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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [redacted] 25X1

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT SAF Procedures During the Re-equipment of a Unit with New Aircraft

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1. By order of the Commander-in-Chief of the VVS, the 175th Fighter Air Division was subject to retraining and re-equipping (to MIG-15 aircraft) in the early part of 1949. Prior to this time, the division was equipped with YAK-9P aircraft. The total number of aircraft in the 175th Fighter Air Division at this time was:

YAK-9P	178	
" -9M	1	
-9V	8	This includes both serviceable
-11	8	and non-serviceable aircraft.
PO-2	10	
S-2	1	

2. In May of 1949 the pilots and some of the enlisted men of the division were sent for retraining to an Educational Training Center near Leningrad. Technical officers of the Division were sent for further technical training to the factories producing MIG-15 aircraft, such as #1 at KUIBYSHEV. In the later half of September, the division had completed its retraining but had not yet received new aircraft.

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3. In June of 1949, the division received instructions from the Air Army to prepare to give up 130 aircraft. This order indicated what had to be done with the aircraft prior to giving them up. The division was to paint all aircraft designated for surrender and to paint-over all recognition marks on them, as well as to check carefully their engines and make all necessary repairs.

4. In July, instructions to ferry 79 YAK-9P aircraft to Khechkemet Airfield (Kecskemet) in Hungary were received. These aircraft were ferried by pilots of the 347th Fighter Air Regiment of the 175th Fighter Air Division. The course flown was across Poland.

5. In September 1949, the division received additional instructions to ferry another 51 YAK-9P's to Poland (Liegnitz Airfield). In December, the division received instructions to transfer 12 YAK-9P's (without painting-over the recognition marks) to the 93lst separate Artillery Spotting Reconnaissance Air Regiment which was based at Keten (Kothen) airfield in Germany.

6. In October 1949, in accordance with a 24th Air Army order, the 175th Fighter Air Division was to provide two groups to receive and dispatch aircraft to the intermediary airfields designated as landing points for MIG-15's being flown in from Kuibyshev. One group was to be located at Orsha (Balbasovo) airfield and the second at Kobrin airfield.

7. The functions of each group were: to receive the aircraft being flown in for the 175th Fighter Air Division (to supervise their landing, to check the aircraft after the landing and prior to the take-off, and to make any necessary repairs); to provide the group of ferrying pilots with food and quarters; to refuel the aircraft; to organize an effective watch or guard over the aircraft; and, to provide the lead groups and crews with necessary radio-data for the remainder of the flight. In order to perform the above functions, the 175th Fighter Air Division's group included the following specialists:

a) Officers in the position of Assistant Commanders of Air Regiments for Aerial Combat Tactics and Aerial Gunnery
b) Officers of the communcations service
c) Officers of the technical service
d) Mechanics in the various specialties

8. Thus, each group included four or five officers and ten sergeants. These groups were transported to the intermediary airfields on transport aircraft of the 24th Air Army. However, due to poor weather conditions prevailing in the fall, the MIG-15 aircraft designated for the 175th Fighter Air Division were not ferried in, and so these groups were ordered back to their unit by command of VVS Main Headquarters, after having been at the intermediary airfields for about two months.

9. The latter headquarters decided to send the aircraft designated for the 7lst Fighter Air Corps of the 24th Air Army by rail. The aircraft arriving in the 175th Fighter Air Division were packed in special crates. The first train carrying MIG-15' aircraft arrived at Oranienburg airfield on the 14th December 1949. This train contained 25 MIG-15's. The second train transporting MIG-15's arrived at the above-mentioned point on the 10th day of January 1950. It contained 25 MIG-15's, and the third train which contained 15 MIG-15's arrived at this point in February. [redacted] Furthermore, the 175th Fighter Air Division received four IAK-17 aircraft from the 6lst Guards Fighter Air Corps at Tserbst (Zerbst) airfield.

10. Oranienburg airfield was the unloading and assembly point for aircraft being sent to the 175th Fighter Air Division. Upon arrival at Oranienburg the aircraft were "depreserved" (i.e. taken out of their protective oil wrappings and wooden crates) assembled, flown (for a period of five hours as a shakedown), and then, ferried to Finow airfield for the 247th and 868th Fighter Air Regiments.

