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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

15 April 1977

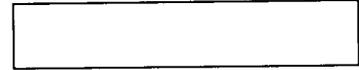
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Bringing Troops
of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. This article comments on a previous article on bringing troops to combat readiness. The author examines the conditions under which troops are brought to readiness and the time required to achieve this, and focuses on certain preliminary measures to be carried out during peacetime or in a period of threat, including preparing movement routes and deployment lines, placing prepared missiles directly in missile brigades, dispersing front aviation units to previously prepared airfields, conducting reconnaissance, and setting up materiel reserves. He also addresses the problem of bringing troops to readiness in the event the enemy succeeds in delivering a nuclear strike against them, and briefly touches on the question of training troops for the march. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR



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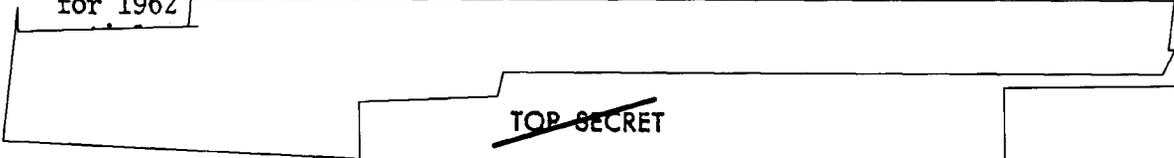
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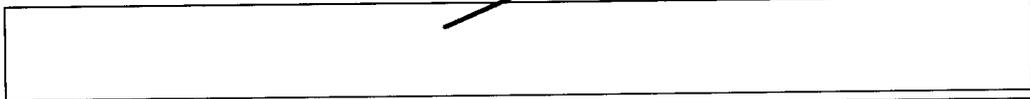
Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963 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 comments on a previous article on bringing troops to combat readiness. The author examines the conditions under which troops are brought to readiness and the time required to achieve this, and focuses on certain preliminary measures to be carried out during peacetime or in a period of threat, including preparing movement routes and deployment lines, placing prepared missiles directly in missile brigades, dispersing front aviation units to previously prepared airfields, conducting reconnaissance, and setting up materiel reserves. He also addresses the problem of bringing troops to readiness in the event the enemy succeeds in delivering a nuclear strike against them, and briefly touches on the question of training troops for the march. End of Summary

Comment:

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 "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" in Issue No. 2 (63) for 1962





Bringing Troops of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness

by
Colonel B. Zheleznov

The article of Colonel V. Prokhorov* touches upon a very important subject. The problem of bringing troops to full combat readiness continues to be the main problem in the theory of military art and in the practice of troops. To further increase the combat readiness of operational formations and large units of all branches of the armed forces is considered one of the basic tasks of operational training.

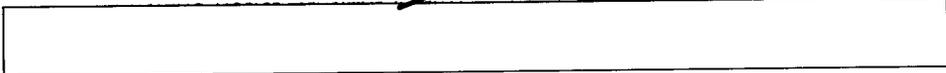
The author of the article bases his calculations on the minimum amount of time needed to complete the bringing of troops to full combat readiness, which equals one hour. It seems to us that in this amount of time, even if certain measures have been carried out in advance (tanks have been loaded with ammunition, the remaining ammunition has been placed on motor transport, etc.), the troops will not manage to move a considerable distance from the military casernes and may suffer great losses from enemy nuclear strikes.

Under conditions when the enemy has launched his missiles and his aircraft are located at a distance of a one-hour flight to the target, it is already too late to move the troops from their permanent deployment sites. It is highly probable that the overwhelming majority of troop permanent deployment sites and the areas of troop concentration on alert are known to the enemy. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to remain at the military casernes and wait for the "last hour".

We believe that troops should be moved from their permanent deployment sites ahead of time, during the period of acute complication of the international situation when it becomes clear that in the next few days or even hours the aggressor may deliver a surprise strike. To give timely warning of preparations for such a strike is the responsibility of strategic reconnaissance. The moment there has been notification of a threatening situation, all troops and staffs must be put on combat alert, and must be immediately withdrawn from their permanent deployment points and dispersed within a short period of time in conformity with the plan for forming attack groupings; staffs must be positioned at field control posts.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought' No. 4 (65), 1962 (FIRDB-312/00892-76).





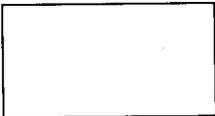
This will decrease by many times the danger of their being hit by nuclear weapons and will maintain their combat effectiveness.

