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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

25 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Problems of the Operational Rear Services

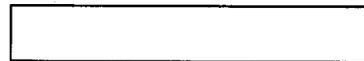
1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article addresses the question of making certain improvements in the front and army rear services necessitated by improved armament and modern methods of armed combat. Drawing on the experience of the last war, and examining present conditions, the author concludes that the rear services must be as mobile, as able to withstand nuclear strikes, and as controllable as the troops they are to support. Among the measures discussed are the employment of motor transport, as well as certain organizational changes, including the combining of the rear services into a single entity with a centralized control system based on the operational control organs of the rear services. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (82) for 1967.

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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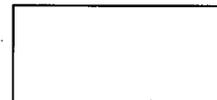
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## Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Late 1967

DATE 25 April 1977

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Problems of the Operational Rear Services

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (82) for 1967 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is General-Major A. Muzychenko. This article addresses the question of making certain improvements in the front and army rear services necessitated by improved armament and modern methods of armed combat. Drawing on the experience of the last war, and examining present conditions, the author concludes that the rear services must be as mobile, as able to withstand nuclear strikes, and as controllable as the troops they are to support. Among the measures discussed are the employment of motor transport, as well as certain organizational changes, including the combining of the rear services into a single entity with a centralized control system based on the operational control organs of the rear services.

End of Summary

Comment:

The author also wrote "Coordination of Operational Tasks of Troops in Offensive Operations with the Materiel Technical Capabilities of the Rear Services of a Front" in Issue No. 2 (90) for 1970 and "The Mobility of the Ground Forces and Rear Services" in Issue No. 1 (86) for 1969

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Problems of the Operational Rear Services

1967

by  
General-Major A. Muzychenko

For a number of years the problems encountered in organizing the rear services at all levels of our Armed Forces and rear services support for the troops during the operations of a nuclear war have been discussed on the pages of the Journal "Military Thought". That there is such interest in Rear services matters is fully understandable, for changes which occur in the methods of armed combat and in the nature of operations conducted should invariably be followed by improvements in the rear services. Keeping in mind the new requirements of military art and the changed conditions of rear services support of troops, we shall attempt to set forth certain theoretical questions and recommend ways of further improving army and front rear services.

As is known, present-day offensive operations are characterized by great territorial scope and sharply increased rates of advance. As a result, the distance between the troops and the supply bases that have been set up in advance will sharply increase and may reach many hundreds of kilometers. How to assure the troops of more stable rear services support under such complex conditions constitutes one of the most critical problems of our times. Let us focus on the organization of the army rear services.

As we know, the combat might of modern combined-arms armies and tank armies has sharply increased. As a result, they can deliver deep strikes and operate in the operational depth at a great distance from the main grouping of troops. It appears to us that armies operating under these conditions must have with them the rear services forces and means necessary to provide the large units with direct support. At the same time modern combined-arms armies and tank armies have become less autonomous with respect to rear services than during the last war as a result of reductions in army rear services made at one time. ?

Measures taken to lighten the army rear services resulted in reduced materiel reserves and in the elimination of hospitals and almost all repair means from the composition of the army rear

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services. A great deal of time has elapsed since then, during which the capabilities of the army rear services have been thoroughly tested in exercises. The data obtained demonstrate that at the present time there is a degree of disproportion between the increased combat might of army troops and the capabilities for providing them with rear services support.

The combat experience acquired during the mobile operations of the last war quite clearly confirms that having materiel reserves, hospitals, and repair facilities available has never reduced the mobility or offensive capabilities of army troops.

For example, it is known that during the deep offensive operations of the last war, the army rear services units and facilities that carried out the basic tasks of supporting the large units and units of the army were the first to move forward behind the troops. It was the army rear services that established the definite stability of rear services support for the troops during their rapid advance and highly mobile operations.

On the basis of this experience, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that as the depth of operations and the rates of advance increase, the role and importance of the army rear services in providing stable rear services support for the troops will increase even more.

