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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

14 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations

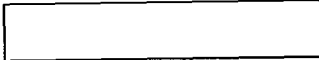
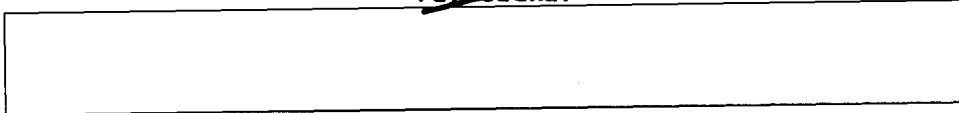
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Going Over
of Front Troops to the Offensive During the
Initial Period of a War with Only a Partial
Concentration of Forces and Means Under
Conditions of Strong Action Against Them
from Enemy Missile/Nuclear Weapons

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 deals with various aspects of the preparation and conduct of the first front offensive as they were discussed at a military science conference of the Southern Group of Forces. Among the areas highlighted were the planning of the operation, the employment of nuclear weapons, cooperation procedures, air defense, and the employment of aviation in cooperation with the rocket troops. Regarding still other areas which were discussed, recommendations for improvement were made on existing problems or shortcomings, including the need for automation of control processes, measures to improve radar support, and a review of the T/O of reconnaissance troops. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) for 1962.

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 W. Wells

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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DATE OF
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DATE 14 April 1977

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MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Going Over of Front Troops to the Offensive During the Initial Period of a War with Only a Partial Concentration of Forces and Means Under Conditions of Strong Action Against Them from Enemy Missile/Nuclear Weapons

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The author of this article is Colonel B. Zheleznov. This article deals with various aspects of the preparation and conduct of the first front offensive as they were discussed at a military science conference of the Southern Group of Forces. Among the areas highlighted were the planning of the operation, the employment of nuclear weapons, cooperation procedures, air defense, and the employment of aviation in cooperation with the rocket troops. Regarding still other areas which were discussed, recommendations for improvement were made on existing problems or shortcomings, including the need for automation of control processes, measures to improve radar support, and a review of the T/O of reconnaissance troops.

End of SummaryComment:

Colonel B. Zheleznov was identified as writing an article concerning the nature of combat operations in local wars, published in the Military Historical Journal, Issue No. 2, in 1962. He also wrote "Bringing the Troops of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness" in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963.



The Going Over of Front Troops to the Offensive During
the Initial Period of a War with Only a Partial Concentration
of Forces and Means Under Conditions of Strong Action
Against Them from Enemy Missile/Nuclear Weapons

(Based on materials from a military science conference
of the Southern Group of Forces)

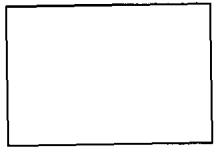
by
Colonel B. Zheleznov

A military science conference of the Southern Group of Forces was held. Officers and generals of the Group of Forces, of certain central directorates of the Ministry of Defense, military academies, as well as representatives of the Hungarian People's Army participated in the work of the conference.

General-Leytenant Tolkonyuk delivered the main report. He noted that the combat composition of a front could be brought to the necessary strength only if the beginning of a war were preceded by a period of threat of adequate duration. In the absence of such a period the offensive operation will be begun by the forces and means which the front possesses in peacetime, which will subsequently be built up with troops entering the front in the course of the operation.

In connection with this, in his opinion, the front will be able to successfully carry out active and deep tasks for the destruction of the enemy on the condition that it has a sufficient number of rocket troops, aviation, air defense means, and above all surface-to-air missile troops and radiotechnical troops, maintained at constant combat readiness already in peacetime.

General of the Army Batov supported this opinion. He noted that having these troops in the front at full strength is the most favorable condition for the conduct of an operation. However, it is not ruled out that the necessary requirement in rocket troops, aviation, and air defense means will become the norm in the course of an operation already under way. Under these conditions the main means for destroying the enemy in the zone of the front should be the strategic rocket forces.



As regards the composition of the ground forces, in Tolkonyuk's opinion, of the 10 to 12 divisions which a front might actually have at the beginning of an operation, from one third to one half should be tank divisions, and one should be an airborne division. With such a composition, the large units of the front will be capable of maximally and immediately exploiting the results of the employment of nuclear weapons by the means of the front and Supreme High Command to the entire depth of the operation.

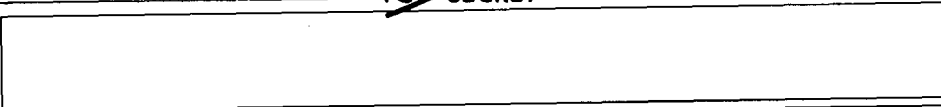
Certain recommendations concerning the planning of the operation were discussed at the conference. In particular, speaking about the scope of the operation in reference to the probable operational axis, the width of the zone of advance of the front was proposed to be 300 to 400 kilometers or more, the depth of the operation -- 600 to 800 kilometers or more, the duration -- up to 10 to 13 days; and the rate of advance -- 50 to 80 kilometers per day.

