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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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15 June 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Transition from Conventional to Nuclear Warfare During an Offensive

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Repor is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles on the Journal "Military Thought." This article is based on CPX and war games conducted by the Frunze Academy. It stresses the necessity of conducting conventional military operations in a manner which will afford the greatest advantages in the event of transition to the use of nuclear weapons. The author states that political approval of the use of nuclear weapons by US forces will take up to two hours, and that when indications of US nuclear attack are detected, Soviet forces should carry out a preemptive nuclear strike. The author also expresses concern that a Soviet commander will employ nuclear weapons without authorization, and recommends measures to prevent such action. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (91) 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.

[redacted]

for W. E. Colby
Deputy Director for Operations

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Intelligence Information Special Report

DIRECTORATE OF PLANS

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Transition to the Use of Nuclear Weapons in the Course of an Offensive Operation

SOURCE Documentary

SUMMARY

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (91) for 1970 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought." The author of this article is Colonel A. Postovalov. This article is based on CPX and war games conducted by the Frunze Academy. It stresses the necessity of conducting conventional military operations in a manner which will afford the greatest advantages in the event of transition to the use of nuclear weapons. Reconnaissance of enemy targets for nuclear strikes and the destruction of enemy nuclear capability during the conventional phase are given as examples. The author states that political approval of the use of nuclear weapons by US forces will take up to two hours, and that when indications of US nuclear attack are detected, Soviet forces should carry out a preemptive nuclear strike. The author also expresses concern that a Soviet commander will employ nuclear weapons without authorization, and recommends measures to prevent such action.

END OF SUMMARY

COMMENT:

Colonel A. Postovalov authored an article in Military Herald, Issue No. 9 for 1955 titled "Thoughts on Control During Military Training," and in Military Missile, Issue No. 3 for 1969--"Modeling the Combat Operations of the Ground Forces." Military Thought has been published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three verions 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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Transition to the Use of Nuclear Weapons in the Course of an Offensive Operation

by Colonel A. Postovalov
Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent

The foundations for successful transition to the use of nuclear weapons are laid down during the preparation for the operation. During this period the decision is made on participation of the army in the initial nuclear strike of the front, and on troop action to exploit the results of the strike. Tasks are assigned to those who will carry them out. Coordinated action, reconnaissance, and final reconnaissance are organized for the initial nuclear strike; a reliable control system is established with first priority for the nuclear weapons; constant readiness is ensured for using these weapons; steps are taken to defend the troops and rear services facilities in the event of surprise use of nuclear weapons by the enemy; and finally, operational camouflage--particularly for nuclear weapons--and the radioelectronic struggle are organized for the delivery of the initial nuclear strike, and nuclear warhead reserves are echeloned.

From the beginning of an operation using conventional weapons, work continues without interruption to maintain constant troop readiness for the use of nuclear weapons. The reason for this is to make it possible to deliver the initial strike in the shortest possible time after the signal is received. To this end reconnaissance and final reconnaissance are carried out on enemy targets slated for destruction in the initial nuclear strike; the mission of the nuclear weapons which will be used in the initial strike is refined in good time; steps are taken to prevent the loss of launchers and nuclear warheads and to preserve reliable control over the means planned for delivering the initial nuclear strike; a constant struggle is carried out against the enemy's nuclear weapons; and checks are made on the readiness of the troops for action under conditions of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

On the basis of the experience of command and staff exercises and war games conducted at the M. V. Frunze Military Academy, this article sets forth a number of considerations on the procedures for transition from non-nuclear combat action to nuclear in an army offensive operation, as applicable to the Western Theater of Military Operations.

In preparing an offensive operation, within the decision to participate in the initial nuclear strike of a front, the army commander determines the primary and reserve targets which must be destroyed by the army's weapons (if these targets have not been designated by the front troop commander), the yield of the nuclear warheads to be used and the type of burst, the means of delivery to be used, the tasks of the first echelon of troops in exploiting the results of the first nuclear strike and the basic problems of coordinated action in carrying them out, and the organization of control over nuclear forces and weapons. In addition, if appropriate orders have not been received from the headquarters of the front, the most important integral part of the decision the army commander makes on using nuclear weapons is to establish degrees of readiness for missile troops, artillery, and supporting aviation with regard to delivering the nuclear strike. Also, he must determine procedures for echeloning nuclear warheads.

