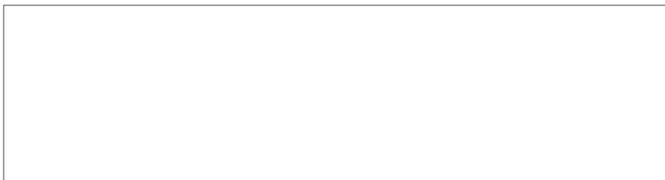


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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 13 Pages

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY USSR

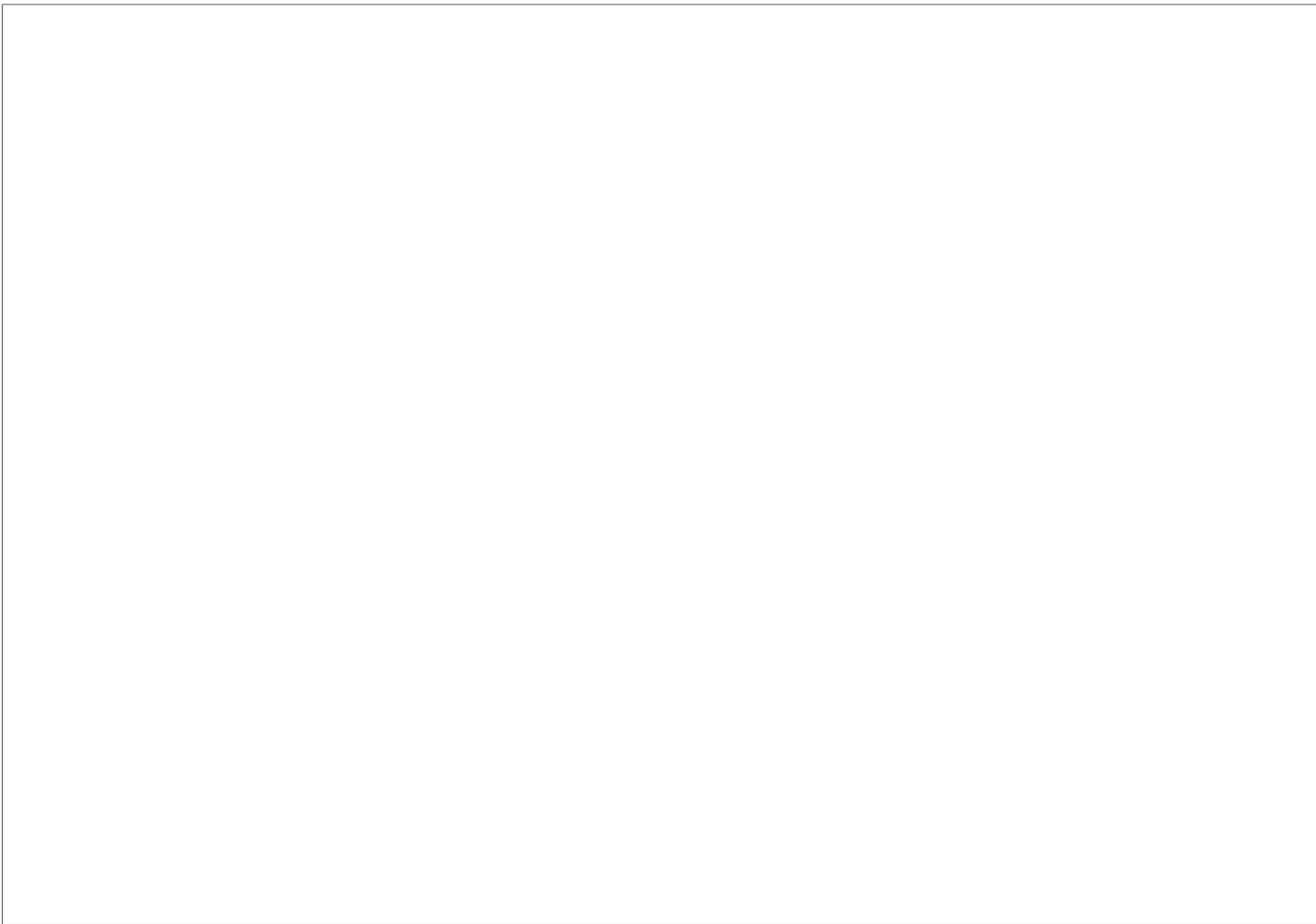


DATE 23 July 1975
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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems of the Control of Troops
of a Front in a Movement over a Large Distance
50X1-HUM



