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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

21 June 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Matters
Pertaining to the Organization and Conduct
of Combined Operational Command-Staff
Exercises

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 summarizes the purpose, preparation, organization, general features, conduct, and analysis of a number of large-scale combined command-staff exercises conducted in 1977 by Warsaw Pact ground, naval, air, and air defense forces. It points out their value for military research and for the training of high-level commanders and staffs. The article also describes the functions and work of the exercise director and his staff, the deficiencies in some exercises, the lessons learned, and the dissemination of the experience derived from these exercises. 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. 14, 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].

John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT

DATE OF
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SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Matters Pertaining to the Organization and Conduct of Combined Operational Command-Staff Exercises

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-Major F. Sarychev. This article summarizes the purpose, preparation, organization, general features, conduct, and analysis of a number of large-scale combined command-staff exercises conducted in 1977 by Warsaw Pact ground, naval, air, and air defense forces. It points out their value for research in strategy, weapons, equipment, and operational calculations; and for the training of commanders and staffs in troop control, cooperation, and all-round combat support. The article also describes the functions and work of the exercise director and his staff, the deficiencies found in some exercises, the lessons learned, and dissemination of the experience, lessons, and research derived from these exercises. This article appeared in Issue No. 14, which was published in 1977.

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Certain Matters Pertaining to the Organization and Conduct
of Combined Operational Command-Staff Exercises

by

General-Mayor F. SARYCHEV
Chief of the Operational Training Branch of the Directorate
for Operational and Combat Training of the Staff of
the Combined Armed Forces

An analysis of recently conducted combined undertakings and the results of troop inspections and checks permit us to conclude that the fraternal armies have taken a significant step forward in improving the organization and conduct of operational and combat training. It is essential to note that in this process main attention has been focused on training the troops and naval forces in combined combat actions, developing among the generals and officers of the allied armies a unity of views in matters of organizing and conducting combined combat actions, and on improving the degree of training for commanders and staffs at all levels in controlling groupings of allied troops and naval forces. All these tasks have been, for the most part, accomplished during the combined exercises conducted with the staffs, troops, and naval forces of the allied armies. We believe that only during such exercises is there an opportunity for formation commanders (commanders) and staffs to work out in actual practice matters of control, cooperation, and the comprehensive support of the troops and naval forces during the combined fulfilment of combat tasks. Operational exercises are also used to investigate the most important problems of strategy, improve the effectiveness of combat equipment and weapons, and verify operational calculations.

The Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact member states have amassed a great deal of experience in preparing and conducting large-scale combined operational command-staff exercises; exercises involving the allied navies, air forces, and air defense troops of the Warsaw Pact countries; operational rear services exercises, and other exercises. This experience is evidence that the allied armies have already achieved unity of views with regard to a wide variety of matters connected with the preparation and conduct of various types of exercises. However, there are still differences in the demands placed upon the training of the

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operational staffs and in the procedures for working out some of the operational-tactical training tasks.

In the pages of our Information Collection, articles are published regularly by generals and officers, describing the experience gained in the course of the operational training of the fraternal armies. These articles consider special features in the preparation and conduct of exercises. Chiefs of the general (main) staffs of the allied armies, their deputies, senior personnel of formations and large units, and generals and officers of the Staff of the Combined Armed Forces have addressed a variety of matters involving the organization and conduct of exercises.

In the present article, we shall attempt to synthesize some of the matters involved in the preparation and conduct of operational command-staff exercises in the Combined Armed Forces.

It has recently become firm procedure in the actual implementation of the combined undertakings for staff training to conduct multilevel command-staff exercises on the terrain with the participation of troops, naval forces, and rear services so that actions may be represented realistically. Most of these exercises have been two-sided or with a representational enemy and they have been conducted continuously day and night to a great depth and with jamming of the operation of radioelectronic means.

