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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

12 January 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John H. Stein  
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Organization of  
Defense by a Field Army 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 sets forth a Soviet description of US views on the organization and conduct of defense in the European theater by a US field army. The primary sources for the article were the then-recent (1960-1961) US field service regulations and the NATO exercises held in the same years. The strength, disposition, time and distance factors, air and engineer support, and actions of a US field army in a mobile defense and in an area defense are discussed objectively but with almost no analysis or evaluation of the strengths or shortcomings of US concepts and actions. US reliance on the massed use of nuclear weapons is stressed. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (64) 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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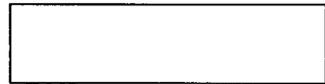
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# Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 24 Pages

COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Mid-1962

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12 January 1979

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Organization of Defense by a Field Army 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. 3 (64) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. This article was written by Colonel M. Shmelev. It sets forth a Soviet description of US views on the organization and conduct of defense in the European theater by a US field army. The primary sources for the article were the then-recent (1960-1961) US field service regulations and the NATO exercises held in the same years. The strength, disposition, time and distance factors, air and engineer support, and actions of a US field army in a mobile defense and in an area defense are discussed objectively but with almost no analysis or evaluation of the strengths or shortcomings of US concepts and actions. US reliance on the massed use of nuclear weapons is stressed.

End of Summary

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. The author also wrote "Offensive Operations of a Field Army and an Army Group in the Initial Period of a War" in Issue No. 1 (68) for 1963



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Page 4 of 24 Pages

Organization of Defense by a Field Army in the Initial Period of War

(Views of the US Command)

by

Colonel M. SHMELEV

In the opinion of the military command of NATO and mainly that of the USA, the nature of the actions of the ground forces in the initial period of war will depend on the situation that has developed. On some axes they will be able to conduct offensive actions; on others, defensive or delaying actions, or both together.

The NATO command contemplates going over to the defense in the Central European Theater of Military Operations in case the surprise nuclear offensive of the NATO armed forces does not produce the expected results or under conditions of a successful countering nuclear strike by the Warsaw Pact member countries, when the latter retain superiority and their ground forces groupings immediately go over to a decisive offensive.

In both cases, defense is regarded as a temporary type of combat action whose main purpose is to achieve favorable conditions for going over to the offensive.

The main task of defense is to rout the enemy's main offensive groupings before they get to the Rhine, to hold a bridgehead east of the Rhine ensuring retention of the Ruhr industrial area, and to stop the offensive and thereby create conditions for the NATO troops to go over to a decisive counteroffensive. To accomplish this task, they are placing main reliance on nuclear weapons.

Defensive actions of troops in the Central European Theater, in the assessment of the American command, will be conducted in approximately the following manner.

Reconnaissance units (armored cavalry regiments and others), moved up in the period of threat to the frontiers of the German Democratic Republic and reinforced with armored units, will make up the covering troops and be

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Page 5 of 24 Pages

operating on the offensive axes of the enemy groupings.

Fighting battles by means of delaying actions and extensively exploiting obstacles and barriers, including those produced by nuclear weapons, these troops must hinder to the maximum the advance of the attacking enemy, force him to concentrate, and thereby create conditions for the delivery of strikes against him with nuclear weapons.

The main forces of NATO's first strategic echelon, exploiting natural defense lines and making massed use of missile/nuclear weapons and resolute counterattacks (counterthrusts), must stop the offensive of enemy troops and not let them get west of the line Regensburg-Nurnberg-Kassel-Hannover-Hamburg.

From this line they plan to commit to battle strong mobile attack groupings of the ground forces consisting predominantly of armored and airborne divisions with the task of annihilating the dispersed and weakened enemy groupings during the counteroffensive.

According to the experience of exercises and maneuvers, the NATO forces will have "stopped" the enemy offensive five to 10 days after the start of war and after approximately seven to five days or less will have gone over to a counteroffensive. Thus, in the large-scale maneuvers of NATO armed forces in the fall of 1960, the troops had on the seventh day withdrawn to the final line 200 kilometers away from the national border of the Federal Republic of Germany. The preparation of the counteroffensive lasted around five days. And in the exercises conducted in 1961, NATO troops, fighting delaying actions with the covering forces and waging active defense with the main forces of the first operational echelon for three days, withdrew 120 to 160 kilometers away from the eastern border of the Federal Republic of Germany. The average rate of withdrawal ranged from 40 to 50 kilometers per day.

In the exercises and maneuvers, the troops were assigned roughly these tasks: to support the conduct of the nuclear offensive by firm defense of a line pushed up as close as possible to the national borders, in an unfavorably developing situation to go over to the conduct of delaying actions, and, employing massed nuclear strikes, to inflict major damage on the enemy and thereby create conditions for going over to the counteroffensive.

