

1/16/2006

HR 70-14

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

12 October 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

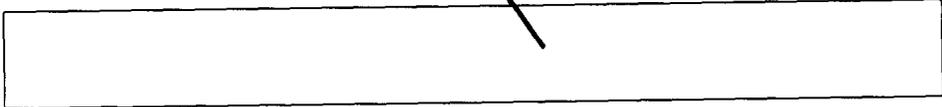
FROM : John H. Stein
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems
in Moving a Combined-Arms Army Forward from
the Interior of the Country in the
Initial Period of War

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, commenting critically on a previous article, states that an army in the interior will probably move after a war begins, and not before in the period of threat because this period will be too short. Owing to nuclear devastation and enemy air attacks, an interior army will have to move by organic means as rail movement is too slow, cumbersome, and vulnerable and air transport lacks heavy lift capabilities. It also discusses control during a regrouping and criticizes the proposal to have second-echelon forces controlled by the rear control post. This article appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962.

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 H. Stein



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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 10 Pages

COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. Mid-1962

DATE 12 October 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems in Moving a Combined-Arms Army Forward from the Interior of the Country in the Initial Period of War

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article, written by Colonel P. LYADOV, comments critically on a previous article and states that an army in the interior will probably move after a war begins, and not before in the period of threat because this period will be too short. Owing to nuclear devastation and enemy air attacks, an interior army will have to move by organic means as rail movement is too slow, cumbersome, and vulnerable and air transport lacks heavy lift capabilities. It also discusses control during a regrouping and criticizes the proposal to have second-echelon forces controlled by the rear control post.

End of Summary

[Redacted] Comment:

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Certain Problems in Moving a Combined-Arms Army
Forward from the Interior of the Country
in the Initial Period of War

by
Colonel P. LYADOV

General-Major P. STEPSHIN's article* is of interest from the viewpoint of exposing not only the salient features in organizing the regrouping of a combined-arms army in the initial period of war, but also the complexity of the details of troop movement as well as of maintaining the combat effectiveness of the troops for the purpose of committing them to battle from the march. We will set forth our views on some of the problems of this subject.

We consider not entirely valid the author's assertion that an army can join the front from the interior of the country before military operations begin and be already in the front's first echelon at the beginning of a war. This can take place only if the area where the army deploys or completes mobilization is not too far removed from the national border. But this then would be not a regrouping from the interior of the country, but the forward movement of an army located in the border zone. In addition, it would hardly be desirable to utilize this army in the first echelon of the front. It would be better to commit it to battle to exploit the success of the first operation.

The regrouping of an army from the interior of the country before the beginning of military operations could take place under conditions of a prolonged period of threat. However, in our opinion, this period will be of extremely short duration, and at best the troops of the army could only be completely mobilized and led out of their permanent location areas.

* Collection of Articles from the Journal "Military Thought", No. 6 (61), 1961.





Therefore, we think that the forward movement of a combined-arms army from the interior of the country is most probable after the beginning of a war, while the fronts formed from border military districts (groups of forces) are engaged in intense combat actions.

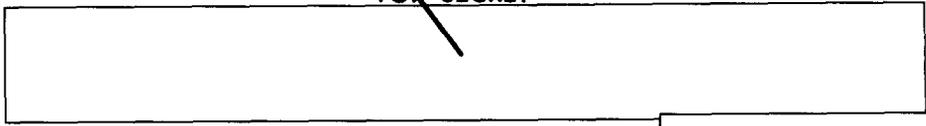
Undoubtedly, the author is right in saying that it is a great deal more complex to conduct regrouping under the conditions of a war which has begun because of the great destruction on transportation lines, vast zones of radioactively contaminated terrain (nuclear obstacle barriers), continuous action of the enemy's aviation and unmanned means of attack, and possible disorganization of control and of the operation of transportation. Centers of fire may develop over a great deal of territory. We cannot exclude the possibility that a portion of the army's troops will have to be allocated to eliminate the aftereffects of nuclear strikes as well as to combat enemy airborne landing forces and reconnaissance and sabotage groups. But it is just this situation which will be most realistic.

