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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

23 May 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSONS :  
The Making and Critique of the Decision  
of the Commander of the Air Army on Combat  
Actions in a Front Offensive Operation

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on a collection of 29 lessons, classified TOP SECRET, prepared in 1977 for use in the Soviet General Staff Academy. The lessons are broken down into two parts: the first 19 lessons deal with the staff preparation of a front offensive operation with conventional and nuclear weapons; the remaining 10 lessons deal with the conduct of an offensive employing conventional weapons at first with a transition to the use of nuclear weapons. This report is a translation of the lesson involving the planning by the commander of the front air army for the initial nuclear strike, first massed conventional strike, and support for ground forces during a front offensive operation in the northern area of West Germany.

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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John N. McMahon

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## Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT

GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON No. 4: The Making and Critique of the Decision of the Commander of the Air Army on Combat Actions in a Front offensive Operation

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of a lesson, classified TOP SECRET, prepared for use at the General Staff Academy of the Armed Forces of the USSR. This lesson is for the instruction of students acting as commanders of the front air army in planning the initial nuclear air strike with 200 nuclear bombs and other air actions during a front offensive operation in the northern area of West Germany. The main points covered are: the assessment of the enemy air, air defense, and electronic situation; the concept of the air army's combat actions, the tasks and targets of its large units and units; the organization of control, cooperation, and radioelectronic warfare; the allocation of nuclear bombs, the conduct of the first massed conventional air operation, the repelling of a surprise enemy air attack with conventional weapons, and air support of the ground forces.

End of Summary

Comment:

Although not specifically identified, the colors representing NATO countries in this series probably equate as follows:

Brown - West Germany  
Blue - Great Britain  
Green - United States  
Lilac - Belgium  
Violet - The Netherlands

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Subject: The making and critique of the decision of the commander of the air army on combat actions in a front offensive operation.

Time: Independent preparation by the students -- six hours, group exercise -- four hours.

Training objective: To give students practice in making a decision on the combat action of an air army in a front offensive operation and in formulating the decision on a map with an explanatory memorandum.

Methodological recommendations on preparations by the students for the lesson:

1. To prepare for the lessons, students must study the section of the textbook entitled, "Operational Art of the Air Forces," pages 164 to 171, and reference books concerning tactical flight data for front aircraft and helicopters.
2. Calculate the allocation of forces required to destroy (neutralize) the targets in the initial nuclear strike of the front and in the first massed strike of the air operation.
3. Independently formulate conclusions from an assessment of the enemy and formulate a concept of the combat actions of the 1st Air Army in the front offensive operation based on the materials of the Lesson No. 4 assignment and the working map (appendix to the assignment).
4. For the lesson the students are to be ready as commanders (chiefs of staff) of the air army to report their decision with the necessary substantiation and calculations.

Procedure for conduct of lesson

1. In the course of twenty minutes, the instructor will discuss the theory of the subject: the procedure followed by the

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air army commander in making a decision and content of the decision; tactical flight data of the aircraft and helicopters and their firing capabilities.

2. Training topics and the distribution of time for working them out:

- conclusions from the assessment of the enemy -- 45 minutes;
- concept of the combat actions of the air army in the front offensive operation -- 70 minutes;
- tasks of air large units and units -- 20 minutes;
- instructions on the organization of control, cooperation, and radioelectronic warfare -- 20 minutes;
- instructor's concluding remarks -- 5 minutes.

Conclusions from the assessment of the enemy

Students in the capacity of air army commanders (chiefs of staff) report on the following matters: strength of the aviation grouping, its possible reinforcement, the main grouping, basing density and the degree of protection of aircraft at airfields, combat readiness and the possible nature of actions; as concerns air defense: the composition of the air defense forces and means, their disposition and capabilities; as concerns the electronic situation: the radar detection capabilities, the main targets whose destruction (neutralization) disrupt the control of the enemy's air defense means.

Text of the report (variant)

The aviation grouping of the enemy (the Blue air force command, the Brown 3rd Long-Range Aviation Regiment and the 4th Air Defense Division of the Air Tactical Command, the Green 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, the Lilac Tactical Air Force, and the Violet Tactical Air Command; and the Allied Air Forces Baltic Approaches) numbers in its complement approximately 720 combat aircraft with more than 240 of them being delivery aircraft. The home command of the Blue air force (up to 160 aircraft and of those, up to 90 are delivery aircraft) can be brought into the area of the front.

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In all, approximately 900 combat aircraft, 330 of which are delivery aircraft, can conduct combat actions against the troops of the Coastal Front.

