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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

### INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR  
SUBJECT The Central Asian Military District:  
Its Military Plans, Units, Roads and  
Railroads, Maneuvers, and Airfields  
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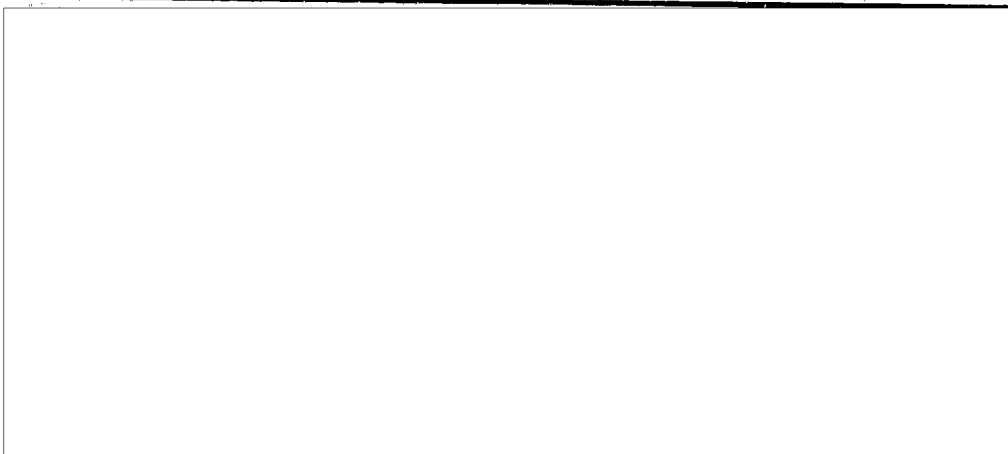
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1. Until 1929, Soviet military planning in Central Asia was defensive. The main direction of a possible counter-offensive was Samarkand-Termez-Kabul. After that date, military planning was reoriented to the offensive. The main southward Soviet direction of operations was to be Baku-Tehran-Abadan. The main direction for a supporting offensive by the Central Asian military district (okrug) was to be Ashkhabad-Mashad-Kandahar-Karachi. A secondary offensive route from Central Asia was to be Merv-Kushka-Herat-Kandahar-Karachi. This route had been designated as the main one in event of operations against western India by Czarist military planners. It had better transportation facilities. However, it was considered secondary by the Soviets because of its distance from the Caspian and the central planned line of attack from Baku. The Soviet authorities, therefore, attempted to build up a base of operations ("plats d'armes") in southwestern Central Asia, as the lack of this was the main disadvantage of the planned route of operations from Ashkhabad. They particularly attempted to create such a base along the left flank (looking southward), i.e. in the Merv-Kushka-Ashkhabad triangle. During the period 1936-1940 a motor road was built by military forces, from the railroad station of Teleshen southeast to Serakhe, then along the border to Childakhter, where the frontiers of Iran, Afghanistan, and the USSR converge. The road had a width of seven meters, was a two way, all weather route, and was surfaced with gravel. It had been planned to construct a railroad atop the motor road at a later date. Any further work was cancelled, however, when hostilities with Germany became imminent. Another road was built, by civilian authorities, from Kizil Arvat southwest to Gosen Kuli. It was

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also a two way, all weather route. It was seven meters wide, which is just barely two way. The surface was of gravel; in the mountains it had a hard dirt surface. Attempts were made to increase the population by improving irrigation facilities. The Tashkepristroi irrigation dam, at the confluence of the Murgab and Kushka rivers, was erected.

2. Until late 1939, the Central Asian military district - which then included the five Soviet Republics of Kazakh, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tadshik, and Kirgis - had six divisions stationed within its boundaries. They were:
- (a) The 1st Turkestan Division. Originally an infantry division of three regiments, it was reorganized in 1930 and redesignated as the 1st Mountain Infantry Division. Its new organization provided for four small regiments of five companies each (there were no battalions). Each regiment had four infantry companies and one machine gun company. The division had only a pack train. Its headquarters was at Ashkhabad.
  - (b) The 3rd Turkestan Division (Infantry) in 1930 became the 3rd Mountain Infantry Division. Termez was its headquarters.
  - (c) There were also four mountain cavalry divisions:
    - 1) The Turkmenskaya Division in Merv.
    - 2) The Tadshikskaya Division in Stalinabad.
    - 3) The Usbekskaya Division in Samarkand.
    - 4) A numbered division (I cannot recall the number) in Fergana, which is also in Uzbekistan.

Beginning in September or October 1939, three additional mountain infantry divisions and six infantry divisions were formed. They were sent to the western front in 1941. Maneuvers were held in Central Asia. These were not held in the Karakum desert. The troops maneuvered along the above mentioned lines of planned operations and along the border roads.

3. The arid regions between Tashkent and the Caspian can be used for airborne chemical attack exercises. This was done once in 1930 north of Ashkhabad and once in 1938 south of Tashkent. The usual area for airborne chemical attack training was near the railroad station of Makat in Turkestan.
4. In regard to any plans for future airfield development in Central Asia, in the late 1930s there was talk about new airfields and landing strips. Survey parties occasionally were active in this connection. However, nothing was done through 1941. Emphasis on Central Asian military development was dropped when it became clear in the summer of 1940 that Germany would be the next enemy. There were underground tanks for aviation gasoline at some of the railroad stations on the Central Asian Railroad, which ran between Krasnovodsk and Tashkent. These storage tanks came under railroad authority, but there was a military representative with each railroad division.

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