Therefore, the task is not to reduce army rear services, but to increase the mobility of its rear services units and facilities, i.e., to bring the technical equipping of the army rear services into line with the improved technical equipping of the troops: by strengthening transport, making medical facilities mobile, and giving the army more mobile and efficient repair means that meet the requirements of the new level of development of combat equipment.

It is now fully possible to accomplish this task. The successful fulfilment of the seven-year plan for the development of the national economy has brought about a sharp increase in the economic level of the country, and as a result the capabilities for the technical equipping of the rear services have expanded: motor transport has been improved; a new lightweight synthetic container for fuel has been developed; repair equipment for the

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armored, motor vehicle-tractor, and other services has become more mobile and efficient; and new models of highly mobile bakeries, ambulances, and other rear services equipment have been developed. It therefore has become possible to set up truly mobile army rear services units and facilities that can move forward behind the army troops in any situation to provide them with materiel, technical, and medical support.

Let us examine matters of the front rear services and, to begin with, the tasks of the front rear services. In our opinion, the principal tasks of the front rear services are as follows: to quickly and with certainty eliminate areas of destruction in the rear, to restore lines of transportation, to promptly move front materiel reserves forward behind the troops and deliver them to the army depots, to organize the receiving from the armies of a large number of wounded and their treatment, to repair disabled combat equipment, etc.

Of course, when carrying out these tasks, the front will make massed use of its own forces and means, concentrating the principal rear services units and facilities on the axes of actions of the main troop groupings. However, the front rear services will hardly be able under the conditions of a nuclear war to effectively carry out their assigned tasks by way of providing direct support of the large units and units without relying on the army rear services element. If this were done, it would inevitably result in the dispersal of the forces and means of the front rear services over an enormous area and in the reduction in the effectiveness of their use, and, ultimately, breakdowns in the support of troops would occur. After all, even during the last war, when conditions were less complex than now, the front rear services could not support the troops directly. This task was carried out jointly with the army rear services.

The nature of present-day operations changes the operating conditions of the front rear services considerably, causing qualitatively new demands to be made of them. To ensure the prompt support of the advance of front troops to a great depth, the forces and means of the front rear services must move forward immediately behind the armies. Consequently, the problem of increasing the mobility not only of the army rear services but of the front rear services as well has come into being. At the same time, it is obvious that under the conditions of a nuclear war

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the capabilities for moving the front rear services forward by railroad will be considerably reduced, while high rates of advance may result in a greater distance between the troops and the supply bases. How can such a situation be prevented? Obviously, in addition to supply bases and other facilities located on railroad lines, the front rear services must have mobile facilities that can be moved forward on motor transport immediately behind the advancing armies to provide them with materiel, technical, and medical support. They will comprise the mobile echelon of the front rear services. Naturally this will be an intermediate echelon between the army rear services and the front rear services bases on the railroad lines. But, this is objectively necessary, for given the great depth of the offensive and the difficulties involved in restoring railroads, the stability of rear services support of troops cannot be guaranteed unless front reserves and rear services facilities are moved forward over ground immediately behind the armies.

Also, our inability to move materiel reserves up to the troops ahead of time when an operation is being prepared constitutes yet another reason why rear services support of troops during present-day offensive operations is complicated. The fact is that by concentrating materiel reserves in the forward area, we risk losing them as a result of strikes by enemy tactical nuclear weapons. Therefore, the main materiel reserves of the front are supposed to be located in the depth of the rear zone at a considerable distance from the troops until the beginning of the offensive. Consequently, these reserves will have to be moved forward behind the troops over fairly great distances at the very beginning of the offensive, and this cannot be done without powerful means of delivery.

This also applies to medical and repair units. They may be located in the depth of the rear prior to the beginning of the offensive, and subsequently they will have to be quickly moved forward behind the advancing troops under conditions of large areas of destruction on the lines of transportation.