The main aviation grouping is the Blue air force in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the Green 49th Tactical Fighter Wing, the Brown 3rd Long-Range Aviation Regiment and 4th Air Defense Division of the Air Tactical Command, which has modern aircraft in service: the Phantom in various modifications, the Harrier GR-1, the Jaguar GR-1, and the F-104.

The main forces of the enemy aviation are based at a depth of 150 to 400 kilometers from the border and are located in a zone within range of the strike forces of the 1st Air Army. The extensive opportunities for dispersed basing and also the capability of concealing up to 500 aircraft (including all of the delivery aircraft) in reinforced concrete shelters make it difficult to destroy the aircraft at airfields with reinforced concrete shelters and also requires constantly keeping track of the enemy's air bases.

Enemy aviation is in a state of "military vigilance" combat readiness in which 30 percent of the aircraft can take off within 10 to 15 minutes, and up to 65 percent of the combat-ready aircraft can take off in 45 minutes; when converted to combat readiness /state/ orange or scarlet, up to 15 percent of the aircraft can take off in two to five minutes, and in 30 minutes, all of the combat-ready aircraft can take off.

The high combat readiness of the enemy's aviation dictates the necessity of increasing the combat readiness of the air army, and with the onset of combat actions, of delivering surprise massed strikes against the enemy's aviation at the airfields and of destroying it in air battles.

With a combat readiness coefficient of 0.8, in a nuclear strike the enemy can employ nearly 650 aircraft, of which up to 250 are delivery aircraft, and up to 600 aircraft with conventional means of destruction (excluding the nuclear reserve).

Air raids are most probable from the west (more than 400 aircraft) and northwest (up to 250 aircraft). It is expected

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that the enemy's massed air raids will be disposed in two or three echelons, primarily at low flight altitudes, and last 45 to 70 minutes.

To repel massed raids, it is necessary to provide for an allocation of considerable fighter aviation forces in the zones of independent search and for the capability of maneuvering the fighters along the axes.

Air Defense. In the front area, eight battalions of Hawk surface-to-air guided missiles, a Thunderbird regiment, five battalions of Nike-Hercules and approximately 160 fighters have been discovered. In addition, for repelling massed strikes, the enemy can allocate up to one-third of its tactical fighters (up to 180 aircraft).

To a depth of up to 150 kilometers along the state borders in the front zone, the enemy has established a zone of continuous cover by means of Hawk and Thunderbird surface-to-air systems; the entire Brown territory west of the HAMBURG-HANNOVER line is covered by the fire of Nike-Hercules battalions; fighter aviation will evidently offer resistance with its main forces beyond the zone of fire of the Hawk surface-to-air guided missiles.

Most reliably covered by air defense forces and means is the Ruhr area and the area of HANNOVER, ALFELD, and HAMELN; less densely covered is the JUTLAND axis.

Direct cover of ground forces large units is accomplished with low-altitude surface-to-air missile systems and light anti-aircraft artillery subunits. Most densely covered are the Brown forces. These means can fire effectively to 600 down to 300 meters, which must be taken into account when selecting a flight profile over the troops. To neutralize the air defense means of the enemy ground forces will require the participation of front rocket troops and artillery.

Operational-tactical missile site areas, airfields, and other important installations in the depth are under direct cover of surface-to-air missile systems and light anti-aircraft artillery subunits. Consequently, the organization of strikes against such installations requires allocating part of the aviation forces for the neutralization of the anti-aircraft means

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which directly cover the installations.

Electronic situation. The enemy has established a solid zone of radar detection and of control over antiaircraft means and aviation which enables him to detect our aircraft at medium altitudes at a distance of 200 to 250 kilometers and at low altitudes at 40 to 50 kilometers from the state border.

To disrupt the enemy's system of radar detection, warning, guidance, and control of air defense forces and aviation, it is necessary that long-range aviation, naval aviation, and electronic countermeasures units of the armies and the front neutralize, in cooperation with front rocket troops and artillery, the control and warning centers, control and warning posts, and the observation and warning posts on the axes of the strikes of our aviation.

To reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's radioelectronic warfare means it is necessary to provide for maneuvering communications channels at the control posts and on the aircraft of the air army and also for destroying these means as they are detected.

Concept of the combat actions of the air army in the front offensive operation.

Students in the capacity of air army commander report the concept of combat actions with respect to the following matters.

General notion of the decision: what enemy groupings; with what forces are /they/ to be defeated in the initial nuclear strike, while front troops are fulfilling the immediate and follow-up tasks, and while /the air army is/ participating in the air operation; the readiness of the air army for combat actions.

