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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

18 JAN 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT: " The Nature of Modern Warfare", by Colonel-General A. Babadzhanyan

1. Enclosed is a verbatim translation of an article which appeared in the TOP SECRET Special Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" ("Voyennaya Mysl") published by the Ministry of Defense, USSR, and distributed down to the level of Army Commander.

2. In the interests of protecting our source, this material should be handled on a need-to-know basis within your office. Requests for extra copies of this report or for utilization of any part of this document in any other form should be addressed to the originating office.

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLANS:

Richard Helms

RICHARD HELMS

Enclosure

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Original: Director of Central Intelligence

cc: The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Military Representative of the President

Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

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Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence

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COUNTRY : USSR

SUBJECT : [redacted] MILITARY THOUGHT: "The Nature of Modern Warfare", by Colonel-General A. Babadzhanyan.

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Following is a verbatim translation of an article titled "The Nature of Modern Warfare", written by Colonel-General A. Babadzhanyan.

This article appeared in the 1961 First Issue of a special version of the Soviet military journal Voyennaya Mysl (Military Thought). This journal is published irregularly and is classified TOP SECRET by the Soviets. This issue was consigned to the printer on 13 January 1961.

Headquarters Comment: The article by General Gastilovich which is cited below was disseminated as [redacted] General Tolkonyuk's will soon be published as [redacted] General Baskakov's article is in hand and will be forwarded as soon as processing is completed. 1.3(a)(4)

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The Nature of Modern Warfare

by Colonel-General A. Babadzhanyan

With great interest and attention, we read the article of Major-General Goryainov depicting the technical-mathematical bases of future warfare, the article of Colonel-General Gastilovich which, on this technical basis, analyzes the new possible methods for conducting war, the articles of Generals Tolkonyuk and Baskakov echoing in many respects the article of General Gastilovich, and finally, the article by General of the Army Kurochkin which expresses serious criticism of the basic positions taken in the articles of Comrades Gastilovich, Tolkonyuk, and Baskakov.

We must admit that upon first reading the articles by Generals Gastilovich and Goryainov, some degree of doubt was created regarding the proper course along which our military science is developing and, consequently, regarding the correctness of the principles on which our armed forces are being built. However, subsequent deliberations and study of the problem have, in our opinion, shown that in many respects the authors mentioned are wrong: They have simply "laid it on thick", so to speak. True, it must be admitted that such "exaggeration" is useful. It will force our military specialists to analyze the nature of modern warfare more profoundly and to draw practical conclusions on a sound basis with consideration for the new conditions in military theory, as well as in the field of its practical implementation.

The article by General of the Army Kurochkin appears to us to be much more realistic and to reveal in greater depth the possible conditions and nuances of future warfare.

One of the basic problems discussed is the following: Does Soviet military doctrine require fundamental review, is Soviet military art undergoing a crisis? General Gastilovich insists that this is so, while General Kurochkin answers in the negative. This matter is complicated and fundamental.

We must agree with General Kurochkin that we have a military doctrine which dwells on the mass use of nuclear weapons, including those in the megaton class. This is attested to by the report of N.S. Khrushchev to the January 1960 session of the Supreme Soviet, in which he depicted the possible nature of the beginning and

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the development of modern warfare. However, the principles for the use of the types of armed forces and arms of troops within the framework created by this doctrine are not yet sufficiently elaborated. The views of the authors of both articles coincide on this. They claim that Soviet military-scientific thought, led by the new military doctrine, has only begun to develop and to determine those laws and principles which must be established as the basis for armed conflict in its modern phase.

This is true for both the strategic and operational scales. It is sufficient to imagine, for example, a front offensive operation in which the front troop commander has at his disposal two or three megaton warheads. Or, on the other hand, that there are such weapons at the disposal of the commander of the enemy group opposing the front. It can be stated with complete assurance that the front operation under such conditions will assume forms other than those under conditions when only kiloton warheads are available.

General Gastilovich's important and possibly basic mistake is due to the fact that in defining future warfare, he approached it too narrowly, without taking into account political and economic factors, and without consideration for the existence of various theaters of military operations, each with different conditions.

