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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

30 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Decisive Condition
of the Practicality of Operational Planning:
The High Level of Combat Training of Troops

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 discusses the matter of the realistic organization and conduct of troop combat training taking into consideration the actual capabilities of the troops and the level of training needed to carry out combat tasks under actual wartime conditions. The author emphasizes also that for planning the initial operation, the special characteristics and level of training of commanders, staffs, and troops must be known in order to appropriately determine their place in the operational disposition and tasks in the operation. He also recommends conducting multilevel command-staff exercises to work out the special problems of troop control. This article appeared in Issue No. 5 (66) 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

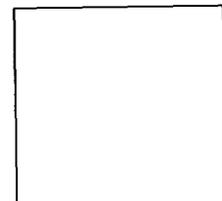
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John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

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DATE 30 November 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Decisive Condition of the Practicality of Operational Planning: The High Level of Combat Training of Troops

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 5 (66) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is General-Leytenant M. Duka. This article discusses the matter of the realistic organization and conduct of troop combat training taking into consideration the actual capabilities of the troops and the level of training needed to carry out combat tasks under actual wartime conditions. The author emphasizes also that for planning the initial operation, the special characteristics and level of training of commanders, staffs, and troops must be known in order to appropriately determine their place in the operational disposition and tasks in the operation. He also recommends conducting multilevel command-staff exercises to work out the special problems of troop control.

End of Summary

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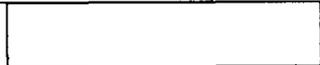
Comment:

After 1962 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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The Decisive Condition of the Practicality of Operational Planning:

The High Level of Combat Training of Troops

by

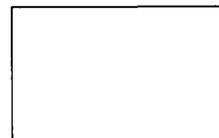
General-Leytenant M. DUKA

The employment of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction, the complete motorization of troops, and their equipping with the newest combat equipment afford the possibility of planning operations with decisive objectives at high rates and to a great depth.

At the same time, successful fulfilment of the tasks provided for by operations plans is unthinkable without a high level of combat training of the large units and units, primarily their field training. Only on this condition can the great capabilities latent in nuclear weapons and the different combat equipment be realized. It is completely obvious that, no matter how well and in how much detail the plans of operations are worked out, they can only remain good intentions unless the troops are trained in making long marches at high speeds, in attacking from the march in the wake of nuclear strikes, and in conducting highly maneuverable combat actions under the conditions of enemy employment of means of mass destruction.

The problems of combat training of troops have always been given primary attention. However, in connection with the growth in the role of surprise in the initial period of a war and especially in the delivery of the first nuclear strike, which can have a decisive effect on the further development of armed combat and in some cases decide the outcome of the entire war, the importance of combat training of troops has grown drastically.

The combat readiness of the armed forces on the whole is made up of the combat readiness of the units and large units of all the branches of the armed forces, especially the strategic rocket forces, the air defense forces of the country, and aviation. Nor does high combat readiness have less importance for the ground forces, who must protect themselves from destruction by enemy nuclear weapons and, exploiting the results of the nuclear strikes of strategic means and their own means, immediately begin



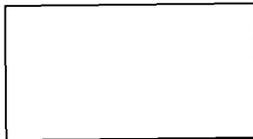


decisive combat actions for the purpose of the final defeat of the enemy and the capture of his territory.

Combat readiness includes a whole array of measures which ensure the readiness of units and large units at any time, under any situational conditions, to accomplish any combat task which may be assigned them. Therefore, those comrades do wrong who sometimes link combat readiness only to the warning of troops, their assembly on combat alert, and their departure to concentration areas. Having the greatest importance for combat readiness along with these matters is the high level of combat training of troops, and the readiness of armament and other combat equipment for immediate combat employment. The staffs of operational formations cannot fail to take this into account when organizing the removal of troops from under an enemy strike, when producing estimates for conducting their first nuclear strike, and when planning combat actions in the first operations of the initial period of war.

As we know, operational training in each military district is planned and conducted in conformity with the task of the district. It must be closely tied in with the tactical training of the command personnel and staffs of the large units and units and of the troops. The themes of tactical and command-staff exercises and command-staff games must be determined, the appropriate terrain for the exercise selected, and other problems of combat training solved in conformity with this.

