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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

18 January 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Control
of the Operational Rear

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 deals with the role and tasks of the commander and his staff in carrying out control of the rear services under the increasingly complex conditions of present-day warfare. The author illustrates, by citing exercise experience, the need for precise cooperation between the combined-arms staff and rear staffs when conducting operations, to ensure proper support for troop actions. The procedure for setting tasks and transmitting instructions to the rear services are also highlighted. Also discussed are matters of increasing the efficiency of directing rear services units and facilities, and of enlarging the role of rear staffs. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (69) 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

JOHN N. MCMAHON

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Page 2 of 12 Pages

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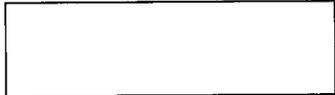
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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 12 Pages

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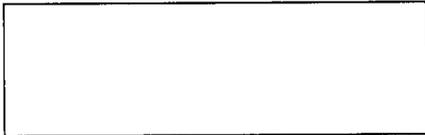
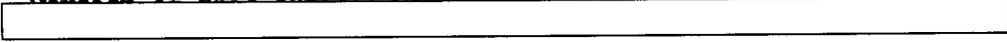
Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (69) 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 I. Zhermosek. This article deals with the role and tasks of the commander and his staff in carrying out control of the rear services under the increasingly complex conditions of present-day warfare. The author illustrates, by citing exercise experience, the need for precise cooperation between the combined-arms staff and rear staffs when conducting operations, to ensure proper support for troop actions. The procedure for setting tasks and transmitting instructions to the rear services are also highlighted. Also discussed are matters of increasing the efficiency of directing rear services units and facilities, and of enlarging the role of rear staffs.

End of Summary

Comment:

The SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.



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Page 4 of 12 Pages

Control of the Operational Rear

by

Colonel I. ZHERNOSEK

Troop control, as we know, involves all the activity of the command, staffs, and chiefs of the branch arms and services for the organization and all-around support of troops and command of them to achieve the objectives of the operation. An important feature of the preparation and conduct of a modern operation is the ever growing effect of the organization and work of the rear services on the success of the fulfilment of the assigned tasks. Therefore, in the activity of the commander and his staff, a time and place is always set aside to decide the questions of rear services support.

Making an operational decision on the preparation of an operation consists not merely in properly choosing the axis of attack, determining the form of troop actions, and structuring them in the most advisable manner. An inseparable part of this work is the establishment of the necessary material base to correspond to the tasks of the troops and the concretely developing situation and to ensure the maintenance of their combat readiness throughout the operation. In this connection, it is not hard to understand why control of the rear services is now and always has been regarded as an important integral part of the operational control of troops.

Just what are the tasks of the commander and his staff in control of the rear services under the new conditions of the conduct of operations?

The all-around support of troops with everything necessary is carried out by dozens and -- on the scale of large operational formations -- by hundreds of special rear services large units, units, and facilities. Their actions must be constantly coordinated in precise conformity with the commander's decision and directed toward the achievement of the given objective. Sometimes, therefore, in making his decision for the operation or for the conduct of one or another maneuver, the troop commander must simultaneously also determine the basic concept of the organization of the rear services: establish the grouping of rear services large units, units, and facilities in conformity with the axes of actions and the tasks of the

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troops, as well as the axes of concentration of the main efforts of the rear services according to the periods of the operation or the tasks of the troops.

Nevertheless, in exercises certain deviations are sometimes allowed in this respect; it happens that the commander does not set any tasks at all for the rear services for the period of the fulfilment of impending tasks by the troops or, vice versa, calling the chiefs of services to the command post, he does this with an excess of detail, thereby supplanting his deputy for the rear. These extremes have a negative effect on the work of the rear services, their organization, and the timeliness of the fulfilment of instructions.

During an operation the situation often changes drastically, calling at times for substantial changes in the organization of the rear services. This is always bound up with the performance of a large volume of work to restore and prepare the transportation network, to relocate bases and depots with reserves of materiel to new areas, and to move a considerable number of medical and repair facilities. Therefore, it is very important that the commander, during the operation, set tasks in good time or else orient the rear control organs about an impending maneuver of troops or a drastic change in their tasks or grouping. When we speak of the timeliness of a commander's setting of tasks for the rear services during an operation, we have in mind such time as will be sufficient for the fulfilment of the extremely laborious tasks enumerated to change the system of the organization of rear services support.

