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Ways of Further Increasing
the Combat Readiness of Troops

by

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In solving problems of further increasing the combat readiness of our troops and of the continuous strengthening of the defensive capability of the country, we must proceed above all from the possibility of a surprise attack by an aggressor with the mass use of nuclear weapons. Now it is probably no secret to anyone that the surprise attack, as a means of attaining their basic predatory aims, has been elevated to the status of military doctrine by many imperialistic countries.

Inasmuch as incomplete readiness of the armed forces under conditions of a surprise nuclear attack can lead to very grave consequences, it would be foolish of us to reckon on a threatening period. Combat readiness must be regarded as readiness to conduct a nuclear war which has started unexpectedly. In other words, it means the capability of the Soviet armed forces to defeat at any moment a sudden attack by an aggressor, to parry his first strikes by inflicting on him powerful nuclear weapon counter-strikes, with simultaneous deployment of the ground troops and the navy in vigorous military operations. The latter will depend on the readiness of large units and units of the border military districts (groups of troops) to begin carrying out their combat tasks in the shortest possible time.

The achievement of a high state of combat readiness by the troops of the border military districts is attained by the execution of a large

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number of very important and varied measures. In this article we will not attempt to deal with the whole complex of measures which form the concept of combat readiness of troops but will give consideration only to those problems which, as we see it, are not yet wholly understood and, in consequence, have found only weak and inadequate solution among the troops.

The quartering of troops. Troops and especially important headquarters are quartered as a rule in cities and political-administrative centers. Many garrisons, therefore, are overcrowded with troops, and thus form suitable targets for an enemy's nuclear strikes. It is fully understandable that these concentrations of troops occupy the attention of foreign intelligence, and we have every reason to suppose that important military garrisons are entered in the card indices of the Directorate of Planning of Strategic Targets of the USA as the most important targets and that nuclear/missile strikes are already planned against them.

It seems to us that a certain contradiction has been created between the present quartering of troops and the requirement to keep them at a high level of combat readiness. While fully aware of the possibility of a sudden attack by the enemy with means of mass destruction, we continue to quarter a large number of troops and headquarters in one garrison.

Certainly, in favorable conditions, troops and headquarters can move out of these garrisons in proper time. We should not, however, underestimate the danger of a sudden nuclear attack by an aggressor. In particular, on the assumption that the enemy possesses ballistic missiles with a range of 12-15,000 kms and a speed of 18-20,000 kms/hr, we can suppose that the target chosen will be destroyed within 20-30 minutes from the launching of the missile. Even supposing the most favorable conditions, when we have been able to detect, 30-40 minutes in

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advance, the preparations for launching the missile, that amount of time will not be sufficient for us to move our troops out away from nuclear strikes. Many large units and units may be in places of permanent quarters in towns and heavily populated points.

At present it is difficult to judge the results of an enemy's nuclear strikes on the troop garrisons under consideration. Theoretical calculations, however, demonstrate what colossal losses might be inflicted in the towns struck by nuclear weapons. At the military-scientific conference of the MPVO (mestnaya protivovozdushnaya oborona - local anti-aircraft defense) of the Latvian SSR which took place in 1960, estimates were given of losses to be expected from a surprise nuclear strike in the center of Riga by a nuclear bomb with a TNT equivalent of 200,000 tons. According to these data the general casualties could amount to 330,000 persons, of whom there would be 109,000 dead and 221,000 injured. All principal buildings less than 4.5 kms from the ground zero of the burst would be destroyed. The whole town would be a mass of flames.

It is scarcely possible in these circumstances to talk about any combat readiness of large units and units stationed in this garrison when the nuclear strike is made; they will be either completely annihilated or disabled.

The question involuntarily arises: Is it not time to review the current quartering of troops and headquarters from the point of view of their maximum dispersal within the territories of the military districts?

The posing of this question is nothing new. Certain comrades have already put forward in the military press the idea of doing away with big barrack cantonments¹ and dispersing the troops

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on the principle of each battalion in a separate military cantonment.² These proposals, however, were not developed further because they were not adequately presented and chiefly because the authors did not indicate the means of their practical application.