The tasks of operational formations should be divided into immediate and subsequent. The combat task for an army corps operating on separate axes and which is not part of the army should be set for two to three days, and should be given in great detail for the first day of battle, and in general outline to the depth of the immediate task of the front. A specific task must be assigned to divisions of the first echelon for each day of battle.

In the first offensive operation being conducted by troops in limited strength, the operational disposition of the front troops should ensure maximum participation of the forces and means available at the beginning of the operation in the delivery of a powerful attack against the enemy.

In the opinion of General Tolkonyuk and certain of the speakers, the operational disposition will be a single echelon with reserves of various designations. Accordingly, the strength of the reserves will be low: in a front -- one or two divisions, in an army -- up to one division, and in an army corps -- up to one reinforced tank or motorized rifle regiment. The troops arriving in the course of an operation already under way should make up the second operational echelon.

General-Mayor Plashin and Colonel Shadurin-Kozlov think that attack groupings, of which rocket troops are the most important element, as a rule, will be formed in the course of combat actions which are already under way.



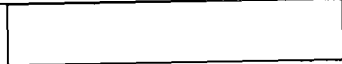
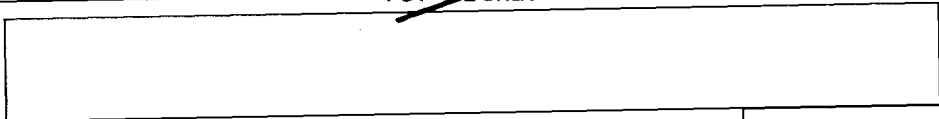
At the conference particular attention was devoted to questions of the employment of nuclear weapons. The generals and officers delivering speeches noted that obviously, in delivering the initial strike, the rocket troops subordinate to the front and army will destroy the enemy means of nuclear attack (in positions and in areas of concentration), groupings of ground forces and primarily tank groupings, aircraft on airfields, the main control and guidance posts, and the most important installations of the rear. Under certain conditions the tactical means of delivering nuclear warheads can participate in the initial nuclear strike, although their main task is to support the combat actions of their own large units in the course of the operation. The timely delivery of the initial nuclear strike will depend to a great degree on the speed with which the rocket troops leave the permanent deployment areas, and points of deployment and preparation for launch. Therefore, part of the rocket troops subordinate to the front and army should be located at the launch positions already in peacetime or upon the introduction of a period of threat.

An opinion was also expressed to the effect that a tactical missile battalion should have not two, but four launchers. The range of fire of the front missiles should be increased up to 600 to 800 kilometers, and that of the army missiles -- up to 300 to 400 kilometers, which will permit considerably greater results to be achieved with the front means in disrupting a surprise enemy attack and in combat for fire superiority, and will also provide for continuous support for the advancing troops and maneuvering of fire in the zone of the front to the entire depth of the operation.

In examining matters of cooperation, especially with the armies of the Warsaw Pact member countries, the opinion was expressed that dual control of these armies (by the command of the front and the military leadership of the countries of the people's democracy) cannot ensure rapid and coordinated actions. These armies (meaning the Hungarian and Romanian armies), if they become part of a front, should receive tasks only from the commander of the front. In this regard there should also be a procedure for reinforcing the personnel, armament, combat equipment, and materiel, as well as a procedure for replacing the troops of these countries with fresh forces.

It must also be specified with what means and how long the military leadership of the countries of the people's democracy will support their own troops, and starting when and to what extent the front will support them.