11. During the above period, the 175th Fighter Air Division received 69 aircraft - 65 MIG-15s and 4 YAK-17's. These aircraft were distributed among the regiments in the following manner:

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	Number of a/c received:		According to the TO, these units should have:	
	MIG-15	YAK-17	MIG-15	YAK-17
347th Fighter Air Regt	15	1	52	3
868th " " "	24	1	52	3
247th " " "	24	1	52	3
Fighter Air Div Command	2	1	4	1

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12. In addition to the above jet aircraft, the division had the following reciprocating engine aircraft: 36 YAK-9P's, one YAK-9M, eight YAK-9V's, ten PO-2's, and one S-2.

13. The division was supposed to be completely re-equipped with new aircraft by June of 1950; this, however, was the second specified date. The first specified date was set for 1949, and according to this plan, the division was supposed to have been completely re-equipped by the end of '49. However, due to the poor autumn weather, this plan was not carried out and a second date for re-equipment was set for 1950.

14. After the 175th Fighter Air Division received its new aircraft by means of railroad transportation, the 61st Guards Fighter Air Corps received 68 or 78 MIG-15's simultaneously by means of ferrying. All of the MIG-15's which were ferried in for the 61st Guard Fighter Air Corps landed at Zerbst airfield in Germany.

15. A well-defined system for re-equipping a unit with new aircraft does not exist. New aircraft may be received by VVS units in two ways: the aircraft may be ferried or, they may be transported by rail or water transportation. All of this depends on time and weather factors. In the majority of cases, new aircraft are received during the spring and winter seasons since the summer season is heavily scheduled with combat training; during the summer all leaves for flight personnel are forbidden as are any interruptions of their combat training. Thus, the flight personnel cannot be utilized to ferry new aircraft.

16. During the spring and autumn seasons, in most cases, the unfavorable weather conditions which interfere with the ferrying of aircraft make it impossible to carry out such a proposed plan since the aircraft being ferried may be detained at intermediary airfields for months due to the weather. Needless,to say, this causes great inconveniences since, in addition to the aircraft, flight personnel are detained at intermediary airfields for a considerable length of time; they are deprived of combat training and also lose the level of combat training already attained.

17. Furthermore, ferrying aircraft involves a large loss in engine-resource time (TN a specified period of time an engine is supposed to function before it has to be overhauled) and shortens the combat-life of the aircraft. Therefore, on the basis of the above factors, VVS Main Headquarters chooses one method or another to use during re-equipment, ie, in transporting the new aircraft to a unit.

18. It is necessary to remember that if a unit which is to be re-equipped is based no farther than the range of the given type aircraft from the factory producing them, these aircraft will invariably be ferried to the units. In the case of units which are located at a considerable distance from the producing factory, new aircraft were transported by one of the two methods indicated above. Transporting aircraft to units by rail or water transportation results in larger losses of time but safeguards the engine-resource of the aircraft and extends its life-span.

19. Aircraft which are detained at intermediary airfields because of weather conditions are parked out in the open and are poorly cared for; consequently, when they reach their destination they have defects. Furthermore, if a defect is discovered along the route, the aircraft remains at an intermediary field until the defect is repaired. It is quite possible that the unit based at the particular intermediary airfield is equipped with a different type of aircraft from the one that is forced down by a defect and will not be able to render any assistance, especially if the repair involves replacing even the simplest, most insignificant part. It takes a certain amount of time to obtain the necessary part and, in the meantime if the weather has been normal the main group flies on while the pilot and his unserviceable aircraft remain sitting at the intermediary airfield, waiting for the defect to be repaired.

20. Another possibility is that while landing at an intermediary airfield, a pilot may damage his landing gear, necessitating a repair job which takes several days; in the meantime, the weather may be good and the flight may continue while this aircraft is detained until repairs are completed.

21. [redacted] in the majority of cases where a group the size of a regiment (fifty aircraft) is being ferried, two to four aircraft lag behind the group at intermediary airfields and arrive at their destination unit only after an extended delay due to the reasons given above. However, the 175th Fighter Air Division did not experience any such difficulties when it was ferrying aircraft to Hungary and Poland.

22. All conventional type aircraft of the 24th Air Army were turned over to the Soviet Union's European Satellites (Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Albania) and, possibly to China and Mongolia. A part of the aircraft from other Air Armies were also turned over to the Satellite countries, while the rest were given to DOSAV's Aeroclubs and those VVS units which were scheduled to be the last ones re-equipped with new aircraft. Furthermore, some of the conventional aircraft were given to air institutes for pilots, and others were stripped for spare parts (which were distributed in the same manner - to Satellite countries, VVS units, DOSAV's aeroclubs, and air institutes).

23. All of the above organizations used these spare parts in repairing their aircraft of a similar type.

24. Some of the old conventional aircraft which were unsuitable even for utilization as spare parts were sent to be smelted down as junk.

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