In our view, dispersal of troops is necessary even in peacetime; undoubtedly it would lead to an increase in the viability of large units and units and consequently in their combat readiness.

In the first place, the necessity has arisen for important military garrisons to be reduced to the utmost so that in the event of a sudden enemy nuclear attack several of their large units would not undergo the risk of simultaneous destruction. Subsequently, to the degree possible, it is desirable to disperse the troops in every large unit in a manner consistent with the general operational plan for the deployment of the troops. It is of course quite evident that dispersal must have its limits, but the principle advanced by some authors of dispersal by battalions is, in our opinion, quite untenable, as it can lead to a wide dispersal of troops which, though favorable from the point of view of antiatomic defense, is inexpedient as regards the necessary creation of groupings of forces and weapons in the very first hours of a war. As we see it, troops should be dispersed so that there are not more than one or two combat units quartered in each garrison, and the quarters for these garrisons should be selected in those areas from which it would be most convenient for them to begin active operations in the required grouping at any time.

In raising the question of changing the quarters of troops, we do not mean only combined-arms large units and units. It is a question of the dispersal



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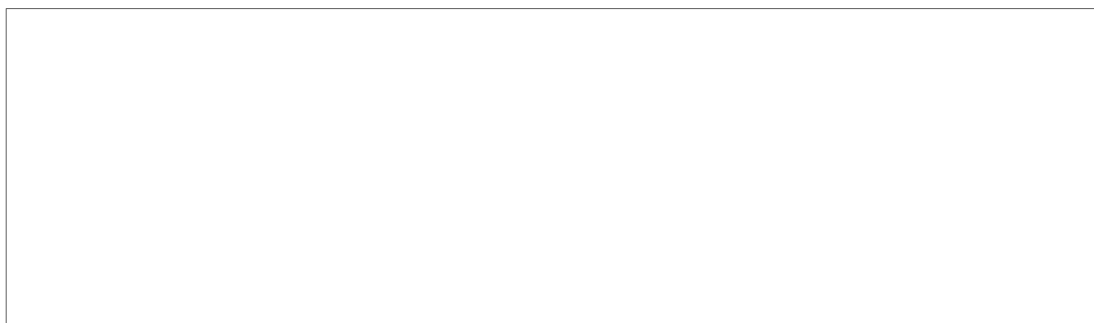
of large units and units of all arms of troops and types of armed forces. In particular the location of missile large units (units) in border military districts (groups of troops) should be such that every battalion is dispersed in a separate garrison. Part of the missile subunits should be on combat duty beyond the military post limit, periodically changing the area of the launching sites.

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In the disposition of the district PVO radio-technical units it is necessary to make their location points conform strictly with the location of the radiotechnical posts of large units of the PVO of the Country so that, if the latter go out of action, the district radiotechnical units can replace these losses and restore in good time the impaired radar field of observation.

Air large units should be dispersed so that there is an airfield as a base for each air regiment and one or two reserve airfields for maneuver on which the necessary supplies should be established in advance and komendaturas and control points organized. Furthermore, a network of decoy (lozhnyy) airfields should be constructed and a notional change of bases by air large units should be carried out periodically. While effecting a dispersal of air large units we must certainly allow first of all for the capacity to create at the right time air groupings which would ward off an enemy's massive air attack, deliver an immediate retaliatory strike, and which would make the most effective use of the available forces for supporting the first operations of the ground troops.