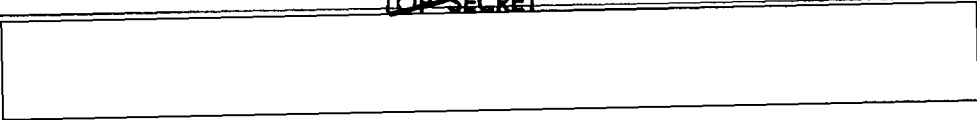


Both in the main report and in the speeches much attention was given to questions of reconnaissance. It was noted that the forces and means of tactical and operational reconnaissance do not meet the demands made on them; they are not in a condition to ensure the fulfilment of their large and vital tasks in an offensive operation of the initial period of a war. A large gap has formed between the capabilities of the means of destruction and reconnaissance. For the purpose of eliminating this abnormal situation it has been proposed that the entire table of organization of reconnaissance units and subunits be revised. In the opinion of the conference participants, in peacetime the military district (group of forces) must have -- an OSNAZ radio reconnaissance regiment and an OSNAZ radiotechnical reconnaissance regiment, an operational reconnaissance air regiment, a tactical reconnaissance air regiment, a spotting and reconnaissance air regiment, and a special-purpose reconnaissance-sabotage battalion; an army -- one spotter air squadron and one tactical reconnaissance air squadron, a separate special-purpose reconnaissance battalion, and a radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance subunit. General-Mayor Zvartsev noted that the separate reconnaissance battalion included in the division should have five companies in it (three companies of uniform organization to operate as reconnaissance detachments, one special-purpose company to conduct reconnaissance in groups to a depth of 60 to 80 kilometers in the enemy rear area and one radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance company). In addition, the divisions should have their own reconnaissance aviation (an air squadron) to conduct reconnaissance to a depth to 150 to 200 kilometers. In the motorized rifle regiments and tank regiments there should be reconnaissance companies with technical means of reconnaissance, and it is necessary to equip artillery, engineer and chemical reconnaissance with the appropriate technical means.

General of the Army Batov was in complete agreement with these proposals. He also turned the earnest attention of the commanders and staffs of all levels to reconnaissance training of motorized rifle and tank subunits, for, in his opinion, with reconnaissance subunits alone it will not be possible to carry out the entire volume of reconnaissance tasks in a battle or operation.

Noting the importance of the tasks of control under present-day conditions, the conference participants expressed support for maintaining the front, army and corps staffs in peacetime at a strength that would make it possible to implement reliable troop control from the very beginning of combat actions without switching them to the wartime T/O. The strength of these staffs should be sufficient to provide not only for the work of control posts (the command post, alternate command post, and rear control



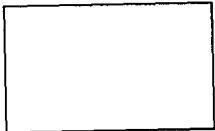


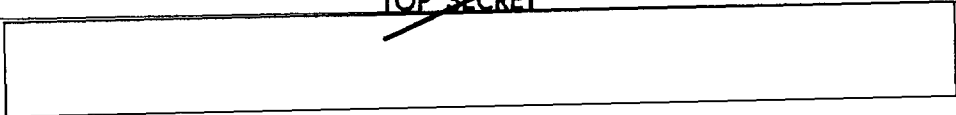
post), but also for the allocation of efficient operations groups with means of communications and travel to be sent to the armies of countries of the people's democracy operating as part of a front or cooperating with it (according to the number of such armies), to supervise the reception of troops arriving from the interior of the country in the course of an operation, to replace at least one army staff and one or two corps staffs in the event they are put out of action, and in the armies -- to replace one or two division staffs and to direct the regroupings of troops operating while separated from the main forces. In the front it is necessary to have a single center of control over the air defense means headed by the chief of the air defense troops of the front.

General-Major Melnikov noted in his speech that automation and mechanization of the work processes at various levels of control must be carried out by a centralized procedure, through developing the necessary means in scientific research institutes and factories in close cooperation with the troops. Attempts to do something substantial on the spot even for the needs of minor mechanization have not been particularly effective.

At the conference supplementary reports were heard and discussed concerning the combat actions of an air army at reduced strength (General-Leytenant of Aviation Pushkin), the employment of missile/nuclear weapons (General-Leytenant of Artillery Manilo), the organization and conduct of air defense (General-Major of Artillery Mikitenko) and rear services support of front troops (Colonel Averin).

General-Leytenant of Aviation Pushkin and General-Major of Aviation Moiseyev expressed a number of ideas concerning the actions of front aviation. In their opinion, in the initial period of a war two extremely complex tasks will simultaneously confront the air army: to repel a surprise enemy attack and to deliver an instantaneous strike against him so that his missile/nuclear grouping can be maximally weakened and favorable conditions can be created for the actions of our own ground forces. To carry out these tasks our air forces have to be in a constant state of combat readiness. For this purpose the concealed dispersal of aviation must be ensured by having one regiment based at two or three airfields. Dispersal should be carried out under conditions of radio silence and at low altitudes. It is necessary to prepare control posts, to set up reserves of materiel, to organize airfield alert and airborne alert of certain fighters in zones, as well as air reconnaissance. In order that the personnel will not be worn out prematurely when an alert is organized, no more than half of all the forces should be in immediate take-off status.





If all these measures to preserve aircraft and missiles, and to guarantee their combat readiness, are carried out beforehand, then the side which has been subject to attack will be able to preserve its ability to take the initiative in decisively destroying the enemy means of air attack.

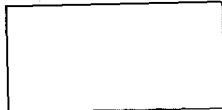
The employment of aviation in the initial strike should occur in close cooperation with the rocket troops, coordinated as to the place, time and altitude of the bursts of the nuclear warheads. The main targets for bombers and fighter-bombers in this period obviously will be small targets which have not been subjected to missile strikes. Under these conditions fighter-bombers should widely employ the method of free search and destruction of enemy targets.