Consequently, the basis of defense has become not stubborn resistance by troops in positions, but massed use of nuclear weapons, extensive

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Page 6 of 24 Pages

maneuvering, and delivery of strong counterthrusts against the enemy from the depth.

The US military command believes that modern defense cannot be passive and have rigid lines of resistance. Widely discussed of late in the US Army has been a new doctrine of defense, underlying which are defensive-offensive tactics that call for maximum exploitation of the mobility of troops and manifestation of initiative on the part of commanders at all levels.

After discussion in print and testing in exercises, the main points of this doctrine have found reflection in the recently published field service regulations of the US Army.

Several proposals which had been advanced in print were rejected. For instance, it had been proposed to discard such terms as "mobile defense" and "withdrawing actions," since these supposedly do not fully reflect the content and nature of defensive battle under conditions of the use of nuclear weapons. In the new service regulations these terms are preserved. Instead of mobile defense, it had been recommended that a new type of defense, "defense by the method of delaying actions" be introduced. In the latest field service regulations there is no such type of defense.

As for delaying actions, they are as before placed in the chapter "Offensive Actions" and form a basic part of this type of combat actions.

In the new US Army field service regulations defense is subdivided into two main types -- mobile and area defense -- based on retaining the key sectors of the terrain. Major large units and formations will most often organize a defense by combining these two types, the basic difference between them consisting in the disposition of the battle formation and in the methods of conducting battle.

Mobile defense, in the view of the US Army command, to a great extent meets the requirements for the conduct of combat actions under conditions of the use of weapons of mass destruction. It makes it possible to eliminate all stereotype in the disposition of the defense and to exploit to the maximum the growing mobility and striking power of the troops. Consequently, it, more than area defense, corresponds to the maneuverable nature of combat actions and is the most dynamic, active, and decisive form of defense actions.

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Page 7 of 24 Pages

In mobile defense, as distinct from area defense, a smaller part of the forces and means of a division and about half the forces of the corps are placed in the first echelon and a correspondingly larger part or half of the forces are allocated to the reserve (second echelon) to make up the so-called counterattack (reserve) group of the corps (division).

Attention is drawn to the fact that in a field army the main effort in a mobile defense is concentrated in the first-echelon army corps, as these play the decisive role when this type of defense is employed.

In the new field service regulations the main items of the organization and conduct of the mobile defense have undergone almost no change.

The essence of the mobile defense consists in the extensive and purposeful maneuvering of personnel and fire means, chiefly nuclear ones, in retaining the initiative, and in destroying the enemy with nuclear weapons and counterthrusts (counterattacks) carried out by mobile groupings from the depth of defense. In so doing, it is contemplated that the defeat of the advancing enemy will be done by means of combined defensive-offensive actions in previously planned areas in the depth of defense that are advantageous for the defenders. It is believed that a mobile defense, with the main forces in its depth, creates conditions favoring the going over from defensive to offensive actions more quickly.

The basis of a mobile defense rests primarily on strong and highly mobile reserves and not on careful preparation of the terrain to be occupied.

Area defense is organized and conducted for the purpose of holding a definite area of the terrain and it is based on maximum exploitation of fire means, chiefly nuclear weapons, and engineer preparation of the terrain with the positioning of the main forces and means of the defenders in the first echelon (in the forward defense area).

The battle formation of the troops is drawn up in conformity with this. The greater part of forces and means are placed in tactically advantageous forward areas, i.e., in the first echelon; and the lesser part, in the second echelon (reserve).

The second echelon has the function of increasing the depth of defense and conducting counterattacks (counterthrusts) for the purpose of restoring a lost position or delaying the offensive of the enemy penetrating into the

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Page 8 of 24 Pages

defense. Area defense can be organized on a normal or a wide front.

As can be seen, the main task of the troops in this type of defense consists in holding or preventing the penetration of the enemy into any area for a definite time. In other words, area defense is essentially a further development of positional defense, which is one of the types of defense of the armies of the main capitalist states.

Along with this it is necessary to take into account the new features which sharply differentiate area defense from the former positional defense. In the new type of defense there are no solid boundaries, no linear positioning of troops, and no sharply defined positions; the main thing recommended is to avoid stereotype in both the disposition and deployment of the forces and means.

Area defense evidently will find use most likely at middle and lower troop tactical levels -- the division, brigade, and battalion. This type of defense will constitute one of the elements in the overall system of defensive-offensive actions.

According to the new field service regulations, the above-cited types of defense may be used simultaneously in defensive battle (operations) by a large unit or a formation. And the more nuclear weapons are used, the less the troops will be required to resort to a type of defense like the area defense.