The nature of the terrain in the territory of most military districts is, in its relief, water boundaries, road network, and other features, largely unlike the terrain in the area of the possible combat deployment of the troops and in the zones where operations are to be conducted. Besides that, when conducting tactical exercises in most cases we are forced to stick to the boundaries of ranges and training fields. In connection with this, along with troop and command-staff exercises on terrain, the conduct of command-staff war games on maps with the commanders and staffs of the large units and units acquires great importance in the system of combat training. These war games, being closely tied in by themes and areas of conduct with the operational training plan, afford the directors of war games the opportunity to create a complex situation and, at the same time, one that is close to actual conditions; and to trainee commanders and staffs it affords the opportunity to study more thoroughly the probable enemy and that part of the theater of military operations where they will have to make a march, deploy, and conduct combat actions.



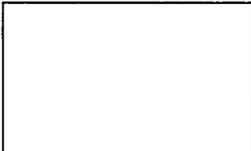


Laying down definite requirements for the combat training and primarily for the tactical training of troops, for their field training, the staffs of operational formations when planning operations must, in their turn, take into account the level of combat training already achieved. If they do not take into account the capabilities of the troops and proceed rather on what is desirable, then this will lead to a divorce from reality and jeopardize fulfilment of the plan of the operation. How, let us say, can one count on march speeds up to 30 kilometers per hour and a fast deployment of troops from the march disposition and plan an operation with a rate up to 100 kilometers per day if the troops are really not trained for this?

Generals and officers of operational staffs have to control not some abstract troops but rather those troops which belong to the districts and armies in peacetime and have a definite level of combat training. It is especially important to consider the actual capabilities of the troops when planning the first operations of the initial period of war. It should be kept in mind that regular combined-arms large units, especially those in constant readiness with their high level of combat training, together with the rocket troops must constitute the basis of the operational disposition of the army and the front and be the leading force of the operation, since the troops to be deployed according to the mobilization plan will undoubtedly have a much lower level of field training.

For checking the realism of operational assessments, it is very important to allocate troops for participation in operational exercises. To do this there is no need for additional exercises. It is enough merely to coordinate combat and operational training plans by time and place, having the time of conducting battalion and regimental exercises, exercises of the missile units, tactical flying exercises of the air units, and others coincide with front and army command-staff exercises on terrain.

The allocation of subunits and units of different branch arms and, where possible, of large units for participation in operational command-staff exercises will afford the opportunity to check staff estimates on such important matters as the concentration and deployment of attack groupings and their commitment to the engagement from the march, the transmission time of signals and instructions from staffs to executors and the readiness time of troops for the fulfilment of combat tasks -- especially the readiness time of missile units for the launch of missiles -- the assault crossing of water obstacles, and the landing of airborne landing forces.



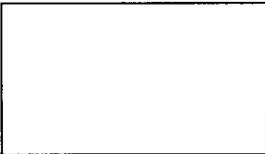


Acquiring special importance for coastal military districts cooperating with fleets based in inland seas is the working out of joint actions to take straits zones for the purpose of ensuring the arrival of naval forces for actions in open sea and ocean theaters and development of front operations into the depth of enemy territory. During command-staff exercises the staffs of the districts and fleets pay special attention to the questions of operational planning of joint actions to take straits. Unfortunately, checking on calculations by conducting joint troop and fleet exercises with the use of the amphibious landing means available at the present time is not done enough.

In working out the problems of operational art we attempt to get a correct picture of the nature of present-day operations, which, according to established opinion, will be conducted in the absence of continuous fronts along separate axes simultaneously to various depths and be distinguished by great intensity, rapidity, fast and abrupt changes in the situation, and variety of the methods of actions employed. Such an understanding of present-day operations makes corresponding demands on the combat training of troops. Therefore, in accomplishing operational tasks, we must at the same time search out new forms of conducting combat actions which would ensure the accomplishment of these tasks by large units and units.

In our opinion, not only the divisions of a combined-arms or tank army may operate along separate axes under present-day conditions, but also regiments and even reinforced battalions. Besides that, we must take into account the instruction of Minister of Defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. MALINOVSKIY that if, as a result of great losses from nuclear weapons, there remain of divisions only individual regiments or composite detachments, then these must resolutely fulfil the assigned task, which in many cases may decide success on the given axis with actions against an enemy also weakened by our nuclear strikes. All of this makes it imperative when conducting practical exercises to inculcate in command personnel initiative and readiness to independently make a bold decision in the spirit of the concept of the senior commander in conformity with the assigned task and the developing situation. In connection with this, the necessity arises of, besides setting specific tasks for the commanders of subunits and units, also orienting them towards the subsequent combat actions and letting the commanders of divisions in on the concept of the army operation.