The need to disperse the control organs of higher formations has also arisen. Under the present dispositions, the headquarters and directorates of the military district, the headquarters of the air army, corps (army) anti-aircraft defense, etc, are frequently stationed in one town. Such a concentrated location



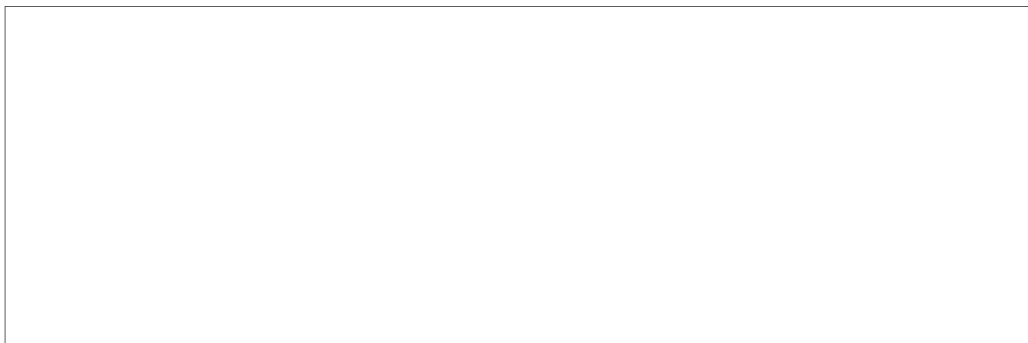
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of the controlling organs may, in the event of a surprise nuclear strike, lead to the simultaneous destruction of several headquarters of higher formations, and consequently to the loss of troop control in the very first hours of a war. We suggest, therefore, that, in order to disperse the controlling organs, the important combined-arms headquarters should be withdrawn from large towns to more suitable places to ensure stable control in the event of a surprise enemy attack. Furthermore, with this in view, headquarters of military districts and armies should prepare in advance field control points with a sufficiently developed communications system and arrange that responsible staff officers should be on continual duty there.

We realize that these measures which we are proposing for altering the existing dispositions of the troops require large material expenditures on supplementary capital construction. Nevertheless, this problem should be resolved gradually by the united efforts of military commanders and directors of agencies of local government, by a transfer of housing, storage, and other funds. In this way local authorities can carry out construction of installations for the use of troops outside the limits of garrisons, and the military command for their part would compensate for these expenditures by putting the corresponding housing funds at the disposal of the local councils. This will permit the dispersal of troops and material resources without considerable expenditures.

Of course measures for the dispersal of troops outside of towns require a comparatively long time, in the course of which we must be continually ready to ward off a sudden attack by the enemy. We must therefore seek additional ways of increasing the troops' combat readiness and the stability of command exercised by headquarters, with the locations as they are today. This can be achieved,



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in our opinion, by changing the routine and activities of the troops. At present, as is well known, large units and units, if they do not move out to summer camps, are located all the year round in permanent quarters and carry out combat training in the immediate vicinity. In training centers, units and large units move out only in order to carry out various training exercises, for a very short time.

We consider it advisable to put into practice the training of troops by moving out large units and units into so-called mobile camps in winter and summer. In this connection, the move out should be of not less than 2-3 weeks' duration. The sequence of these moves of troops should be planned on a district (army) scale, so calculated that concurrently there should be about one-third of the combat troops outside permanent quarters, i.e., in mobile camps. At a time of increased tension in the international situation and on the introduction of increased combat readiness, the number of large units and units in mobile camps can be increased by decision of the district (army) command and, under favorable circumstances, on the other hand, can be decreased.

While they are in the mobile camp the troops can, within the complex, carry out tactical, tactical-special, fire, and other types of combat training in various localities and under different conditions of a situation. Every unit (large unit), in a mobile camp should therefore move out at full strength with all transportable reserves of materiel.

Linked with the change of routine of troops, certain changes in the program of combat training must evidently be introduced, chiefly in increasing the time for tactical and tactical-special training. This may be effected by cutting down the hours of exercises in fire training and altering the

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conditions for carrying them out. We think that in a nuclear war the fire skill of the personnel should consist of the ability [2 or 3 words missing] weapon, massive automatic fire in the composition of a subunit. To achieve this it is not at all necessary to spend a lot of time in exercises out of the Manual of Firing (Kurs strelb). The soldier's training in accurate fire may be carried out successfully in the initial period of his training by his doing 2 or 3 exercises. Further skill in marksmanship should be acquired in tactical exercises with combat firing. We consider it possible for all tactical exercises, from platoon to battalion, to be carried out with combat firing alone, in different places and under varying conditions. The troops will move out to these exercises on the calling of a combat alert, as is done at the present, but not widely enough.