The plan for the initial nuclear strike, which is worked out in the course of preparation for the operation under peacetime conditions, must take into consideration the possibility of war being unleashed by the enemy with surprise massive use of all combat-ready nuclear weapons. In other words, it must anticipate the most difficult action variant. This initial nuclear strike plan will be an integral part of the plan for the initial offensive operation. When nuclear war breaks out, the initial strike plan is put into effect right away. If the operation begins with conventional weapons, the plan is subjected to continuing review and amplification in accordance with changes in conditions.

The goal of the initial nuclear strike is the destruction of the major portion of the enemy's means of nuclear attack, the defeat of his main groupings of forces, and the disorganization of control. The purpose of this is to frustrate a nuclear strike and attack--or at the very least to weaken them as much as possible. The primary targets which must be destroyed in the initial nuclear strike are the means for delivery of nuclear warheads, with first priority to those with the greatest range and whose nuclear charge has the greatest yield. Further primary targets are storage and supply points for special weapons; troops, aviation, and pilotless weapon control points; and groupings of troops--especially tank troops. In selecting targets for destruction it is essential to take into consideration the fact that under peacetime conditions

the disposition of troops and other enemy targets is different than it will be with the onset of war. Therefore, in planning the initial nuclear strike the epicenters (centers) of nuclear bursts aimed at mobile enemy targets must be worked out very carefully. These are established following a final reconnaissance carried out immediately before the strike. In the plan for the initial nuclear strike the number and yield of nuclear warheads to be used, the means of delivery, the type of burst, and the means of final reconnaissance are shown for each mobile target.

The plan for participation in the initial nuclear strike is worked out under the direct leadership of the commander and chief of staff. The plan is usually drawn up as a separate document, separate from the operations plan. It is prepared on a 1:200,000 map, and a chart of the initial nuclear strike is attached. The map shows the groupings of enemy troops; the position of friendly troops in broad outline; the grouping of means of delivery of nuclear warheads; the Army Mobile Missile-Technical Base; the airfields for aircraft designated to provide support for the army; primary and reserve enemy targets destroyed in the initial nuclear strike by weapons of the Supreme High Command, the front and the army; the yield of the warheads and the type of burst; and possible zones of destruction, fire, flooding, and radioactive contamination.

The chart for the initial nuclear strike shows the following: the means of delivery; the targets for destruction; the yield of the nuclear warheads; the types of bursts and the timing for the strike; the forces and means to be used for final reconnaissance of mobile targets; anticipated destruction to be achieved; duty nuclear weapons; the echeloning of nuclear warheads designated for the second and succeeding launches; procedures for relocating nuclear weapons during non-nuclear action; signals for shifting launchers to Readiness No. 2, No. 2A, and No. 1 for delivering the initial nuclear strike, and for changes in orders on delivering the strike; procedures for transmitting these signals; and the system for authenticating them.

In accordance with the decision, the army commander levies tasks on the nuclear weapons for their part in the initial nuclear strike. Experience gained from exercises and war games has shown that tasking of troops to exploit the results of the strike is best done not during the phase of preparation for the operation, but while combat action is already under way and after the order for

the initial nuclear strike has been received. This proceeds from the fact that the conditions in which the transition to the use of nuclear weapons takes place will be significantly different from those which obtained during the planning of the operation. It is impossible to foresee these later conditions in detail in advance. Consequently, even if the troops are tasked during the preparation phase of the operation to exploit the results of the initial nuclear strike, at the time the nuclear weapons are actually used tasking will still be necessary--and this not so much in terms of refining existing tasking as in tasking again. Also, we must not lose sight of the fact that the troops have combat tasks to carry out with conventional weapons and this will require maximum effort from all forces. Full levying of combat tasks for a situation of exploitation of nuclear weapons will to a degree distract commanders and staffs from their combat action with conventional weapons, and can sometimes even lead to confusion in the troops understanding their tasks and carrying them out.

