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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

26 July 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Question
of a Combined Front Command Post

[redacted]

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 consists of two separate comments on a previous article proposing the establishment of a combined center for controlling fast-moving combat actions. While the authors of the first comment agree in general with the idea of a combined center, they object to certain specific proposals regarding its organization, stressing the need for a system of interconnected, rather than separate, command posts capable of replacing and supplementing one another. The second comment proposes improving control by supplying troops with automatic secure communications equipment and introducing means for the integrated automation of control, rather than setting up a combined command post. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (77) for 1966. [redacted]

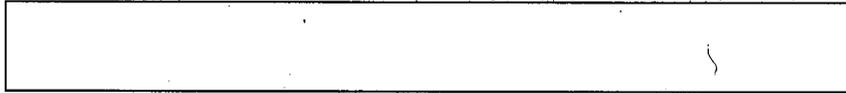
2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been [redacted]

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William W. Wells

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Early 1966

DATE 26 July 1977

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Question of a Combined Front Command Post

SOURCE Documentary
Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (77) for 1966 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are General-Mayor of Communications Troops G. Zakharov, General-Mayor of Tank Troops P. Nazarov, Colonel B. Dudnik, and Colonel O. Dmitriyev. This article consists of two separate comments on a previous article proposing the establishment of a combined center for controlling fast-moving combat actions. While the authors of the first comment agree in general with the idea of a combined center, they object to certain specific proposals regarding its organization, stressing the need for a system of interconnected, rather than separate, command posts capable of replacing and supplementing one another. The second comment proposes improving control by supplying troops with automatic secure communications equipment and introducing means for the integrated automation of control, rather than setting up a combined command post.

End of Summary

Comment:

General-Mayor P. Nazarov co-authored with Colonel G. Cherkas and Colonel V. Savelyev "Some Problems of the Control of Troops of a Front in a Movement over a Large Distance" in Issue No. 2 (84) for 1968

Colonel B. Dudnik also wrote "Features of the Organization of Communications of the Ground Forces in Operations During a Non-Nuclear Period of Warfare" in Issue No. 3 (91) for 1970

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The Question of a Combined Front Command Post

by

General-Major of Communications Troops G. ZAKHAROV

General-Major of Tank Troops P. NAZAROV

Colonel B. DUDNIK

Colonel O. DMITRIYEV

The task of reorganizing the control methods, organs, and posts of the formations and large units of the ground forces, which General-Major of Artillery I. DZHORDZHADZE discusses in his article*, is an urgent one, and a thorough discussion of it in the pages of Military Thought, it seems to us, would be highly useful and advisable.

The author's main proposals for the improvement of troop control are contingent on the accomplishment of the principal task, which is to increase the effectiveness of the employment of nuclear means and of their delivery vehicles. The author notes quite correctly that the intermediate levels in the control system increase the time needed for the passage of information and that even a delay of five to ten minutes decreases by 15 to 20 percent the probability of destroying the target.

In our view, the combined center for controlling fast-moving actions proposed by General I. DZHORDZHADZE will make it possible to substantially increase the probability of destroying enemy nuclear and other fire means on the ground and in the air.

This is our attitude to the author's idea in general. However, at the same time, we have serious objections to some of his specific proposals.

For example, we do not share the author's view that a center for controlling fast-moving actions should be the principal work area of the front commander. The main task of a formation commander, after all, is not so much to control fast-moving troop actions as it is to make basic decisions at the time the operation is under preparation, at critical moments during engagements, and during the course of combat actions. In his decisions, the front commander determines those principal enemy targets whose destruction will ensure the overall success of the front troops, and

* "Troop Control During a Front Operation," Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought', No. 2 (75), 1965. [redacted] in Russian)

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allocates the efforts of the rocket troops, aviation, and other troops. Based on this, the personnel of the combined center for controlling fast-moving actions can independently control missile launchings, air sorties, etc.

In view of these circumstances, we believe that it is sufficient to have at the above-mentioned center responsible generals and officers from: the operations and intelligence directorates, the chief of the rocket troops and artillery, the chief of the air defense troops, and the staff of the air army.

Of course, during individual crucial periods of an operation, the front commander, the commander of the air army, the chief of the air defense troops, and the appropriate chiefs of the directorates of the front staff may also be located at the center for controlling fast-moving actions.

The author's proposal to combine the front command post and the air army command post does not help solve the problem of increasing the survivability of control posts, and this is a factor that cannot be ignored. As it is, at a front command post there are currently about 100 staff buses, more than 100 motor vehicles with communications means, and as many as 50 vehicles for various auxiliary purposes. If the air army command post were combined with the front command post, no fewer than 100 more motor vehicles would be added to this amount.