Unfortunately, in exercises tasks are very often announced to the rear services belatedly, and this in the long run has an adverse effect on the support of troops and the preparation of the rear services organs themselves.

To justify such actions, people sometimes cite the undesirability of familiarizing a large circle of persons with the operational plans of the commander. In our opinion, these arguments cannot be taken seriously, inasmuch as the timely setting of tasks for the rear services does not require the complete disclosure of the operational concepts. It is quite sufficient that the commander, foreseeing the possibility of a drastic change in the situation, indicates to his deputy for the rear where and by when to establish supplementary reserves of materiel, how much reserve transport to allocate, what amount of medical facilities to release, when to prepare them for possible movement, etc.





To be sure, under present-day conditions of the conduct of operations, the necessity will often arise to make a decision quickly without awaiting the report of the deputy commander for the rear. Therefore, as has been said before, it is now necessary for the combined-arms staff to be constantly posted on the rear services situation and to know well the supply state of their troops and the condition and capabilities of the rear services organs. This requirement testifies to the growing role of the combined-arms staff in directing the rear services in modern highly mobile operations developing to a great depth and on separate axes. There is no need to demonstrate that the combined-arms staff cannot, without precise knowledge of the rear services situation and good cooperation with the rear control organs, correctly decide a number of questions of operational command of troops.

We shall confirm this with examples. In one of the exercises conducted in the Kiev Military District in 1962, the staff of a front, in planning the movement of troops into an area of combat actions, did not show enough concern about the organization of a branching network of the road and traffic control service in the zones of the movement of the operational formations and did not enlist the services of the appropriate specialists in drawing up the plan. As a result, serious defects appeared in the finished plan, and unless these were eliminated the fulfilment of the plan was placed in doubt. Only after a whole series of observations of the director of the exercise, made, unfortunately, too late (on the night before the offensive of the troops), were officers of the directorate of the chief of engineer troops and road service brought in for joint work to organize traffic control service on the transportation lines. However, the indicated measures could not be completely fulfilled because of the lack of time.

Another example from the same exercises shows how important it is for the combined-arms staff to solve separate problems of the rear services support of troops in practice. Thus, the staff, working out a special plan of support of the crossing of a large water obstacle, prepared the appropriate instructions on the basis of possible enemy counteraction. In particular, it was proposed that commanders and formation commanders locate their troops at a specific distance from the river. All were notified of this except the chief of the rear, who naturally made his decision regarding the medical support of the crossings without considering the instructions of the command. As a result of such inadvertence, the troops might have been deprived of extremely necessary means of medical support in the very first hours of combat actions.





In deciding the questions of operational and combat support, the combined-arms staff must not limit itself to coverage of the battle formations of the troops or of the first and second echelons of their operational disposition alone. Under present-day conditions, where air defense and antiatomic and antichemical protection are organized with the centralized use of all forces and means, it is necessary for the combined-arms staff to keep the entire depth of the rear zone in its field of vision. It must know well the accepted organization of the rear services, correctly evaluate the most important rear services installations to be given especially effective coverage, and take a direct part in the organization and support of the survivability of the transportation lines used for the movement of troops and for supplying them with everything necessary. It will be of interest to cite an example from an exercise conducted in 1962 in the Leningrad Military District.

In the beginning of the exercise, the staff of the front and the chief of chemical troops did not pay attention to the organization of effective protection of installations of the operational rear located in the depth of the rear zone from means of mass destruction. It must be noted that at this time the forces and means of the rear services had not yet been fully mobilized and the front deputy commander for the rear had no capability of providing greater survivability of the transportation network and the deployed facilities. The rear services sustained great losses from the first nuclear strike of the "enemy". The movement of transport on many lines was paralyzed. A considerable portion of the large depots, medical facilities, and other rear services units happened to be in zones with dangerous levels of radiation. In addition to this, no decisive measures had been taken for eliminating the aftereffects of nuclear strikes on the rear. As a result, as the director of the exercise indicated, the front found itself in a very difficult situation.

It is also necessary to note that, with the exceptional complexity of rear services support and its differentiation into a considerable number of independent special services, the role of the combined-arms staff as organizer of the cooperation of these services has grown immeasurably. If the staff does not pay constant attention to maintaining the close cooperation of the rear support services subordinate to the different chiefs, then quick reaction to changes in the situation will not be achieved and the carrying out of urgent measures will be slowed down. This has been shown by the experience of the last war and postwar exercises.

