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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

4 October 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Organization of
the Strikes and Maneuver of Rocket Troops
in Operations

[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 takes issue with a couple of points expressed in an earlier piece in the Collection. It calls for a distinction between the organization of massed nuclear strikes and that of grouped and individual ones: the organization of massed strikes must continue to be quite centralized, but grouped and particularly individual strikes require quicker decisions and must be accordingly decentralized -- to the point where they may be undertaken by the front or army chief of rocket troops and artillery in certain cases. The other point of the article is a semantic difference over the meaning of maneuver. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (75) for 1965.

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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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for

John N. McMahon

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Distribution:

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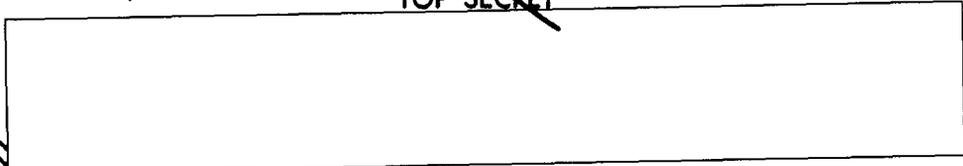
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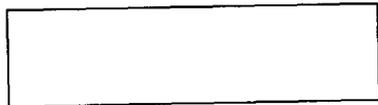
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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Mid-1965

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SUBJECT

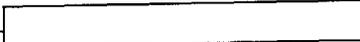
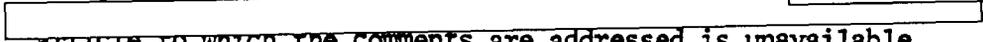
MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Organization of the Strikes and Maneuver of Rocket Troops in Operations

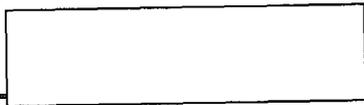
SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

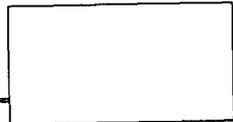
The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (75) for 1965 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The author of this article is Colonel I. Zheltikov. This article takes issue with a couple of points expressed in an earlier piece in the Collection. It calls for a distinction between the organization of massed nuclear strikes and that of grouped and individual ones: the organization of massed strikes must continue to be quite centralized, but grouped and particularly individual strikes require quicker decisions and must be accordingly decentralized -- to the point where they may be undertaken by the front or army chief of rocket troops and artillery in certain cases. The other point of the article is a semantic difference over the meaning of maneuver. End of Summary

Comment:

 the ~~SECRET~~ version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.  The  article to which the comments are addressed is unavailable.



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Organization of the Strikes and Maneuver
of Rocket Troops in Operations

DOI 65

by

Colonel I. ZHELTIKOV

The problems of organizing the strikes and maneuver of rocket troops in operations as presented in an article by Colonel P. SHKARUBSKIY,* in our view, deserve attention. These problems are, unfortunately, still insufficiently researched; and, in practice, they are frequently resolved only in general terms in exercises.

In the article, the author has given main attention to the organization of massed nuclear strikes, since the resolution of this problem is the most complex and requires considerable time. We cannot disagree with this, but at the same time there are no grounds to underestimate the significance of grouped and individual nuclear strikes delivered by rocket troops in the course of an operation. And it would seem to us that these should also have been discussed in the article.

Massed nuclear strikes are delivered comparatively seldom in the course of an operation; as a matter of fact, they should be considered an occasional phenomenon of a front scale. They are employed, for instance, to destroy a large grouping of enemy missile/nuclear means, to frustrate his counterthrust, to destroy large operational reserves, and in some other cases. Grouped, and especially individual nuclear strikes, are delivered by front, army, and division missiles throughout an operation to hit various targets. And, as the experience of exercises has shown, these strikes are somewhat more efficient than massed ones. Thus, when massed strikes are delivered, 30 to 40 percent of the missiles strike empty areas, but with grouped and individual strikes this occurs less often. And this is understandable because the whole process of the preparation and delivery of a massed strike is bound to the overall time established by the commander for readiness and commencement of the strike. In this time, many of the targets slated for destruction may move, and it is very difficult for reconnaissance to watch all of these targets at the same time.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1964, No. 3
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This is the reason one should not succumb to the temptation of employing only massed strikes. In speaking about the organization of strikes and maneuver of rocket troops in the course of an operation, individual and grouped strikes should be kept in mind first and foremost, particularly since they best satisfy the requirement to destroy enemy targets as soon as they are detected.

The successful fulfilment of the tasks of hitting enemy targets depends on many conditions, among which are the correctness of actions taken by commanders and staffs and the efficiency of their work. Unfortunately, the article has not duly treated the question of the distribution of responsibilities between staffs and persons directly organizing the strikes of rocket troops. This continues to be a timely problem; however, it is still unclear how to solve it. For instance, in a number of exercises, the adoption of the decision by the front commander has been done with the active participation of the chief of staff, the chief of rocket troops and artillery, and the commander of the air army; and the author of the article speaks of this. Such a variation as one of those possible may be acknowledged as advisable under certain conditions of a situation, namely, when there is very little time for preparation of the strike.