Page 4 of 13 Pages

Some Problems of the Control of Troops of a
Front in a Movement over a Large Distance

by

General-Mayor of Tank Troops P. Nazarov,
Colonel G. Cherkas, and
Colonel V. Savelyev

The organization of the movement of troops over a large distance has been set forth in a series of texts and in periodical literature. In an article based on war games conducted in 1966-1967, they examined the problems of ensuring continuity of control of troops which, in our view, demand comprehensive discussion and solution.

The control of troops of a front during their movement from the interior of the country has substantial special features: it is necessary to control troops in the departure area, on the routes of movement, and in the new concentration area almost simultaneously.

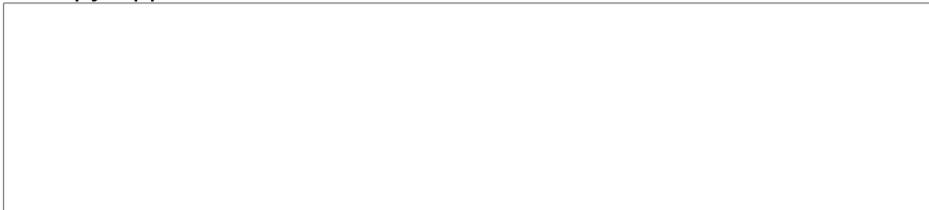
It is practically impossible to ensure control in such cases with only the command posts, forward command posts, and rear control posts of a front and armies which are moving with troops. It is necessary to set up temporary auxiliary control posts, place them along the whole depth of movement, and more widely use the traffic control service.

In exercises, operations groups from the headquarters of formations were set up for this purpose. They facilitated control considerably and assisted in the achievement of continuous command of troops from the main posts while these were located in place or being relocated.

Operations groups were set up using personnel of the main control posts and in a way became "control points" on certain lines and in certain areas. They brought about an immediate monitoring of the order of movement in accordance with the decision of the front troop commander, summarized the situational data, and, maintaining constant communications with the command posts or forward command posts, reported to their formation commander or chief of staff, and when necessary amplified the tasks for the troops and took measures to fulfil them.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Page 5 of 13 Pages
50X1-HUM

The composition of such a group was made up of officers from the operations directorate, the staff of the rocket troops and artillery, the engineer directorate, the chief of the air defense troops, and the directorates of the chemical troops, military transportation, the rear, and communications, as well as the forces and means of communications, engineer subunits and security subunits. Officers of the intelligence directorate were also assigned to the group being sent to the staff of the forward operating front.

Operations groups were usually sent to the boundary of the state border, to major water obstacles, to staffs of forward operating formations, and to the final concentration area. Specifically, in one of the war games, Operations Group No. 1, with a complement of 25 men and headed by the deputy chief of staff of the front, was sent to the state border with the task of directing the transloading of trains from Soviet to European gauge and passing the marching columns of troops through the traffic control points. The group had communications with the command posts of the front and armies, with the traffic control areas, and with operations groups of the armies which also were located in the border area.

Operations Group No. 2, with eight men headed by the deputy chief of intelligence of the front, was sent to the staff of the forward operating formation to gather information on the enemy and his troops and to organize cooperation.

Operations Group No. 3, located at a major water obstacle, directed the troop crossing and organized the maneuver with water crossing means; it had communications with control posts of the front and armies, with organs of the traffic control service and also with local military and civilian administrative organs in the territory of the other country. The group was composed of 20 men and headed by the deputy chief of the operations directorate of the front.