Under conditions of the extensive employment of nuclear weapons, where the destruction of command posts is quite probable, every commander must be



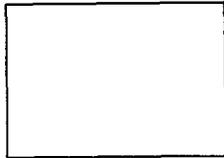


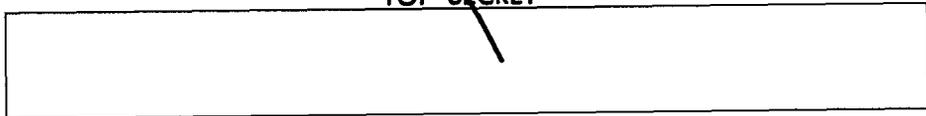
ready to assume control of troops one, and perhaps two, levels above the position occupied. Therefore, in the course of officer training it is advisable to prepare officers not only on the level of the position occupied, but also for a step higher. This is very important also because, upon mobilization expansion, many regular officers will be appointed to higher positions. Hence it is advisable, besides training commanders of large units at training methods assemblies, troop and command-staff exercises and games, also to include them for participation in operational assemblies and exercises where they must learn the principles of organizing and conducting army and front operations.

For military districts which border on countries of the socialist camp friendly to us and, consequently, do not come into contact with capitalist states belonging to aggressive blocs, the study of the problems of organizing and executing the regroupings of operational formations and large units over a great distance to get to the area of combat deployment, and in combat training, to good march training of the troops, acquires especially great importance.

The experience of troop exercises testifies to the fact that even good training of the drivers of tanks, armored personnel carriers, and trucks and their ability to drive vehicles at high speeds under adverse road conditions, including at night, still do not decide the success of a march if commanders and staffs cannot fully exploit the march capabilities of their subunits and units. Having great importance in march training is the development among commanders and staffs of practical skills in controlling subunits and units during the march, the ability to constantly keep march columns in hand. Control of troops on the move is a very complex matter and must be given serious attention. During mass relocations of troops under conditions of the employment of nuclear weapons, the need will very often arise to redirect large units and units from some routes and axes to others in connection with the presence of zones with high levels of radioactive contamination, the destruction of crossings and mountain passes, and changes in the situation and the task received. Therefore, troops must be easily controllable during the march, otherwise the staff of an operational formation will not be able to get them to the assigned areas in good time, quickly set up attack groupings, and commit them to the engagement from the march.

While requiring us to advance at a rate up to 100 kilometers per day, the Minister of Defense at the same time points out the necessity of reckoning with the specific conditions of the situation and proceeding on the actual capabilities of the troops. The staffs of operational





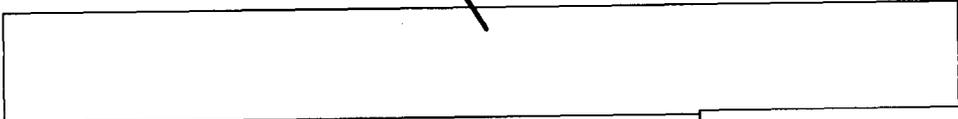
formations, when planning operations, must take this into account. True, under peacetime conditions it is difficult to check on the ability of troops to conduct at such high rates an offensive which will be made up of marching movements, rapid attacks in approach march and battle formations, and wide maneuvering on the battlefield. However, it is completely obvious that it is impossible to achieve a rate of 100 kilometers per day with a long advance on foot. The troops must be trained to conduct fire on the march from armored personnel carriers, to know how to dismount quickly and attack the enemy in case of strong resistance and immediately continue the offensive or pursuit of the enemy in armored personnel carriers when his resistance is broken. Only as the result of short rapid attacks in conjunction with quick dashes over great distances can high rates of advance be achieved. Care that the troops master the indicated actions to perfection must be at the center of attention not only of those who by branch of service are supposed to concern themselves directly with the combat training of troops, but of all generals and officers of the staffs of districts and armies.