It must be mentioned that the mobility of the front rear services units and facilities is still far from adequate to their tasks and operating conditions; this is especially true of supply bases and medical facilities. Front supply bases are not sufficiently mobile or controllable. Front hospitals are unable

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to move forward independently, using their own transport, although the fact remains that, on the whole, the rear services units and facilities have a fairly large quantity of transport.

We can well understand that it is impossible to make all front units and facilities mobile; moreover, there is no need to do so. An objective assessment of the operating conditions of the front rear services during present-day operations demonstrates that it is desirable for the front rear services to have two types of rear services units and facilities: mobile units and facilities -- for moving forward over ground behind the army troops during an offensive, and base units and facilities, which are to be located on the railroad lines and moved forward as the lines are restored.

If this approach is taken to solve this problem, the bulk of the motor transport can be concentrated in the mobile units and facilities. In other words, it is a question of discontinuing the uniform distribution of transport to all facilities and concentrating it in the mobile large units and units.

This requires a substantial improvement in the organizational structure of the army and front rear services.

It should be emphasized that during the last decade, in their personnel and technical equipping the rear services of the Ground Forces have been generally strengthened and have become qualitatively new. Their organizational structure, unfortunately, has not undergone serious changes. Its characteristic feature is excessive fragmentation of rear services units and facilities: the rear services of the front and the army have a large number of units and facilities, while the basic organizational element continues to be the depot, the hospital, and the workshop.

In the past, when depots, hospitals, and other facilities were located on the railroad lines, they were moved comparatively rarely during an operation, and they carried out their tasks under relatively favorable conditions, such disunity did not give rise to special complications. Each unit and facility remained in place for a long period of time and carried out its tasks independently.

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In present-day operations, the conditions of deploying the rear services have changed radically. Before deploying, the army and front rear services must move forward to the theater of military operations while simultaneously supporting the movement forward of the troops, especially with fuel. Consequently, it is desirable for the army rear services and part of the front rear services to move together with the troops, as part of their operational disposition.

During an offensive to a great depth, the army and front depots and other facilities cannot remain at the supply stations in the rear, but must move forward behind the troops to the operational depth under a complex situation involving mobile combat actions of troops when there is no continuous front and when there are large areas of destruction on the lines of transportation.

Consequently, the army rear services and a portion of the front rear services units and facilities should have the same mobility and maneuverability as the troops. Those rear services units and means that are supposed to ensure the troops are so highly maneuverable from the materiel, technical, and medical standpoint must be made equally mobile.

Further, under the conditions of a nuclear war, the army and front rear services units and facilities have to have the same stability and survivability as the troops. The very important fact that, under the conditions of a nuclear war, the rear services will carry out their tasks in the same complex situation as the troops, must not be disregarded. If they do not possess the same capabilities and means for protection as the troops, their work may be thoroughly disrupted and the materiel may be destroyed.

Finally, the third important requirement is that the rear services units and facilities have high controllability. This requirement stems from the increased mobility and fluidity of the work of the rear services. The rear services can hardly be counted on to give the troops operating in the operational depth uninterrupted support if they are poorly controlled.

Thus, the principal requirement now confronting the army rear services and all the mobile rear services units and

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facilities of the front is that they be as mobile, as able to withstand nuclear strikes, and as controllable as the troops. That is, it must be recognized as an objective law that there is a growing similarity between the demands made on the rear services and those made on the troops.

This in turn permits us to draw yet another very important conclusion as to the inescapable similarity between the organizational structure of the troops and that of their rear services. Essentially, the problem is that, since the volume and scope of the tasks of the rear services have increased and the conditions under which they work have become increasingly complex, it is of the utmost importance that the uncoordinated, inadequately controlled army and front rear services units and facilities be consolidated into integrated, mobile, well-controlled, tactical-type units and large units, capable of carrying out the tasks of rear services support in the most difficult situation.

The rear services already have such tactical-type large units and units. These are the road, pipeline, motor transport, and railroad brigades and battalions, and no one doubts the desirability of their existence. As for the units and facilities that provide the troops with materiel, medical, and technical support, they as yet continue to be fragmented, even though they carry out their tasks in direct contact with the troops in an extremely complex situation.