As the army commander levies agreed tasking--agreed with respect to objective, location, and time--on the nuclear weapons for their part in the initial nuclear strike, he also organizes coordinated action for carrying out these tasks. After tasks have been assigned, only brief supplementary instructions are needed on such matters as procedures for receiving the order to carry out the initial nuclear strike, and the degree of readiness of launchers, delivery aircraft, and supporting air units. In addition, the commander may indicate the procedure for relocating rocket troops and the Army Mobile Missile-Technical Base during the attack. Also, he may provide signals for rocket troops and air units to change from one degree of readiness to another, take measures to prevent unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, take steps to ensure the effective utilization of nuclear weapons in delivering the second and succeeding massed and group nuclear strikes, etc.

Action coordination of troops which will have the job of completing the destruction of what remains of the enemy after the initial nuclear strike is organized at the same time as the assignment of tasks: after the order has been received to deliver the initial nuclear strike.

One of the most important problems is the establishment and continuing maintenance of optimum readiness of nuclear weapons

to deliver the initial nuclear strike. The successful transition from non-nuclear to nuclear action hinges to a large degree on the correct resolution of this problem. A great deal of attention is devoted in our press to examination of this problem.* We would like to draw attention only to the fact that for successful transition from non-nuclear action to nuclear it is necessary not only for the initial nuclear strike to be delivered at the proper time, but also for it to be possible to employ nuclear weapons quickly to destroy newly appearing important enemy targets after the initial nuclear strike. This is ensured by organizing a combat duty unit of rocket troops which does not take part in delivering the initial nuclear strike, and which is in a state of thirteen to fifteen minute readiness to launch. Appropriate echeloning of nuclear warheads also helps to ensure this.

On the basis of the experience of exercises and war games, the highest degree of nuclear weapons readiness for the second launch and succeeding launches can be achieved if all transport capabilities of the army's missile battalions, missile brigade, and Army Missile-Technical Base are utilized to maintain and transport nuclear missiles. Under the existing organization of rocket troops nine rockets can be held and transported in a missile brigade, nine missiles each in the missile-technical platoons [vzvod] of the missile battalions of the division, and ten operational-tactical and thirty tactical missiles in the Army Mobile Missile-Technical Base. Thus, not counting duty weapons which did not participate in the initial nuclear strike, the army can have nineteen operational-tactical missiles and up to sixty tactical missiles for the second launch and succeeding launches.

With such echeloning of nuclear warheads and the correct organization of relocation of the Army Mobile Missile-Technical Base, the second launch of operational-tactical missiles is possible within one and a half to two hours, and of tactical missiles within forty to sixty minutes. This is exclusive of missiles which did not take part in the initial nuclear strike

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*The article by General-Mayor A. Romashkin and Col. V. Ivanov (Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," 1970, No. 1) [FIRDB-312/02796-73]; article by General-Leytenant of Artillery L. Sapkov (Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," 1970, No. 2)

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(duty launchers, and also launchers which were not used in the initial nuclear strike because there were no targets for them or for technical reasons).

Nuclear bombs for a second sortie should be kept at airfields, and for succeeding flights at the Mobile Missile-Technical Base of the air army. With nuclear bombs collected at the airfields, a repeat flight by the delivery aircraft which participated in the initial strike is possible within sixty to ninety minutes after they have landed.

During non-nuclear combat action the readiness of the nuclear weapons of an army for the initial nuclear strike depends to a large degree on the correct organization and execution of relocating them to new launch areas during the attack. Experience of exercises shows that relocation of an army missile brigade and of tactical missile battalions should be carried out in the same manner as under conditions of nuclear warfare. The purpose of this is so that the major portion of the nuclear weapons will always be in readiness to deliver the initial nuclear strike. Also, at the tensest moments in repulsing enemy counterstrikes, in the breach of intermediate defense lines, in the forced crossing of water barriers, or in the introduction of the second echelon into battle, all the rocket troops of the army must be ready to use their nuclear warheads. It is desirable for the planning for relocation of an army missile brigade to be worked out on front scale, and for relocation of battalions of tactical missiles and long-range artillery drawn on for the initial nuclear strike on army scale.

