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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

9 March 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Matters in
Preparing and Conducting the SOYUZ-77
Combined Operational Command-Staff Exercise

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on articles from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This article sets forth the broad details of the large-scale SOYUZ-77 command-staff exercise held in March 1977 in Hungary and Czechoslovakia with the participation of Soviet, Hungarian, and Czech commanders and staffs. It describes the thorough preparation of the exercise, training of commanders, staffs, umpires, and research groups; conduct of the exercise, playing out of enemy and friendly air actions, and research into aspects of controlling coalition forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article appeared in Issue No. 13, which was published in 1977.

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 the [redacted] Codeword [redacted].

[redacted]
John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT

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SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Matters in Preparing and
Conducting the SOYUZ-77 Combined Operational Command-Staff
Exercise

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article was written by General-Leytenant K. Arsenyev. This article sets forth the broad details of the large-scale SOYUZ-77 command-staff exercise held in March 1977 in Hungary and Czechoslovakia with the participation of Soviet, Hungarian, and Czech front, army, and division staffs. It describes the thorough preparation of the exercise, training of commanders, staffs, umpires, and research groups involved in it; the methods of conducting the exercise, the playing out of the air situation, stressing the importance of the air enemy's role; and the extensive research into aspects of controlling coalition forces. It is apparent that the exercise was closely monitored and supervised, with little flexibility in the playing out of the training topics. This article appeared in Issue No. 13, which was published in 1977.

End of Summary

Comment:

General-Leytenant Konstantin Ivanovich Arsenyev also contributed an article on the Guide on the Conduct of Combined Exercises, mentioned on page 5, to Issue 11, 1976

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Certain Matters in Preparing and Conducting the
SOYUZ-77 Combined Operational Command-Staff Exercise

by

General-Leytenant K. ARSENYEV
Chief of the Operational and Combat Training
Directorate of the Staff of the Combined Armed Forces

In March 1977, the combined operational command-staff exercise codenamed SOYUZ-77 was held according to plan. The exercise was conducted under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, Marshal of the Soviet Union V.G. KULIKOV, on the territory of the Hungarian People's Republic and Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The headquarters and operations groups of staffs of formations, large units, and units, the electronic neutralization battalions, and also the units and subunits for communications, support, and services allocated to the exercise were from the Hungarian People's Army, Soviet Army, and Czechoslovak People's Army.

The exercise was one-sided, multi-level, and involved the deployment and relocation of the control posts from the staffs of fronts down to those of divisions, and the deployment and relocation of communications means on the ground. It was conducted following a complex theme; during the working out of it the commands and staffs being trained carried out the tasks of repelling enemy aggression, planning and conducting offensive operations employing all modern means of destruction, and controlling and organizing the cooperation of troop groupings having a coalition complement; and they also studied the possible nature of the actions of the probable enemy.

We believe that certain matters in the preparation and method of conducting the SOYUZ-77 command-staff exercise are of definite interest.

Preparing the exercise. The staff of the directing body to prepare and conduct the exercise was formed from among the generals and officers of the Staff of the Combined Armed Forces.

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Its make-up included representatives of the general staffs of the Hungarian People's Army and Czechoslovak People's Army, who, under the supervision of the exercise director's deputies for the national armies, operated in the role of umpires attached to the commands and different staffs and operated in the [enemy] role-playing groups and research groups.

The directing body's staff began its work by developing the necessary documents for the preparation and conduct of the exercise according to the Guide on the Conduct of Combined Exercises in the Combined Armed Forces.

The basic planning documents were coordinated beforehand with the general staffs of the allied armies participating in the exercise. This made it possible to take into consideration their wishes, the characteristic features of the training of the commands and staffs of the allied armies, and those matters requiring special attention while the documents were being worked out.

At the same time that the training materials were being developed, a reconnaissance was made of the forthcoming exercise area. During the reconnaissance the location areas and relocation axes of the control posts were determined and the matters of organizing communications between those being trained and the directing body's staff were resolved.

It is known that the successful conduct of an exercise depends greatly on the purposeful, creative, and efficient work of the umpires. Based on this, the exercise director devoted much attention to their training. This attention related first and foremost to the selection of the umpires, to their placement, and to specifying the forms and methods of the training sessions with them before the exercise and during its conduct.

In the concluding stage of the preparatory period the specific training of the generals and officers for the conduct of the exercise was carried out. Over a period of six days with the directing body and of two days with the umpires, they studied the concept, initial situation, possible variants of the decisions, course of the combat actions, and as a whole the entire plan for the conduct of the operation from the first to the last day.

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During the training sessions the generals and officers of the directing body were not passive participants, but acted the roles of formation commanders and their respective responsible staff officers. This made it possible to analyze in more depth possible alternative decisions of those being trained and alternative courses in the overall playing out of the combat actions.