In the overall system of rear services support of troops, the continuous supplying of materiel is of decisive importance. A shortage of ammunition and fuel has an immediate effect on the combat capabilities of the troops. For this reason the problem of increasing the mobility and stability of materiel support of the troops is of paramount importance.

In our opinion, the need for mobility in materiel support of troops is not met by the separation of depots, servicing units, and delivery means that has developed.

The existing base structure of the operational rear services emerged during the last war, under conditions when the army and front bases were located on railroad lines and, since they remained in one place for a long period of time, carried out

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their tasks under almost stationary conditions. Then each depot could independently issue materiel to the troops, and the headquarters of the bases had limited functions connected with the placement, security, and defense of the depots. The motor transport for bringing up supplies had little to do with the depots located on the railroad lines. It delivered materiel from these depots to the troops.

The conditions for basing during present-day operations are totally different. Because of the discrepancy between the rate of restoring the railroads and the rate of disruption of their operation, during an advance of the troops the army depots and the forward front depots will have to move forward over ground, i.e., a maneuverable basing system will have to be set up. However, this entails frequently relocating the depots by motor transport immediately behind the troops and ensuring their operation in a complex combat situation, i.e., under conditions in which a separation of the depots, transport units, and servicing units would be inadmissible. In our opinion, an objective calculation of the new tasks and working conditions of the rear services during operations necessitates a more mobile and reliable organization for materiel support units. For example, instead of army bases and forward front bases that have poor mobility and are insufficiently controlled we could have integrated mobile large units and units for materiel support. Such large units and units, which would combine under a single command depots containing materiel reserves, motor transport for moving and supplying these reserves to the troops, servicing units, and means of protection and control, would be better equipped to move forward into the operational depth immediately behind the troops and to provide the troops with materiel support in a complex combat situation.

A similar solution is possible with respect to medical units and facilities. In addition to hospital bases, the front must have mobile medical large units and units to carry out tasks in the forward area of combat actions. These medical units have to contain fully mobile hospitals and the forces and means needed for protection, servicing, support, and control.

There is no justification for the separation of repair units and facilities, a situation which came about as a result of the separation of the supply and technical support services, when

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each service formed its own independent small units and facilities. It is quite clear that an integrated technical support and servicing system is needed for the combat equipment of the troops, and that it is therefore necessary to have integrated maintenance units and facilities.

Because the armament and combat equipment of the troops are complex, the rear services must be capable of performing a variety of functions. This is understandable, for as new tasks and activities for the rear services arise, it becomes increasingly more difficult to combine them into a single, smoothly functioning entity. However, in our opinion it is possible under present-day conditions to so combine them by having a carefully conceived control system, based on the operational control organs of the rear.

As is known, the operational control organs of the rear were established during the last war. They consisted of the deputy commanders for the rear of the front and armies and of the rear staffs.

The extensive authority exercised by the deputy commanders for the rear and by the rear staffs with regard to the overall organization of the rear services and the materiel support of the troops enabled them to carry out the functions of the principal organizers of the rear services and to combine the work of all the services. The wartime work of the deputy commanders for the rear and the rear staffs of the fronts and armies was not limited solely to providing the troops with the types of supplies and servicing handled by their subordinate services. They also had to decide all matters of the organization of the rear services, the delivery of the various types of materiel, and the medical support of the troops.

During the postwar period, the functions of the deputy commanders for the rear and of the rear staffs became more restricted. Their activity basically was directed toward organizing the rear services within the framework of the subordinate services. As a result, the system of control of the rear services has become somewhat uncoordinated: those services that are not subordinate to the chief of the rear are not covered to the extent necessary, whereas the complex conditions for deploying the rear services and for rear services support of the

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troops objectively require the establishment of a flexible, centralized system of control of all services.

