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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

13 September 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): More on the
Cooperation of Large Units of the
Soviet Army with Border Guards

[Redacted]

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 examines certain areas of cooperation between ground forces large units and border guards. The author focuses first on the need for an established procedure for exchanging operational and reconnaissance information. He also emphasizes the need to conduct joint command-staff exercises of ground forces and border guards in order to work out these cooperation matters in practice. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963.

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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

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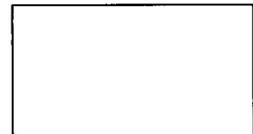
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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRYUSSR

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DATE OF
INFO. Late 1963

DATE
13 September 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): More on the Cooperation of Large
Units of the Soviet Army with Border Guards

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel G. Ashin. This article examines certain areas of cooperation between ground forces large units and border guards. The author discusses the need for an established procedure for exchanging operational and reconnaissance information, and the need to utilize the special capabilities of the border guards, rather than giving them the same tasks to accomplish as combined-arms units. He provides examples of the tasks they can perform, including destroying the enemy border guard and combating enemy reconnaissance and sabotage groups, and also emphasizes the need to conduct joint command-staff exercises of ground forces and border guards in order to work out these cooperation matters in practice.

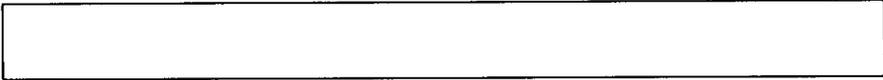
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More on the Cooperation of Large Units of
the Soviet Army with Border Guards

by
Colonel G. ASHIN

The questions of the cooperation of large units of the Soviet Army with border guards in a period of threat and the initial period of a war have already been treated on the pages of the Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought,"* We shall dwell on just a few of these questions insufficiently discussed in print but having, in our opinion, definite interest.

The cooperation of large units of the ground forces with the border guards appears primarily in the constant exchange of operational and reconnaissance information. The volume of this information must be established by instructions worked out by each border military district and border guard district, who know the peculiarities of the theater of military operations well.

Experience shows that in these instructions it is very important not only to give a list of the matters about which the exchange of information must be carried out, but also to set out in detail the procedure of carrying it out between the staffs of the large units of the Soviet Army and the staffs of border guard units, taking into consideration their existing disposition and possible changes in it in a period of threat and with the start of war.

The lack of such a firmly established procedure of information exchange has led to serious blunders. Thus, it is not uncommon that information from a border guard detachment which according to the findings of senior combined-arms commanders should have been sent immediately to the staff of the division has taken the long route -- staff of the border guard detachment, staff of the border guard district, staff of the military district, staff of the army corps, staff of the division. Under conditions where the constant combat readiness of the large units of the border military districts has decisive importance for the success of combat actions in the initial

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," No. 1 (39), 1958, No. 1 (62), 1962.



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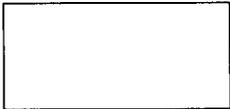
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period of war, every delay in information about changes in the behavior of the enemy is absolutely intolerable.

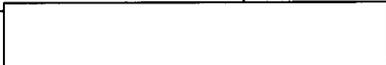
Without examining all the matters on which the exchange of information must be carried out, we shall point out only those which have a direct bearing on the maintenance of constant combat readiness. It appears to us that data received by border guard detachments by means of troop surveillance and agent reconnaissance about changes in the disposition of troops on the adjacent side, about the arrival and relocation of new troop contingents, and about the conduct of reconnaissance of the terrain must be reported to the staff of the large units of the Soviet Army simultaneously with the report to the superior border guard staff. The same procedure must be followed for information about troop exercises being conducted by the enemy, engineer preparation of the terrain close to the national border, and also about the strengthening of ground and air surveillance of all types.

