, published under the same title in the Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 3 (82), for 1967, attempted to classify the combat effectiveness of large units and units that have suffered losses and to analyze the nature of limited forces. In our opinion the most interesting part of the article consists of the methods of actions recommended for troops remaining after nuclear strikes and the specific command measures aimed, under these complex conditions, at swiftly exploiting the results of our own nuclear strikes and retaining the initiative.

As regards the classification, proposed by the author, of the combat effectiveness of large units and units, in our opinion, it can be adopted for convenience in studying the problems of the employment in a battle or operation of troops that have been subjected to nuclear strikes. It can also be used to distinguish between the forces and means remaining after enemy nuclear strikes and the troops that even in peacetime have a reduced T/O or other large units and units that for some reason have not been brought up to full strength.

However, we believe that this classification will hardly satisfy commanders and staffs under combat conditions, when precise data on the status of each large unit (unit) are required. It is extremely doubtful that a formation commander (commander) will find adequate the general conclusion that any given large units (units) have limited combat capabilities or have partially lost their combat effectiveness. Obviously, in each specific instance he will require precise data in order to assign them actual tasks and take necessary measures to reinforce them. Neither percentage expressions nor the use of general terms can reflect the actual status of any given large unit or unit. For example, tank subunits may suffer losses of crews while the equipment is preserved; in some units the control posts may remain, in others -- some of the combat subunits, and in still others -- the servicing subunits and rear services organs.

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Undoubtedly, after a massed enemy nuclear strike it is more convenient to replace troops on decisive axes with the second echelons (reserves) of the front, armies, and divisions, as the author recommends. However, the possibility that the large units and units of the second echelons and reserves may have suffered as much or more from nuclear strikes cannot be ruled out. Therefore, we believe that formation commanders (commanders) should first organize subsequent actions employing surviving forces and means, but in order to do so (we again emphasize) they will require not general conclusions on the status and combat effectiveness of troops, but a knowledge of the specific capabilities of each large unit (unit).

It is quite possible that some units and subunits that have been subjected to nuclear strikes will not be able to continue to carry out their assigned tasks. They will be forced to eliminate the aftereffects of the nuclear attack, and to reorganize themselves. However, the overall majority of surviving units and subunits will have to continue the uninterrupted offensive, without a pause. It must be kept in mind that at that time the enemy, as a result of our nuclear strikes, may be in the same or even a worse condition. His capabilities will be sharply reduced. And our forces, even if weakened, will be able to carry out certain tasks immediately after the nuclear strikes.

In the given situation, the formation commander (commander) and staff will have an acute need of data on the status not only of their own troops, but also on those of the enemy, since only by knowing the true balance of forces on the most important axes can they determine the methods of troop actions and correctly refine their tasks or assign new ones. Unfortunately, since the article devotes little attention to the analysis of the balance of forces, the conclusions and recommendations of the author are not very persuasive.

On the question of setting up composite troop formations from the remnants of large units and units that have suffered massed nuclear strikes and using them during the offensive, the article provides practical recommendations based on command-staff and troop exercises that in our opinion are worth noting.

The author quite accurately emphasizes that at the same time as the formation commander (commander) and staff direct the

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combat actions of the surviving troops, they will have to take a whole range of organizational measures to resubordinate the remnants of large units and units, and to restore control, communications, and all-round support of actions. For this purpose it will obviously be necessary to use primarily the remaining control organs, resubordinating to them the remnants of adjacent large units (units). If control posts have been put out of action and the operation of communications systems has been disrupted, it will be necessary to send staff officers to certain axes and to take other measures.

It is also obvious that the formation commander (commander) will have to render assistance to large units and units that have been subjected to nuclear strikes. However, the experience of exercises involving large units and units of the Baltic and Belorussian military districts and the Southern Group of Forces has demonstrated that many of these, using their own forces, were able to eliminate the aftereffects of the nuclear attack and quickly prepare themselves for further actions.

The author pays very little attention to the selection (transfer) of the axis of attacks by the remaining troops, and this matter requires study. When both sides are endeavoring above all to destroy troops on decisive axes by means of nuclear strikes, these axes may lose their initial importance. The prospect of the surviving troops achieving the quickest possible success on new and, for them, extremely short axes, may open up. In other situations, although the decisive axes retain their importance, an acute shortage of time will preclude accomplishing the desired regroupings.

The opportunity sometimes arises to commit the second echelon to the engagement, as the author recommends, for the purpose of quickly exploiting the results of nuclear strikes on the most important axis. However, in the majority of cases, obviously, it will be necessary to change the axes of attacks by the remaining large units and units and, sometimes, to accomplish the necessary regrouping of troops in a short time.

To sum up what we have said, let us emphasize that after the sides have exchanged massed nuclear strikes, there may be a definite sequence in the use of forces and means. Immediately following nuclear strikes, the surviving troops and the second

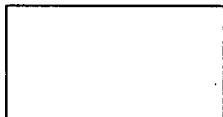
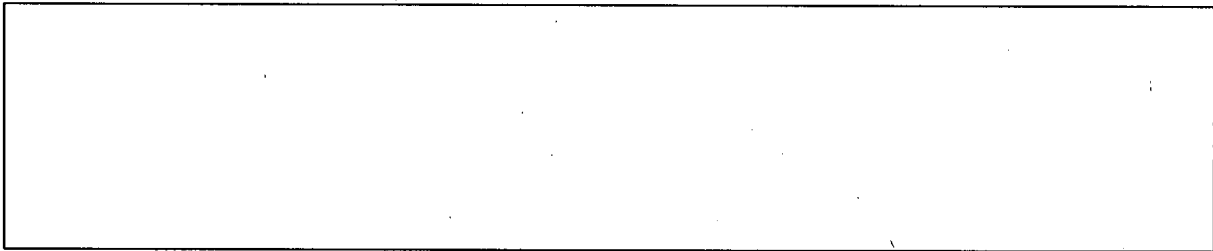
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echelons (reserves) will most quickly be in a position to attack, followed by the composite troop formations, which, as is known, require a certain amount of time to be organized. All these forces and means will be able to successfully exploit the results of nuclear strikes in order to complete the destruction of the enemy in precise, coordinated actions.



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