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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

7 November 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSONS : Combat Actions
of Front and Army Aviation in the Breakthrough of
the Enemy Defense

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on a collection of 29 lessons, classified TOP SECRET, prepared in 1977 for use in the Soviet General Staff Academy. The lessons are broken down into two parts: the first 19 lessons deal with the staff preparation of a front offensive operation with conventional and nuclear weapons, the remaining 10 lessons deal with the conduct of an offensive employing conventional weapons at first with a transition to the use of nuclear weapons. This report is a translation of the lesson outlining the steps to be taken by an air army commander for the non-nuclear air preparation and support of a breakthrough of NATO defenses during a front offensive operation in West Germany.

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.

John N. McMahon

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APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
19-Nov-2009

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

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INFO. 1977

DATE
7 November 1980

SUBJECT

GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON No. 21c : Combat Actions of Front and Army
Aviation in the Breakthrough of an Enemy Defense

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of a lesson, classified TOP SECRET, prepared for use at the General Staff Academy of the Armed Forces of the USSR. This lesson is for the instruction of students acting as a front air army commander in determining the tasks of the army, and deciding on that basis upon the allocation of air resources, the NATO targets to be struck, the aircraft and non-nuclear ordnance to be used, the timing of strikes, and the support and cover of ground forces during the breakthrough of NATO's defenses in a front offensive operation in the northern part of West Germany.

End of Summary

Comment:

Although not specifically identified, the color Brown representing the NATO country in this lesson probably equates with West Germany.

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Lesson No. 21c

Lesson subject: Combat actions of front and army aviation in the breakthrough of an enemy defense.

Training objective: to give the students practice in distributing the front and army aviation forces allocated for the destruction and neutralization of targets and practice in formulating a decision on the air army's combat actions when conducting the air preparation and support of an attack.

Method and time for conducting the lesson:

- individual preparation by the students -- 2 hours;
- group exercise -- 2 hours.

Methodological recommendations regarding the lesson preparation:

- No. 1. The instructions on the students' preparation for the lesson are set forth in the assignment to Lesson No. 21c.
2. The instructor, when preparing for the lesson, studies the assignment to Lesson No. 21c with the appendices and the current training-methods text.
3. During the students' individual preparation for the lesson, the instructor must give them assistance in selecting the means of destruction and in determining the detail of forces required for the destruction or neutralization of the targets, indicated in appendix No. 2, that are to be struck by 1st Air Army in the breakthrough of the enemy defense.

Procedure for conducting the lesson:

First training topic: sizing up of the air army's tasks and estimate of the situation at 1900 hours 8 September -- 15 minutes.

The lesson director announces that in the period from 1900 to 2200 hours 8 September the air army commander will size up the tasks received,

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estimate the situation, and make a decision.

Students in the role of 1st Air Army commander will report the sizing up of the tasks and the estimate of the situation at 1900 hours 8 September.

1. Sizing up the air army's tasks:

From an analysis of the tasks assigned by the front commander it follows that:

-- before the onset of darkness the 1st Air Army will concentrate its main efforts on delivering a second massed strike according to the air operation plan and will support the 4th, 7th, and 9th armies within the limits of the allocated flight resources;

-- as of the morning of 9 September it will participate in the preparatory fire for the troops' attack during the breakthrough of the enemy's defense line in the WESENDORF, (excluding) MEINE sector with two regimental sorties of fighter-bomber aviation and two regimental sorties of bomber aviation and army aviation. Subsequently it will support the attack of the 7th and 9th armies' troops by the expenditure of two regimental sorties of fighter-bomber aviation and two regimental sorties of army aviation;

-- effective 0700 hours 9 September and throughout the day fighter aviation will cover front troops and rear services installations against the enemy's air strikes and reconnaissance, concentrating its main efforts on covering the 7th and 9th armies' troops in the breakthrough area of the enemy's defense and in the 4th Army's breakthrough sector, for which the detail of airborne alert forces from the 1st, 3rd, and 5th fighter divisions will be doubled;

-- one regimental sortie of fighter-bomber aviation and one regimental sortie of army aviation will be allocated to conduct preparatory fire for the attack according to the 4th Army commander's plan;

-- air reconnaissance is to concentrate on detecting newly discovered missile/nuclear means, engineer equipment and firing means of defense lines, control posts, advancing reserves, and home airfields and landing strips of the enemy's tactical and army aviation.

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The 1st Air Army will fulfil its assigned tasks in cooperation with the air defense troops of the front and the country, and with the troops of the 4th, 7th, and 9th armies.