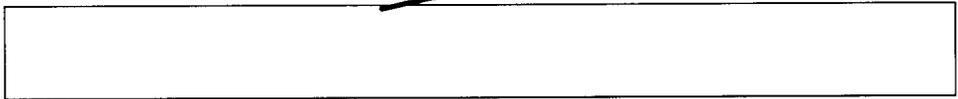
However, it must be kept in mind that to simultaneously move troops of a military district to alternate areas, rebase aviation to concealed airfields, and change control posts within a very short period of time, let us say in one night, let alone on the day before the beginning of military actions, is extremely dangerous. Changing the disposition areas of troops, forces and means, as Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. Malinovskiy stated at the critique of an operational command-staff exercise in September 1962, is necessary and advisable, for it is an effective measure of protection against enemy nuclear strikes. However, this change must be organized intelligently, in conformity with the order of priority for relocating large units and units, so as to avoid exposing unprotected troops to an enemy nuclear strike and greatly prejudicing troop combat readiness.

Of course, the organized bringing of troops to combat readiness will depend primarily on the amount of time the command has between the moment of transmission of the signal to shift to increased combat readiness and the beginning of military actions. Under present-day conditions, with a dependable organization of reconnaissance and effective use of all reconnaissance means, a surprise attack by an aggressor has become highly unlikely. During certain periods of especially acute international complications, there obviously will be grounds for initiating a state of threat in the country.

Everyone still remembers the events of the end of October 1962 in the area of the Caribbean Sea, when the world literally was on the verge of a thermonuclear war, which did not break out thanks only to the heroic efforts of the Soviet government. It cannot be ruled out that other similar complications of the international situation will arise in the future, requiring special vigilance and readiness on the part of our troops. The actual period of threat, although it was not officially instituted in our country, lasted not just one day, as the course of the complications of the situation in the Caribbean Sea area shows. Under other conditions this period may be shorter or longer, but it is most likely that there will be one. It is clear that all measures to bring the troops of a military district to full combat readiness will have to be carried out during this interval of time.

Troop combat readiness, of course, is not determined merely by the ability of troops to assemble quickly upon a combat alert signal and move





to concentration areas. Its most important indicators are coordination of large units, units, subunits, and combat crews, impeccable knowledge on the part of the personnel of the equipment assigned them and the ability to effectively employ it in battle, and the capability of commanders and staffs to firmly control troops under any conditions of the situation. Playing an enormous role in maintaining a high level of troop combat readiness are the excellent training, firm military discipline, and physical stamina of Soviet soldiers, a high level of general, political, and technical training, and a deep understanding on the part of soldiers of their military duty and the conscientious performance of it. All these qualities are inculcated during peacetime during daily, painstaking drill.

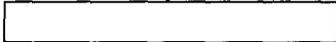
Colonel A. Prokhorov correctly points out the importance of quickly deploying troops and forming attack groupings to conduct the first offensive operations. The swift deployment of missile units and large units, the main fire means of the ground forces, takes on special importance. However even in this matter, as the experience of operational exercises shows, many errors are committed. Thus, for example, during a command-staff exercise in April 1962, as a result of the low level of combat readiness of missile units and their inadequate preparation for the march, the main part of the front missile troops was not able to deliver nuclear strikes until two to 2.5 hours after enemy aggression had begun.

The initial nuclear strike of the front may coincide with the initial nuclear strike of the strategic rocket forces. Therefore, the missile units and large units of the front and the army should take up their positions well in advance. They must prepare to deliver a strike and to perform the most important tasks of the offensive operations sooner than the other forces of the front.

In order to reduce the time required for the rocket troops to achieve readiness, it is necessary while it is still peacetime to fully reconnoiter sites for the elements of the battle formation of the missile units and large units, carry out the topographical tie-in of them, prepare the routes of movement, and have missiles fully prepared for launching immediately in the army and front brigades. For this same purpose it is advisable to set up the necessary reserves of propellant components, communications means, protective means, and rations.

The tactical missile units will operate and relocate together with their divisions, and only under certain conditions will they take part in the initial strike, for which they also have to deploy well in advance.





