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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

8 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Features of an
Offensive Operation When Neither
Side Employs Nuclear Weapons

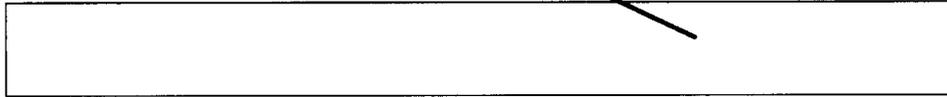
1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article contains two separate articles commenting on a previous article which dealt with the special features of an offensive operation in which nuclear weapons are not employed. The first discusses the capabilities of using conventionally-armed-missiles and also the question of the transition to the employment of nuclear weapons. The second deals primarily with the various aspects of switching army rocket troops over to actions in which nuclear weapons are employed. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (75) for 1965.

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

John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. Mid-1965

8 November 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Features of an Offensive Operation When Neither Side Employs Nuclear Weapons

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". This article contains two separate articles commenting on a previous article which dealt with the special features of an offensive operation in which nuclear weapons are not employed. In the first comment, Colonels A. Postovalov and K. Kushch-Zharko discuss the capabilities of using conventionally armed missiles and also the question of the transition to the employment of nuclear weapons. Regarding planning the initial operation, variants for a comprehensive plan including the use of both nuclear and conventional means, as well as for separate plans for employing each type of weapon are mentioned. The second article, by Colonels G. Biryukov and I. Khoroshilov, deals primarily with the various aspects of switching army rocket troops over to actions in which nuclear weapons are employed, and provides some readiness times.

End of Summary

Comment:

Colonel A. Postovalov also wrote "Transition to the Use of Nuclear Weapons in the Course of an Offensive Operation" in Issue No. 3 (91) for 1970 [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The article to which it refers is not available.

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Features of an Offensive Operation When
Neither Side Employs Nuclear Weapons

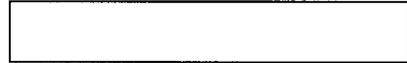
by

Colonel A. POSTOVALOV
Colonel K. KUSHCH-ZHARKO
Colonel G. BIRYUKOV
Colonel I. KHOROSHILOV

Colonel S. BEGUNOV's article* is one of the attempts to reveal the special features of offensive operations under conditions in which neither side employs nuclear weapons, and therefore, it is of great interest. We have no objections to its basic theses in principle, however, in our opinion, a number of recommendations do require revision and more in-depth discussion.

The author points out quite accurately that the initial offensive operations will be conducted basically by the same number of large units and formations it is considered possible to allocate for participation in the operations of a missile/nuclear war. This circumstance, as well as the increase in mobility, striking power and tactical independence of combined-arms large units and units, provide the basis for suggesting that combat actions from the very outset will take on a sharply defined maneuvering nature with rapid development on separate axes, in the absence of continuous fronts, with deep mutual penetration of the sides. Under these conditions, troops will very often go over to the offensive from the march and exploit existing open flanks in the enemy's defense and unoccupied or poorly covered gaps in order to decisively move to the flank of his groupings and quickly rout them with attacks from various axes. Sometimes, however, the attacking forces must begin combat actions by breaking through a prepared defense. To establish this defense, the enemy has in his large units and units a large number of tanks, armored vehicles and antitank guided missiles; he is capable of quickly sheltering his weapons and combat equipment and of setting up all types of obstacles. In such instances, just as in the past, it is necessary to deploy the main means of destruction, command posts and covering units in close proximity to the enemy, that is, troops must go over to the offensive from

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1964, No. 3 (73).



close contact with the enemy. It is true that their deployment will be somewhat different than in the past war. Thus, for example, artillery can be moved to fire positions more quickly than previously. As calculations and also the experience of war games and troop exercises show, for planning fire, deploying artillery and sending tasks to artillery battalions and batteries, preparation [for an attack ?] against the enemy will take [words missing] hours in an army and two to three hours in a division, rather than eight to twelve hours, as it used to. During this time it will be possible to position only forward detachments and advance guards in close contact with the enemy, while the main forces of first-echelon divisions will be deployed at a distance of 10 to 20 kilometers in order to prevent delivery against them of strikes by the main mass of enemy tactical nuclear means, to reliably camouflage and disperse them more, and also to move them out to the line of attack during preparatory fire (30 to 40 minutes).