A change in the routine of the troops and in the methods of combat training in the direction indicated will undoubtedly increase the combat readiness of large units and units, because these measures will improve the field training of troops and will permit the dispersal, to some degree, of troops stationed in large garrisons.

The question of finding ways of increasing the stability of troop control in the first days of a war deserves special attention. One such method, in addition to the changes of location of headquarters to effect their dispersal, is the maintenance between headquarters of a smooth transition in troop control. For example, the headquarters of a district (group) must envisage the possibility of assuming the control of army or corps large units in the event of the destruction of the army or corps headquarters. In turn, the headquarters of a combined-arms army must always be ready to take the place of the headquarters of a district (group) in the event the latter goes out of action. This succession of control must be provided

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for at all levels. Each headquarters of a formation, large unit, or unit must, even in peacetime, have its own replacements (understudies) or successors who are ready to take the command upon themselves when the basic organs of control go out of action.

For this purpose it is certainly not sufficient to confine oneself to a formal appointment of understudy - headquarters. They must be able, in time of need, to utilize each large unit in conformity with its operational purpose. It is therefore necessary, in our opinion, to have in the substitute headquarters duplicates of the operational and mobilization plans, cryptographic documents (SUV), and the requisite means of communication. Furthermore these understudy headquarters should, even in peacetime, be ready to function at one level higher and during troop and command-staff exercises they should be given the control of the troops more often.

It appears that a similar takeover of the organs of control can be adopted not only for all arms of troops but for military commissariats, organs of civil defense, and for other institutions and departments, according to their own specific character.

Concerning the methods of daily maintenance of the troops at an increased level of combat readiness. One of these methods consists of changing the existing routine of storing mobile supplies and moving them on the alert signal. This refers, firstly, to large units and units which are in a continual state of readiness and whose mobile supplies are kept, at the present time, in permanent (statsionarnyy) depots. In order to move out these supplies at the alert, a large number of personnel and transport are brought in, and what is more, much time is wasted. The adoption of various means of mechanization would certainly speed up the process of moving the supplies and would ease the labor of loading them, but radical changes are not suggested.

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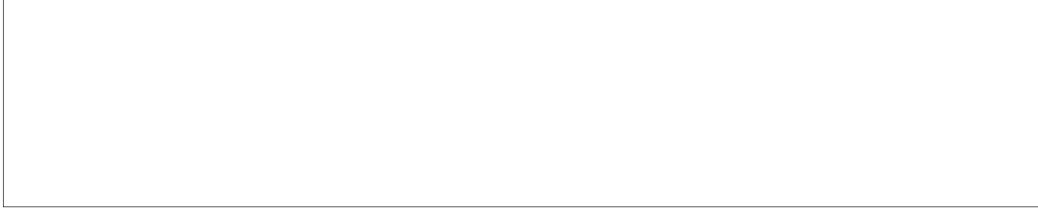
The moving of mobile supplies from places of permanent stationing continues to be a thorny problem for the combat readiness of troops. Actually it is only the shifting of supplies which limits the time for assembling troops at the alert and for moving them to the concentration area.

With the aim of continued maintenance of increased combat readiness of large units and units, some comrades suggest keeping part of the mobile supplies in the areas of troop concentration, while others advocate cutting down the overall weight of mobile supplies and thus rendering our large units (units) more maneuverable.

We do not share these opinions. Firstly, we can not rule out the possibility that certain large units and units may be placed on alert, but instead of moving out to the concentration areas in the event of a sudden enemy attack, they may be moved directly from their places of permanent quartering to perform their combat tasks. Secondly, the cutting down of the overall weight of the mobile supplies of large units and units in their present organic constitution could significantly lower the combat efficiency of the troops in the first days of a war.