Relocation of a missile brigade can be carried out by battalions and of tactical missile battalions by batteries. However, the variant is not to be excluded of relocating a missile brigade (tactical missile battalion) all at once, in toto. Calculations show that with an average daily troop advance of forty to fifty kilometers, an army missile brigade can begin relocation to a new site area on D3-D4. Tactical missile battalions need to be relocated daily.

In firming up planning for the initial nuclear strike during non-nuclear action it is essential to take into consideration the reduction in combat readiness of rocket troops which are being relocated. Thus, when the command to shift to the use of nuclear weapons is received during relocation, a missile battalion of an

army brigade cannot carry out this command in less than fifty to sixty minutes, and a tactical missile battery in less than thirty to thirty-five minutes.

In the organization and execution of relocation of rocket troops during an operation, particular attention must be paid to concealing their withdrawal from their positions, their movement along roads, and their deployment in the new launch areas. With this in mind it is desirable to make maximum use of night time and of conditions of poor visibility (fog, rain, snow, low-lying clouds, artificial fog and haze). In concealing the relocation movement of rocket troops, broad use must be made of troop and operational camouflage, and also of periodic shifting of launch positions.

In the conduct of combat action using conventional weapons it is extremely important to preclude the possibility of nuclear weapons being used on the initiative of battery or battalion commanders who have gotten into a difficult situation during combat action, or as a result of a commander irresponsibly exceeding his authority. It goes without saying that such a possibility must not be underestimated during highly mobile and decisive combat action when loss of communication with senior chiefs for a more or less lengthy period of time is not to be excluded.

To solve this problem a reliable system must be established for authentication of the transmittal of the command to proceed with the first nuclear strike. Also, readiness stage No. 1 must not be imposed for tactical and operational-tactical missiles earlier than necessary, taking into consideration the possible time for the receipt of the command for the use of nuclear weapons. In addition, it clearly is also necessary to have a technical solution to the problem by creating a device which would make it impossible for a nuclear missile to be launched by anyone in a battery, battalion, or brigade without the permission of the senior chiefs: in the division--the division commander, and in the army--the army commander.

As is well known, the forces and weapons designated for delivering the initial nuclear strike will be first-order targets for reconnaissance and destruction. Therefore it is very important during non-nuclear combat action that all measures be taken to conceal the relocation of rocket troops and the Army Mobile

Missile-Technical Base, to camouflage the areas where they are deployed, to provide reliable cover from air strikes, to organize a watch for and defense against attack by enemy airborne assault forces and sabotage detachments and groups, to ensure adequate dispersal also of engineer equipment in the site areas, and to provide for timely replacement of losses.

The successful transition from non-nuclear action to nuclear depends in large measure on the degree of success in reducing the effectiveness of the enemy's first nuclear strike. Stated differently, this means the degree of success in preserving the combat effectiveness of friendly troops. The most important way to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's strikes is to forestall his use of nuclear weapons. This depends basically on the timely making of a decision on transition to nuclear war, and getting the order (signal) to those who will carry it out. The troops must be prepared at a moment's notice to carry out an order (signal) to deliver the initial nuclear strike.

During non-nuclear warfare, reduction of the enemy's capabilities to use nuclear weapons is achieved first and foremost through unremitting struggle against his nuclear weapons and by taking all measures to increase the survivability of friendly troops, the control system, and rear services facilities. The main purpose of the struggle against the enemy's nuclear weapons during non-nuclear warfare is to disrupt his use of them or, at the very least, to weaken his first nuclear strike as much as possible. The principles of carrying on the struggle against weapons of mass destruction remain the same as in a nuclear war: struggle unremittingly, and forestall the delivery of fire strikes.

The organization and conduct of the struggle against the enemy's nuclear weapons must be carried out by commanders at all levels. The main efforts of reconnaissance and of means of destruction should be concentrated on identifying and destroying means of delivery in areas of concentration, on the march, and in site areas; nuclear warheads in depots, supply and storage points; and also nuclear weapons control points. In addition to destructive weapons, special detachments and airborne assault forces must be applied to the struggle against the enemy's nuclear weapons. And radioelectronic means must be applied to disrupt his control.