In the initial offensive operations, large units and operational formations can begin moving forward on their own axes of advance from assembly areas upon combat alert, from waiting areas or from permanent garrison areas. In the latter instance it will not be possible to halt the troops for any prolonged period of time in the specified areas, to bring them into formation and to establish the necessary grouping of forces and means. This must be done, as a rule, during the movement forward. This being the case, it is possible that, at the moment of encountering the enemy, reinforcement means will not have arrived in all the units and large units, and they will be forced to conduct combat actions for a certain amount of time with only their own forces and means.

With the given method for going over to the offensive, it is hardly possible to count on the simultaneous invasion of the enemy's territory by the main forces of the first echelon. The danger that the troops will be hit by nuclear weapons will prevent waiting until all the forces of the first echelon, which are located at various distances, have approached the border. Considering this, it will be necessary to pay particular attention to getting at least the forward detachments to cross the border at one time and reducing to the utmost the gap in the time the main first-echelon forces get to the border. By the moment when forward detachments and advance guards cross the





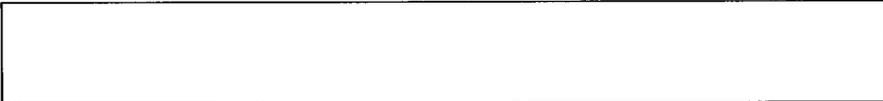
state border, the main means of destruction of first-echelon divisions and the army must be deployed and in readiness to deliver fire and nuclear strikes. In order to hasten the arrival of reinforcement means, it is necessary to make those march routes available to them which will allow movement at increased speeds. It is extremely important also to precisely specify the time and areas for the reinforcement means to join the units and large units; and for organic means of divisions and regiments, it is necessary to specify the siting areas and the time of deployment in them.

Missile battalions of the first-echelon large units and their artillery groups must move forward to siting areas along separate march routes or at the head of the columns of first-echelon regiments. In the event of the surprise unleashing of war, it is necessary to designate for the army missile brigade an alternate siting area which is close to its garrison area.

When nuclear weapons are not employed, the capabilities of destroying enemy targets in the operational depth are sharply reduced. Therefore, a rout of enemy groupings can be accomplished in sequence. For destroying the most important targets in the operational depth on the axis of the main attack, it is necessary to employ aviation, conventionally armed missiles, and also airborne landing forces and special-purpose groups with maximum intensity. Regarding this, it is impossible to agree with the assertion of the author of the article that, due to the low effectiveness of conventionally armed missiles, rocket troops will be employed in an extremely limited capacity. With the adoption into service of cluster-type missiles, the expenditure of which is decreased 30 to 60 times in comparison with high explosive missiles, the capabilities of rocket troops to destroy enemy targets will increase considerably. For employing missiles of this type, using from one-third to two-thirds of the operational-tactical missile troops (the remainder must be in readiness to deliver nuclear strikes) and a large part of the tactical missiles, it is possible to fulfil an extremely large number of tasks. Their fulfilment is attainable also from the standpoint of the productivity of missile technical bases. Thus, an army mobile missile technical base with two assembly brigades is capable in 24 hours of preparing almost 128 tactical missiles, or approximately nine to ten missiles for each launcher, and of delivering them to the division in good time.

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Concerning conventional operational-tactical missiles, they will most often be supplied ready for launching to the army missile brigade from front mobile missile technical bases. Under these conditions rocket troops can be successfully employed to destroy troop groupings, airfields and rear installations. They will be able to play a special role in neutralizing the air defense system of the enemy.

In Colonel BEGUNOV's article much attention is devoted to the switching of nuclear missiles and bombs from one level of readiness to another. To what has already been stated, we would like to add only the following. As the results of an operational scientific-research war game conducted at the M. V. Frunze Academy in February 1964 showed, depending on the situation, from one-third to two-thirds of all the missile launchers and delivery aircraft should be in readiness for delivering nuclear strikes, and, in the staffs of the rocket troops and the air army, charts of the increase in combat readiness should be kept. Missiles with nuclear warheads for the initial launch of front and army units must be maintained in Readiness No. 2 and 3; there must be tactical nuclear missiles in the technical support platoons of the battalions. For the second and subsequent launches, it is advisable to keep front and army missiles in the technical support platoons of the battalions, in the technical battery of the missile brigade, and part in the front mobile missile technical base; tactical missiles should be kept in artillery depots of divisions and in the army mobile missile technical base.