In 1977 the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, Marshal of the Soviet Union V. G. KULIKOV, conducted exercises of this type: the SOYUZ-77 command-staff exercise in the territory of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, VAL-77 in the territory of the German Democratic Republic, Polish People's Republic, USSR, and in the water area of the Baltic Sea; and TRANZIT-77 in the territory of the Polish People's Republic and German Democratic Republic.

The SOYUZ-77 exercise was conducted as a one-sided multilevel command-staff exercise on the terrain with the actual deployment and relocation of control posts and the organization of communications from the front [down] to the battalion.

Against the background of an overall operational situation, air defense troops of the Hungarian People's Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and also of the Central and Southern groups of Soviet forces, worked out tactical cooperation by engaging in practical exercises

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with actual flights by air targets.

The VAL-77 operational-tactical exercise was a significant event in the training of the allied navies in the Baltic Sea. In it, matters concerning the planning and conduct of combined operations on land, sea, and in the air for the purposes of routing enemy groupings, achieving supremacy in the Baltic Sea, and seizing a straits zone were worked out.

Tactical exercises for the large units and units of the navies, ground forces, and aviation of the three allied armies were conducted under realistic conditions; with missile, artillery, and torpedo firings, with the firing of depth charges, and with minesweeping. A parachute drop, an amphibious landing, and the assault crossing of a water obstacle were also carried out.

In the TRANZIT-77 operational-rear services command-staff exercise, matters of rear services support for the troops of a front having a coalition complement and for the forces of the Combined Baltic Fleet were worked out.

On the southwestern axis, a front two-level command-staff exercise on maps was conducted under the direction of Colonel General I. COMAN, Minister of National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

The Bulgarian People's Army and the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic conducted two army command-staff exercises on the terrain with communications means and representational troops.

Exercises have been conducted on the terrain (at sea) with communications means and with the actual deployment and relocation of command posts to realistic distances. For each specific exercise, an operational-strategic situation was set up with the combat strength and status of the troops (naval forces) different from the actual ones.

As is evident from the above mentioned, in order to have the scope and nature of the work of the operational staffs at these exercises approximate actual reality, representational troops were brought in, in addition to the trainee headquarters. All of this complicated the work conditions of the operational staffs to the utmost and approximated a real combat situation for them. As a rule, the representational troops worked out their combat actions against the general background of the operation in conformity with the decisions made by and under the direction of the corresponding trainee formation commanders (commanders) and their staffs.

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By conducting the exercises in this fashion, the directing body obtained direct contact between the senior commanders and their subordinate commanders and staffs during the organizing of combat actions on the terrain (at sea), and especially during the organizing of cooperation; the several levels of the operational and tactical staffs were afforded the opportunity of engaging in joint work; and conditions were provided for accomplishing one of the most complicated tasks -- the planning and conduct of combined operations and combat actions with troops and naval forces.

Bringing troops, naval forces, and rear services organs into command-staff exercises provided the opportunity to check: the efficiency of the staffs' work, the correctness of the decisions that were made and of the plans that were developed and the timeliness with which these were transmitted to the troops (naval forces), and also the organization of control over the troops and naval forces during the preparation and dynamics of the combat actions.

I would like to especially emphasize that all of these combined exercises, besides accomplishing the tasks of improving the military skills of all the personnel, had great ideological and indoctrinational application. In the course of their preparation and conduct, conditions were established which favored friendly relations and increased contacts between the servicemen of the allied armies and the population of the states on whose territory the exercises were conducted. This greatly influenced the subsequent strengthening of combat solidarity and mutual understanding among servicemen of all the categories of troops and naval forces of the Combined Armed Forces, and developed among the servicemen of the allied armies a strong sense of internationalism, friendship, and combat comradeship.

As we all know, the key principle in training staffs and troops is the principle: "study that which is necessary in war". With this as its objective, the training approximated conditions of combat reality by [reproducing] its characteristic frequent and drastic changes in situation and the sudden appearance of tasks, which require making bold decisions and implementing them within limited periods of time, as well as playing out the flow of actions not according to previously developed plans, but in keeping with the decisions of the trainees. This fostered the development among the commanders and staffs of initiative, foresight, the ability to successfully cope with the growing volume of tasks and with the implementation of undertakings involving troop control.

