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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

7 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Combined Arms Army Reconnaissance During Commitment from the March

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article discusses the principal measures to be taken to ensure the timely deployment of reconnaissance forces of a Soviet combined arms army during its commitment to battle from the march. The author distinguishes between reconnaissance under these circumstances and reconnaissance from a concentration or waiting area. He then outlines the steps to be taken to collect the necessary information, emphasizing the use of air elements both to collect the information and to deliver it to intelligence consumers. Exercises of the Carpathian Military District serve as the basis for the article. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (89) for 1970.

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.

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David H. Blee
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

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DATE OF INFO. Early 1970

DATE 7 February 1974

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Reconnaissance in a Combined Arms Army During Its Commitment into an Engagement from the March (Based on Training Exercises)

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (89) for 1970 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel L. Shapovalov. This article discusses the principal measures to be taken to ensure the timely deployment of reconnaissance forces of a Soviet combined arms army during its commitment to battle from the march. The author distinguishes between reconnaissance under these circumstances and reconnaissance from a concentration or waiting area. He then outlines the steps to be taken to collect the necessary information, emphasizing the use of air elements both to collect the information and to deliver it to intelligence consumers. Exercises of the Carpathian Military District serve as the basis for the article.

End of Summary

[redacted] Comment:

[redacted] no information in available reference materials which can be firmly associated with the author Military Thought has been published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three versions in the past -- TOP SECRET, SECRET, and RESTRICTED. There is no information as to whether or not the TOP SECRET version continues to be published. The SECRET version is published three times annually and is distributed down to the level of division commander.

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Reconnaissance in a Combined-Arms Army During Its Commitment into an Engagement from the March
(Based on training exercises)
by
Colonel L. Shapovalov

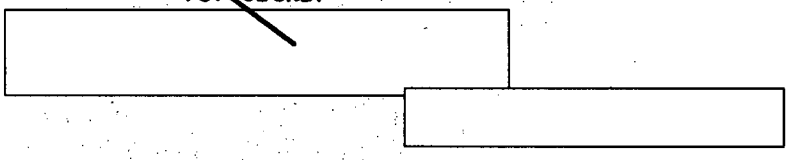
Recently, during training exercises and war games, our headquarters and troops have acquired some experience in organizing and conducting reconnaissance during the commitment of a combined-arms army into an engagement from a concentration area or from a waiting area. In addition, the military press is giving considerable prominence to a discussion of this problem. However, during actual operational training a more complex situation frequently arises in which the army is committed into an engagement directly from the march without preliminary disposition of the troops in a waiting area or in a final concentration area. When this happens there is no time to systematically organize the attack from the march, since, as has been borne out in training exercises, the army may receive the directive for commitment into the engagement when it is located in the daily rest area or when it is on the march at a distance of 150 to 200 kilometers or more from the enemy. Consequently, the army will only have 16 to 25 hours between the time the directive is received and the beginning of the attack.

The organization of reconnaissance in support of the army differs fundamentally, depending on whether the army is committed from the march, from a waiting area, or from a concentration area. The following features are characteristic of the commitment of an army into an engagement from the march: information on the enemy is inadequate and often completely lacking; the reconnaissance units and subunits are at a great distance from the line of commitment; and the amount of time available for the organization of reconnaissance is limited.

The command-staff exercises and war games that were held in 1968 and 1969 in the Carpathian Military District demonstrated that the primary prerequisites for carrying out reconnaissance tasks when an army is being committed into an engagement from the march are timely and careful planning; the establishment of procedures for handling information about the enemy that has been received in the headquarters of the forward operating formations (large units); the swift deployment and maximal exploitation of available reconnaissance forces and means; the wide exploitation of data obtained by reconnaissance aviation; and the firm and consistent control of reconnaissance forces and means.

The planning of reconnaissance begins immediately after receipt of the directive and is based on the orders of the commander. Experience gained in training exercises has proven that the amount of time expended in planning can be sharply reduced if the work involved is assigned to a specially designated officer who makes use of previously processed information when preparing calculations; and who, when engaged in planning, makes use of the information from the reconnaissance plan in support of the regrouping in preparation for the commitment into the engagement from the march. This information may include the locations of reconnaissance units and subunits on the march; the procedure for completion of the march by radio and radiotechnical units and the probable lines of their deployment; the composition of the special purpose reconnaissance groups and the proposed procedure for using them; etc.