Operations Group No. 4, made up of 20 men under the direction of the deputy chief of the operations department of the operations directorate of the staff of the front, was sent to the final concentration area of the troops of the front with the goal of reconnaissance of the area, preparation of the area for the siting of control posts, and the organization of the traffic control service. Operations groups were sent to designated areas after the declaration of a combat alert and stayed there until the completion of the troop movement through the specified area.

50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM

Page 6 of 13 Pages

In all, the forming of the operations groups in the case we are citing required 73 men which amounts to about 13 percent of the overall complement of the generals and officers of the field headquarters of a front (without counting the personnel directorate, the secretariat of the military council, the finance department, and the military censorship element). Thus, 60 to 70 percent of the overall complement remained at the command post and 20 to 25 percent at the forward command post.

The movement of the operations groups required about 35 vehicles (10 passenger cars, 15 command-staff and staff cars, and 10 trucks) which amounted to 15 percent of the overall quantity of means of transport which is calculated to be needed for movement of the forward command post and command post by organic means.

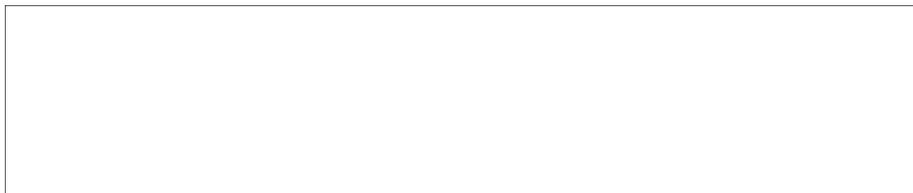
The experience of exercises shows that the operations groups will be based mainly on permanent communications lines: on the state communications system and on the communications system of the Stavka of the Supreme High Command; they will also be within the communications system of friendly countries, using cable and overhead lines, radio-relay lines, and radio communications centers. However, to perform a number of tasks in troop control, it is necessary that the groups are provided with a certain minimum of radio-relay, wire, and radio communications means from the organic units of the front. Thus, to provide radio means to the indicated groups, 29 radio sets of various types were provided by drawing on the communications regiment of the front command post. Of these, four sets were in the 1st operations group; 16 in the 2nd, drawing on the means of the alternate position of the command post; four in the 3rd; and five in the 4th. Besides this, each operations group was allocated part of the radio-relay and wire communications means.

As a result, detaching several operations groups from the complement of a field headquarters facilitates improving the control of troops during their movement. Therefore, it is necessary to select officers beforehand and to prepare them for work within the complement of operations groups and to prepare the main control posts to work with a somewhat reduced complement.

50X1-HUM

As has already been stated, operations groups of like composition and technical equipment handle their own responsibilities and accomplish some of the tasks of the main control posts. Some decrease in the composition of the latter as a result of the detachment of operations groups does not have an effect on its activity because the volume of tasks accomplished by these posts in the course of movement will obviously be less (especially

50X1-HUM



Page 7 of 13 Pages

until the use of weapons of mass destruction by the enemy) than during the carrying out of an operation. Besides that, the presence of a far-flung network of control organs, which are located great distances from each other and along the whole depth of the movement of troops, provides a steadier movement, even in the case when the enemy employs weapons of mass destruction.

It is necessary to note that the variant we have shown is near the maximum in terms of the quantity of operations groups, their composition, and equipment.

Thus, the control system for troops of the front moving over a large distance will include: the main control posts (command post, forward command post, rear control post) and auxiliary posts represented by operations groups of varying composition and purpose.

A system of control posts must be made ready in advance, in peacetime. The deployment of the main posts to prepared areas should be executed when the troops are brought to full combat readiness. With this, the main complement of a field headquarters goes quickly to the designated area -- as the directorates and departments are made ready -- not waiting for the general assembly. In the first instance, the command post and rear control post deploy in the departure area. During the period when the troops are brought to an increased state of combat readiness, it is advisable to dispatch small operations groups preliminarily to the deployment area of the command post and rear control post.