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During the exercises, a large number of tasks were assigned involving the preparation and conduct of operations, and the opportunity was presented to thoroughly work out matters concerning troop leadership in the following areas: the collection of data on and the estimate of a situation, decision-making, the assigning of combat tasks, and the organization of comprehensive support for troop combat actions under rapidly and drastically changing situational conditions. In this process, the operational-tactical situation was built up on a realistic time scale or in stages, with operational transitions between them.

Operational transitions were used to work out the most distinctive episodes of an operation, when drastic changes in the situation were imminent, or when important training matters needed to be worked out.

As a rule, at all of the exercises, a complex situation was set up and different methods and variants were worked out for the actions by troops and naval forces in the critical situations which might occur in a modern war, and which demand from the leadership personnel and higher operational staffs skill, daring, initiative, and the ability to conduct operations and combat actions against a strong and technologically well-equipped enemy.

In many of the exercises, the initial situation made provision for the initiation of combat actions by surprise. This placed the trainees under difficult conditions. They were required to simultaneously make a decision on repelling the enemy's attacks (invasion), complete the process of bringing the troops to combat readiness and organize their movement to the area of their operational assignment (combat actions), plan the operation, muster the appropriate troop groupings, etc. The volume of work for the trainees was extraordinarily large, whereas the time they had available to fulfill it was extremely limited. All of this required high organizational ability, precision, and efficiency in the work.

In those instances when the assigned purpose was to work out matters of converting the armed forces from peacetime to wartime status, the initial situation was portrayed as a period of threat, with the distinctive features of such a period.

A number of exercises were begun in a situation where the aggressor has already unleashed a war, i.e., while combat actions were in progress, etc.

In the overwhelming majority of exercises, military operations were initially conducted using conventional means of destruction. Subsequently,

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there would be a transition to the employment of nuclear weapons.

Matters involving the use of nuclear weapons were most fully worked out in those command-staff exercises where the representational rocket troops, aviation forces, and reconnaissance and communications means were knocked out of action. Under such conditions, formation commanders, commanders, staffs, and other control organs were able to practice the transition to the employment of nuclear weapons against the enemy by: building up the readiness of the rocket and missile technical troops and aviation, preparing the nuclear warheads, continuously modifying the plans and schedules pertaining to the employment of nuclear weapons, carrying out reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of enemy installations and targets, targeting the missile and air units against other installations, assigning them new tasks, and delivering a massed nuclear strike in the shortest period of time.

Particular attention was devoted to the following: the accurate definition and timely transmission of the tasks to be accomplished by nuclear weapons to the executors of those tasks; the coordination of the nuclear strikes to be delivered by missile large units and units, by front and long range aviation, and by the navies; and also the transmission of safety measures and of signals to the troops, the drawing up of combat documents, and the estimate of the expected results of the damage inflicted on the enemy.

Also accomplished in the exercises were the matters of organizing the collection of reconnaissance data about the enemy's means of delivery, his nuclear warheads, and his main installations. Good results were obtained when different reconnaissance units (subunits) were allocated to the exercises and the enemy's main installations (targets) were represented by models that matched his weapons and combat equipment, and by mock-ups and radioelectronic means. This enabled us to give formation commanders (commanders) and trainee staffs practical training in the acquisition of data on the enemy from actually operating reconnaissance organs, subordinate and cooperating troops, adjacent forces, as well as from the higher-level staff.

Reconnaissance data on the enemy were reported to the trainees in the same form and at the same time that such data would become available in a combat situation: in the form of diagrams, radio messages from the reconnaissance organs, entries in the journals for the recording of reconnaissance reports, and information from the higher-level staff and adjacent forces, as well as from on board reconnaissance aircraft through

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pecially allocated radio sets. These data were issued based on an analysis of the capabilities of the reconnaissance forces, means, and tasks of the troops, of the adjacent forces, and of the higher-level staff; and on the requests for reconnaissance from the trainees.