It is necessary to say a few words about organizing the initial nuclear strike of a front, keeping in mind that it will begin in the course of combat actions and most likely will not coincide with the strike of the means of the Supreme High Command. On account of this the front will not be in a position to designate targets for all means participating in the initial nuclear strike. For the greater part of army and especially for tactical missiles, the targets for destruction will be determined by army commanders, and sometimes by division commanders. It is true that the decision to employ nuclear weapons in this instance is left to the front commander.

65 In conclusion, we would like to note that, even at the present time, there is no unified opinion about the procedure for





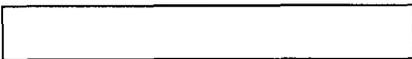
planning initial offensive operations conducted without employing means of mass destruction. Two views, in particular, were expressed on this matter at a military science conference at the M. V. Frunze Academy in November 1961. In one case, it was maintained that in peacetime it is necessary to have only one operation plan, worked out for conditions of a nuclear war, in which the procedure for conducting combat actions without employing means of mass destruction should be stipulated. In the other case, it was proposed to develop two operation plans in peacetime, one for conditions of a nuclear war, and the other in case of the unleashing of war without the employment of nuclear weapons.

In our opinion, armies of the first strategic echelon must have two separate operation plans in peacetime: for conditions where nuclear weapons are employed and where they are not. It is impossible to be limited to one plan, since the troops already possess the capabilities of destroying the enemy under these different circumstances, and consequently, the scope and methods of their actions will be radically different. In view of this, it is necessary to work out in detail all necessary matters inherent to both sets of conditions, which is extremely difficult to accomplish in a common plan. Thus, in planning offensive operations without the use of nuclear weapons, simultaneously with specifying methods for routing enemy groupings with conventional means, it is necessary to stipulate possible methods for destroying them with nuclear and chemical weapons and to outline methods of actions of troops and the procedure for employing means of destruction, keeping in mind the constant and immediate threat of delivery of a nuclear strike by the enemy and the necessity of maintaining the high-level readiness of our own rocket troops and aviation to employ nuclear and chemical weapons. It is necessary to provide for the conduct of all measures for protecting troops and rear installations from enemy means of mass destruction.

The most important component of the operation plan is the establishment of the procedure for changing over from combat actions where only conventional means of destruction are employed to conduct of a nuclear war. For this, the targets for destruction with nuclear and chemical weapons, the procedure for storing nuclear and chemical munitions, the level of combat readiness of rocket troops and aviation for employing them, the



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tasks of troops of the first echelon in case of the unleashing of nuclear war, and a number of other things must be defined in the plan and constantly refined during the course of combat actions.

Separate planning of an operation allows the successful conduct of combat actions with conventional means of destruction and the organized transition to combat actions in which nuclear and chemical weapons are employed in the event that the enemy unleashes a nuclear war.

* * *

In our opinion, the article by Colonel BEGUNOV raises the very important question about the procedure for the army to go over to actions with the use of nuclear weapons. In connection with this, we feel it is advisable to develop somewhat the ideas expressed by the author, primarily those relating to the rocket troops of an army.

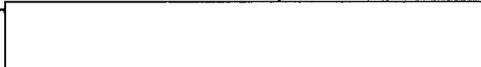
First of all, we would like to say that the army's successful transition to actions with the employment of nuclear weapons in the operation under discussion will be determined primarily by the readiness of the rocket troops for this and by the timely planning of nuclear strikes.

The initial data for the planning are instructions of the front commander or an excerpt from the "Plan (chart) of the initial nuclear strike of the front," which is drafted in case of the changeover to actions in which means of mass destruction are employed. Based on this, a "Plan of strikes of missile large units and units," a "Table of availability (expenditure) and readiness of missiles and missile subunits," a "Map for control of combat actions of rocket troops," a "Log book of commands to give (prepared for) missile units," and a "Communications schematic for rocket troops" are worked out and kept up in the staff of the army.

As the experience of exercises shows, it is advisable to designate a special operations group for immediate development of the necessary plans. It is desirable to include in the group the chief and a senior staff officer of the rocket troops and artillery, the deputy chief and a senior officer of the operations department of the army staff, and also a senior



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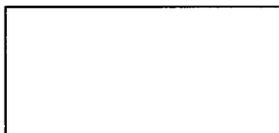


officer of the intelligence department. The chief of the rocket troops and artillery of the army, who periodically reports to the army commander on the status of the rocket troops of the army and receives instructions for planning their actions, will head the group.