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The survivability of troops and rear services facilities is increased through dispersal, maximum utilization of the defensive and camouflage features of the terrain, as well as the engineer equipment there, carefully thought out operational and troop camouflage, and the conduct of fast-moving and highly mobile combat action. In addition, the troops must be in a constant state of readiness to eliminate the consequences of the use of nuclear and chemical weapons by the enemy.

Dispersal of first echelon subunits and units, it would appear, can be effected only to the point where they are still able to carry out their combat tasks. Consequently, first echelon troops will be obliged to act in comparatively tight formations which will ensure the necessary supremacy over the enemy and make it possible to count on neutralizing his defenses. In so doing, certain procedures must be followed in order not to incur massive losses in the event of a surprise nuclear attack by the enemy. Along with ferreting out and reliably destroying his nuclear weapons, it is essential to conduct combat action at a fast pace and secretly, and within a limited time span to concentrate the forces and weapons necessary to carry out the combat mission. Then as soon as the need is passed, these forces and weapons must be dispersed again right away. A significant increase in the survivability of second echelons and reserves, control points, and rear service facilities can be achieved through clever dispersal, utilization of the defensive and camouflage features of the terrain, and also the engineer equipment there.

As indicated above, control of the army's troops in the conduct of a non-nuclear operation must be such as to ensure transition to the use of nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time. Therefore, in the organization of control special attention must be devoted to establishing reliable communications, particularly with the means for delivering nuclear warheads. For the control of units and large units which will take part in the delivery of a nuclear strike, it is best to set up special channels of communications and anticipate the possibility of duplication of communications facilities for some nets and axes.

The experience of command-staff exercises and war games shows that during the period of non-nuclear combat action it is essential to set up in the army's staff a special working organ--a planning group for planning the initial nuclear strike. This group is

charged with various tasks: preparing data to permit an accurate decision on the army's participation in the initial nuclear strike; calculating the probable results of the strike in the zone of the army's offensive; preparing proposals for taking advantage of these results; effecting control over the transmittal of precise tasks to those who will carry them out and also control over the readiness of the nuclear weapons; and maintaining the planning map for the initial nuclear strike and the chart for carrying out the strike and recording data from reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of targets hit in the initial nuclear strike.

Generally the deputy chief of staff of the army and officers from the operations, intelligence, and chemical departments and staff of the rocket troops, artillery, and air army operations group are brought together to do all this work. Composed in this fashion, the group can coordinate closely with the operations and intelligence departments and staff of the rocket troops and artillery and air army operations group and successfully carry out the duties assigned to it. All the work of the group in planning the initial nuclear strike is done under the direct leadership of the commander and chief of staff of the army.

The data the group begins with in planning the initial nuclear strike consists of the decision of the army commander for an offensive operation, in which the delivery of the initial nuclear strike figures prominently; data on objectives which may be targets for destruction by the army's weapons; on the availability and grouping of means of delivery of nuclear warheads in the army; the time of the offensive; and the number of nuclear warheads.

One of the important questions in directing troops with regard to ensuring rapid transition from non-nuclear action to nuclear is that of efficient organization of reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of initial nuclear strike targets, along with timely disclosure of the enemy's preparations for the use of nuclear and chemical weapons. In addition, reconnaissance must ensure that the enemy's nuclear weapons are found so that they can be destroyed during non-nuclear combat action. The solution of these tasks and the necessary forces and weapons must be provided for in working out the reconnaissance plan.

Discovery of the enemy's intentions with regard to using nuclear weapons is rendered exceptionally difficult by the fact

that his means for nuclear attack are maintained continually in a high state of combat readiness. In addition, it must be kept in mind that the enemy will take every possible measure to hide his intentions.

As is seen from analysis of NATO troop exercises, between the time the operational-tactical means of delivery receive the order for an initial nuclear strike and the time the strike is carried out there is a total elapsed time of fifteen to sixty minutes. This amount of time is clearly insufficient to learn about the preparations of the means of delivery of nuclear warheads for the launch, report this to the command who can make a decision on the initial use of nuclear weapons, get the order transmitted for the initial nuclear strike, and--finally--carry out the strike. Accordingly, it goes without saying that one cannot count on discovering the enemy's intentions to shift to the use of nuclear weapons after the order to deliver the strike has been given to his means of delivery.