Information on the installations to be destroyed by nuclear weapons was issued in such volume as would allow the trainees to thoroughly assess them, determine their dimensions, status, and degree of protection for personnel and equipment, the cover from air strikes, speed of movement, and other indices. To complicate the situation, the directing body would temporarily take certain reconnaissance organs and their communications out of action, which brought the training closer to real conditions.

Organizing the collection and recording of data on our own means for employing nuclear weapons was very important. In command-staff exercises with the participation of representational rocket troops, their status and the nature of their actions were determined realistically on the terrain. For these purposes, the staffs continuously conducted reconnaissance of the missile siting areas to which relocation was planned, and rigorously calculated the times for: the assignment of combat tasks, the transition from one level of readiness to the next, the delivery of strikes, the relocation, the deployment; and did other things as dictated by the conditions of the combat situation. At all of the exercises, meteorological support tasks were accomplished.

As experience shows, in the conduct of a high-quality exercise, the training of its directing body and umpire organization plays an important role. Whenever such training was comprehensively thought through and conducted with precision and timeliness, the exercises proceeded in an organized and instructive manner.

Even as the training materials were being developed, the concepts of the exercises were carefully thought out, and the combat strength, balance of forces, and tasks of the sides were validated. The plans for conducting the exercises, their content, time, and the procedure for working out all the training matters at each stage were thought through in depth.

Operational missions were developed in detail for each operational staff. They contained all the data necessary for working out the training tasks. Information about the enemy was discovered in keeping with the actual capabilities of all types of reconnaissance.

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A comprehensive analysis of the degree of preparedness of the trainees together with a mastery of the general documents (the concept, plan for conducting the exercise, etc.) are achieved, as we all know, by having a fundamental awareness of the impending volume of work for the trainee staffs, and the nature and content of the operational-tactical calculations and norms with respect to the theme being worked out. Therefore, during the preparation of the SOYUZ-77 command-staff exercise, the VAL-77 operational-tactical exercise of the allied navies, and the TRANZIT-77 operational-rear services command-staff exercise, the exercise director held special training periods with the directing body's staff and the umpire organization of the front (fleet) formations, during which the exercise director's assistants and the generals and officers of the directing body's staff assumed the roles of their corresponding trainees, for the purposes of studying the data in greater depth and of better preparing the directing body and umpire organization, as well as for the purposes of refining the procedure for playing out the course of the combat actions, of studying the possible variants of the trainees' decisions, and of checking the realism of the plan for the conduct of the exercise.

Just prior to each exercise, under the direction of the exercise director's deputies for each of the national armies and with the participation of generals and officers of the directing body's staff, analogous training periods were held with the entire umpire organization allocated from the allied armies. This organization was brought in to support the playing out of the course of the combat actions of the sides, to build up the situation, and to monitor the decisions and actions of the trainees. For these purposes, we used battalion (artillery battalion) commanders as well as the end umpires specially assigned to the operations groups of the staffs of units and large units.

Several staff training practices were held with staffs which had participated in exercises; for the most part, these were held in the field with communications means and in keeping with the themes of the exercises. Likewise, tactical-special exercises were conducted with communications units on the working out of the deployment, coordination, and relocation of the communications centers of the command posts of armies, divisions, and regiments.

It is worth noting that the directing body's staff at all the exercises assumed two roles: of the higher staff and of the organ of control for the exercise. At this point, one must emphasize the importance of clearly allocating responsibilities within the directing body's staff to provide for the playing out of the combat actions and for the building up

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of the situation, which makes it possible to plan and coordinate these matters in advance between the personnel concerned and the departments of the directing body's staff.

Experience indicates that in the overall plan and individual plans for the conduct of an exercise, one should determine the tentative content of the situation (information reports) and the general procedure for its transmission, and also have the urgent reports and messages handled over the combat communications nets from the troops and combat support organs, adjacent forces, the higher staff, and other sources. But the specific data pertaining to the buildup of the situation, the condition of the troops, and the losses of the sides must be worked out in advance in the form of a plan and a sequence for playing out the situation; and they must be updated during the exercise, keeping in mind the strong and weak aspects of the trainees' decisions and the instructions of the exercise director concerning the subsequent playing out of combat actions, so that the planned training topics are worked out in the best possible manner.