A high level of combat readiness of front aviation is essential for the delivery of a strike in cooperation with the operational-tactical rocket troops. It is achieved by carrying out a number of measures, the most important of which may be considered dispersing aviation units during the period of threat to airfields that have been prepared in advance and bringing them to a state of readiness to operate from these airfields, and having the aircraft crews on airfield alert and part of them on airborne alert. A necessary condition is that command and flight personnel have a good knowledge of the specific enemy and of his combat capabilities and methods of action, that all flight and technical personnel have adequate training for the conduct of combat actions in a complex situation, and that there be continuous, reliable control.

The author of the article correctly raises the issue of maintaining the combat effectiveness of front aviation by dispersing it on field airfields. The flat terrain in the majority of the border military districts in the European part of the country facilitates the choice and preparation of field airfields, and the vastness of the territory promotes their camouflage. Dirt airfields are prepared in peacetime.

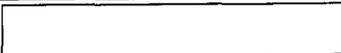
The reduction in aircraft take-off and landing distances effected by the use of new parachute braking systems and ski-wheel landing gear enables front aviation to make extensive use of dirt airfields of limited size.

Tank and motorized rifle divisions, depending on the situation, may go over to a rapid offensive from departure areas and alert assembly areas that have been designated in advance with regard for the protective characteristics of the terrain or directly from permanent deployment sites.

It cannot be ruled out that the enemy may succeed in delivering a nuclear strike against our troops. As a result of these strikes, important installations and road junctions may be destroyed, our troops may suffer considerable losses, and extensive zones of radioactive contamination may be formed. All this will drastically complicate the conditions of bringing troops to full combat readiness. However, even in these cases the troops should prepare for aggressive actions without delay. The methods of maintaining troop combat effectiveness and of restoring losses of units and large units that have been subjected to the effects of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction require further study and practical mastery.

Of great importance under these conditions are well-organized radiation reconnaissance, rapid collection of data on the radiation





situation and evaluation of them, and notification of the troops as to the boundaries of contaminated zones and the radiation levels in them. This will enable the command to issue instructions to large units, units, and facilities of the military district (front) to leave contaminated zones. Specific knowledge of the combat effectiveness of troops, their supply situation with regard to materiel reserves, losses, and the degree of disruption of control and communications will promote the restoring of disrupted control and communications with units and large units and the taking of measures to eliminate the aftereffects of the nuclear attack, particularly in the hardest-hit large units.

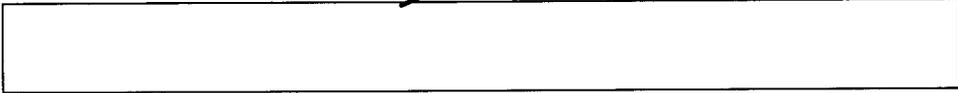
It is known that the majority of border military districts in the European theaters of military operations do not have common borders with the states of the aggressive imperialist blocs. The fronts which will be deployed on the basis of these military districts, will not be able to go over to the offensive immediately. They will begin initial operations after the troops have moved forward a distance of approximately 800 to 1,000 kilometers to the area of combat actions, and the troops will be committed from the march to an engagement that is already in progress.

The primary goal in maintaining the troops of the border military districts at a high level of combat readiness should be to ensure the rapid and orderly movement of front troops to the area of combat actions and to the axes of the forthcoming offensive. It is essential to ensure that each army and division goes over to the offensive from the march in an orderly manner under conditions of the use of nuclear weapons by both the sides.

In anticipation of such actions, it is very important in advance to prepare the movement routes and deployment lines and make precise calculations of the time the troops will reach them so as to go over to the offensive simultaneously. However, it should be kept in mind that the situation at the beginning of combat actions (grave losses, extensive zones of radioactive contamination, destruction on transportation lines, etc.) may require considerable modification of the original plan of actions.

Under these conditions, a high level of combat readiness should be characterized above all by the capability of troops to negotiate contaminated zones and various areas of destruction without decreasing their rate of advance. This requires that the troops have a high level of training for the march and enormous physical and psychological stamina, and that all levels of control display initiative and stability.





A few words on training troops for the march. As experience demonstrates, even good training of the driver-mechanics of tanks and the drivers of armored personnel carriers and motor vehicles, and their ability to drive at high speeds day and night, which are acquired during peacetime in the combat training system, are not enough to bring about the success of the march if commanders and staffs have not learned to make use of the march capabilities of their units and subunits. During practical activities of troops, it is necessary to develop in commanders and staffs the skills to control subunits and units during the march and the ability to achieve high rates of march and to make a timely switch from given march routes to others when there are zones of radioactive contamination.