Having great importance for the testing and development of operational-tactical doctrines and standards are experimental troop exercises. However, it must be said that the existing procedure of organizing and conducting these exercises cannot fully satisfy us. The fact is that in most military districts troops can only make marches outside the boundaries of firing ranges, and they are forced to deploy and work out the problems of conducting combat actions inside the boundaries of firing ranges on which they have repeatedly conducted exercises before this and on which the terrain is quite familiar to them. Changing the axis of the offensive or the front of the defense does not solve the problem, since every commander knows in advance already while making the march that he will be sure to meet the "enemy" on the firing range.

In our opinion, experimental exercises are advisably conducted on an inter-district scale, allocating for this purpose troops from neighboring military districts to make the march over a long distance and work out the problems of the meeting battle, offensive, and defense on terrain unfamiliar to the troops, which will afford the opportunity to solve research and training problems more completely.

With the development of the means of armed combat and the technical equipping of troops, large units and units are acquiring new qualities, which, besides the search for new forms of conducting combat actions, also requires improvement of the organizational structure of troops. Therefore, during everyday combat training and when allocating troops for



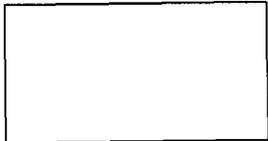


participation in operational command-staff exercises on terrain, the staffs of operational formations must study the organization of troops and discover how much it corresponds to the tasks which the troops must accomplish during an operation, and, on the basis of this, work out proposals for the improvement of the organizational structure.

In order to use large units and units correctly during an operation, especially the first operation in the initial period of a war, it is important to know the level and special characteristics of the training of the commanders, staffs, and troops of every large unit and even every unit. This will afford the possibility of most appropriately determining the place of the large unit in the operational disposition and its tasks and of deciding which large units can be sent ahead to ensure the deployment of the attack grouping of the front (army), who can be assigned for actions on an isolated separate axis, which units it is best to employ as landing forces or forward detachments, etc.

As we know, great skill in controlling troops, especially in the fluid situation of combat actions, is now required of commanders and staffs. The situation will require the solution of all problems in very short times. Hence, commanders and staffs must be trained and methods of control drawn up. The latter must ensure the minimum expenditure of time on obtaining and processing situation data, performing estimates, making decisions, and setting tasks for the troops. Besides the introduction of means of automating and mechanizing the processes of control, the accomplishment of this task is achieved by the high level and unity of methods in training the staffs of operational formations, large units, and units in such a way that all staffs, both higher and lower, understand one another in mid-sentence, as they say, and are able to extensively employ the setting of tasks with the aid of signals. Working out these problems can be done in multilevel command-staff exercises on terrain with communications means, as well as at joint staff training sessions. Mobility of control during the conduct of highly maneuverable combat actions also depends on the availability of mobile control posts on specially equipped vehicles cleared of tents, cots, and other cumbersome equipment.

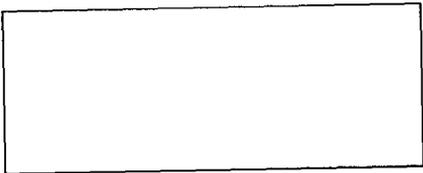
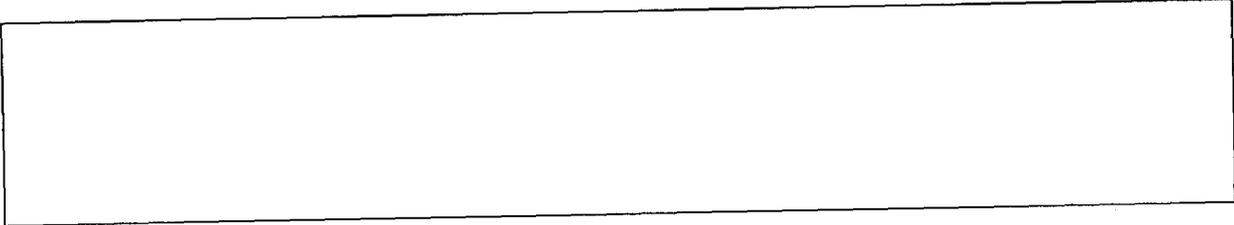
In conclusion, we should like to mention that where the problems of operational and combat training are solved in close unity and cooperation, where staffs and, above all, their operations directorates (departments) delve into combat training without trying to fence themselves off in this matter from combat training directorates (departments) and strictly limit their functions, there one finds successes both in the operational training of generals, senior officers, and staffs and in the combat training of troops.



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