Since the amount of time available is extremely limited, it is advisable that the plan be worked out graphically on a map, which will also reflect the basic problems involved in the employment of the radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance units and of the separate special purpose company. At the same time, explanatory notes to the map-plan are prepared. These notes contain that information which cannot be presented graphically, as, for example: the procedure for reinforcing reconnaissance units; certain coordination problems; an estimate of the forces and means to be used for each mission (objective) and day of the operation; the deadlines for submitting information, and other data.

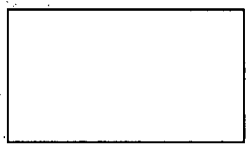


When work is organized in this manner, the amount of time required to work out the plan is considerably reduced. Thus, during the PEREVAL training exercise in May 1969, a plan was worked out in 6 hours in the headquarters of one of the armies; and in a command-staff exercise in August 1969, a plan was worked out in 4 hours. Moreover, this proposed method of drawing up the plan enables the other officers in the department to simultaneously work out the combat orders (which should be as brief as possible). Training exercise experience has demonstrated that their preparation is speeded up if previously developed standard forms and graphic documents are used.

In this situation, the delivery of combat orders to executors deserves careful consideration. It has been demonstrated during training exercises that this problem is most expeditiously solved by having the officers of the reconnaissance department of the army drive to the headquarters of the reconnaissance units with the orders in map form. When it is necessary to transmit the orders via communcations means, considerable time is saved if facsimile equipment and M-125M encoding machines are used. Unfortunately, the reconnaissance department and the reconnaissance units of the army do not have facsimile equipment or the organic personnel to operate the machines.

Information on the enemy is obtained from the forward operating large units by sending an operations group to their headquarters. However, this task can be successfully carried out only if the operations group has been formed in advance and is equipped with transportation and communication means. Training exercises have confirmed that this operations group at army headquarters should be composed of six to eight persons (two or three persons each from the operations and intelligence departments and one person each from the communications department and the rocket troops and artillery staff).

The primary task of the operating group consists of making a detailed study of the situation at the headquarters of the formation (large unit). The officers of the group, which is usually headed by the deputy chief of army intelligence, study the information on enemy forces located in the zone of the commitment of the army into the engagement, transmit information on the location of the enemy and the nature of his activities, and, as the



reconnaissance units and subunits approach the commitment line, they supervise the deployment of their forces and means and organize coordination with intelligence elements of the forward operating large units. If one of the large units is assigned to the army, the exact position of its reconnaissance organs is determined and new ones are sent out to support the commitment of the army into the engagement.

In our opinion, the helicopter is the best means of transportation and communications for this group. This has been confirmed by training exercise experience and by the following calculations. GAZ-69 trucks accompanied by one R-118 radio set mounted on a ZIL-157 truck take 4 to 5 hours to cover 150 to 200 kilometers, but it takes an MI-4 helicopter 1 to 2 hours. It takes more than 4 hours to transmit 300 groups in the telegraph mode over an R-118 radio set (if time spent on encoding and decoding is included). And mistakes may be made during the encoding, transmission and reception. It takes no more than an hour to deliver information in written or graphic form by helicopter.

However, despite all that has been said, an operations group cannot resolve all intelligence tasks. Therefore, the intelligence department must take measures to deploy the organic reconnaissance forces and means of the army and divisions of the first echelon as quickly as possible; and this depends not only on when they are assigned their tasks but, primarily, on their place in the march formation of the army troops.

Training exercise experience has confirmed that it is advisable to have radio and radiotechnical battalions in front of the main forces, at a distance of at least a one-day march. Their march plan should provide that, when they move out of the penultimate daily rest area, they use not one, but two or three army routes; that they employ approach march formation and be ready to deploy and to conduct reconnaissance at previously assigned lines. To ensure stable control, the headquarters of the battalions should be positioned along one route at intervals of 5 kilometers from one another. If the march is organized in this manner, by the time the army receives its directive the radio and radiotechnical battalions may be 30 to 50 kilometers from the line of commitment of the army into the

engagement and will be in a position to deploy in the assigned areas within 3 to 4 hours after receiving their tasks.

The practice of having tasks assigned to the battalions by the senior officer in charge of radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance is of proven value. He goes to their headquarters with written combat orders or with an order in map form, and he personally supervises the implementation of the orders and arranges coordination between the battalions. The preliminary task, together with an approximate estimate of the forces and means available for conducting reconnaissance should be given the radio battalion while it is still on the march; and the task should be refined while the battalion is in the penultimate or last daily rest area.