At the forward command post, usually headed by the deputy commander of the troops of the front, there will be officers from the primary directorates and departments and representatives of the branch arms and special troops. The forward command post is set up in accordance with the situation and the selected method of relocation of main control posts. For instance, with relocation by the "successive displacement" method, the forward command post must already be one day's march ahead of the command post before the movement of troops begins. It follows that, in this case, it is necessary to set up the forward command post at the same time as the command post and the rear control post. In other cases it can be set up somewhat later.

Operations groups will move to their designated areas as the troops begin to be brought to an increased state of combat readiness and will stay there until their tasks are fulfilled.



50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM



Page 8 of 13 Pages

The control of troops in the course of their movement is fundamentally accomplished by the forward command post and the command post which, as a result, either are relocated or take control themselves, being broadly supported in this by the auxiliary control posts. The commander of troops of the front, in our opinion, must be in the command post, as a rule; but he must have the capability of transferring to a different control post -- including to an operations group -- where the situation for the troops has become most critical at any given time.

Let us look at the special features of the work of operations groups in the control of troops in the course of a movement.

The control of the loading of troops in the loading areas, which is usually carried out by an operations group, deserves special attention. It is composed of operations officers, officers of the Military Transportation Service, the rear staff, and other departments and services of the field headquarters of the operational formation. The group has the appropriate means of communication and regularly reports to the command post or forward command post during the course of the loading and dispatch of trains.

According to the experience of exercises and war games, the direct control of troops during transit of a state border can be effected by an operations group of the front staff. Some of its officers can be located along the more important routes of movement of the troops and at railroad stations. The group must be supported by its own forces and means and besides that, by the organs of the traffic control service and the border guard troops.

The traffic control units on a state border usually set up traffic control areas; apart from their immediate responsibilities, they participate in the control of troops moving through a system of traffic control and movement control posts. The border guard troops set up their check points with communications means on every route of the movement of the operational formation and large units, and on rail lines which cross the border.

50X1-HUM

Speaking of the possibility of using the border guard troops and their means for control of the troops of the front, it is necessary to note that this question must be thoroughly thought through in advance -- in peacetime -- and coordinated with the appropriate border guard troop organs. It is known that, with the onset of combat operations, the border guard units can become operationally subordinate to commanders of the troops of the border military districts for a defined period. Thus, the use of border guard



50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM



Page 9 of 13 Pages

units and their means in support of control of troops will be a completely natural thing and absolutely not detrimental to the fulfilment of their own fundamental duties.

During negotiation of major water obstacles by the troops in the course of their movement, their control will be carried out, in the main, by an operations group specially designated for this. Dispatches on the passage of troops through river lines, and on their status and location in the given period will be received by the group from its officers, commandants of the crossings, commandants of the traffic control areas, and from the commanders of the large units and units. On the basis of an analysis of the situation, the operations group will take effective measures in support of timely negotiation of river lines by the troops; they will, in particular, amplify individual tasks for the units, give instructions, set up auxiliary crossings by drawing on the reserves, activate back-up crossings, etc. The data on the situation and the measures taken in support of a rapid crossing of the troops will be transmitted to the command post or forward command post for the report to the front troop commander.

The control of troops of the first echelon during their approach to the final concentration areas, and before the arrival of the main control posts in these areas, is advisably handled by an operations group which has been sent especially for this purpose. At this point the situation can change abruptly and require the establishment of a new grouping of troops. Under these conditions one of the most important tasks for the operations group will be the amplification of the tasks for the troops in accordance with the commander's decision and in accordance with the situation; the tasks include implementing monitoring of their fulfilment, rendering assistance, and coordinating with the staffs of the forward operating formations in respect to the areas and order of deployment of the troops. In exercising control, the group relies on information received from the designated staff, its own representatives, and the traffic control service organized from the means of the front and armies.