For example, in a war game in the Volga Military District, in the zone of forward movement of the combined-arms army the "enemy" delivered 16 nuclear strikes, seven of them against major railroad junctions and administrative centers, three against river crossings, and six to form a nuclear barrier. In addition, fourteen air and missile strikes were delivered using chemical warheads.

As a result, two motorized rifle divisions of this army were subjected to nuclear strikes, and the troops of two other divisions were subjected to strikes by chemical weapons, a zone of radioactive contamination covering an area of up to 15,000 square kilometers was formed, and on the routes of troop movement the bridges across water obstacles were destroyed. The army commander and his staff had to take appropriate measures to bypass the destroyed crossings, to negotiate the zones of radioactive contamination, and to eliminate the aftereffects of the enemy's nuclear and chemical attacks.

In similar situations it will always be a matter of particular concern to achieve regrouping at high rates of speed and to maintain the combat effectiveness of the advancing troops in order that they will be in condition to enter into battle from





the march or after a short halt. In our opinion, this is ensured by having in the army's zone of advance a developed network of roads and railroad lines, deep bypasses around major railroad junctions and industrial centers, parallel crossings and transshipment centers, as well as transportation refueling points which must be known during peacetime to senior personnel of the army and to the commanders of large units.

In order to lead the troops into the selected area within the prescribed time limit and in a combat-effective condition, it is necessary in the first place to concentrate the army's rocket troops and air defense units in a timely manner, giving them the most reliable and advantageous transport means, the best roads, and comprehensive operational (combat) support. Meticulous planning of the regrouping and an efficient traffic control service are very important in this.

Speaking of regrouping methods, the author, in our opinion, correctly indicates that along with the movement of the entire army by organic means, various forms of transportation (combined method of movement) can be utilized simultaneously. The airlifting of troops is not excluded either. The latter, owing to the known advantages of air transport, will undoubtedly be used very extensively in the future.

However, the article overestimates somewhat military transport aviation's capabilities which are not great at present. The experience of exercises and calculations show that to airlift only one motorized rifle division without its tanks requires up to two military transport aviation divisions. Along with this we must also consider the possible destruction and decrease in the capacity of the airfield network in the border zone.

Consequently, at the present time we cannot count on massed airlifts. At best, an army can be supported with transport aviation for the shifting of not more than one motorized rifle division without tanks.

The problem of transporting missile launchers and nuclear warheads by air has also not been fully resolved. And without missile units and tanks it is impossible to achieve the fully effective combat employment of ground forces in operations even when regrouping is carried out in the shortest possible time.



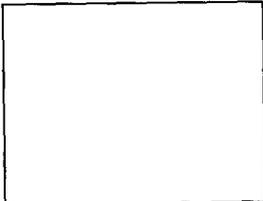


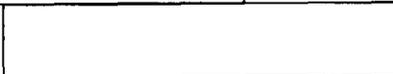
Therefore, in our opinion, it is correct and timely to raise the question of the necessity of increasing as rapidly as possible the relative importance of transport aviation and of providing it with heavy jet aircraft and helicopters having great cargo capacity.

In our military press different opinions have been expressed concerning the possibilities of utilizing railroad transport for military purposes. But to all, however, it is clear that when a war begins we cannot count on massed railroad shipments within short periods of time over great distances. And the issue is not only the vulnerability of the railroad network to enemy nuclear weapons, the possible destruction of major junctions, bridges, and other installations, and the formation as a result of this of isolated sectors on the railroad lines, but also the cumbersome nature of this form of transportation and the great expenditure of time in regrouping. The experience of operational exercises and war games shows that to move one division over a distance of 1,000 kilometers under comparatively favorable conditions using railroad transportation requires 150 to 200 hours, and that with the transshipment of loads in transshipment areas, two or three times more time is needed. At the same time a division proceeding by organic means is capable of covering this same distance within 80 to 100 hours. Just to transport a combined-arms army's heavy equipment and supply cargo over this distance requires more than 100 trains and up to three railroad lines.

Obviously, railroad transportation will be utilized mainly to transport non-priority cargoes and those troops for which it is more important to save their fuel and mileage reserve than their time (for example, strategic reserves designated to conduct subsequent operations, etc.).