As we all know, the activities of an exercise director and his staff are directed toward training subordinates to take the most efficient actions in the interests of achieving the planned objectives and accomplishing the combat tasks, of correctly organizing work during the preparation of the operation (battle); and also toward training them in troop control. This has been confirmed by all of the exercises that have been conducted. During the planning period, the exercise director would be briefed by the formation commanders (commanders) and other officials in periodic visits to them. Trainees were summoned to the directing body's staff primarily during the preparation of the exercise. During the conduct of combat actions, only the commanders of second-echelon formations (large units) and, in rare instances, of first-echelon ones, were summoned.

The exercise director would often combine his work with the briefings held by the trainee formation commanders (commanders) with their deputies or chiefs of branch arms and services while working out the decisions for one situation or another. Most frequently, he was briefed by the senior personnel of the higher staff. With regard to the commanders and chiefs of the lower levels of command, he was usually able to hear their briefings not more than once or twice in the course of the exercise. In the majority of cases, and this was fully justified, their superior commanders and the appropriate deputies and assistants of the exercise director were the ones that became involved with them.

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Along with these briefings, the exercise director, the chief of staff of the directing body, and their deputies made a practice of personally observing the methods of work and the style of leadership of the trainee commanders and staffs during the more complicated periods of combat actions, while they were engaged in making decisions, issuing instructions, collecting data on the situation, and while they were controlling the troops, making the transition to actions involving the employment of nuclear weapons, the landing of troops, the assault crossing of water obstacles, etc.

The staffs of the directing body looked closely at the decisions reported to them, appraised their advisability in the given situation and their capability of achieving the most effective results in fulfilling the combat tasks, and on this basis prepared the subsequent playing out of the actions of the sides. In order to maintain objectivity in the playing out of the actions, the directing body's staff, as a rule, computed the damages (losses) inflicted on the troops of both sides, worked out an estimate of the balance of forces, and updated the status of the troops prior to the working out of each training topic. All of this made it possible to avoid gross errors in determining the results of the combat actions with respect to one training topic or another. In determining the success of the troops, the following were taken into consideration: the depths of their advance, the times they reached the appropriate phase lines, the losses sustained; and furthermore, the depth of their analysis of the situation, their correctness in choosing targets, their thoroughness and efficiency in resolving matters involving the employment of nuclear weapons, the methods used by the troops to exploit the results of these weapons, as well as the measures for operational (combat) support. Troop losses were determined daily by the directing body.

Data on the situation and various other kinds of information generally reached the trainee staffs as it would in combat -- i.e., from subordinate troops, reconnaissance organs which were actually functioning, cooperating staffs, aviation, adjacent forces, and the higher-level staff -- by radio, telegraph, in code, in written and graphic form, using standard forms, from on board reconnaissance aircraft, from the message offices of communications centers, from message centers, and from communications officers.

During the SOYUZ-77, VAL-77, and TRANZIT-77 exercises, the playing out of the course of the combat actions was done on a real-time basis, with the uninterrupted buildup of the situation "hour by hour" from below, from the battalions, regiments, and ships (from the end umpires) in strict

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conformity with the decisions made by the trainee formation commanders (commanders). Along with this, in some exercises, the procedural documents on matters concerning the playing out of combat actions were not worked out to the extent necessary, the situation was built up by handing over broad hypothetical situations, from which everything became immediately known to everyone, thus relieving the trainees of collecting, collating, and analyzing the pertinent information. There was no transferring of control from one post to another. Real crisis situations and circumstances, which would have forced the trainees to think creatively and defeat a strong, technologically well-equipped enemy, were seldom set up. Investigation into the matters involved in an offensive operation limited itself to the depth of the immediate task, matters involving troop control were not worked out within scheduled operational time, and simplified conditions far removed from actual combat reality were set up; lengthy briefings, laxity in working out combat documents, and other shortcomings were tolerated. This is an oversimplification of the methods of conducting an exercise and detrimental to the severity demanded in staff training.