This, of course, does not mean a depreciation of the role of the front commander in the preparation of nuclear strikes. One may object by saying that, according to the current position, the authority to make a decision on the use of nuclear weapons belongs only to a combined-arms commander -- the front commander, army commander, or division commander. This is the essence of the universally recognized principle of centralized control of nuclear means.

We do not deny the principle in general either, but consider that the time has come to solve the problem differently. It should be taken into account that such a position, correct in principle, was adopted when the troops had at their disposal a relatively small quantity of nuclear weapons, with extremely imperfect means of delivering them to targets, and when the fundamentals of the combat employment of these weapons were still not sufficiently developed. Now, as the experience of exercises has shown, it is no longer possible to limit oneself to such positions. In the course of an operation, situations can arise when strict centralization of control of rocket troops will only reduce the effectiveness of their combat employment. This, of course, does not apply to massed nuclear strikes, in which a considerable quantity of nuclear warheads are expended; for this reason, the decision on their delivery must be made, without question, by

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the front or army commander, especially as these strikes are usually planned in advance.

The case is completely different with the delivery of individual nuclear strikes, especially in accomplishing such an important task as the conduct of combat against the enemy's nuclear means and especially against his missile launchers. Analysis of exercises conducted in the US Army and other NATO member nations has shown that, as a result of their adoption into service of solid-fuel operational-tactical Pershing and Sergeant missiles, there is a tendency toward reducing the time their launchers remain at launch sites. It is clear that the successful destruction of these means, with the short time they remain at launch sites, can be accomplished only in case of exceptionally prompt preparation and delivery of strikes against them.

Thus, we arrive at the conclusion that it would be advisable to grant the authority to make a decision on the delivery of individual nuclear strikes (when necessary) also to front and army chiefs of the rocket troops and artillery, who directly control missile large units and units.

We have nothing to do with those other extremes when the front commander is practically divorced from the control of rocket troops. Unfortunately, at several even large operational exercises such things have occurred. In particular, the actions of the commander were limited merely to the formal act of signing prepared cards (filled in by the staff of the rocket troops or air army) on the use of nuclear warheads. He focused primary attention ~~only~~ on the control of combined-arms formations and large units, which, of course, cannot be considered correct.

The article also takes up the problem of the maneuver of rocket troops in the course of an operation. Here, it seems to us, the author does not quite properly use the term "maneuver of nuclear strikes (trajectories)." Since, in the generally accepted understanding, a nuclear strike is a burst, then it is clear that if it has already taken place there is no way one can maneuver it, i.e., shift it to another target. It is apparent that this term has been borrowed from artillerymen. But in the artillery the terms "maneuver of fire" and "maneuver of trajectory" are justified since the accomplishment of one fire task usually takes many shells; and, in the course of its being fulfilled, corrections in the direction and range of fire can be made and fire shifted from one target to another. Among the rocket troops this is just not the case. If, for instance, a given missile is aimed at some target and is only waiting for a signal to execute its launch and a command ensues to hit a different target located in a

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different direction and at a different range, then the missile launcher and missile are retargeted. But this is hardly a maneuver. To some degree it would seem that the delivery of a strike on the next target after hitting the one originally designated can be considered maneuver. But this, in our view, is a most common occurrence in preparation for the next nuclear strike. Thus, the example used by the author, taken from the experience of exercises, has almost nothing in common with maneuver. It is apparent that one should not speak of the maneuver of nuclear strikes but about the high combat readiness of rocket troops and the methods of maintaining it so that the capability of executing a launch with every missile launcher to hit a target in any direction is constantly ensured.

As regards the maneuver of missile large units and units, missile launchers, and prepared missiles, the organization and execution of this must rank high in the activity of commanders and their staffs. Here it should always be taken into account that maneuver is inseparable from strikes. Thus, the relocation of missile units in order to bring about a more advantageous grouping for carrying out the tasks is one of the main requirements imposed on the preparation of strikes.

The existing flight ranges of operational-tactical missiles which are in service necessitate the change of siting areas several times in the course of a front offensive operation. The size of each relocation jump and the average number of relocations in the course of an operation depend on the depth and rate of movement of the advancing troops of the front. If the rates of advance are no less than 50 kilometers per day, then it is necessary for army missile brigades which are armed with R-170 missiles to relocate daily. With a daily rate of advance up to 100 kilometers, army missile units armed with R-300 missiles must move each day and so must the front missile brigades.

The relocation of rocket troops, as we know, is planned when the operation plan is worked out.

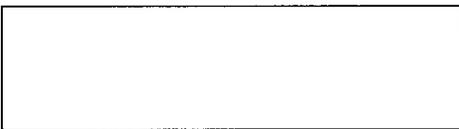
In the course of an operation, the relocation plan of the rocket troops will inevitably undergo changes. And not only siting areas but also routes of movement as well as the time of relocation and deployment of missile large units and units may be changed. The main thing is to ensure their timely readiness for the delivery of massed strikes. As for grouped and individual strikes, the rocket troops must always be ready to deliver them.

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