Observance of these requirements will permit taking immediate steps to strengthen our ground surveillance, in particular by bringing in reconnaissance subunits belonging to the large units of the Soviet Army. These now have at their disposal considerably greater capabilities than formerly, and they are capable of drastically increasing the effectiveness of the reconnaissance of the enemy conducted by our border guards from our territory. In case of necessity, supplementary agent measures can be carried out by the forces of the military district. Finally, timely receipt by the large units of information about the enemy will permit gaining time and taking measures to increase the combat readiness of those of them which are located close to the national border.

In our opinion, it would be extremely useful to make provisions in the plans of combat training of the reconnaissance subunits of the Soviet Army for working out certain themes in different sectors of the national border in the zones of their possible combat actions with the start of a war. Such practical exercises are especially important for intelligence officers, since they allow them to study the terrain better in their own border zone and the adjacent territory. It goes without saying that, while conducting the practical exercises, camouflage requirements should be strictly observed.



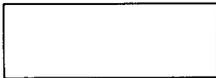
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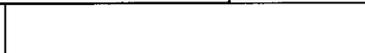


Having great importance for the correct organization of the service for guarding the national border by border guard detachments is their timely receipt of information from the large units and units of the Soviet Army about troop exercises to be conducted close to the border. Taking into consideration the necessity of carrying out a number of additional measures for guarding the border or changing them in connection with the exercises, it is important to inform the border guards of the time frames of the exercises as early as possible, but not later than two full days before they start. Experience shows that during this time the border guards jointly with the territorial organs of the KGB and with the participation of the apparatus of special departments of the large units are able to carry out the indicated measures. This time is also necessary so that each border guard has the opportunity to learn well the nature of the light, sound, and other signals, as well as the other noises which will be in the exercise area and is able to react to them properly. In turn, the border guards must in good time inform the large units and units of the Soviet Army about the preparation and conduct of their exercises at the border. This will permit the staffs of the large units (units) of the Soviet Army if necessary to strengthen the guard on their most important installations in good time. In some cases they can cover the main axes of the movement of border violators in the border zone by sending out patrols predominantly of reconnaissance subunits or support detachments. Information about the nature of the exercises of the border guards is also necessary for the large units of the Soviet Army to properly react to the sound, light, and other signals that appear.

In speaking about the exchange of mutual information, we should dwell especially on the organization of reporting about the radiation, chemical, and bacteriological situation with the start of a war. The experience of troop and command-staff exercises conducted in recent years by the aggressive NATO bloc convinces us that, with the start of a war, the imperialists will employ nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons on a large scale.

We are also obliged to take into consideration that the enemy may create a complex radiation and chemical situation in the area of the disposition and combat duty of border guard subunits. In order to act correctly in zones of radioactive and



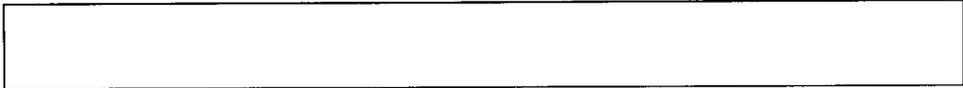


chemical contamination and avoid unnecessary losses, the border guards must have radiation and chemical reconnaissance data. It will be very hard for the border guards to get all these data with their own forces even if every border guard outpost is well equipped with dosimetric devices and chemical reconnaissance instruments. This is explained by the fact that the border guards usually operate over very great expanses. From this arises the extreme necessity of thinking out thoroughly and setting forth in the district instructions the matter of the methods of getting timely information to the border guards from the large units and units of the Soviet Army about the radiation situation. In turn, the large units of the Soviet Army can receive from the border guards valuable information about the radiation and chemical situation in the zone of their actions if they maintain dependable communications with the border guards not only with the start of a war but also during the development of offensive actions. The border guard details, if they have the necessary equipment, can serve as good supplementary suppliers of information about the radiation, chemical, and bacteriological situation.

The employment of nuclear weapons and the energetic activity of the enemy to disrupt our radio communications both by jamming and by means of sabotage actions may lead more often than formerly to the disruption of communications between the large units and units of the Soviet Army. Under these conditions, one should not neglect the use of the radio means of the border guard subunits as retransmitting points. The experience of the last war showed that on some axes at the beginning of operations such cooperation of radio means significantly improved the control of troops of the Soviet Army.