As we see it, this problem should be solved by splitting up the stationary warehouses and by maintaining the greater part of mobile supplies (especially ammunition) in combat vehicles and motor transport. In short, mobile stores must be really mobile so as not to limit the combat readiness of troops. To this end we consider it possible for large units and units, especially tank, which are permanently in a state of readiness, to keep their ammunition in combat vehicles and their equipment of all kinds in specially allocated and equipped motor vehicles. When the troops are placed on alert, mobile supplies must be transported together with

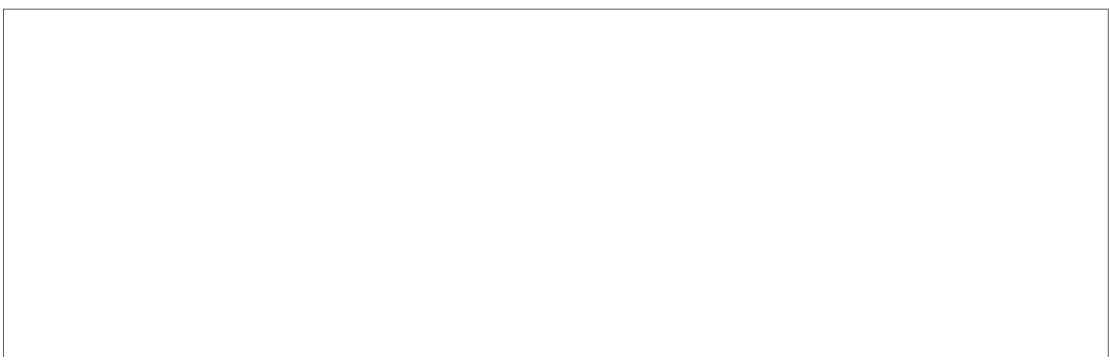
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the units (large units) or concentrated in suitable places, according to the decision of the respective commanders. Such a method of keeping supplies ensures great viability and decreases considerably the time needed to bring large units and units to combat readiness, and also increases the maneuverability of troops on the battlefield.

Another, no-less-important measure is the further improvement of the methods of providing combat tasks to the troops who are in permanent readiness. We doubt if it is necessary to point out that with the existing system of communications, there is the possibility of loss of troop control by the highest command echelons in the first hours of a war. As a result, certain large units and units, although ready to perform their combat tasks may be inactive for a long time because they do not know their assignment.

What measures can we take to improve the methods of communicating combat tasks to troops? It is evident that firstly a much more reliable multi-channel system of communications must be established for large units which are in constant readiness. In order to effect a periodic check of the working of the means of communications and of the maintenance of these large units (units) in a continual state of alert, it is advisable to have a training signal of combat readiness in each military district. Immediately on the transmission of this signal, it is necessary to allot to the commander of the district troops, his deputy, chief of staff, and chief of the operational directorate several words missing large units of constant readiness, to set them out on a map and in peacetime to keep them in the personal safe of the commanders of these large units and units of remote garrisons. At the required time, on receiving the agreed signal or on a sudden enemy attack, the commanders must open the packets and act according to the prescribed instruction. This method



of communicating tasks to troops, which has been current for some time in certain military districts (groups) as a way of checking combat readiness, is to be recommended strongly. It should therefore, in our view, be used by all types of armed forces, but chiefly by missile troops and aviation.

In maintaining the continual combat readiness of troops, it is very important for large units and units of border military districts to be kept fully staffed. We have raised this question specially because the necessary attention has not been given to it in practice, with the result that certain large units, although actually at full strength, sometimes cannot move out on the alert to their own concentration area with their full complement. This is explained by the fact that a large number of the personnel and technicians in these large units spend a considerable time in carrying out various non-military tasks such as getting in the harvest or felling timber. These are certainly necessary tasks, but the existing army method of allotting manpower and equipment to such tasks requires review.