Because the rear support services are uncoordinated and the organization of their work, exchange of information, and subordination are not regulated with adequate efficiency, the movement forward and deployment of the numerous rear services units and facilities and their work during an operation may be severely impeded.

In solving the problem of the operational control of all services, we must take into account the total inability of commanders and combined-arms staffs, when in a complex combat situation, to adequately concentrate on organizing the mutually coordinated work of the rear services. Therefore, the elimination of this lack of organizational coordination in the system of control of the rear services, and the improvement and increase of the role of organs of operational control of the rear services, are very serious tasks. To carry them out it is necessary to specify more precisely and specifically the functions of the deputy commanders for the rear and their staffs in organizing the coordinated work of all services involved in rear services support, and to increase the role of the rear staffs as the main operational organs of control of the rear services.

The management of the motor transport making deliveries constitutes one of the important tasks of the system of control of the army and front rear services. In our opinion, proper organizational principles for the control of shipments were worked out during the last war which meet the fluid nature of operations.

It is important to note that during the last war, the management of deliveries and the control of motor transport were entrusted not to the powerful military transportation service then in existence, but to the rear staffs. This did not come about accidentally, but for sound reasons.

Even at that time motor transport had ceased to be merely a means for bringing up supplies; it had effected a qualitative change on the rear services as a whole by giving them mobility and maneuverability. Naturally, control of this important means

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of maneuver was not the job of any separate service. This task was entrusted to the main control organs of the rear -- the rear staffs, particularly since a high level of efficiency and a thorough understanding of the combat and rear services situation are needed in order to control motor transport, and the staffs are most qualified in this respect.

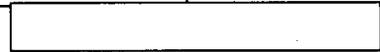
Under present-day conditions, the role of army and front motor transport as the basic means of maneuvering the rear services has become even greater. It is on motor transport that supply bases with materiel reserves, hospitals, and other rear services forces and means now move forward and change locations behind the troops. Thus, motor transport constitutes the basis of the maneuverability of the army and front rear services. Moreover, control of motor transport is by no means limited to managing the transport process, as is the case with railroads. It consists of commanding the motor transport troops when they carry out tasks in a very complex combat situation. Therefore, control of motor transport is directly tied in with control of the rear services and consequently has to be carried out by the principal operational control organ -- the rear staff.

As the experience of exercises demonstrates, efficiency in the control of transport is not increased by subordinating motor transport to the military transportation service. Moreover, duplication occurs between the work of the rear staff and that of the military transportation service. Here, the dual planning of delivery by motor transport in the rear staff and in the military transportation service, which is difficult to avoid when motor transport is subordinated to the military transportation service, lowers the efficiency of motor transport shipping.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the successful fulfilment of plans for the national economy, the growth of the economic resources of the country, and the constantly accelerating rate of technical progress are creating favorable opportunities for raising the level of the technical equipping of the rear services as well as their combat readiness. In realizing these opportunities, it is important that we synthesize the rich experience accumulated during the development of the

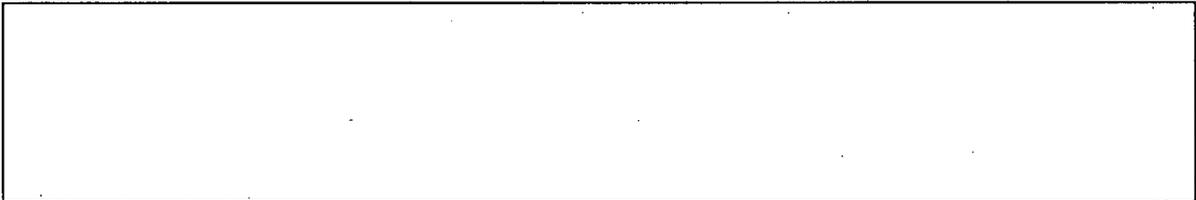
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rear services and that we scientifically work out ways of further improving all systems of rear services support in conformity with developments in armament, combat equipment, troop organization, and methods of conducting present-day operations.



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