In analyzing the capabilities of air and railroad transportation as well as the experience of exercises, we agree with the author's conclusion that at the beginning of a war troops will make most extensive use of movement by organic means. This is especially true of an army, which does its regrouping while moving up from the interior of the country to take part in the first front offensive operation.





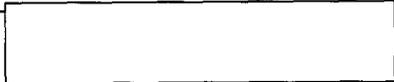
In 1961 during exercises in the Volga Military District, in moving a combined-arms army from the interior of the country, up to 50 percent of all of its forces and means made the march by organic means. In so doing, a distance of 700 kilometers was covered in 2.5 days. We should mention that the army completed regrouping in a zone up to 200 kilometers wide and had three railroad lines, and seven paved and dirt roads (five main and two alternate routes). This made it possible to allocate two main and one alternate route to each of the two divisions of the army's first echelon. Accordingly, the depth of the columns of the divisions on the routes ranged up to 40 kilometers, and when including the rear services of the army, up to 99 kilometers. We think that such a solution to the problems of an army's regrouping is fully acceptable.

Bearing in mind the different forms of transportation used during a regrouping, as well as the possible aftereffects of an enemy nuclear attack, the troops of the army will not arrive at the final points simultaneously. Therefore, in our opinion, it is necessary to ensure that, in addition to the army's rocket troops and field headquarters, we shift as rapidly as possible into the area of commitment to battle one or two divisions, army reconnaissance units, and control and communications forces and means. In this case, one or two divisions from the front reserve and those flank divisions found to be in the army's offensive zone from adjacent armies already in action can be resubordinated to the army.

Regarding the remaining large units of the army, it is not essential that they all remain in its complement. Part of them will make up the reserve of the army, and some which arrive later at the designated points can be placed in the reserve of the front. In our opinion, herein lie the distinctive features of regrouping and committing an army to an engagement under modern conditions of the initial period of war. They will become even more manifest when rocket troops and tank divisions are airlifted from the interior of the country.

The key condition ensuring the successful conduct of an army's regrouping is firm troop control. The considerable distances, high rates of speed in regrouping, and rapidly changing situation make control an extremely complex process.





Under the conditions being examined, control can be organized in various ways. Given below is one of the variants tested during exercises.

After a combat alert is announced large units and units will go out to the concentration areas and carry out (complete) their full mobilization. At this time the army commander, located at the command post, will receive an operational directive. After making a decision for the regrouping, organizing it, and assigning combat tasks to the troops, he, along with the operations group from the army's field headquarters, communications means, reconnaissance subunits, as well as the operations groups from the missile brigade and the divisions, relocate on aircraft to the areas where the army is committed to the engagement, where the command posts are set up and the arriving troops are met. Right at this time the army commander will receive the task for commitment to battle from the front commander.

The army staff and the staffs of the large units, proceeding in convoys, exercise control over the troops, controlling their movement forward by designated movement phase control lines and taking measures to negotiate obstacles which develop during the march. We think that the author's proposal to assign control of the second-echelon troops to the rear control post, which has a completely different function, is unsound. This can take place only if there is a clear necessity -- when the command post is put out of action. To direct the completion of full mobilization and to control second-echelon troops when they lag behind a great deal, it is more desirable, in our opinion, to temporarily allocate a small operations group headed by the deputy army commander or the deputy chief of staff of the army and include in the make-up of this group officers of the rear services headquarters.

We also cannot agree with the author's assertion that the regrouping of an army moving from the rear area to the front, which earlier was in the nature of a peaceful movement, has now supposedly been transformed into a distinctive combat operation. Even under modern conditions the concepts of "regrouping" and "operation" are utterly different. Regrouping is the movement of troops from certain areas to others in a situation which is more complex than in the past for the purpose of forming a new





grouping to carry out the assigned task. At this time the army will neither employ nuclear weapons nor conduct combat actions with its main body. Only in certain instances, as already mentioned, will it be necessary to allocate a small portion of the troops to destroy enemy airborne landing forces and reconnaissance and sabotage groups. An operation is the totality of the missile/nuclear strikes and troop combat actions of an operational formation carried out according to a single plan for the achievement of operational or strategic goals.

In this manner, even in missile/nuclear wars, the regrouping of an army cannot be equated with an army operation.