Proceeding from the premise that there would be a world war with unrestricted use of nuclear weapons, the author arrived at the wrong conclusions regarding the number of armed forces necessary to conduct a war and the nature of the actions of ground troops in offensive and defensive operations of modern warfare.

With a view to analyzing some of the positions expressed in the articles of Generals Gastilovich, Tolkonyuk, and Baskakov, let us dwell in more detail on individual questions of military art.

First of all, it must be recognized that the yield of a thermonuclear weapon is extraordinarily high. It is still difficult for one to grasp and evaluate it. The radiological factor of destruction is particularly great. For example, a 10 megaton bomb is capable of destroying industrial and municipal structures over an area of 1,300 square kms; this is sufficient to destroy any capital. Radioactive contamination resulting from such a burst will be such that under average wind velocity (35 kms/hr) all persons in an area of about 5,000 square kms (a zone 170 x 30 kms) will perish from radiation sickness, and in an area of about 10,000 square kms (a zone 250 x 40 kms)

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about 50 percent of the persons will perish and the rest will lose combat (working) effectiveness for several months, and finally, all those in an area up to 100,000 square kms (a zone 2,500 x 400 kms) /sic/ will partially lose combat (working) effectiveness. This means, for example, that an industrial area such as the Ruhr can be knocked out of action for a long time by two-three 10-20 megaton bombs as a result of the destruction of basic installations and of the annihilation of the labor force.

According to the estimates of American specialists, the use of 50 nuclear weapons against the principal cities of the USA would kill off about one half of the total population and would destroy up to 60 percent of all industrial enterprises. According to this same estimate, the USA has a total of 170 urban areas in which the principal body of the population and industrial plants is concentrated. Consequently, the use of 100-120 nuclear weapons over the territory of the USA would knock out up to three fourths of the industry and a significant portion of the population of the USA. Considering the high degree of industrial cooperation in producing complicated military equipment, one can say that such a blow would halt production of armament and supplies for the army and its demise would be only a matter of time.

But what would be the consequences of a similar blow against our country?

The large territorial expanses, the great dispersion of population and industry, and the observance of proper camouflage and secrecy measures will permit a significant reduction in the effect of a similar massive thermonuclear attack against our installations. However, this would only reduce the effect! Results of a strike would be significant enough to require the most extreme human efforts to restore order in the country and to ensure the capability of our armed forces to deliver a counterblow and to seize the strategic initiative.

Under modern conditions, aggressive circles possibly may not risk a war, if only because they recognize the impossibility of depriving the Soviet Union, as a result of one strike, of the capability of delivering a devastating counterblow.

But this situation cannot be permanent. The power of the first surprise attack in modern times is not determined by the supply of warheads but on the availability of the means to deliver them to targets.

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According to estimates, the USA at present has thermonuclear materials in sufficient quantity to build about 2,000 megaton warheads. The NATO countries' basic means for delivery of nuclear weapons on a strategic scale is still aircraft. Our possession of highly effective antiaircraft missile weapons does not allow them the necessary degree of confidence in their capability to deliver nuclear weapons by this means. The strategic missiles at their disposal clearly cannot satisfy the requirements of a major war, and, in addition, their quality is not high, since, according to assertions of the Americans themselves, only 50 percent of the missiles launched reach their target.

This is the situation today. What will the situation be at a future time, when governments which do not now have sufficient numbers of missiles will overcome their shortcomings in this type of armament? In the future, the probable enemy will have a greater capability to deliver surprise massive nuclear strikes in order to destroy a significant portion of industrial targets, administrative-political centers, missile-launching sites, strategic aviation airfields, and other vital areas and installations. Such a powerful, practically simultaneous initial strike can destroy the most important and crucial installations of the country, disorganize national control, disrupt mobilization and deployment of armed forces, and severely reduce the combat effectiveness of the army and the country as a whole.

This is so serious in its possible political and economic consequences that every measure must be taken so that if the imperialists try to start a war it will not begin by a sudden massed enemy nuclear strike.