This method of training the directing body's staff for the forthcoming exercises enhanced the responsibility and purposefulness of the work of the staff's directorates and departments and the work of each general and officer personally.

In addition to studying the method of conducting the exercise, during the training sessions the personnel of the directing body's staff built up their military-theoretical level with principles and conclusions arising from the theory and practice of military affairs and the nature of the utilization of all types of armed forces and modern weapons in combat and operations. Together with this they studied the requirements of the exercise director and the methods of resolving in actual practice many of the problems arising from the exercise.

The training sessions with the directing body's staff were conducted by the exercise director and those with the umpires were held under the supervision of the exercise deputy directors from the national armies and representatives of the directing body's staff that had participated in developing the concept and plan of the exercise and who knew all the salient features of the playing out of its episodes and the particulars of its conduct.

This method of training the directing body and the umpires makes it possible for the director and directing body's staff to more objectively evaluate the work of formation commanders and staffs, the content of their decisions, and as for umpires -- to correctly and rapidly get oriented on the situation and approach in a creative manner the playing out of the combat action episodes.

Methods of work of the directing body's staff and umpire organization during the exercise. In this period the directing body's staff made an analysis and comparison of the decisions, worked out and refined the procedure and sequence for the playing

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out of the exercise's episodes in accordance with the decisions of those being trained, and analyzed and collated a variety of matters relating to the buildup of the situation by the umpire organization and the [enemy] role-playing groups. Along with this, the directing body's staff, in the role of the superior staff, organized and implemented control over those being trained. In conformity with this, the documents on troop control were worked out by the axis officers and specialists (of the branch arms and services) according to the progress of the exercise; and other written, graphic, and procedural and reference documents were also prepared.

All of the work of the directing body's staff in accomplishing the aforementioned matters was conditioned entirely by the method by which the exercise was conducted and in particular, by the playing out of the combat actions of the sides "hour by hour".

The playing out of the combat actions of the sides "hour by hour," as the experience of the exercise showed, is complex and requires exceptional efficiency in the work of those being trained, the umpire organization, and the directing body's staff; especially in analyzing decisions, developing the fast-moving episodes, and preparing all instructions to guide the actions of both those being trained and also of the umpire organization.

The exercise participants, by experiencing the constant changes in the situation, planned the actions of the troops and directed their subordinates on the basis of the time actually available.

It should be noted that this method requires the continuous presence of the umpire organization with the staffs and troops being trained so as to monitor the fulfilment of the assigned tasks, the buildup of the situation, the implementation of the playing out of the individual episodes of the exercise, and the fulfilment of other assignments given by the exercise director and the directing body's staff.

During the exercise, in the playing out of the combat actions according to the decisions of the sides, special attention was devoted to realistic consideration of the time

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factor by those being trained because decisions that take a long time in being made by commanders and in being drawn up by staffs will not correspond with the situation nor with the nature of the troop actions that will have been changing over this time. That is why all of the exercise episodes were played out within the strict confines of real time.

Along with this, an operational pause was made at one of the stages of the exercise so as to work in greater detail on matters such as the following: the adoption of the decision to employ nuclear weapons, the collection of data on the results of enemy nuclear strikes, the estimate of the radiation situation, the adoption of the decisions on the restoration of combat effectiveness and on subsequent actions, and also for the purposes of providing for listening to the reports of the greatest possible number of trainees on the situation that had developed.

The buildup of the operational-tactical situation for those being trained and the conveying of changes in it to them was done during the entire exercise through the umpire organization and the groups playing out the course of the combat actions of the sides.

The umpires attached to the fronts and armies, and also the senior officers of the groups playing out the situation that were attached to the staffs of the fronts, would, daily, at the end of the day, report by technical communications means, through the axis officers for the fronts and armies, to the directing body's staff the decisions of the formation commanders for the next day. Based on an analysis of the decisions of those being trained and in the light of the nature of the enemy's actions, the directing body's staff would work out on the map the plan for the playing out of the course of combat actions of the sides for the following day. Then the plan would be approved by the exercise director and subsequently worked out in detail based on the changed situation. Next, the content of the plan would be transmitted to the groups playing out the course of combat actions that were attached to the staffs of the fronts. Here they were given only the general operational-tactical data that enabled them to play out the combat actions of the large units and units in accord with the decisions of those being trained and the concept of the "enemy" actions.

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The situation for the branch arms, special troops, services, and the rear was passed on to the umpire organization attached to the responsible officers of the headquarters of the fronts personally by the assistants to the chief of staff of the directing body for branch arms, special troops, services, and the rear; or by the relevant chiefs of directorates (departments) of the directing body's staff.