Besides this, in the case where main control posts are put out of operation or unable, due to the conditions of the situation, to exercise control, the operations groups can temporarily fulfil their functions or serve as the basis for the restoration of one of them. This is completely confirmed by the experience of exercises and war games. Thus, in the course of one of the war games, part of the troops of the front moving up from the interior came to a river line and crossed to the opposite shore where a large part of them were cut off by a nuclear barrier and could not



50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM

Page 10 of 13 Pages

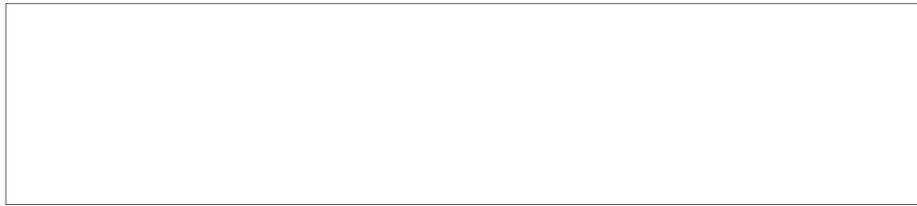
continue the negotiation of the river crossing in the order envisaged in the plan. As a result of the destruction of transportation centers and bridges, a significant number of troops moving by rail transport continued the march by organic means or were temporarily delayed in occupying areas. The forward command post of the front was destroyed; the command post was on the move in zones with high levels of radiation.

Such a complex operational situation demands the organization of control of troops in the minimal amount of time. The only correct solution was to temporarily transfer control to the operations group which was controlling the troops crossing the water obstacle. Since the withdrawal of the command post from zones with high levels of radiation and deployment in a new area took a significant amount of time, the commander, with a few generals and officers, arrived at this group by helicopter and took control himself. The group received additional communications means from the reserve. The advisability of such a solution was conditioned by the fact that the specified operations group had data available on the location and status of the grouping of troops moving toward the river line, had communications with them and direct contact through their own representatives, the traffic control service, and engineer units maintaining the crossing.

Extraordinarily complex conditions for the provision of control of troops of the front in the course of a movement occurs in the case when both the command post and forward command post are put out of operation simultaneously. In such a situation, as experience shows, the control of troops can be taken over, first of all, by the commander and staff of one of the armies moving forward in the second echelon or one which has been designated for operations on the main axis.

One of the exercises, for example, provided for the transfer of control to the command post of an army moving forward in the second echelon throughout the entire zone of the front along several axial routes and using the front communications channels located along the routes. The commander of the army under such conditions had available the necessary data on the situation in the zone of movement of the front. 50X1-HUM

For the provision of control of the formations and large units of the front, a commander of an army designated as a deputy commander of the troops of the front, familiarizes himself in detail with the plan of movement and the system of control during the planning process. A second copy of this plan may be sent to the staff of the army. The chief of communications of this army may receive for his use a large amount of



Page 11 of 13 Pages
50X1-HUM

communications means by drawing on the reserve. Besides this he familiarizes himself with the communications system in the entire zone of movement of troops of the front.

The conditions of the situation always determine the order for taking on control. However, in all cases it is first necessary to provide for control of rocket large units, the air army, and the air defense troops of the front, and then for control of the troops of the first and second echelons, the reserves, and the rear.

In the conditions being considered, one should not exclude the possibility of transferring control to the rear control post. In our opinion, however, this should be done only in the extreme circumstance where no command post, not even of just one of the armies, will be in a position to take over control of the troops of the front.

Considering the incomplete complement of the rear control post, from which part of the officers of the rear move to operations groups, the availability of a limited quantity of organic communications means at the rear control post, and the extremely complicated conditions for control of troops of the front during their movement (the great dispersal of groupings of troops, the varying nature of movement, etc.) one can maintain that it is doubtful that the rear control post can cope with this task. One cannot count on a timely reinforcement of the rear control post by operations officers and the necessary communications means under the given conditions of the situation.