The peace-loving foreign policy of our Party and the Soviet Government is known to all. It stems from the very nature of a socialist state. We do not want war and our Party is conducting constant work in the direction of preventing a new world war, which would demand huge numbers of victims and would destroy all that has been created by human hands. However, if it becomes evident that aggressive forces have decided on war, and that the initiation of military operations is only a question of a short time, and if we fail to prevent the aggressor's attack by diplomatic means, then it is necessary to wreck the enemy strike by all our available forces and means. Under such conditions, the strategic concept of the armed forces of our country must be based on the total annihilation of all enemy capabilities to accomplish his aggressive schemes during

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the first days of the war.

The question may be asked: When will these new conditions come about? From what year or what date must our armed forces be guided by the new concept? The number of missiles and launching sites grows gradually, and occasionally in spurts. The precise determination of the period of the transition of the quantity of these means to the new category is difficult and unnecessary. What should be done now and quickly is to prepare and organize our intelligence and the armed forces in such a way that they will be in a constant state of readiness to deliver such a blow against the aggressor.

The possession of missiles, particularly intercontinental, as a means for delivering nuclear weapons, permits the conduct of preparations for an attack in utmost secrecy. Under these conditions, the work of our intelligence organs will be very difficult. Possibly, information about aggressor preparations for an attack will be received only at the last minute before the beginning of an attack. This requires a new approach to the preparation and definition of the stage of readiness of our own means of attack.

Regarding the matter of the numerical size of armed forces, and specifically of the ground troops. We agree with the assertion of General Gastilovich that, in order to accomplish specific strategic and operational tasks in modern warfare, smaller numbers of forces will be required than in past wars. However, in making this conclusion, we must not forget that the number of strategic and operational tasks to be fulfilled in modern warfare will be incomparably greater than in the past.

In the event of a global war, today our armed forces will be required to operate simultaneously in many theaters of military operations, including the Arctic. Considering the wide use of means of mass destruction, which will create heavy demands for replacements in the active armies, and in a number of cases for their full reconstitution, one can say that in modern war more massive armed forces will be needed than those discussed by Comrade Gastilovich.

General Gastilovich considers that the role of ground troops in modern warfare will be essentially that of "occupation". In order to seize countries subjected to massed strikes by megaton bombs, ground troops need only overcome zones of partial and total destruction. Thus, the author excludes the bringing up of large operational and, what is more, of strategic reserves. On the basis of this, one reaches

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the conclusion that in the Western TVD (Theater of Military Operations) 30-40 divisions would be required to accomplish the war's tasks. There is no need to engage in polemics regarding the number of divisions (30-40 or 50-60). One thing is clear, that a sufficient number of troops must be available to make possible the rapid replacement of large units knocked out of action by nuclear weapon strikes. There will be numerous such situations. It seems to us that General Gastilovich's estimates are too optimistic.

Nor can we agree with the view of Generals Gastilovich and Baskakov that, under modern conditions, the distinction between defensive and offensive operations has been erased. We agree with the authors that the conduct of offensive or defensive operations will be conditioned by the number of nuclear weapons and their delivery means which are allotted to a given front. Let us add to this the fact that the conduct of one or another type of operation will depend essentially on the relative quantities of nuclear weapons and their delivery means available to the front and to the enemy grouping opposing the front.

At the same time it is impossible to agree that an offensive which differs from a defensive one in the purpose of the action will resemble it in the methods of tactical actions of large units (Gastilovich) or with the concept that the difference in conducting offense and defense will be retained only in tactics (Baskakov).

We fully agree with the view of General Kurochkin, who says that mass employment of nuclear weapons does not erase the boundaries between offensive operations and defensive operations, but gives them a unique character requiring the development of new methods for conducting offensive and defensive operations. Actually, what can there be in common between an operation whose goal is to crush enemy resistance and to penetrate into the depth of his territory, and an operation whose goal is to prevent enemy penetration and consequently to hold specific terrain and establish conditions favorable for a switch to a counter-offensive? In our view, such an assertion could have been made only in view of the denial by General Gastilovich that a stable defense is necessary.

Stability is a basic quality of defense, operational included. Without this quality, defense as such ceases to exist and becomes meaningless. Let us imagine, for a moment, the defense of an important economic or strategic area which does not have stability and in which stability is not required. Most probably, such a defense will not

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accomplish its defensive tasks and the installations defended can be surrendered to the enemy without any particular feeling of responsibility.