In recent years the question of cooperation of the large units of the Soviet Army with the border guards in a period of threat and in the initial period of war has been touched upon at the military science conferences of some border military districts. Sometimes border guard officers are invited to the command-staff exercises of border military districts as advisers in the staffs of the directing body. These measures, although they do increase the attention paid to the questions of using border guards with the start of a war and of improving cooperation with them, are still insufficient to eliminate the defects there are in this matter.





The basis of dependable cooperation of the large units of the Ground Forces of the Soviet Army and the border guards with the start of war is a good knowledge by the officers of the Soviet Army of the capabilities of the border guards and the nature of the tasks which it is most advisable to call on the border guards to accomplish. Unfortunately, we still have not achieved this. Here are a few examples.

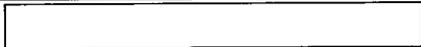
In the concepts of a number of troop exercises of units and large units of the Ground Forces of the Soviet Army against the background of the initial period of a war, the border guard units are forgotten altogether or they are given the same kinds of tasks as combined-arms units and large units. This indicates that many combined-arms officers have a superficial picture of the capabilities of border guards and that in everyday training the contact between the officers of the combined-arms large units and the border guards is still not close enough.

The facts testify that the mistakes of the period preceding the start of the Great Patriotic War are still being repeated. At that time, in command-staff exercises of the Soviet Army, border guard officers most often acted in the role of the corresponding combined-arms commanders or chiefs of staff of large units (units): the commanders of border guard districts generally in the role of commanders of divisions, district chiefs of staff in the role of chiefs of staff of divisions, and the commanders of border guard detachments in the role of commanders of regiments.

Hardly anyone will contest the usefulness of such participation of border guards in command-staff exercises. It has promoted the broadening of the military horizon of the border guard officers and their acquisition of definite skills in commanding troops in battle. But this one thing, as the experience of the initial period of the last war showed, is not enough.

In the prewar period, the commanders of border guard detachments and the chiefs of staff of the detachments, the chiefs of the border guard districts and their chiefs of staff were very seldom brought into command-staff exercises of the troops of the Soviet Army in their own positions. This had a negative effect on the use of border guards and on the





cooperation of the large units of the Soviet Army with border guard units at the start of the war.

Listening to the presentations at the military science conferences of border military districts and periodic participation of border guard officers in exercises as advisers do not afford the opportunity of thoroughly checking out the questions of cooperation of the large units of the Soviet Army with the border guards. Nor do the command-staff exercises regularly conducted in the border guard districts allow this to be done fully. [It is still more complicated, it seems to us, by means of the forms mentioned to determine the most advisable methods of using border guard units to perform various tasks when they are made operationally subordinate to the commander of a border military district.]

Analysis of the materials in military periodicals shows that the main stress in them is on the examination of the conditions under which border guards can operate and not on the methods of using them. And some statements about the methods of actions of border guards are, to our way of thinking, in need of refinement. Let us give some examples.

[One of the tasks which border guards can perform is the destruction of the enemy border guard. This task has been spoken of in published articles, and examples describing the results of the activity of border guards have been cited. But here it has not been altogether correctly shown that the border guards must accomplish a certain task merely with the "going over to the offensive" of the troops. The experience of the offensive of our troops in Manchuria showed that border guards achieved the greatest success when they undertook the accomplishment of the indicated task suddenly, immediately before the start of the offensive of the large units of the Soviet Army. But in the offensive zone of the First Red Army of the Far Eastern Front the beginning of actions of the border guards was preceded by a sortie of front aviation, which alerted the Japanese garrisons. They made ready for battle, and the border guards sustained losses greater than on other axes.*]

* Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR, Archive 210, inventory list 20837ff., file 50, sheet 78.