Consequently, we could not succeed in making a combined front command post small in complement and highly mobile. Instead, it would be unwieldy and unviable under conditions of missile/nuclear war.

Of course, we could boldly undertake to establish a combined front command post if it were possible to locate it, not in four motor vehicles, as the author indicated in Figure 2, but even in 40 to 50 motor vehicles. However, as of now this is hardly possible.

The giving away of their positions by radio and radio-relay means has a particularly unfavorable effect on the survivability of front (army) control posts.

It is known that our probable enemy devotes much attention to developing radio reconnaissance and already has a sufficient number of means to determine quickly the locations of front (army) radios which are transmitting. Still, radio reconnaissance data, as is well-known, requires

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subsequent final reconnaissance, and it is here that visual and radar camouflage, along with radio camouflage, acquire a special role. But even modern front command posts, as well as air army command posts, are cumbersome and extend over a rather large area, which makes visual reconnaissance easier for the enemy. The entire control post area can easily be detected by reconnaissance aircraft radar, since it is covered with a dense net of communications lines, cables, and antennas for receiving radio centers and individual radio sets.

Consequently, to decrease the probability of the front control posts being destroyed, it is necessary first of all to trim down their size and remove communications means that reveal their location. Therefore, it is obviously inadvisable to incorporate the air army command post into the front command post. It would also even be better to remove the air defense command post from the front command post area.

It can be stated from the experience of many exercises that to control troops in a missile/nuclear war, it is better not to establish separate control posts, but rather a system of interconnected posts capable of replacing one another in the event one is put out of action and also of supplementing one another. Studies show, for example, that reliable troop control in a front offensive operation requires a system of two simultaneously deployed and mutually replaceable front control posts (exclusive of the rear control post) and one or two command posts of the armies reinforced with communications means.

A similar system of control posts should be established in the armies also.

We also disagree with the author's position regarding the automation of control. His statement about the intricacy of the problems of automation does not in our view correspond to the actual state of affairs. The matter has already been clarified and that is precisely why all order-requests for the development of automated control systems have been approved by the government. Even if there are still some difficulties, they are related to establishing automated control systems in the air defense troops.

On the whole, certain difficulties do exist in the area of automation as well as in matters of the improvement of control methods and systems. However, they do not arise from the complexity or involved nature of the problems themselves, but are obviously the result of our not having one organ directing the development of control systems, with broad authority

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and responsibility both for the status of the control systems and methods in the armed forces and for their future development.

* * * *

We are unable to share the viewpoint expressed by General-Mayor of Artillery I. DZHORDZHADZE that air and ground engagements have become equally important parts of a single front operation. In our view, no matter how great the success of an air engagement, it still does not determine the outcome of an operation.

The purposeful employment of our own nuclear means and the destruction of the enemy's is, of course, an extremely important task, but it cannot be stated, as General I. DZHORDZHADZE actually does in his article, that the accomplishment of this task is the main purpose of a front operation.

Because of their enormous destructive power, nuclear weapons ensure the destruction of the main groupings of the enemy's troops and his most important installations. The attack groupings of the fronts then complete the defeat of the enemy, destroy his advancing reserves and seize vitally important installations in the depth of the theater of military operations.

The author of the article under consideration gives particular attention to control of the combat against the enemy's nuclear means, stating that this forms the basis of all troop control. For this reason, apparently, this subject alone is treated in the article. However, it is quite obvious that troop control should ensure a high degree of success for all the most important aspects of armed warfare, and not just for one -- the destruction of the enemy's nuclear means of attack.

We cannot agree with the statement by General I. DZHORDZHADZE that currently there is no constantly operating system providing unified control over all the ground and air forces. There is such a system. It is headed by the commander of the front (army) and his combined-arms staff. Moreover, there is nothing calamitous in the front commander's exercising control over the destruction of the enemy's nuclear forces via the chief of the rocket troops and artillery and the commander of the air army. The latter are the best prepared to do so, since they know the situation and condition of the special equipment and of the troops under their command. They are less burdened than the commander with the other matters involved in the control of an operation.

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Under the present system, the actual control over the actions of the nuclear forces starts not from the moment the task is received from the front commander, as General I. DZHORDZHADZE maintains, but considerably earlier (from the moment the troops are brought up to increased combat readiness). Even before the front commander makes a final decision, the chief of the rocket troops and artillery organizes the technical, ballistic, and meteorological preparation for the strikes, examines the problems of grouping his own missile/nuclear means, indicates the siting areas, reconnoiters the routes for moving to the siting areas, and organizes topographic and geodetic support and the preparation and delivery of missiles to the missile large units and units. At the same time, data about the enemy is analyzed, and reports are prepared for the front commander about the enemy grouping which must be destroyed.