The new US service regulations indicate that an infantry division may organize and conduct mobile defense and area defense either independently or in combination. In the final analysis, the choice of one or the other type of defense is determined by the specific situation, by the purpose for which the troops go over to defensive actions, and by the availability of nuclear weapons.

An infantry division, to organize a defense, receives a zone up to 24 kilometers wide in mobile defense and up to 18 kilometers wide in area defense. The total depth of defense of the division may range from 16 to 32 kilometers.

The zone of defense of a division, according to the regulations, and independently of the type of defense, includes:

-- a forward area of defense with a depth of five to six, and sometimes six to eight kilometers; the first-echelon units of the division

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Page 9 of 24 Pages

are positioned within the bounds of this area;

-- an area of division reserves, which contains the disposition and defense areas of the reserves (second echelon) of the division, switch and blocking positions, and positions of fire means. Here, as in the forward area of defense, strongpoints (areas of defense) are established.

In the absence of immediate contact with the enemy, for the purposes of ensuring timely warning of troops about the preparation of an offensive and to inflict losses on the enemy, in front of the defense of the main forces a forward security zone, which includes the positions of the covering troops and the outpost zone, may be established.

A field army, being the basic operational formation of the ground forces, usually organizes and conducts defense as part of an army group, but sometimes it may independently defend an important axis in a theater of military operations. When acting as part of an army group, the field army will in most cases be defending in the first echelon of the operational disposition of the army group. In individual cases on important axes the field army will make up the reserve (second echelon) of the army group. The field army may operate on a main or secondary axis (see diagram).

In modern defensive operations, the role of the field army has grown drastically because, having acquired missile/nuclear weapons in its armament, it can defend a large zone in terms of frontage and depth and accomplish the tasks of a defensive engagement with fewer forces and in shorter times.

The objectives of a field army's defensive operation may be:

-- to hold an advantageous line or important objective until the approach and concentration of additional forces on the given axis, the plans being to go over to an offensive when they arrive;

-- to repulse the counterthrust of the defending enemy during the offensive of the army group or of the theater forces, or to secure the flank of the troop grouping on the offensive.

The combat strength of the field army, which does not have a fixed organization and does not possess T/O&E means, will be determined in the defense in the initial period of war by the importance of the axis to be defended, the objectives and tasks of the defense, the availability of forces and means in the theater of military operations by the start of the

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Page 10 of 24 Pages

war, as well as by the forces and nature of actions of the enemy.

As shown by the experience of NATO ground forces exercises conducted in recent years as well as by the troops actually present in Europe, in the initial period of war a field army in actions on the main axis may have in its composition two or three army corps, numbering a total of six to 10 divisions, two or three tank groups, and two or three armored cavalry regiments, as well as various means of reinforcement.

True, in some exercises the 7th Field Army in the Central European Theater of Military Operations had in its composition four army corps (the 5th and 7th US Corps and the 2nd and 3rd West German corps). A field army, and sometimes the army corps, too, may have a coalition composition.

As for means of reinforcement, as we know, when conducting defensive and offensive actions Americans do not make an appreciable distinction in the reinforcement of a field army and a corps with means of the reserve of the high command, excepting, of course, nuclear weapons.

To accomplish the tasks of the first days of the initial period of war, formations and large units will receive the maximum number of nuclear warheads as compared to the number which can be allocated on subsequent days of the initial period of war. To successfully accomplish the tasks of defense, a field army operating on a key axis may receive 60 to 90 or more individual nuclear warheads for the operation.

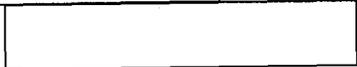
In reinforcing an army group and field armies with nuclear warheads, it is characteristic that from 40 to 70 percent of the warheads allocated to them have low yields (six to 10 kilotons), the main part of these being placed at the disposal of the army corps commanders.

As the experience of exercises and analysis of the available materials show, our probable enemies plan to employ missile/nuclear weapons to accomplish the main tasks of the operation, using nuclear warheads to neutralize key targets.

The army command considers nuclear tube artillery, guided missiles, and free rockets to be the main means of delivering nuclear warheads to targets. From 80 to 90 percent of the nuclear warheads issued to the field army for an operation are apportioned to them.

Because of the limited range of the greater part of the indicated means, the American command contemplates extensive use of tactical aviation

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(delivery aircraft and cruise missiles) to deliver nuclear strikes on targets in the operational depth. In addition, in support of a field army they intend also to use Nike-Hercules surface-to-air guided missile battalions to strike surface targets with nuclear warheads to a distance of up to 185 kilometers.

A field army consisting of 10 divisions with reinforcement means within the limits of the maximum norms can count altogether on 300 guns and launchers capable of delivering fire with nuclear warheads, 200 to 300 launchers of surface-to-air guided missiles of the Nike and Hawk types, up to 2,500 to 3,000 tanks, 2,000 to 2,500 field guns and mortars, over 1,500 antiaircraft guns and launchers, etc. However, this composition cannot be regarded as fixed (typical).