During the command-staff training exercise in March 1969 this method of assigning tasks made it possible for the special purpose radio battalion to deploy within 8 hours after the army headquarters received the directive for commitment into the engagement. By that time the battalion was located 45 kilometers from the commitment line.

Special reconnaissance is planned and organized immediately after the orders for reconnaissance are received. It takes 5 to 8 hours to prepare a special purpose reconnaissance group (RGSN) for actions in the enemy rear. During this time the group is given its combat task, and its personnel study the area of forthcoming activities and prepare their clothing, equipment, landing means, etc. It is possible to land special purpose reconnaissance groups in the enemy rear within 10 to 12 hours after the receipt of the directive, including the time spent in assigning the company its tasks, in getting the requisition for aircraft through front headquarters, in preparing the aircraft (helicopter) crews, and in taking other measures. The groups will be able to send their initial reports within 4 to 6 hours after being landed (dropped) in the enemy rear, i.e., a total of 3 to 5 hours before the beginning of the attack.

Training exercise experience has confirmed that the time required to prepare a special purpose reconnaissance group can be reduced considerably if preparations are begun the moment the initial data on the enemy are received, while the group is still on the march. It is advisable to have preliminary preparations carried out at the penultimate and last daily rest areas under the supervision of the senior officer in charge of special work. Because this method was used during the PEREVAL training exercise, the special purpose reconnaissance groups were ready for landing within 7 hours after the receipt by army headquarters of the directive for the commitment into the engagement.

The amount of time necessary for the organization of special reconnaissance can be reduced if the army has organic means for airborne landings. In our opinion, it is therefore advisable that the combined-arms army include a minimum of one squadron of AN-2 aircraft and one squadron of MI-4 helicopters.

To a considerable extent, the timely deployment of the reconnaissance forces and means of the first-echelon divisions is a prerequisite to the successful fulfilment of reconnaissance tasks. In anticipation of the possible commitment of the army into the engagement from the march, it is advisable, during the regrouping, to have separate reconnaissance battalions of the divisions 80 to 100 kilometers in advance of the main forces. Their primary function in this case is to supply the division commander with timely information on route conditions during the march. When army headquarters receives the directive for the commitment into the engagement, the reconnaissance battalions, located 80 to 100 kilometers from the commitment line, deploy and begin carrying out their reconnaissancce tasks within 7 to 10 hours, i.e., 8 to 12 hours before the attack. Training exercise experience demonstrates that combat tasks can be delivered to the divisions within 5 to 7 hours after the army headquarters has received the directive (during the PEREVAL training exercise this was accomplished in 6 hours, and during the training exercise in August 1969 it took 5 hours). We believe that it is possible for combat orders pertaining to reconnaissance to be worked out for the first-echelon divisions as soon as the plan has been adopted indicating from what lines and with what principal tasks they will be committed into the engagement. If previously prepared standard forms are used, combat orders can be

worked out in 30 to 35 minutes and delivered to the divisions within 1.5 to 2 hours after the army receives the directive.

Training exercise experience confirms that reconnaissance battalions can begin advancing to the assigned areas within 1 to 1.5 hours after the division headquarters receives the combat orders pertaining to reconnaissance. In this case it is advisable that the refueling of equipment be conducted when the division arrives at the line of its commitment into the engagement and be completed while the subunits of the battalion are being assigned their combat tasks; this makes it possible to deploy the radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance company and the observation posts 10 to 14 hours before the attack.

Reconnaissance-in-depth groups (GGR) will be ready to operate in the enemy rear within 3 to 4 hours after the division headquarters receives the combat orders pertaining to reconnaissance. When the reconnaissance in depth groups are dropped by helicopter they can begin to carry out their tasks within 5 to 7 hours and begin to supply initial information about the enemy 6 to 10 hours prior to the attack. It is not worthwhile to dispatch them by motor vehicle, as training exercise experience confirms, since much time is lost in moving out to the assigned areas.