Defensive operations must, unquestionably, be stable. However, mass use of nuclear weapons has its impact on this concept. If the previous concept of "stability" included a specific, if one may use the expression, "linearity" (the holding of a specific line) now, under present conditions, stability must be referred to as being established within the depth of a sector of the territory.

Let us clarify this thought. To hold specific zones, positions, or centers, when the attacking enemy has a sufficient number of nuclear weapons, is practically impossible. Therefore, one cannot speak of "linear" stability. The offensive can be halted only by a system of massed nuclear strikes, counterattacks, and counterstrikes. This can be done, however, only within a specific depth of the defense. In each case the rear boundary of the defensive depth must be determined on the basis of specific conditions of the situation, in which the main factor is the relative strength in weapons of mass destruction possessed by the attacker and the defender.

Under these conditions, should defensive zones be established? General Gastilovich says that they should not. We do not agree with this. We know that the enemy will use gaps and open flanks during his attack. Therefore, we can channel the enemy offense along directions which are advantageous to us by establishing zones and centers in specific areas. In addition, defensive structures serve as troop protection against nuclear weapons. It is more advantageous to build defensive structures which serve a dual purpose (the protection of personnel and equipment and increasing the stability of the defense) rather than shelters at concentration areas with the sole function of protection.

We also consider General Gastilovich's view regarding the use of nuclear weapons in defensive operations to be incorrect. He rejects both the necessity for delivering massed nuclear strikes to disrupt the enemy offensive and the desirability of conducting counterpreparations.

The wide use of nuclear weapons changes the method for conducting defensive operations. Now, it is of paramount importance that action be taken to disrupt or to diminish the strength of enemy preparations for the offensive. Massed employment of even a limited number of nuclear weapons can place the enemy in a situation where he may be

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forced to cancel his offensive. In this case, the greatest significance will unquestionably be attached to counterpreparations directed primarily against the enemy's deployed nuclear means of attack and his troop groupings.

In light of this, the proposal to limit ourselves to day by day and immediate destruction of detected enemy nuclear attack weapons and to individual (to the degree possible) nuclear strikes at varying times against his most dangerous enemy tank divisions which have broken through, sounds strange, to say the least. Even more strange is the fear that a massed strike by nuclear weapons can lead to the growth of a defense into an offensive. First of all, such a growth is unlikely, considering the relative relationship of nuclear weapons, and secondly, it should be welcomed rather than feared.

In conclusion, we would like to dwell on the role of tanks under modern conditions. The development of tanks as an effective striking force from the time of the first world war until now was conditioned by the fact that the tank emerged victorious in the competition with antitank weapons. Today the development and serial production of antitank missile launchers which have a high effectiveness both with respect to accuracy and destructive action, have created a new situation.

In single combat, a tank against an antitank missile launcher, the tank will usually lose. This means that with a high enough concentration of antitank missile launchers on the field of combat, any tank attack can be disrupted and a large portion of the tanks and their crews participating in the attack will be destroyed. But if we consider further that the production of an antitank missile launcher costs several tens of thousands of rubles and that a tank costs several hundreds of thousandsof rubles, then it becomes clear that the use of tanks in their modern concept in warfare is unprofitable both militarily and economically.

In our view, heavy tanks must depart from the scene. They should be replaced by medium and, particularly, light, combat vehicles armed with an automatic multi-round missile launcher having a grazing range of 3-5 kms, equipped with anti-small arms fire, and splinter-proof armor, and capable of crossing water barriers.

The basis for this combat vehicle can be the amphibious tank, PT-76. It must be kept in mind that, under modern conditions, troops must cover great distances on their own power both during preparation

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for, as well as during the course of, combat and that possibly it would be more advantageous to create a combat vehicle with an especially high cross-country capability wheel drive with three or four axles.

The proposed combat vehicles, retaining the basic positive quality of tanks --- stability against the destructive factors of a nuclear burst - would cost much less, would be easier to produce, and would be more effective in their firing action.

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Not considering that the views expressed in this article are the only correct ones, we trust that a review of the large and basic questions raised by this issue of the Collection will serve to develop individual views corresponding to the modern conditions of conducting an operation.

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