The front troops' success in accomplishing their tasks will depend on the 1st Air Army's successful fulfilment of its tasks.

2. Conclusions from an estimate of the situation:

a) As a result of offensive actions by the attack groupings, the Coastal Front has inflicted a defeat on large units of the Brown 6th, 1st, and 4th army corps on the NEUMUNSTER and HANNOVER axes; by 1900 hours 8 September the forward units of the 4th, 7th, and 9th armies have seized the lines: the southern outskirts of LUBECK, MARIENWOHLDE; and of REINSTORF, ISENBUTTEL, KONIGSLUTTER, where they met organized enemy resistance that will require the preparation and organization of a breakthrough of the enemy's defense.

The 1st Air Army during 8 September fulfilled its tasks according to the plan of the front and carried out air support of the troops. Air army losses consist of 48 aircraft (fighter aviation -- 17, fighter-bomber aviation -- 19, bomber aviation -- 6, reconnaissance aviation -- 6) and 7 fire support helicopters.

Air large units and units are prepared to deliver the second massed strike in the air operation; part of the fighter-bomber aviation forces are providing air support to front troops.

b) West's Northern Army Group, having gone over to the offensive, has invaded East territory with its main forces on the PRITZWALK and MAGDEBURG axes to a depth of up to 10 to 25 km. On the NEUMUNSTER and HANNOVER axes, under the thrusts of advancing East troops, it has been compelled to go over to delaying actions with the forces of the Brown 6th Army Corps' 18th Motorized Rifle Division and the Brown 1st Army Corps. By 1900 hours 8 September the aforementioned troops have occupied previously prepared lines and, anchoring themselves on them, they have halted the further advance of East.

During 8 September West aviation delivered two massed strikes in which up to 500 combat aircraft participated against front troops, airfields, and rear services installations. In addition, raids by groups of 6-8-12 aircraft were carried out.

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For the successful fulfilment of combat tasks and the maintenance of combat effectiveness it is necessary:

-- to constantly maintain the air large units and units of the air army at a high level of readiness;

-- to take aggressive action against enemy aviation by destroying aircraft and helicopters on airfields (pads) and in the air;

-- to maneuver airfields about both along the front and in the depth depending on the situation. To provide for the maneuvering and combat actions of fire support helicopters from ambush; to provide for this by preparing helicopter pads and by positioning the necessary reserves of materiel and combat means on them.

Second training topic: the distribution of allocated front and army aviation forces in the air preparation for an attack in the 7th and 9th armies' breakthrough sector -- 30 minutes.

Students in the capacity of 1st Air Army chief of staff are to report their proposals for the distribution of forces by targets (variant):

| Nos. | Strike targets | Detail of forces | | | | Ordnance | Time of strikes |
|------|--|------------------|-------------|--------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| | | SU-20 | SU-7 BKL | YAK-28 | MI-8 heli- copters | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1 | Lance launchers of the Brown 1st Army Corps (6 launchers) in area NE of BERGEN | 8 | 12 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-14 to H-07 minutes |
| 2 | Honest John battery of the 3rd Tk Div (4 launchers) in area 200 m N of HOHNHORST | 6 | 8 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-18 to H-07 minutes |

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|----|-----|----|----|---|----------------------|
| 3 | Honest John battery of the 7th Tk Div (4 launchers) in area 2 km W of ZWEIDORF | 6 | 8 | -- | -- | UB-32 pods with S-5M rockets, guns. | H-18 to H-07 minutes |
| 4 | Brown 1st Army Corps command post in area 2 km W of OTZE | 8 | 12 | -- | -- | *OFAB-250; OFAB-500, guns | H-13 to H-07 minutes |
| 5 | Helicopters on pads in areas: 500 m NE of FASSBERG (20 helicopters), and 3 km W of LANGENHAGEN (10 helicopters) | 12 | 16 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-13 to H-07 minutes |
| 6 | Tank battalion/s/ in ESCHEDA area | -- | -- | 28 | -- | *RBK-500 with PTAB-2.5 | H-14 to H-07 minutes |
| 7 | Tank battalion/s/ in area SE of HERMANNSBURG | -- | -- | 28 | -- | *RBK-500 with PTAB-2.5 | H-14 to H-07 minutes |
| 8 | Hawk battery in area 1 km N of IMMENSEN | 4 | 6-8 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-18 to H-16 minutes |

* Translator's note: These transliterated ordnance designations may be defined as follows:

OFAB-250 = fragmentation HE bomb, 250 kg
OFAB-500 = fragmentation HE bomb, 500 kg
RBK-500 with PTAB-2.5 = cluster bomb, 500 caliber, with antitank aerial bomblets, 2.5 kg

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----|---|----|----|----|----|--|----------------------|
| 9 | Antiaircraft artillery battery in area 1 km N of <u>SPIERNKHORST</u> /?STEINHORST?/ | 4 | 8 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-18 to H-16 minutes |
| 10 | Antiaircraft artillery battery in area 3 km E of HOFER | 4 | 8 | -- | -- | UB-32, UB-16 pods with S-5M rockets, guns | H-18 to H-16 minutes |
| 11 | Dug-in tanks in breakthrough sector (up to 30 tanks) | -- | -- | -- | 30 | MALYUTKA antitank guided missiles | H-26 to H-18 minutes |
| 12 | Armored targets and antitank means in KASTORF sector, including GIFHORN | -- | -- | -- | 30 | Antitank guided missiles and S-5K shaped charge rockets and S-5M rockets | from H-07 minutes |

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Third training topic: the decision of the 1st Air Army commander on combat actions in the air preparation and support of the attack by the 7th and 9th armies' troops in the breakthrough sector of the enemy defense -- 40 minutes.

The operational time is 2200 hours 8 September.

Students in the capacity of 1st Air Army commander are to report their decision to the front commander on the following matters:

-- the forces allocated for fulfilment of the tasks of air preparation for the attack;

-- the time and sequence of the actions by the forces allocated for the destruction of targets in the air preparation for the attack;

-- the forces allocated for air support of the attack and the sequence of their actions.

Text of the report (variant)

I decided: for accomplishing the tasks in the air preparation of the attack in the 7th and 9th armies' breakthrough area, to allocate the 31st and 32nd bomber regiments of the 6th Bomber Division, the 17th Fighter-Bomber Regiment of the 4th Fighter-Bomber Division, the 14th Fighter-Bomber Regiment of the 2nd Fighter-Bomber Division, and the 7th and 9th separate helicopter regiments.

In the period H-18 to H-07 minutes, the complement of the 14th Fighter-Bomber Regiment of the 2nd Fighter-Bomber Division will destroy two antiaircraft batteries in the areas 1 km north of SHTERNKHORST /?STEINHORST?/ and 3 km east of HOFER; the Lance launchers of the Brown 1st Army Corps (6 launchers) in the area northeast of BERGEN; the Honest John launchers of the Brown 3rd Tank Division (4 launchers) in the area 200 m north of HOHNHORST; and the helicopters on the landing pads in the area 500 m northeast of FASSBERG.

The forces of the 17th Fighter-Bomber Regiment of the 4th Fighter-Bomber Division will destroy the Hawk battery in the area 1 km north of IMMENSEN and the launchers of the Honest John battery of the Brown 7th Tank Division (4 launchers) in the area 2 km west of ZWEIDORF; they will neutralize the Brown 1st Army Corps command post in the area 2 km west of OTZE, and destroy helicopters on the landing pads in the area 3 km west

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of LANGENHAUSEN /sic--possibly LANGENHAGEN; see No. 5 in Table/.

In the period H-14 to H-07 minutes, forces of the 31st and 32nd bomber regiments of the 6th Bomber Division are to destroy two tank batteries /sic/ of the 8th and 9th tank brigades /?sic--see Nos. 6 and 7 of Table/ in the areas of ESCHEDÉ and southeast of HERMANNSEBURG.

In the period H-26 to H-18 minutes and as of H-07 minutes fire support helicopters of the 7th and 9th separate helicopter regiments will destroy the enemy's dug-in tanks, other armored targets, and antitank means in the 7th and 9th armies' breakthrough sector.

As of H-04 minutes two fighter-bomber regiments and two army aviation regiments will be in readiness No. 1 and No. 2 for air support of the attack and air close support of the troops of the 7th and 9th armies, /ready/ to take action upon request from the air army's combat control center.

At dawn on 9 September and throughout the day the 3rd and 5th fighter divisions will cover front troops and rear services installations, concentrating their main efforts on the 7th and 9th armies' breakthrough sector; for this the detail of airborne alert forces will be doubled.

Concluding remarks of the instructor -- 5 minutes.

The instructor is to sum up the lesson. He will indicate the degree of mastery of the subject, and note the positive and negative aspects of the students' preparation. He is to give instructions on eliminating deficiencies.

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