The front play-out groups, on having received all the necessary data from the directing body's staff, would, together with the umpires attached to the responsible officers of the front headquarters, build up the situation in the front's zone, following which the umpires attached to the commanders of the armies would be given the parts of the situation that pertained to the commanders.

The umpires attached to the chiefs of the branch arms, special troops, services, and rears of the fronts transmitted personally all necessary data to the umpires attached to the responsible officers of the headquarters of the armies.

In analogous sequence, the schedule for the playing out was transmitted by the umpires attached to the commanders of armies to the umpires located at the corps, divisions, and their regiments.

An important feature of the method of conducting the exercise was the fact that the data on the situation (about the enemy, our own troops, nuclear strikes, the radiation situation, etc.) were fed in only through the terminal umpires attached to the regiments and divisions and those attached to the units of the branch arms, special troops, and services subordinate to the armies and fronts.

But as concerns those data which in a combat situation might be provided by a higher staff or an adjacent force, or which a commander [of a division or lower] or chief might observe personally, in the exercise these were passed on by the umpires attached to the relevant responsible officers of the higher staff.

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In transmitting data on the situation, account was taken of the time required to collect the data in a regiment or division and to report them to the higher staff. Based on these considerations, changes in situation for armies and staffs were given out three to four hours later [after occurring] and for large units and units 1.5 to two hours later.

Thus, all data on the situation in exercise SOYUZ-77 came in to the staffs being trained via the lower staffs by way of the command-staff chain, consequently all levels from front staff down to battalion staff inclusive became involved in working out the training topics.

This method of building up the situation during the conduct of the exercise decidedly made commanders and staffs work under conditions that approach a combat situation.

Exercise experience shows that each umpire must display creativity and initiative so that the data passed on by him ensures that an interesting, complex, and instructive situation is developed requiring from those being trained the adoption of rapid and bold decisions and that an interesting operational background is established for the working out of the training topics by the higher staffs.

Playing out the air situation. During the working out of the episodes of fluid battle with the trainee air defense and air forces commands and staffs of the armies participating in the exercise, the [enemy] role-playing of the air situation, which was closely related to the actions of the ground forces, was done in a centralized manner. In this case, the subordinate and cooperating staffs and troops received warnings from the Central Command Post of the Air Defense Forces of the Country (front air defense command post); and it was also done in a decentralized manner by the issuing of data from the command posts of the air defense divisions or radiotechnical brigades (regiments). The basic content of the [enemy] role-playing was the data about the appearance and location of the enemy, the combat strength of the air groups making the air raid, their flight altitude, and their action tactics.

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In exercise SOYUZ-77 the [enemy] role-playing for the air enemy's first massive strike was organized from the command posts of the radiotechnical battalions equipped with the VOZDUKH-1P semiautomated systems and colocated with the command posts of the fighter aviation regiments. The descriptive information about the air targets was passed on to the intelligence and information centers of the air defense divisions, from which the information went to the central command posts of the air defense of the country in real astronomical time. In addition, identical information on the very same groups of air targets, and in the same time, was sent out from the command posts of the radiotechnical large units and units of the fronts.

This method for [enemy] role-playing made it possible to: determine the time required for the transmission of information about the air targets between the levels of control; check the readiness of command post crews to process information; consolidate the messages on the same targets and about which a command post had received data under different numerical designations; monitor the timeliness with which information was posted to the formation commander's (commander's) map board and illuminated display for the making of a decision on the conduct of combat actions.

This method for the [enemy] role-playing of the air situation made the organization of the collection of information take place under a situation approaching actual combat and contributed to the development of cooperation between the air defense groups of the country and of the fronts and to the resolution of the complex problems of controlling air defense troops with a coalition complement.

Experience has shown that the correctly organized role-playing of the air enemy's actions is an important factor in the hands of the director; with its use he can effectively influence the course of the exercise and the actions of those being trained.

The combat control centers (TsBU) of the air armies were used in this exercise for the playing out of the combat actions

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of front and army aviation.

Air actions were represented by informing the pertinent responsible officers of the combat crew of a combat control center about the takeoff time of units (groups of aircraft), their strength, airfield, flight route and altitude, their accomplishment of the assigned task, and return to the landing airfield.

For this purpose a plan for the playing out of the air combat actions was developed. This plan guided the umpires attached to the combat control centers of the air armies. The plan showed: the sequential numbering of the information (hypothetical situation), the operational and astronomical time it is to be handed over, to whom it is to be given, a summary of its content, and the tentative actions of those being trained.

The plan was developed taking into account possible changes in the unfolding of events during fast-moving actions of ground forces. A distinctive feature was the fact that based on the specific circumstances, but in line with the plan for the playing out, the umpire attached to the air army's combat control center had been granted the right, taking into account the situation, to change the time for the handing over of the information (hypothetical situation) so that the actions of the aviation large units and units supporting the troops would be carried out in conformity with the decisions of the front (army) commanders.

