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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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8 June 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Additional Views
on Readiness Terms for Front Rocket Units

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 comments on an article which appeared in a previous issue of this journal (FIRDB-312/02796-73). The author argues that the earlier article ignores the fact that the commander is concerned only with the question of when rocket units will be ready to launch. He therefore proposes terms incorporating time-to-launch figures. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (91) 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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Deputy Director for Operations

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COUNTRY USSR

FIRDB- 312/02797-73

DATE OF Late 1970
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DATE 8 June 1973

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Degree of Readiness of
Rocket Troops for the Initial Nuclear Strike

SOURCE Documentary

SUMMARY

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (91) 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 I. Kochergin. He is commenting on an article on the same subject which appeared in Issue No. 1 (89) for 1970. He states that the earlier article dealt too much with defining the conditions of readiness of rocket units, which he asserts to be of no interest to the commander. Since the interest of the commander, in his view, is when the units can launch, he argues that the readiness terms should be expressed as the amount of time required for a unit to launch its rockets. He recommends that these figures should be either one hour, thirty minutes, or five minutes.

END OF SUMMARY

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COMMENT:

There is no information on this author in available reference materials. 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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The Degree of Readiness of Rocket Troops
for the Initial Nuclear Strike

by Colonel I. Kochergin

In offensive operations in which conventional weapons are used at the outset, with subsequent transition to nuclear weapons, timely increase in the combat readiness of front (army) rocket troops becomes exceedingly important.

This problem was discussed in the Journal,* but, in our opinion, no satisfactory solution has yet been found. The essential deficiency of the proposed degrees of readiness of rocket troops ("alert" and "maximum alert") lies in the fact that they do not specify the most important thing--the time factors of readiness to deliver the initial nuclear strike, although this criterion has always been a basic one. Because, in the final analysis, it is not particularly important to the front (army) troop commander what the rocket troops are doing at a given moment, but how much time will elapse before the troops can participate in an initial massive nuclear strike by the front.

On the basis of exercises conducted in the past, the conclusion can be reached that, depending on the degree of threat, the phased increase of readiness of front (army) rocket troops for the initial nuclear strike requires the establishment of three degrees of readiness: hour readiness, thirty-minute readiness and five-minute readiness.

Hour readiness is that condition of rocket troops in which they are capable of delivering a massive nuclear missile strike against enemy targets in no more than one hour. This means that the launch batteries of operational-tactical and tactical rockets will be in Readiness No. 3. When the signal is given for rocket troops to go on hour readiness, the rocket battalions (launch batteries) occupying prepared site areas will continue to carry out the assigned tasks to maintain Readiness No. 3. Commanders of relocating rocket units (subunits) will take all necessary

*Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," 1970, No. 1 (89), page 76.

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measures to assure the rapid deployment of launch batteries into unprepared site areas. The rocket battalions (launch batteries) will go over to Readiness No. 2.

The longest time in preparation for a nuclear strike in this case will be used by the relocating launch batteries. However, according to existing norms, the average time for this should not be over one hour.

Thirty-minute readiness means that condition of rocket troops in which they can launch a massive nuclear strike within thirty minutes from the moment the signal is given to launch missiles.

This condition will apply to the following: 9K72 launch batteries--Readiness No. 3 at the main (launch) position; 9K76 launch batteries--Readiness No. 2; and launch batteries for tactical rockets--Readiness No. 3 while taking up prepared positions.

To shorten the time needed to launch nuclear strikes (especially against means of nuclear attack), the duty battalions (batteries) and launch batteries targeted against enemy means of nuclear attack should be in Readiness No. 2 or No. 2A. Upon receiving the signal for the rocket troops to go over to thirty-minute readiness, the relocating battalions (launch batteries) will deploy into unprepared site areas and will be brought to a state of readiness to launch missiles.

In this connection, it is advisable to refine somewhat the meaning of Readiness No. 3 by applying it also to batteries which have missiles on their launchers ready for combat use.

Five-minute readiness is that condition of troops in which they are able to deliver a massive strike against previously planned enemy objectives within five minutes. This condition corresponds to Readiness No. 1. Thus, upon receiving the signal for changing the rocket forces over to five-minute readiness, all launch batteries that have assigned targets will go over to Readiness No. 1. Duty launch batteries that have no assigned targets will go over to Readiness No. 2A.

By adopting these phases of readiness for the initial nuclear strike by front (army) rocket forces will assure orderly progression of readiness depending on the degree of threat and will considerably simplify their control.

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