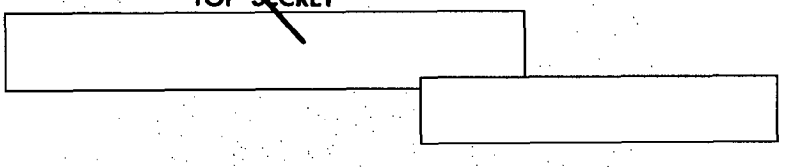
We have briefly examined the principal measures to be taken to ensure the timely deployment of the organic reconnaissance forces and means of the army when it is to be committed into an engagement from the march. However, even if these measures are fully implemented and maximum use is made of the resources of the organic forces and means, this will not always be sufficient to assure the acquisition of essential information on the enemy.

Aerial reconnaissance plays a paramount role in solving this problem--it is the fastest and most effective method of obtaining information on the enemy. As a rule, it is organized and conducted in accordance with the plan of the front headquarters. However, when an army is committed into an engagement from the march, a number of reconnaissance tasks may crop up which cannot always be accomplished in time if carried out by the front headquarters at the request of the army. We therefore believe it advisable that the army be allotted a certain number of reconnaissance aircraft

for this special purpose. Then it would be possible to organize the acquisition of information on the enemy on the axis chosen by the commander for the main strike, to conduct aerial photography in support of the planning of preparatory fire, to obtain essential information on the terrain, and to locate the areas where enemy means of nuclear attack and enemy reserves are located.

As a rule, the troops of the first echelon of the army will move out to the line of commitment into the engagement at nighttime, taking advantage of darkness to ensure that the attack is a surprise. According to training exercise experience, in this case the army may have 4 to 8 hours of daylight before the troops begin their advance to the commitment line and 1.5 to 2.5 hours before the attack. During these periods aerial reconnaissance in support of the army is absolutely necessary. Aerial reconnaissance permits the determination of the location of the basic components of the enemy combat troop dispositions before our large units begin their advance to the line of attack, and it provides information that enables the special purpose reconnaissance groups and the reconnaissance-in-depth groups to be more effectively employed. In the 1.5 to 2 hours before the attack, aerial reconnaissance forces can pinpoint the location of both small and mobile targets, making it possible to draw up the final plan concerning the delivery of nuclear and chemical strikes and the use of artillery and other means of destruction.

The principal aerial reconnaissancce method employed, particularly during the final reconnaissance of the enemy, is to search out targets and make a visual determination of their coordinates and the nature of their activities. Information on targets that have been spotted is immediately transmitted from the aircraft to ground posts. In our district these posts have been set up and are operated by trained enlisted men and non-commissioned officers (headed by an officer); and all these personnel have regularly undergone special training for a period of several years. The value of this training has been demonstrated during the DNEPR and other training exercises. However, it has been our experience that when information is transmitted simultaneously from two, three or more aircraft, its reception by existing ground posts is incomplete (they miss 30 to 60 percent of the reports transmitted).

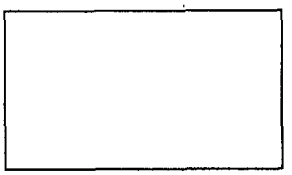


It is extremely important that the posts quickly decipher the message received from reconnaissance aircraft, determine the nature of the targets, and enter their locations on a map. The use of officers who do not have the necessary skills for this work is unjustifiable. To illustrate, of 40 messages transmitted during a training exercise, 30 were received by the telegraphists of the posts of one of the armies and 28 were deciphered by the officers of the intelligence department and the headquarters of the rocket troops and artillery. Because of the lack of necessary training in determining the nature of targets and in evaluating them, flagrant inaccuracies were committed in posting them on the map in short time limits (the final reconnaissance was completed in 50 minutes): 4 out of 12 important targets were omitted, and in three instances the coordinates were inaccurately posted, exceeding the amount of permissible error by a factor of 4 to 5.

Training exercise experience demonstrates that in order to have this work done, it is advisable that army headquarters have a permanent group composed of three or four officers from the intelligence department and the rocket troops and artillery staff. These officers should undergo training on a regular basis (2 to 3 hours once or twice a month) on receiving and processing aerial reconnaissance information.

In our opinion it is now urgently necessary that organic posts for the reception of information from reconnaissance aircraft be set up at the headquarters of the army and of large units and units. It is desirable that the post of the intelligence department of the army be mounted on a special motor vehicle and that it be equipped not with R-313 receivers, which have low sensitivity, but with one R-250 receiver and two crystal R-870 receivers.

These are some of our conclusions and proposals relating to the organization and conduct of reconnaissance by a combined-army when it is being committed into an engagement from the march. They are based on experience gained in recent training exercises.



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