As a rule, the chief of the rocket troops and artillery will be with the front commander when the latter makes his decision, especially since the control post of the chief of the rocket troops and artillery is currently an integral part of the front command post.

Also without foundation is the statement by the author that the existing system for obtaining reconnaissance data is inadequate.

The front commander receives these data from one organ, the intelligence directorate, which accumulates information from all types of reconnaissance. This system, in our view, is the right one. It needs only to be noted that to ensure an effective missile strike, the staff of the rocket troops and artillery must receive reconnaissance data at the same time. This will allow the chief of the rocket troops and artillery to analyze the targets concurrently with the intelligence and the operations directorates and to issue instructions and commands which will considerably expedite the preparation of the rocket troops to deliver a strike against the targets.

The author of the article correctly states that there is currently a definite discrepancy between the capabilities of the means of armed combat and the means for controlling them. But this discrepancy will hardly disappear once the proposed organic combined command post is created. Placing everyone in one place in front of plotting boards which are filled in by hand still does not signify the improvement and expediting of the control process. By the way, we should note that, in principle, the method of control proposed by General I. DZHORDZHADZE is not new. In a number of exercises in 1957 and 1958, the Americans had set up similar control posts at the division, corps and army level, calling them "tactical support

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centers" (for the division and corps) and "army operations center" (for the army). But these centers did not solve the main problem of automated control and suffered from the same shortcomings as the control system that preceded them. The non-organic "centers for controlling combat actions" that were organized somewhat later do not, in essence, differ particularly from our existing command post (in organizational structure, not in equipment).

In general, we believe that the organization proposed by General I. DZHORDZHADZE will limit the functions of the staff, which is the basic control organ, to control of only a part of the combat actions, more precisely, to control of combat against enemy nuclear means of attack. This removal of the best forces of the staff from integrated troop control could be harmful.

In our view, a sharp improvement in troop control, including control of nuclear means, should be achieved not by setting up a combined command post, but rather by supplying the troops, primarily the rocket troops, as quickly as possible with automatic secure communications equipment for telegraph radio-relay and telephone channels of communication, by introducing into the troops means for the integrated automation of control as rapidly as possible, and by making broad use at first of means of minor automation and mechanization. In this connection, there already exist considerable capabilities for reducing severalfold the time needed to transmit commands and instructions and for making troop control substantively easier for the commander. The trouble is that they often either do not want, or do not know how, to use these means.

In the not too distant future, as we have already mentioned, the ground forces will be equipped with automated control equipment. The first steps in this direction have already been taken. Electronic computers are in use in separate tactical and operational-tactical missile battalions; these provide within several tens of seconds the automatic preparation of data for launches, the processing of the results of meteorological soundings of the atmosphere, etc.

With the introduction of an integrated automated control system there will obviously also be the need and capability for fundamental reorganization of control organs and reduction of their size. It is premature, in our view, to deal with such a reorganization before this takes place. It should be noted that the reorganization of control will require a considerable amount of time, which troops in constant combat readiness do not have.

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Several words about the "Graph for Combat Against Nuclear Means". Of course, the author is right in trying to find more suitable forms for combat documents. However, in our view, the form of the graph is inconvenient. A great number of persons are involved in coordinating it, and a great deal of time and effort is required to complete it. Undoubtedly all this will distract the chief of the rocket troops and artillery, the commander of the air army, the chief of staff of the front, and finally the front commander himself from the control of operations.

We propose the use of network graphs, which are already widely used in the control of industrial enterprises, rail traffic, etc.

The network graphs make it possible to represent clearly the scope of the task to be accomplished, to indicate with any degree of detail the nature of the measures being carried out, to establish their interrelationship, and to determine the actions (events) needed to attain the set goal. On the basis of these graphs, it is possible to devise easily and quickly a plan for carrying out a group of operations, to predict the critical aspects, and to concentrate the attention of the commander on carrying them out. The network graphs promote the more effective employment of all resources, since analysis of the network graph and discovery of the critical targets, axes, or situations permits a shift in the concentration of effort to them from less important axes. And finally, using them it is possible to carry out in advance on electronic computers a varied analysis of any plan in many variants.

There is every reason to assume that network graphs will be widely used in developing new methods of control.

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