From what has been said, it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that the staff of an operational formation, in organizing all-around





support of operations and other troop actions, must be sure to pay special attention to guaranteeing the uninterrupted work of the rear services and to offer the rear services organs all possible help and assistance.

The chief of staff and his subordinate chiefs of directorates and departments must get the orders and instructions of the commander about matters of rear services support of an impending operation to the deputy commander for the rear and to the chiefs of the branch arms, special troops, and services in good time and inform them about the composition of troops and changes in the operational situation.

Only through the staff can the rear services organs obtain the initial data to determine the need for materiel and plan the work of the rear services.

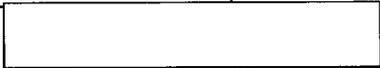
It is extremely important that the staffs of operational formations correctly understand their tasks in organizing uninterrupted communications for control of the rear services and that they offer all possible assistance to the rear services in implementing its protection, security, and defense.

In all guidance documents regulating the work of operational staffs, we think it necessary to reflect the tasks set forth above.

In examining the role and tasks of the commander and combined-arms staff in control of the rear services, one must not fail to touch upon their work methods. It is well known that up until recently, the most widespread method of directing the rear services on the part of the commander and his staff was to summon the respective chiefs of services of the rear to the command post. Here they would report on the status of rear services support and receive instructions. Such summonses not uncommonly took the form of lengthy conferences, and the command personnel of the rear services would be disengaged for a long time from their immediate work in the control organs and rear services large units and units. Under present-day conditions, where it is necessary for the combined-arms staff to have constant knowledge of the rear services situation and to systematically inform the rear services organs of changes in the operational situation and of the prospects of developing the operation, such a method cannot be considered the best.

For setting tasks, the troop commander can limit himself to summoning only his deputy for the rear to the command post, with trips of the chief of the rear to the command post taking place only in case of the receipt of





a new task, the introduction of radical changes into the organization of the rear services, or the support of an impending major regrouping. One cannot, of course, rule out summonses to the commander of certain responsible individuals from rear services control in those cases where it is inadvisable to inform a wider circle of officers about the impending task and the instruction needs to be given in person. Thus, personal contact between the command and the directors of the rear has not lost its importance under present-day conditions. However, this method should be used only when deciding fundamental questions.

It should be said that, in the transmission of information about the condition of rear services support and of various instructions and data about the operational situation, rear services operations groups located immediately at the command post have made a good showing. In our opinion, such groups will have great usefulness in all operational staffs.

In practice, there are observed cases of the transmission of a large quantity of repetitious and meaningless information between different control organs, which leads to overloading the communications means and a loss of efficiency in control of the rear services. This comes from the fact that combined-arms staffs frequently make little use of the rear staffs and their organs of operational control of all the forces and means of rear services support and maintain direct communications with the numerous services located at rear control posts.

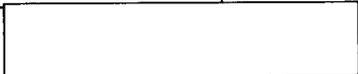
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We should like to say a few words about increasing efficiency in the direction of rear services large units, units, and facilities and, above all, about enlarging the role of the staffs of the rear.

Under present-day conditions, the situation at the front and in the rear changes literally every hour. Accordingly, the position and status of troops, including rear ones, often change so drastically that an entire established grouping of rear services large units and units and even the system of organization of the rear services as a whole has to be reorganized without delay.

Combat actions, under the conditions of the employment of weapons of mass destruction, will develop not only along separate axes dispersed along the front, but also in isolated areas in the operational depth which will not have transportation lines connecting them with the main groupings of fronts and armies. Units and large units, using air transport, will





negotiate zones of radioactive contamination and areas of total destruction. In the operational depth of the enemy in areas where it is possible for personnel to remain, intense combat actions will be conducted by separate large units or groups of large units. Under these conditions, the organization of rear services support of the troops and the direction of rear services units and facilities become exceptionally complicated. The constant intervention of higher control organs will be required to solve major questions of principle in the organization of rear services support, carry out the flexible maneuvering of forces and means of the rear services, and exercise assiduous monitoring of the status of the materiel, technical, and medical support of each subunit.

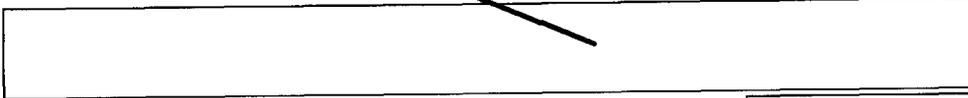
Naturally, the staffs of operational formations and large units are in no position to perform the functions of immediate direction of rear services units and facilities and they cannot set aside enough time even to accomplish the various tasks of control of the rear services.