Based on the experience of exercises and taking into account the tactical make-up of the presently existing groupings of NATO forces in Europe, it should be assumed that a field army in the first operation of the initial period of war will have at its disposal a considerably smaller number of reinforcement means than has been planned by the US Army command.

Therefore, the reinforcement norms cited in reference books and various other materials cannot be taken as the standard, but should be regarded as the maximum possible variant of the allocation of means of the reserve of the high command to a field army operating on the key axis, mainly in the course of a war when additionally deployed and mobilized troops will arrive in the theater of military operations.

When preparing a defensive operation, much attention is paid to the questions of employing nuclear weapons and using artillery and aviation.

Missile/nuclear weapons, according to the views of the US command, are the main means of achieving the objectives of modern defense. The surprise massed use of them in cooperation with other means of destruction enables defending troops to inflict considerable losses on the enemy, disrupt his offensive, and create conditions favoring the going over to the counteroffensive.

Their plans are to use nuclear weapons in the defensive operation of a field army to isolate the area of combat actions by setting up nuclear obstacles (obstacle barriers) to a depth of 150 to 200 kilometers and to support directly the combat actions of the troops.



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Page 12 of 24 Pages

For the purpose of most effectively exploiting nuclear weapons, the staff of the field army works out a plan of nuclear support, which is part of the plan of fire support for the troops in the defensive operation. The field army apportions the greater part of the nuclear warheads it receives among the corps, holding the rest, approximately one fourth of them, in reserve.

Strikes with nuclear weapons are divided into planned strikes, which are carried out chiefly as the enemy is preparing for an offensive, and on-call strikes, to be delivered during the defensive engagement.

To deliver nuclear strikes against approaching reserves and troops in concentration areas and conduct counterpreparation fire, 25 to 50 percent of the total number of nuclear warheads issued to the field army may be expended. The remaining nuclear means are expended for combat support within the boundaries of the defense zone. During counterattacks and counterthrusts nuclear weapons are used in a massed manner immediately before the beginning of troop actions.

In spite of the equipping of troops with nuclear weapons, field artillery is, as before, considered one of the main fire means influencing the course of combat actions. The NATO command, especially the American, emphasizes that the most important tasks of field artillery in defense are to neutralize and destroy the enemy's means of nuclear attack and also to combine artillery fire with the nuclear strikes to be delivered by guided missiles, free rockets, and aviation.

All the tube field artillery of the reserve of the high command that comes in to reinforce the field army is distributed among the army corps. Usually left in the hands of the field army commander is a Redstone guided missile field artillery group and, in individual cases, one or two Corporal guided missile battalions.

The views of our probable enemies on air support for the combat actions of the ground forces have undergone great changes recently. These changes pertain to the amount of tactical aviation to be allocated, the distribution of its forces by tasks, as well as to the cooperation of the air forces with the ground forces.

The American command has drastically reduced the amount of tactical aviation to be allocated and has changed the allocation of aviation forces by tasks. Based on the experience of recent exercises, the efforts of tactical aviation have been allocated according to tasks approximately

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Page 13 of 24 Pages

thus:

To give close air support to troops they have now allocated only 10 to 15 percent of the total number of aircraft sorties preplanned for the operations of the field army (army group) instead of 50 percent as was formerly done. To isolate the area of combat actions they have allocated up to 40 percent of the aviation. Up to 50 percent of all the tactical aviation is to be used to gain nuclear superiority and retain air supremacy.

For joint actions with an army group in a theater of military operations, the US command plans to allocate a tactical air army instead of the now-abolished tactical air command.

According to American views, the main level for planning the joint actions of ground forces and aviation in a theater is that of the tactical air army -- army group, with direct operational-tactical cooperation being organized in the headquarters of the field army, to which the air army allocates an air support operations center, usually headed by an air force general.

The combat strength of a tactical air army is variable in defense; it is usually smaller than in an offensive. For instance, in an offensive, such an army may, according to estimated data, consist of 16 to 20 air wings (1,100 to 1,500 aircraft), but of 11 to 15 wings (800 to 1,100 aircraft) in a defense. In addition, the air army may have in its complement a wing of Matador or Mace cruise missiles made up of two or three groups (240 to 360 cruise missiles). Here the American command is at the present time reorganizing the cruise missile wings, and, in place of the Matador cruise missiles, they are rearming them with the more sophisticated Maces. The latter, unlike the Matadors, have, as we know, an autonomous jamming-resistant guidance system and are intended mainly for actions at low altitudes. This increases the range of action and reduces vulnerability to air defense means. The tactical air army is deployed in the area of the army group.