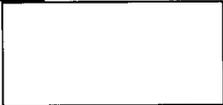


An important task that can be assigned to the border guards is combat against reconnaissance and sabotage groups of the enemy. In some materials* it is indicated that this task will be accomplished by border guards during the preparation of the first offensive operations and in the course of them only in the zone on this side of the border. But it appears to us that the border guards can, more successfully than anybody, accomplish this task as our troops move forward on enemy territory. The most advisable depth of using them for this purpose should be considered the zone in which the border guards carry out their agent reconnaissance. This, of course, does not mean that they cannot be used in zones whose depth is greater than the depth of agent reconnaissance.

★ [In connection with the fact that the enemy intends to conduct sabotage and reconnaissance activity over wide expanses, we consider it advisable to provide for the establishment of a highly mobile operational reserve of border guards in the strength of a separate battalion to a regiment per front (depending on the theater of military operations). For the rapid movement of this reserve into areas of the most dangerous sabotage activities of the enemy, it is advantageous to use helicopters (aircraft), which ensure successful negotiation of zones of radioactive contamination on the routes of movement of the reserve.

In articles published there is talk of the possible use of border guards during the preparation of the first offensive operations and in defensive operations of the initial period of a war to guard the most important elements of the operational disposition of the army and the front (missile location areas, control posts). It appears to us that, under these conditions, the border guards can also be entrusted with guarding rear installations until rear security subunits and units are deployed. In the event that the subunits to guard the indicated elements of the operational disposition have been deployed, the participation of the border guards in the accomplishment of this task can be expressed above all in strengthening agent operational measures jointly with special departments, and also in increasing the density of the troop guard on the approaches to the installations to be guarded.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," No. 1 (62), 1962.





An important way to check the correctness of judgements about using border guards under conditions that most approximate reality is joint command-staff exercises of line troops and border guards.

In our opinion, it is necessary to conduct joint command-staff exercises of large units (formations) of the Ground Forces of the Soviet Army and the border guard units (districts) against the background of the varied situation of the initial period of war. Participation of the border guards in such exercises must be provided for in the combat training plans of the border guard districts. Special difficulties, it seems to us, will not occur in the accomplishment of this matter. Experience shows that independent command-staff exercises of a border military district and a border guard district are sometimes conducted at almost one and the same time. It would be useful in such cases to conduct joint exercises.

To work out the concept and overall situation in command-staff exercises being planned by border military districts it is advisable to bring in border guard officers on the recommendation of the Chief Directorate of Border Guard Troops. These same officers can also be used in the umpire organization during the conduct of the exercises. To work out and conduct joint exercises of the large units (formations) of a border military district with border guard detachments, officers from the staffs of the border guard districts should be brought in.

Such joint exercises, to be conducted every year, will permit the accumulation of material about the most advisable tasks which should be entrusted to the border guards, taking into consideration the specific conditions of the theater of military operations, and also about the methods of using these guards. They will afford the opportunity of checking out the ways of controlling border guards after their resubordination, the nature of their cooperation with the ground forces, and the procedure for carrying it out; they will help solve in the most advisable way the question of the organizational structure and number of border guard districts in theaters of military operations.

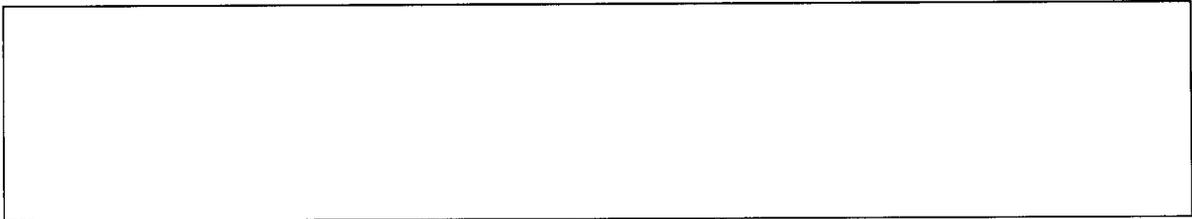


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Finally, joint exercises will promote the deeper study of the axes of operations of the theater of military operations by the officers and generals of the ground forces and the border guards and the exchange of work experience of commanders and staffs.



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