In the first place, large units and units which are in a permanent state of readiness should not be detailed for work a long way away from their permanent quarters, nor should detachments made up of their personnel be sent off to perform non-military work beyond the boundaries of their garrison. Under any circumstances every effort should be made to ensure that large units in a state of permanent readiness should always be at their authorized strength and in the vicinity of their own garrisons. In the case where the need arises to detach personnel and equipment for non-military work at a great distance from the permanent location posts, it is advisable not to create composite formations (formirovaniye) but to detail entire military subunits, so as not to impair the combat readiness of several large units

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(units) simultaneously. The same principle should well be applied in detailing the personnel and equipment for any other work done by troops, both inside the unit (large unit) and outside the boundaries of their place of location.

The continual maintenance of troops at a high state of readiness is effected by the skillful choice and preparation of concentration areas of large units and units when the alert is given. It is therefore most necessary to select areas of maximum suitability and usefulness for effecting the concealment and dispersal of units and large units which have means of communication, are equipped with supplies and which have approach routes to ensure the movements of troops at any season of the year. We must not forget that the conditions of the locality must permit the organization of antiatomic protection with a minimum expenditure of personnel and material in the carrying out of engineering works.

Commanders at all levels should know the place of disposition of their own units and small units in these areas and the approach routes to such places, and should take all steps to ensure that they are always maintained in good condition.

Concerning the system of checking combat and mobilization readiness. The present method of testing separate units and large units by calling an alert, although known to be effective as regards the troops, cannot give the whole picture of the level of combat readiness of operational formations. Moreover, the combat readiness of headquarters of districts and armies is still being insufficiently tested by higher command echelons.

We consider it advisable for important operational command-staff exercises of a district (or group of districts) to start with placing headquarters on the alert and issuing them their operational directives.

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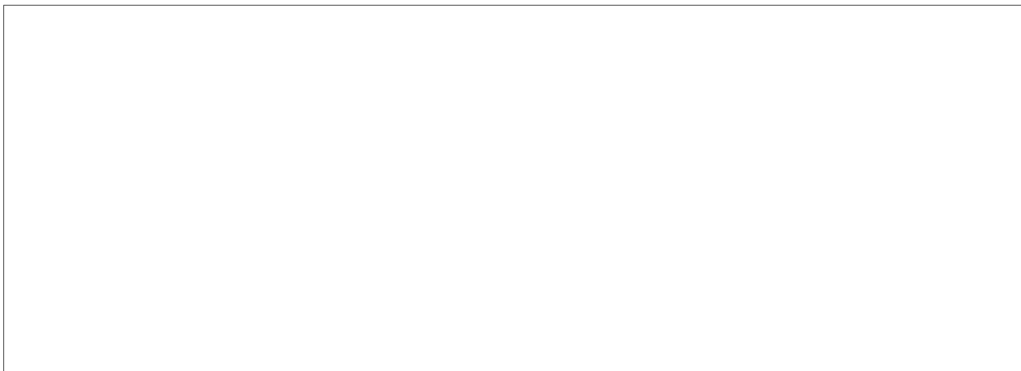


Large units and units of all arms of troops (with obvious exceptions), military commissariats, and organs of civil defense in the district area, together with the headquarters of districts, should be put on the alert and assume a state of readiness. At the same time it is advisable to have a test mobilization (otmobilizovaniye) of a number of large units and units. If such exercises take place in a maritime area, it would be most useful to alert the manpower and resources of the navy and bring them into the exercise so as to carry out joint operations with other types of armed forces. As a result of such a complex test of all problems of combat and mobilization readiness, we can detect deficiencies and find ways of eliminating them.

Undoubtedly the carrying out of this measure on such a large scale will entail large expenditures and must receive the concurrence of the local soviet and Party organs. However, the interests of maintaining a high level of combat readiness dictate the necessity for such expenses.

On the basis of these considerations, we think it is also possible, in the interests of increasing the combat readiness of the troops, to test, by operational-strategic exercises the different variants of the activities of the armed forces for the initial period of a war, at different levels of their readiness. Such a test of combat readiness should take place on the scale of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact; not in the depth of our own territory, as is the accepted thing, but on the forward boundaries, near the borders of the capitalist world.