For the support of a field army, the Americans intend to allocate units and large units from the tactical air army.

A field army in the defense and operating on a key axis may be provided with air support by 300 aircraft. In so doing, the estimated aviation density per infantry (armored) division has been reduced from 100 down to 30 to 40 aircraft (if the army is provided with a sufficient number

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Page 14 of 24 Pages

of nuclear warheads).

The operational disposition of troops in a field army's defense in the initial period of war consists most often of a single echelon with the allocation of an appropriate reserve. In so doing, one or two divisions and a tank group or an armored cavalry regiment may be allocated to make up the field army's reserve. We cannot rule out that in individual cases the field army may be operationally disposed in two echelons, as was the case, for instance, in the exercises WATER POLO, WOLF'S [letter unclear] HOWL, CORDON BLEU, and WINTER ACE [letters unclear] 2. The second echelon of the army in these cases was made up of an army corps.

The reserve of the field army is positioned in the operational depth 70 to 100 kilometers from the forward edge of defense. Its function is to deliver a counterattack on an enemy penetrating into the defense and to occupy the line of defense on a threatened axis or to replace part of the first-echelon troops in case they are put out of action by enemy nuclear weapons. In some cases, during a defensive engagement the field army's reserve may be transferred to one of the first-echelon army corps operating on the main axis.

In addition to the first echelon and the reserve (second echelon), a field army may have as a component of its operational disposition the army field artillery, made up primarily of a Redstone guided missile field artillery group and sometimes one or two Corporal guided missile battalions, and the army's antiaircraft artillery, made up of one or two groups of field artillery, including guided missile battalions of the Nike-Hercules type.

The army field artillery is entrusted with the task of general support of the army's troops, i.e., of hitting important enemy targets in the operational depth with nuclear warheads. Along with this, the army may set up special reserves -- tank, engineer, chemical reserves, and others. In case the field army is conducting mobile defense, the reserve component will consist primarily of armored troops.

The army corps of the army's first echelon arrange their battle formations, as a rule, in two echelons. In the corps operating on the main axis, a reinforced armored division and an armored cavalry regiment or tank group is usually allocated as the reserve (second echelon).

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Page 15 of 24 Pages

Such a disposition of troops is due to the fact that the Americans expect to accomplish the task of routing the attacking grouping of enemy troops and of creating conditions for going over to the offensive by massed use of nuclear weapons and aggressive defensive-offensive actions on the part of the first-echelon troops conducting strong counterattacks into the tactical and immediate operational depth. In connection with this, the role of an army corps as a component of a field army on the defense in a future war will grow considerably.

Thus, it is not difficult to conclude that, when a field army's troops are operationally disposed in one echelon, the army's main forces and means will be positioned within the limits of the tactical zone of defense, and only part of its forces will be in the army reserves.

The predominantly one-echelon operational disposition of the troops of the field army and the army group is due mainly to the inadequate forces and means in the initial period of war. As the total strength of the NATO forces on the main axes is increased, the troops will probably be operationally disposed in two echelons.

A key condition for achieving success in a modern operation is the skilful use of nuclear weapons, and this presupposes that ground forces must be the ones to most effectively exploit the results of the missile/nuclear strikes.

It is quite clear that the one-echelon disposition of a field army's troops is a weak defense, since a reserve of fire means (nuclear weapons) cannot compensate for the lack of a strong second echelon (reserve), especially during a defensive engagement.

In this connection, to ensure the success of our offensive against the defense of a field army, it is necessary first of all to destroy the enemy's nuclear weapons. Hence, our reconnaissance must direct its main attention toward discovering the location of nuclear weapons and the enemy's preparation to use them.

The disposition of the defense of a field army in the initial period of war may feature: the forced and hasty going over of troops to the defense, usually under the pressure of an advancing enemy; excessively wide zones of defense, within whose limits the large units of the field army will be deployed; the absence of the classically arranged layout of a defense with the allocation of clearly marked zones and positions, as was done until recently by the armies of the main capitalist states; and poor

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Page 16 of 24 Pages

engineer preparation of the terrain.

According to the experience of recent NATO troop exercises, a field army may be given a zone of defense 200 to 250 kilometers or more in width. In this case, the operational density of the first-echelon troops may amount to one division per 25 to 30 kilometers. However, on axes where the delivery of the main attack by the offensive side is expected, the operational density of troops reaches approximately one division per 20 kilometers (see diagram).