It is considered that for a decision on nuclear weapons to be made by the President of the U.S. and for this decision to be relayed to the means of delivery can take between one and two hours. During this time interval the greatest opportunities for discovering the enemy's intentions lie with agent intelligence. Radio intelligence can also obtain some information through intercept of orders related to preparation for the use of nuclear weapons.

The possibility is not to be excluded that such a responsible step as a shift to nuclear war will be preceded by certain measures to heighten the state of readiness of the enemy's nuclear weapons and troops. Specifically, various developments may provide evidence that the moment is approaching when the enemy will use nuclear weapons, viz: an increase in the number of duty nuclear means; the delivery of nuclear warheads from mobile supply points to launch and firing positions for all means of delivery; the reinforcement of engineer equipment in areas where second echelons, reserves, and rear service facilities are located; a change in work patterns at storage depots for special types of weapons; and an increase activity on radio nets providing communications for control and for notification of means of delivery of nuclear warheads, and also on radar stations, radionavigation means, radio remote control, etc.

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These signs which show evidence of an increasing threat of the use of nuclear weapons by the enemy can be revealed through various army intelligence means, or they can be obtained from interrogation of prisoners and deserters. Since the army commander does not have the right independently to take the decision for the initial use of nuclear weapons, all intelligence information obtained which relates to direct preparation by the enemy for the use of means of mass destruction must be immediately reported to the headquarters of the front

On receipt of an order (signal) to deliver the initial nuclear strike, the commander and the whole army headquarters concentrate their primary efforts on carrying it out as quickly as possible, ensuring maximum effectiveness of the nuclear strikes, and organizing the immediate exploitation of the results of the strikes by first echelon large units.

First of all the order (signal) to deliver the initial nuclear strike must, in the shortest time possible and in a manner concealed from the enemy, be transmitted to the missile brigade and to the commanders of the first echelon division. Any functioning channels of communication are used to notify the troops of the transition to the use of nuclear weapons; the use of duplicate channels and a check to determine that the order has been correctly understood are mandatory. Aviation as a rule will receive its orders on the initial nuclear strike directly from the headquarters of the front.

If it is not necessary to introduce any last minute changes into the initial nuclear strike plan, then the order to carry out the plan can consist only of the previously arranged signal and the time for the first missile launch. However, it will apparently often happen that it will be necessary to introduce further precision into or even to change the tasks assigned to individual nuclear means after the order has been received for transition to nuclear war. This will happen despite the fact that the plan for the initial nuclear strike is continually being made more precise. This is a function of the highly dynamic quality of combat action, the mobility of troops and other targets, and the fact that as a consequence intelligence data quickly become outdated.

After he receives the order (signal) to carry out the initial nuclear strike, the army commander will have to specify the

procedures for putting it into effect. In this regard there are two possible courses of action.

First variant: Deliver the strike with all combat-ready nuclear means in accordance with the last revision of the initial nuclear strike plan and without additional target reconnaissance. If the information on the initial nuclear strike objectives is reliable right up to the moment of delivering the strike, then this will ensure the quickest and most effective use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, if some of the information turns out to be outdated or erroneous, then this will lead to the unproductive expenditure of a portion of the nuclear warheads. Consequently, this variant is advisable only when there is no question about the accuracy of the intelligence information on objectives to be hit in the initial nuclear strike.

Second variant: Deliver the initial nuclear strike within the established time (simultaneously with or following the strike by strategic means), but only against objectives which are definitely known at the time. This ensures not only rapid delivery of the initial nuclear strike, but also the most effective use of the nuclear warheads. A strike by operational-tactical and tactical missiles against objectives which do not require final reconnaissance can be carried out simultaneously with the initial nuclear strike by strategic means, with a strike by delivery aircraft from front aviation coming ten to fifteen minutes later. In this way the enemy can be forestalled from using his operational-tactical nuclear means. This in turn will lead to the weakening of his nuclear strike and to the creation of favorable conditions for completing the destruction of his troops by a rapid advance by large units of the army's first echelon. In this situation whenever there are at the moment of delivering the first nuclear strike fewer objectives than the initial missile launch and air strike are capable of hitting, the unexpended nuclear warheads are used to hit enemy targets revealed by reconnaissance during the initial nuclear strike.