During command-staff exercises, the directing body's staffs not only handled the playing out of the combat actions, but also continuously studied and investigated the work methods and procedures of the trainee commanders and staffs, and their compatibility with the content and nature of the situation. Of especially great benefit in this process was the work method whereby the exercise director and responsible officers of the directing body, upon uncovering any shortcomings, would immediately find their cause, point out the possible consequences, and indicate the more advisable decisions or actions in the given situation. This made it possible to instruct subordinates more effectively and prevent future errors.

When the working out of all the training topics of each individual exercise was completed, a critique was conducted, this being an important integral aspect of the combined exercise. As a rule, all critiques were based on the theoretical principles of the training topics which had been worked out and on an analysis of the actual actions and materials of the trainees in each specific exercise.

Following the general critique, the exercise director's deputies for each national army conducted individual critiques with a detailed analysis of the results of the actions of the formation commanders (commanders), staffs, large units, and units of their own individual armies.

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To improve the methods of training the staffs and instructing the troops in the Combined Armed Forces, a great deal of attention is devoted to the regular exchange of the experience in training methods gained in the allied armies. All that is best and most advanced in the training of the troops and naval forces of the allied armies is reported in writing by the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces to the defense ministers, the general (main) staffs, and the senior personnel of the defense ministries and is covered in the pages of the Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. Much of the material concerned with the exchange of training methods experience is also published in the military press of the allied countries.

It has been standard practice at almost all command-staff exercises for us to pose problem questions in order to research them scientifically, synthesize the results, and introduce them into the actual practice of the operational and combat training of the allied armies. Thus, during the SOYUZ-77 exercise, matters of troop control were researched, and a new system of control posts for the operational level of the ground forces was tested, which included command posts (KP), alternate command posts (ZKP), and rear control posts (TPU). It was specified that the forward (PPU), airborne (VzPU), and auxiliary (VPU) control posts be component elements of the command posts. During the VAL-77 operational-tactical exercise of the allied navies, matters concerning the capture of a straits zone by the combined efforts of the ground forces, the navies, air forces, and air defense were studied. The research data on these questions are being studied and synthesized.

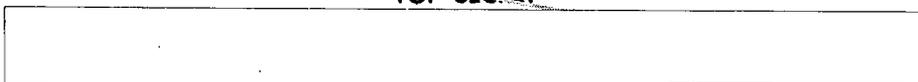
The generals and officers were greatly aided in improving the methods of preparing the staffs and of training the troops by the relevant methods handbooks, guides, and instructions. The Staff of the Combined Armed Forces is doing specific work in this regard. Under its direction and with the participation of the general (main) staffs of the allied armies, a Guide on the Organization and Conduct of Combined Exercises in the Combined Armed Forces has been published. It was put into effect 1 January 1976.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the continuous coverage in the pages of the Information Collection of the positive experience gained from preparing and conducting the different kinds of allied army exercises will contribute to the further improvement of the operational training of the Combined Armed Forces.

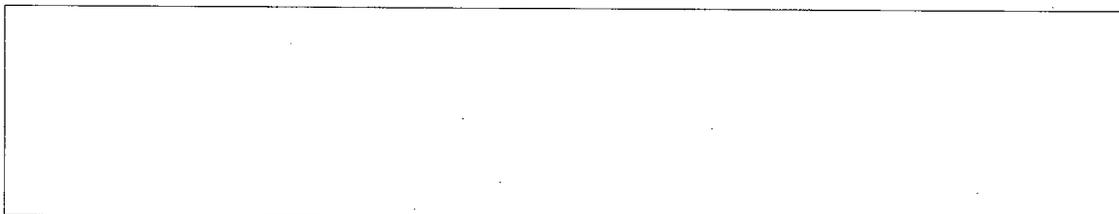
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