Judging by the experience of NATO troop exercises and maneuvers (1960-1961) conducted against the background of an initial period of war, in the zone of defense of a field army belonging to the Central Army Group in the Central European Theater of Military Operations a forward defense line was established 50 to 130 kilometers west of the border between the Federal Republic of Germany and Czechoslovakia. A first intermediate line of defense was established 50 to 70 kilometers away from the forward edge of the forward defense line, and a second one was established 120 to 150 kilometers away from the forward edge. In addition, within the limits of the field army's defense zone two switch lines of defense were established. The forward line was occupied by the first-echelon divisions, the first intermediate line by the reserves of the first-echelon army corps of the field army; the second intermediate line was allocated for the reserve of the field army. The total depth of the field army's defense zone ranged from 130 to 160 kilometers.

In front of the forward defense line they established a cover zone 40 to 50 kilometers deep, and in a number of cases, 80 kilometers or more deep, with the forward edge along the eastern border of the Federal Republic of Germany with Czechoslovakia.

Plans were to send out from the first-echelon army corps and divisions into the cover zone the most mobile units (armored cavalry regiments and tank and reconnaissance battalions of the divisions) and, on the main axes, armored divisions.

In exercises, the army corps have reinforced the covering units with means of nuclear attack (one or two Honest John free rocket battalions or a 203.2-mm howitzer battalion) and engineer subunits (one or two engineer battalions). The covering troops were provided with enough materiel and technical means so that they could conduct combat actions independently for three days.

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Page 17 of 24 Pages

In the cover zone they usually establish a line of resistance, a number of delaying positions, and a main line. Positioned and operating in this zone are the covering units, sent out usually from the reserve (second-echelon) complement of the army corps or the field army and, on separate axes, also from the first-echelon divisions.

The zone of defense usually consists of the forward defense line, the intermediate defense line (at a distance of 25 to 100 kilometers from the forward edge of the forward defense line), the final defense line (at a distance of 50 to 150 kilometers), and also one or two switch lines.

It should be noted that the above-cited wide variation in the possible distances between defense lines depends upon the importance of the axis being defended and the availability of advantageous natural obstacles. Here the forward and intermediate lines are defended by first-echelon army corps, while the reserves (second echelon) of the field army are positioned on the final line of defense.

The data cited testify to the fact that the entire depth of the operational disposition of a field army's defense and the distance between the lines has at the present time increased by a factor of approximately 1.5 to two. It must be noted that this deep echeloning of an army's defense zone reflects the general tendency of the US Army and NATO command to still further increase the depth of defense in the Central European Theater of Military Operations.

It must be said that, in choosing the trace of the forward edge of the lines, areas, and positions and their distances from one another, the NATO command does not adhere to any strictly established norms.

In speaking of the width of the front and the depth of the disposition of a field army's defense it is necessary to take into account that the army corps of the field army's first echelon may, in each individual case, position their defense differently. This is due to the fact that the corps, depending on their national affiliation, will have at their disposal different numbers of divisions and of reinforcement means, especially nuclear means. And their positions will also have a dissimilar organization.

Because of this it can be assumed that the defense by the corps on the forward defense line will not be organized solely according to the principles of the American army, i.e., it will not be stereotyped.

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Page 18 of 24 Pages

The increased frontage and depth of the defense, as well as the necessity for protection against the casualty-producing elements of a nuclear burst, have led to an increase in the volume of engineer works in the defense. For engineer support of a field army's modern defensive operation it is anticipated that they will allocate up to nine engineer groups (25 to 27 combat engineer battalions), two engineer construction groups (up to six engineer construction battalions), an engineer camouflage battalion, an engineer topographic battalion, and a number of other subunits having other functions.

Of all the tasks to be performed by the engineer troops in a defense, the Americans and British consider the most important to be the organization of a multi-zone deeply echeloned system of antitank and antipersonnel obstacles, including the use of nuclear land mines and toxic substances.

On the whole, a field army's defense, as concerns its layout, will not have sharply defined lines, areas, and positions, [?but?] with the presence of considerable gaps between defense areas, of intervals not prepared in the engineer aspect, so that enemy reconnaissance cannot discover the nature of the defense and the trace of the lines and positions. The [engineer] preparation of the latter will consist chiefly of strongpoints and separate centers of resistance positioned non-uniformly along the front and in the depth and cutting across the most important axes of a possible enemy offensive, of positions for fire means (guided missiles, free rockets, artillery), various antitank and antipersonnel obstacles, emplacements and shelters for personnel, etc.

Thus, in modern mobile combat actions with extensive use of missile/nuclear weapons by both sides, defense during the war will, as a rule, be incomplete in respect to its layout and the engineer preparation of the terrain. At the same time, on some axes of the North European and South European theaters of military operations, along the borders of the NATO member countries and in the depth of their territory, during peacetime they may establish defense lines beforehand which will be occupied by troops in the initial period of war. In this case, the defense may be prepared to a sufficient extent.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the overly wide zones of defense of the troops, as well as the considerable increase in their depth, have led to the excessive dispersal of personnel and equipment both along the front and in the depth. This in turn somewhat reduces the stability of the

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Page 19 of 24 Pages

defense.