As we study the questions of control of the rear services we are becoming ever more convinced that combined-arms staffs can assign the rear services organs only basic tasks and give instructions only on questions of principle issuing from the decision of the commander. Becoming ever more obvious in this connection is the task of enlarging the role of the rear services staffs and converting them into genuine organs of operational control of the rear services in organizing the cooperation of all the services of rear support.

Experience shows that only on the condition that the rear staff correctly understands the tasks of the troops and is able to thoroughly analyze a developing operational situation and foresee the prospects of its development will various surprises be eliminated to a considerable degree in the organization of the operational rear. This will afford the opportunity of achieving more stable functioning of the rear services support system created in the operation.

The staff of the rear must, under present-day conditions, perform functions in essence analogous to the functions of the combined-arms staff, only in a different sphere of activity. Thus the rear staff works out for the deputy commander for the rear proposals on the axis of concentration of the main efforts of the rear services in conformity with the concept of the operation, on the creation of groupings of rear services large units and units in conformity with the operational disposition and axes of actions of the troops, on the elimination of the aftereffects of an enemy attack, on the redistribution of forces and means, etc. At the same time, the rear





staff, analogously to the combined-arms staff, organizes and immediately implements: the collection, collation, and analysis of data about the situation; the protection, defense, and security (combat security) of the rear; the communications to support control of the rear services; the deployment and relocation of control organs; the preparation and dispatching of instructions on behalf of the chief of the rear; the monitoring of plans and instructions issued, etc.

In this connection, it is necessary to determine the tasks and functions of rear staffs precisely, to work out completely modern work methods, and to increase their authority. The functions of the rear staffs and the supply services should be more precisely differentiated to avoid duplication, and rear staffs should be given the authority to organize the interaction of services impinging on the rear independently of their subordination.

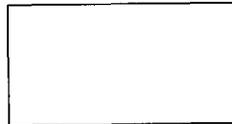
In introducing such a suggestion, we are proceeding from the fact that the staffs of the rear of operational formations have all the objective preconditions to carry out a considerably wider range of tasks for operational control of all the forces and means of rear services support. Modern staffs of the rear are not supply organs, but quite powerful organs of operational control in the hands of the front (army) deputy commander for the rear and an extremely dependable help to the combined-arms staff in organizing the implementation of the decision of the commander in the units of the rear services support of troops in an operation.

At the present time, the staffs of the rear of operational formations are composed of generals and officers well trained in an operations respect who have finished the General Staff and M. V. Frunze Military academies and the command faculty of the Rear Services and Transportation Academy and have much experience in command and staff work. By enlarging the role of staffs of the rear we will thereby considerably improve control of the rear services in keeping with modern requirements.

The experience of exercises suggests the necessity of revising some official tenets touching on separate sectors of the work of rear staffs.

In the rear staff, in our opinion, should be kept a map of the operational situation, without which it is hard to properly organize rear services support of large units operating on separate axes.

Much still remains to be done in solving the questions of the organization, purpose, and equipping of rear control posts.





The main task of the rear control post, of course, consists in providing stable control of the rear services large units, units, and facilities. However, this is not its only task. Under modern conditions, one cannot rule out cases where the commander or someone taking his place will, for some period of time, have to control troops from the rear control post. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the technical equipping of these posts and provide for the concentration of at least the minimum of data about the operational situation and the actions of troops at them. The rear control post at the present time should be regarded as a probable alternate command post.

It would be very useful to work out a precise list of the documents to be processed in the staff and services of the rear of formations, and to include in it the plans, directives and instructions, summaries, reports, accounts, and other documents for presentation to the higher organs. The availability of a scientifically based list of documents with a definition of their scope and content will allow considerably reducing the routine work of the operations organs, which in many cases devours a considerable part of the time of officers, and achieving elimination of the load on technical means of communications caused by the transmission of duplicate materials.

In conclusion, let us note that, in our organs for control of the rear of the troops, the training of officers for extensive use of means of automating and mechanizing staff work is still done poorly. The task of creating an integrated automated system of control of the rear has now been placed on the agenda. However, there are still very few of even the simplest calculating machines in service with troops; nevertheless, calculating equipment, particularly in organs of the rear services and supply, can be used very effectively.