In determining the duration of the initial nuclear strike it is essential to take into consideration the capabilities of the delivery aircraft and their flight time to their objectives, to ensure their safety from friendly nuclear bursts, and to keep in mind the need for final reconnaissance of a number of targets. Considering all these factors, the duration of the initial nuclear

strike with one missile launch (not counting the time needed to reestablish combat effectiveness) and one flight of delivery aircraft will run not less than forty to sixty minutes. This time figure is confirmed from the experience of a number of operational command-staff exercises and war games.

If in order to achieve the element of surprise or because of time limitations it should turn out to be impossible to notify army commanders in advance, i.e., before the strike is delivered by the strategic means, about the transition to nuclear action, then the first use of operational-tactical and tactical missiles and of strikes by front aviation delivery aircraft can be carried out actually during the onset of nuclear war. In these circumstances the initial nuclear strike of the front will take on the character of a counterstrike or response strike. It will be delivered by nuclear means in various stages of readiness, since it is quite obvious that it is inappropriate to wait for all means to be brought up to combat readiness No. 1 in order to deliver a massive strike. Each minute of delay can lead to the destruction of a portion of our means of delivery of nuclear warheads and to massive losses of troops, control points, and rear services facilities. Accordingly, in such a situation the most appropriate course is to deliver individual and group nuclear strikes as launchers and delivery aircraft are ready, in accordance with the last revision of the nuclear strike plan and with the information from final reconnaissance of those objectives where this was needed.

Under these conditions the amount of time available for carrying out the tasks of the initial nuclear strike depends on the way the situation has specifically developed. The first missile launches are possible within twenty to thirty minutes after the batteries have received the command. The timing for the succeeding nuclear missile launches and air strikes in accordance with the initial nuclear strike plan will depend not so much on the speed with which information is received from final reconnaissance on objectives to be hit as on the losses which our nuclear means may suffer and the possibility of restoring control over the nuclear means which remain.

A particularly difficult situation can arise if the enemy forestalls us from using operational-tactical nuclear means. In this event a number of actions will be necessary: control over

the troops must be rapidly restored, with nuclear weapons as first priority; strikes must be delivered against the enemy with the remaining nuclear means; decisions on operations and the organization of combat action for the remaining troops must be reviewed; combat effectiveness must be restored in subunits, units, and large units which have been subjected to nuclear attack by the enemy; the enemy's airborne assault forces must be destroyed; his sabotage and espionage groups and detachments must be eliminated; his ground force attack must be repulsed; and a continuing struggle must be waged against his aviation.

Along with taking all measures to inflict maximum losses on the enemy, a most important task of the commander and of commanders, staffs, and troops is to reduce the effectiveness of his nuclear strikes. In this the ability of command personnel to achieve their assigned battle and operational goals with minimum losses will play a major role.

With the transition to the use of nuclear weapons fundamental changes take place in the character of troop combat action. The sharp increase in the opportunities to hit the enemy simultaneously along the whole depth of his operational structure will lead to a need to make new decisions, assign new tasks to the troops, apply different methods, change the groupings of forces and means at both operational and tactical levels, and develop different organization for coordination and supply. The losses incurred from the enemy's nuclear strikes and the resulting zones of destruction, fire, radiation and chemical contamination, and flooding will have decisive influence on the character of troop combat action. In connection with the sharp change in conditions during the initial nuclear strike, decisions with regard to exploiting the results of the nuclear strikes may need to be reviewed and redrawn many times over.

In those sectors where our nuclear strikes are delivered against objectives located well back, the attacking troops must maintain contact with the enemy at all times and get as close to him as possible. This will reduce the opportunity for the enemy to hit our troops with medium- and large-yield nuclear warheads. Personnel of subunits, units, and large units which at the time of transition to the use of nuclear weapons are located in the reserves or in the second echelon, as well as artillery crews who at the moment are not engaged in fire activity, and personnel in

control points, rear services organs and other installations, must occupy their prepared shelters without delay. Antiaircraft defense troops continue on combat duty ready to exert all forces and means in the struggle against enemy aviation.

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