The necessity for such measures arises from the aggressive actions of our probable enemies. It is sufficient to refer to certain exercises carried out by the NATO armed forces in 1959-60. For example,



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the command-staff exercise "Sidestep" (September 1959) embraced nearly all the area of Europe, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean Sea. The commanders-in-chief and headquarters of the armed forces of the North European, Central European, South European, the Atlantic, and Mediterranean theaters of military operations, the commanders and headquarters of types of armed forces and of areas in the theaters of military operations, the commanders and headquarters of groups of armies, of tactical air commands, field and air armies, the commanders and headquarters of army corps (19 in all) and divisions (51) and also the commanders and headquarters of atomic artillery units, guided missiles, and free rockets, all took part.

Furthermore, the central directorates of ministries of defense, the commands and headquarters of military-territorial organs, rear organs, central directorates of ministries of internal affairs, transport, the merchant fleet, economy, public health, communications and many other organs from all the European countries belonging to NATO, were brought in.¹ The exercise bore an openly aggressive character and was conducted in the spirit of NATO military preparations, obviously directed against the Soviet Union and countries of the Socialist Camp.

The vast maneuvers of the combined armed forces of NATO, under the general title of "FOLLEX 60" (September 1960) serve as a present-day dramatization of a war against the Soviet Union. The area of maneuvers embraced the territories of countries belonging to NATO and the Atlantic zone. The air and naval forces of the USA, Great Britain, France, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, the Federal Republic of Germany, Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Turkey and the ground troops of a number of these countries all took part in them. In all,

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up to 300 ships of the navy (including 7 aircraft carriers and 4 cruisers with guided missiles and surface-to-air missiles), strategic and tactical aviation, and up to 600 carrier aircraft took part in the maneuvers. Political circles of the Federal Republic of Germany considered these maneuvers to be "a show of force" of the NATO military alliance and also one of the important stages in preparation for a future war.

It is quite clear that the military preparations directed against the USSR do not stop at exercises and maneuvers. The militaristic circles of the Anglo-American bloc are conducting feverish preparations for war in every direction. Thus, the regular execution of huge strategic exercises puts our probable enemies in a favorable position with respect to the armed forces of the Socialist Camp. Firstly, exercises of this kind allow the enemy to introduce masked measures relating to the threatening period and thus create for himself the necessary prerequisite for the sudden unleashing of war. Secondly, under the cover of such exercises he can at any moment switch to military operations with the necessary grouping of forces and weapons.

All this, naturally, compels us to maintain our armed forces continually on the alert and in the highest state of combat readiness, so that the enemy cannot catch us unawares. But this is not enough. We believe that we must carry out counteractions and conduct periodic strategic exercises with armed forces on the scale of the Warsaw Pact. On the one hand this will permit us to study the theaters of military operations more thoroughly, to work out problems of cooperation with the armies of the socialist states, and to introduce measures for bringing the troops up to combat readiness; on the other hand, to limit somewhat, or even suppress, the enemy's acts of provocation and his capacity to unleash a sudden nuclear war.

Undoubtedly such exercises are necessary, even though they may provoke various interpretations in the capitalist world, for the reactionary circles of the imperialist governments will not fail to use them in making false accusations of "aggression" against the Soviet Union.

We shall not dwell on the questions of intelligence, anti-aircraft defense, and other important measures whose significance in the increase of combat readiness of troops is quite evident. It need only be mentioned that the fulfillment of a number of measures directed toward increasing the combat readiness of troops requires preliminary consent on the part of the local authorities on whose territory the troops are located. In particular, certain agreements must be made with the local Party and government organs in altering the existing location of troops, the conduct of important operational-strategic exercises, and in the introduction of mobilization tests of the population, etc. We must, beforehand, coordinate the designated areas of concentration of troops on the alert with the areas of concentration of the civil population who would be moved on the threat of a nuclear attack from large cities to safer places, and define the methods of organizing the work of rescue and reconstruction and other problems to whose solution insufficient attention is given in peacetime.

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