In doing planning, it is necessary to continuously refine the location of possible targets of destruction, to conduct reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of them, to define precisely the location of our own rocket troops and their tasks, to ensure the readiness of means for monitoring the results of possible nuclear strikes, and also to determine the procedure for delivering and maintaining prepared missiles (warheads, delivery missiles). It will be necessary to introduce changes in how the relocation of missile units, their meteorological support, and topogeodetic preparation are organized and in measures to be taken for engineer preparation and camouflage of siting areas. It is also necessary to precisely define the organization of control of rocket troops and monitoring of their readiness.

In order to raise the level of readiness of rocket troops for a strike so as to preempt the enemy, a "Chart (plan) for switching rocket troops over from one level of readiness to another" should be worked out and implemented in the army staff. In so doing, the time for the switchover is to be calculated very accurately.

If, for example, part or all of the batteries of an army missile brigade are provided with missiles and are in Readiness No. 2, then it takes two to five minutes to transmit the order (signal) from the staff of the army to subunits, 10 to 20 minutes to prepare and carry out the launch, and two to five minutes to report the readiness and carry out monitoring, or 20 to 30 minutes in all. In a case where prepared missiles (Readiness No. 4) are in a front mobile missile technical base and it is necessary to supply them to missile divisions 40 to 60 kilometers away, then it takes 3.5 to five hours to prepare a brigade for a launch. The breakdown of time for this is: two to three hours for the missiles to reach the brigades, 40 to 50 minutes to receive and transfer the missiles to the launchers, and up to 45 minutes to bring the batteries to the launch sites and to prepare and carry out the launch.



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Preparation of the missile battalions of divisions when the prepared missiles are at army missile technical bases requires 2.5 to 3.5 hours. Two to three hours of this is for delivery of missiles to the battalions, 15 minutes for inspection and charging, and 20 to 25 minutes for moving the launchers to launch sites and preparing and carrying out the launch.

The army commander will receive the signal (order) for going over to combat actions with the use of means of mass destruction or for participating in the initial nuclear strike of the front from the staff of the front or -- in case communications are disrupted -- directly from the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (from the General Staff).

Upon receipt of the signal, a previously designated operations group of the army staff refines the available "Plan of strikes of army rocket troops" to correspond to the task received, about which the chief of the rocket troops and artillery quickly reports to the army commander. If there is not a sufficient amount of time, this refinement is conducted directly under the direction of the army commander. Simultaneously with the refining of the plan based on the instructions of the commander, the task is sent to the army missile brigade and the missile battalions of the divisions. When there is not sufficient time, this is done by communications means in the routine manner, but, when time is available, it is done by liaison officers. In the latter instance, great secrecy of the measures being undertaken and surprise in the initial nuclear (chemical) strikes by rocket troops of the army are ensured. If the tasks for the rocket troops have been set previously and are not subject to change, it is possible to limit oneself to confirming them and indicating the time for fulfilment, and also to organize monitoring of the readiness of the rocket troops.

In sending the signal for switching the troops over to actions in which means of mass destruction are employed by the front, the main tasks for destroying the enemy by strikes of army rocket troops will be indicated by the front commander and only a portion of them by the army commander. When the signal is sent to the army by the General Headquarters, a situation can be created where the tasks will be determined mainly by the army commander, and a portion of these (for the separate missile

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battalions of divisions) can be specified by the division commanders with subsequent approval by the army commander.

At the same time that tasks are assigned to the rocket troops for employing nuclear weapons, the advancing troops should be warned about the delivery of nuclear strikes, especially against targets located near our own forward units. In order to ensure the safety of the troops, the commanders of divisions and regiments must specify the line which troops must not cross until a specified time. In the event that the troops are successfully continuing the offensive, strikes and safety lines should be designated so that they do not hold up the offensive. Otherwise, it could alert the enemy and lead to the loss of surprise as well as to considerable separation of our troops from the enemy.

Everything which has been discussed above relates to a situation where advancing troops of the army preempt the enemy in delivering nuclear and chemical strikes. But, the possibility is not ruled out that the enemy will successfully preempt our own troops in employing nuclear weapons. In this case, a signal for switching the army over to actions in which means of mass destruction are employed obviously marks the beginning of nuclear strikes of the enemy. In such a situation, the army commander, without waiting for instructions from above, must make a decision for delivering retaliatory strikes. They can be either individual strikes, delivered at first only by batteries on alert, and then, as they get ready, by the remaining launch subunits, or grouped strikes timed for a specific time for the purpose of destroying one major installation or a number of important targets of the enemy.

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