The preparation for a defense in the initial period of war, and in particular for the conduct of the first defensive operations, will be done while still at peace, especially on those axes of the theater of military operations where the plans of the NATO command stipulate going over to the defense when war starts.

The command of the army group and field army will endeavor to carry out all measures concerning the organization of defense secretly under the guise of exercises, courses of instruction, and other pretexts, to ensure surprise in unleashing war and to prepare troops to repel the first attack. Upon the start of war, the variant of the plan for the first defensive operation can be refined and supplemented based on the developing situation.

Along with thorough planning of the first operations of the initial period of war, the US and NATO commands are carrying out various measures to strengthen the groupings of ground forces in Europe and increase their combat readiness.

As the result of the systematic conduct of training alerts, a relatively high level of combat readiness of the troops has been achieved. Approximately four to six hours after an alert is declared, the large units and units arrive at the assigned concentration areas from their permanent billeting areas. Nuclear attack means are capable of full combat readiness to open fire, judging by the exercises and maneuvers of the 7th Field Army, within eight to 10 hours after an alert is declared.

For the purpose of ensuring the survivability of the defense and the achievement of surprise actions, the US command plans to shorten to a minimum the preparation time for an operation. Thus, in the maneuvers of NATO forces in the fall of 1960, ground forces large units and units began to move up to the concentration area and deploy on the defense lines after the declaration of a so-called "air alert" 10 hours before the start of the enemy offensive.

The experience of recent exercises and maneuvers of NATO forces, in which US troops also took part, shows that a field army, depending on the conditions of going over to the defense, may have one or two days available for the organization of a defensive operation in the initial period of war. However, one should consider the possibility of shortening the indicated times.

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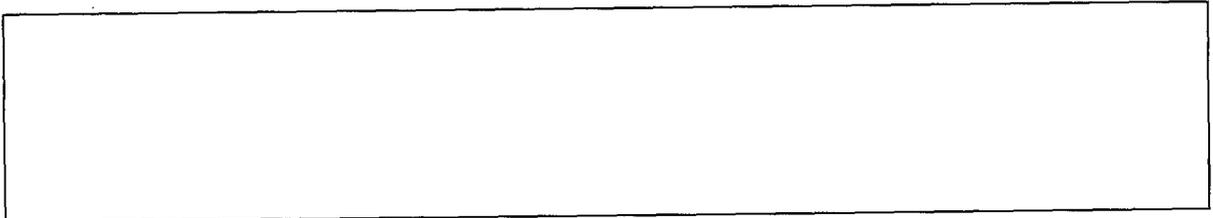


Page 20 of 24 Pages

In determining the possible readiness times of troops to conduct the first operation of the initial period of war, it is necessary to keep in mind that, as a result of systematic training, the American command is achieving a condition where a field army can get to concentration areas and bring itself to full combat readiness within approximately eight to 10 hours after an alert is declared.

In the preparation of a defensive operation much attention is devoted to achieving surprise and deceiving the enemy for the purpose of splitting up the attention of the enemy's forces and means, concealing the disposition of the main grouping of their own troops and their plans and intentions, creating favorable conditions for them to fulfil their main task with minimum losses and in the shortest time, as well as positioning their own troops in a more advantageous position relative to the enemy troops. In general, when organizing defense special attention is paid to establishing a grouping of forces and means that would force the offensive side to concentrate its troops but would not itself at the same time offer an advantageous target for a nuclear strike on the part of the enemy.