As exercises and war games have confirmed, the determination of the process of exchange of information between the troops and control posts is of great importance for increasing the efficiency of the control of the troops and, first of all, the efficient use of existing communications means. By proceeding from anticipation of the conditions of the situation, the following were determined first: communications lines for information in the various stages of movement of troops (from whom, to whom, and what reports, instructions, summaries, and other data should be sent or received), the nature of this data, its possible volume and transmittal time periods.

Due to the limited capabilities of technical communications means, the quantity of reports, situation reports, and orders was limited. For instance, the only obligatory situation reports were those from the troops on crossing state borders, wide river lines, and phase lines, on the departure time of trains, their passage through major railway junctions,



50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM



Page 12 of 13 Pages

and on the movement of formations and large units to areas of the day's halt and final concentration areas as well. The routine situation reports on the status and location of troops were reduced to a minimum and were given to the staff of the front only two times in a 24-hour period and situation reports to the branch arms and services, once per 24-hour period.

The comprehensive working out of a process of exchange of non-scheduled information is extremely complex. To this relate situation reports on sudden changes in the situation and on the employment by the enemy of means of mass destruction, various kinds of discussions of the persons in charge, requests, inquiries, and mutual informing of staffs and troops about the situation. After a highly detailed study of this question and a determination of what belongs to scheduled and what to non-scheduled information, and the general process of exchange of it, it remains to be determined among which levels they should be transmitted.

The question of the mutual exchange of information was investigated in war games at the following levels: Stavka of the Supreme High Command -- front; front -- army (large units, units of front subordination); command post -- forward command post; command post and forward command post -- operations groups. An analysis of the flow of information shows that its volume may reach 10,000 groups or more at the Stavka of the Supreme High Command -- front level, and 12,000 to 15,000 groups or more at the front -- army level, in one 24-hour period. Of course, such a volume puts a heavy load on the existing communications system and calls for efficient planning of its utilization. ✓

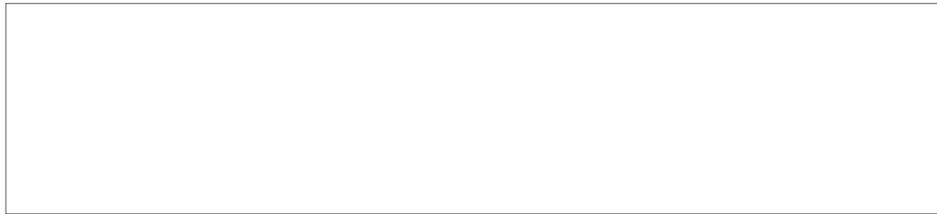
It seems to us that this gives rise to the necessity of working out a schedule for exchange of information between staffs and all control posts which is coordinated with the movement times of troops and also with the relocation of the control posts themselves. The lines of transmission of information, the quantity of information sources, their nature, and transmission frequency should be reflected in this schedule.



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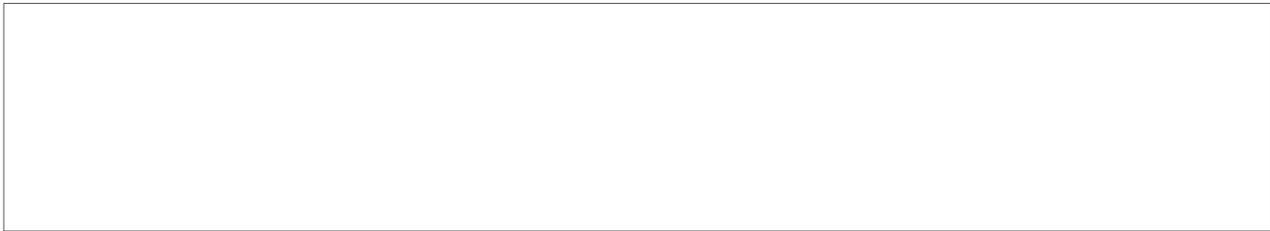
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Page 13 of 13 Pages

The problems considered in the article, in our view, have a practical significance and call for further research and testing in the course of exercises and war games.

50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM



50X1-HUM