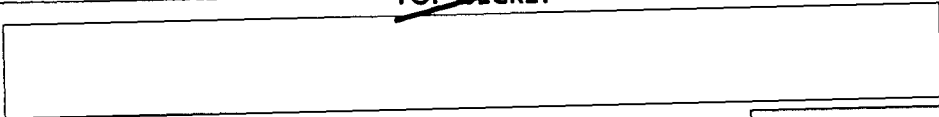
In spite of the fact that the ground forces will need the active support of aviation when the operation begins, it should be utilized in a centralized manner, considering the small number of aircraft.

In examining the capabilities of surface-to-air guided missiles for destroying the air enemy, General Pushkin gave the following basic arguments which, in his opinion, determine the nature and conditions for the cooperation of fighter aviation with them: approximately 70 percent of the capabilities of the surface-to-air guided missiles are relative to altitudes of 200 to 8,000 meters; therefore, fighter aviation should give greater consideration to the interception and destruction of air targets at high altitudes; where there is a system for recognizing one's own aircraft, cooperation between surface-to-air guided missiles and fighter aviation in a single zone can be accomplished not only according to the principle of the allocation of targets and altitudes of operation between them but also, when necessary, by joint fire cooperation against a single target. Arming aircraft with "air-to-air" missiles makes it possible to hit targets from a distance of 5,000 to 12,000 meters. One of the most important tasks of the front fighter aviation is to destroy the air enemy at altitudes lower than 200 meters.

General-Mayor of Artillery Mikitenko emphasized that in order to maintain a grouping of surface-to-air means to provide an area system of air defense of the main axes and most important areas, it is mandatory that the chief of air defense of the front plan the relocation and maneuvering not only of front but also of army surface-to-air missile units.

The existing system of radar support, in his opinion, has a number of shortcomings, the main ones being the unreliability of recognition and the low degree of accuracy in determining the coordinates of targets, which





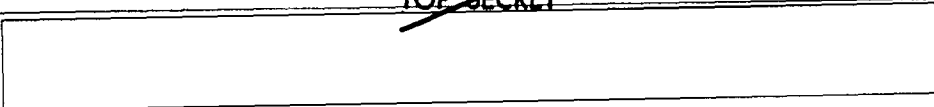
leads to a distortion of the air situation. Therefore, radar support does not fully meet present-day air defense requirements, and this task can be accomplished only on the basis of the integrated automation of these processes.

Considering that by the beginning of an operation a radar field will have been established in the zone of the front mainly by the air defense forces of the country, it will be advisable to have a considerable portion of the front radar means in reserve in readiness to move forward and to build up the radar field when combat actions develop. In the course of an operation it is better to have part of the army means in reserve and concealed, which ensures greater survivability of the radar system and continuity of reconnaissance of the air enemy. In order to prevent gaps in the radar field from being formed between the air defense system of the front and the air defense system of the country in the course of an operation, it is necessary already in peacetime to plan a procedure for moving the radar means of the air defense of the country immediately behind the field system. This problem remains an extremely urgent one, and must be resolved within the framework of the member countries of the Warsaw Pact.

The organizational structure of the front air defense troops does not meet present-day requirements, either. The rapidity of battle does not leave time for the coming to agreement and coordination which are essential when there is diverse subordination of the active air defense means. Therefore, it is proposed that all means be joined under one command and that the front contain -- an air defense corps, and the army -- an air defense division. In the front there should be a commander of the front air defense troops. It is necessary also to have a coordination center to control the air defense means of the Warsaw Pact countries.

In examining the problems of materiel-technical support, the participants in the conference (Colonel Averin, General-Major Savushkin, Colonel Belashchenko) emphasized that a sudden enemy attack can partially disrupt or deprive the front of its organized rear services. In the first days of a war it is impossible to count on the timely arrival of rear services units. Therefore, the constant maintenance of fully manned and equipped rear services units and facilities as well as the necessary amount of materiel reserves, especially missiles, has decisive importance for the successful conduct of the operations of the initial period of a war. Reserves should be placed outside of areas of probable enemy nuclear strikes. In the opinion of those who spoke at the conference, it is already necessary to work out and agree upon the procedure for utilizing





the material resources of the member countries of the Warsaw Pact.

At the conference an exhibit of the military science works of officers and generals of the group of forces for the past academic year was set up. In it 174 works were presented.

Summing up the conference, General of the Army Batov noted that it enabled the conferees to identify the specific features and procedure of the preparation for and conduct of a front offensive operation with only a partial concentration of forces and means under conditions of strong action against them from enemy missile/nuclear weapons, and also to outline specific recommendations for the further training of troops and staffs. The conference contributed greatly to the improvement of the military theoretical knowledge of the generals and officers on some very important matters of operational art.