When aircraft were requested to accomplish suddenly arising tasks, the umpire would inform the chief of the air army combat control center and give him appropriate hypothetical situations whose actualization would require specific actions on his part.

Thanks to the functioning of the combat control centers, the formation command posts had more complete and timely information about the situation and they accomplished the assigned tasks in close contact, thereby creating the best conditions for maintaining the cooperation of ground troops with aviation.

Listening to the reports of formation commanders (commanders) and monitoring the work of staffs. In the work of the directing body's staff, prominence was given to the matters of organizing the listening to reports of formation commanders

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(commanders) and staffs and the monitoring of the actual actions of the staffs and troops by the exercise director. These matters were accomplished by the exercise director and the chief of the directing body's staff right at the control posts set up by those being trained, that is, at the working site of all the responsible officers of a staff, the branch arms, or special troops.

This method of work made it possible not only to comprehensively and fully check the substance and suitability of the decisions made by those being trained, but to also analyze how they organized their work to arrive at a decision, transmitted tasks to the troops, and exercised control, and to objectively evaluate the activity of commanders and staffs and their ability to work under conditions approaching a combat situation.

Organizing and conducting research into matters of control.
In defining the specific direction of the research, we based ourselves on the fact that under modern conditions the role of control is rising continuously and that directing a coalition grouping presents certain difficulties.

Based on this, during the exercise there were assigned the tasks of comprehensively studying and synthesizing the methods of work of formation commanders (commanders) and staffs in controlling front (army) troops; of researching the organization, composition, and equipment of the system of field mobile control posts and communications centers as well as their positioning and relocation during the operation; and of synthesizing the distinctive features of controlling front (army) troops of coalition complement in an offensive operation, the employment of means of automation and mechanization, and other matters. This was for the purpose of subsequently developing proposals and recommendations for the Combined Armed Forces.

These tasks were accomplished according to a special plan. Its content, thrust, and details were arrived at taking into account the development of the training topics, the nature of the combat actions of the troops, and the work of formation commanders and staffs at each stage of the exercise, thereby furthering the detailed study of the assigned tasks.

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A research department was set up in the directing body's staff to carry out the research work. Its tasks included planning, collecting messages, reports, and statistical data from all sources; and synthesizing and working up a report and recommendations.

Parallel to this, the assistants to the directing body's chief of staff and the chiefs of the departments for the branch arms and special troops were given the tasks of researching individual matters that were peculiar to the given branch arm or service.

In addition, in the staffs of the fronts and armies, by instructions of the general staffs of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak People's Armies, research groups were established and their work was carried out under the direct supervision of the senior umpires of the directing body's staff. These umpires participated actively in organizing the research at their sites.

The senior umpires attached to the staffs of the fronts, armies, and divisions were also involved in the performance of the research tasks.

Since research was conducted simultaneously in all levels of the commands and staffs of the front formations with coalition complement, the research department of the directing body's staff performed its work in several groups.

The generals and officers participating in the research were trained beforehand.

Directions on the organization and methods for all research matters were worked out as was also a detailed listing of the projects of the work; and report forms, tables for the collection of statistical data, and other documents were prepared. All of the materials developed were turned over to the executors in their entirety. Instructional training sessions were also held with the generals and officers of the directing body's staff and of the allied armies who were participating in the research.

Simultaneously with this, and for the purpose of checking the practicality of the new views on the organization of the

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system of control posts, recommendations were worked out about their possible structure, composition, and equipment and these were passed on to the staffs that were participating in the exercise.

During the exercise all of the work of the research groups, assistants to the directing body's chief of staff, umpire organization, and specialists of the branch arms and services, was conducted according to the principle of decentralized collection of information. But as concerns the submission of the materials resulting from the research to the directing body's staff, this was done on a daily basis following the chain of command, from lower to higher. In so doing, the materials and reports of the umpires attached to regiments were synthesized in the reports of the umpires attached to divisions by the research groups in the armies, the reports of the groups with the armies were synthesized by the front groups and sent at the end of each day of the exercise to the Research department of the directing body's staff.

The summary reports for the stages of the exercise were prepared by the research groups of the armies and fronts.

As a result of the work that was done, we studied and synthesized some of the experience obtained by the staffs of the Soviet Army and of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak People's Armies in setting up field mobile control posts for fronts (armies) and divisions, and we analyzed their composition and equipment and the methods of work of the formation commanders and staffs in troop control.

These were some of the matters concerning the methods of preparing and conducting the SOYUZ-77 combined operational command-staff exercise.

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