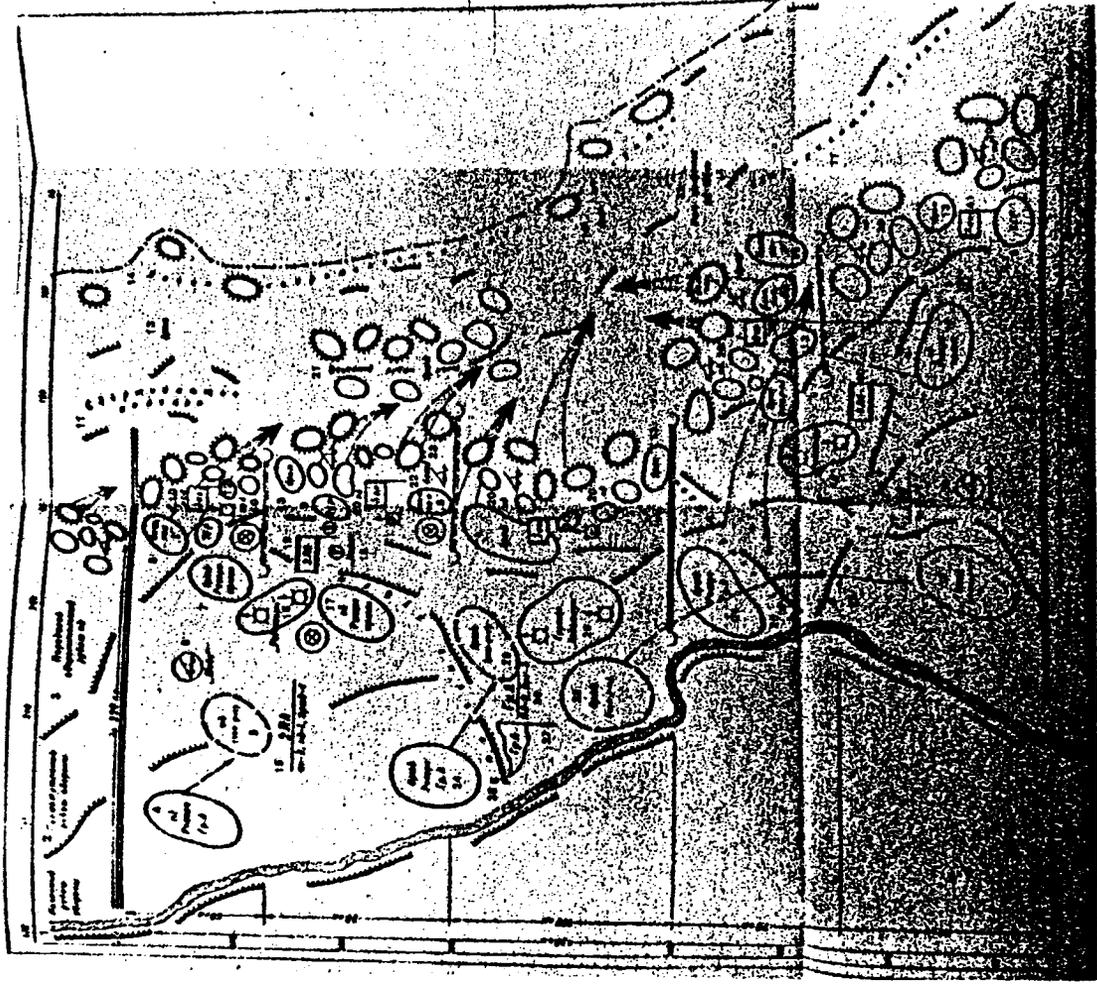
In this article we have examined the organization of the defense of a field army chiefly according the views of the US military command since it occupies a dominant position in the combined armed forces of NATO.



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Page 21 of 24 Pages



~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Page 22 of 24 Pages

Legend:

1. Final line of defense
2. Intermediate line of defense
3. Forward defense line
4. Infantry division - reserve of army group
5. Infantry division (alternate area)
6. Mace
7. Armored division - reserve of army
8. Combat Command C
9. Tank group
10. Motorized infantry division
11. Delaying positions
12. 2nd Army Corps - HQ
13. Armored cavalry regiment
14. Line of resistance of cover zone
15. 2nd Field Army  
army corps - 3, infantry division - 1, armored division - 1
16. Redstone
17. Infantry division - reserve of army
18. Nike
19. 2nd Field Army - HQ
20. Infantry division

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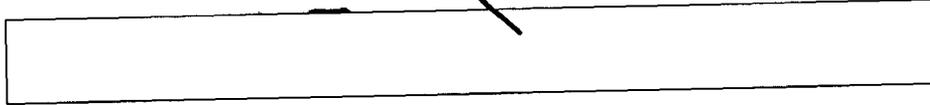
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Page 23 of 24 Pages

21. Main line of cover zone
22. 5th Army Corps - HQ
23. Armored division
24. Armored division - reserve of army group
25. Switch line
26. Army Group  
field armies - 2, divisions - 3
27. Army Group - HQ
28. Armored division (alternate area)
29. Redstone group
30. 7th Army Corps - HQ
31. Combat Command A
32. Cover zone, 25-100 kilometers
33. Armored cavalry regiment (alternate area)
34. Combat Command C
35. Combat Command B
36. Armored division (alternate area)
37. 1st Field Army  
army corps - 2, infantry divisions - [?3]
38. Matador
39. 2nd Army Corps - HQ
40. 1st Field Army - HQ

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Page 24 of 24 Pages

41. 1st Army Corps - HQ

42. Defense zone

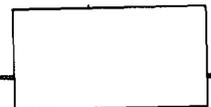
Distance scale at top of map (kilometers):

400 - 350 - 300 - 250 - 200 - 150 - 100 - 50

Frontage scale at left of map (kilometers):

430

110 - 70 - 110 - 80 - 60



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