Procedure for fulfilling the assigned tasks:

a) Combat actions of the air army in the initial nuclear strike of the front: composition of forces and means of the air army, operational disposition, tasks of the echelons, objectives and time of actions, breaking through (overcoming) the enemy's defense; procedure of actions in the event of surprise nuclear attack;

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b) Combat actions of the air army in the first massed strike of the air operation -- the report will be drawn up in the same sequence;

c) The decision as to the fulfillment of the air army's tasks during the front offensive operation.

Text of the report (variant)

The forces of the air army, together with the forces of the Coastal Front, and in cooperation with the Combined Baltic Fleet, the 3rd Separate Bomber Corps of Long-Range Aviation, the 2nd Air Army, and the 5th and 6th corps of the Air Defense of the Country, will destroy the nuclear missile, aviation, and ground groupings of the enemy (Northern Army Group, 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force, and the troops and Allied Air Forces of Baltic Approaches) by employing 320 nuclear bombs and conventional means of destruction with an expenditure of 21 army sorties of front aviation and 150 regimental sorties of army aviation.

The 1st Air Army is to concentrate its main efforts: when employing nuclear weapons in the initial nuclear strike and in the follow-up nuclear destruction -- on the destruction of the main ground forces grouping and operational-tactical missiles of the Northern Army Group; when employing conventional means of destruction in the air operation and in the follow-up fire destruction -- on the destruction of the enemy's aviation and nuclear missile groupings and on the air support of front forces. Expenditure of nuclear warheads and flight resources: 200 nuclear bombs on the initial nuclear strike; 72 nuclear bombs, 11 army sorties of front aviation and 90 regimental sorties of army aviation on the immediate task of the front; 36 nuclear bombs, six army sorties of front aviation and 55 regimental sorties of army aviation during the follow-up task; keep in reserve 12 nuclear bombs and one army sortie.

The air army is to be ready for combat actions at 0500 hours 8 September.

In the initial nuclear strike of the front. The assigned tasks are to be fulfilled by the entire strength of the air army employing 200 nuclear bombs. In cooperation with front rocket

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troops, ten divisions of the enemy are to be destroyed and the destruction of the 2nd Pershing-1A Missile Wing, 650th and 150th Lance missile battalions, 24th and 50th Lance missile regiments, and the 450th Sergeant Battalion is to be completed; by itself it is to inflict damage on seven divisions, destroy the command posts of the Northern Army Group and the 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force, and destroy seven Nike-Hercules batteries and five of the enemy's nuclear warhead depots. In all, in the initial nuclear strike of the front, the air army will hit 26 targets, 17 of which are mobile.

The overcoming of the air defense, flight to the strike targets, and reconnaissance are to be carried out by exploiting the results of the nuclear strikes of the rocket troops (against 34 surface-to-air guided missile batteries, 11 airfields, four air defense and tactical aviation control and warning centers and posts) and of the strikes by air army forces with conventional means against air defense targets, by destroying enemy aircraft in the air with fighter aviation forces, by maximum use of electronic neutralization means, and by performing flights at low altitude with maneuvering in order to lower the effectiveness of the enemy's air defense means.

The air army is to be operationally disposed in two echelons and a reserve in the air of 15 delivery aircraft with nuclear bombs and two fighter regiments.

The first echelon (support), made up of the main forces of reconnaissance aviation, three fighter regiments, one fighter-bomber regiment, and the main forces of the 23rd Electronic Countermeasures Air Regiment, is to do the following in the period of LAUNCH plus 0.05 to LAUNCH plus 0.45: conduct reconnaissance of the targets of the initial nuclear strike and, by conventional means of destruction and jamming, neutralize, incapacitate, and destroy air defense installations in the flight zones and combat actions area of the air army. With fighter aviation forces it is to destroy enemy aircraft in the air in the area of /their/ home airfields.

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The second echelon (strike), made up of three bomber regiments, six fighter-bomber regiments, four fighter regiments, and part of the reconnaissance aviation forces, is to deliver a strike against the assigned targets in the period of LAUNCH plus 0.13 to LAUNCH plus 0.45 employing 200 nuclear bombs.

The reserve in the air: delivery aircraft with 15 nuclear bombs are to be in the prescribed area in readiness to strike newly detected targets or nuclear targets that have not been destroyed, and in readiness to deliver follow-up strikes; two fighter regiments are to be in the assigned on-alert zones for reinforcing the fighter aviation of the first and second echelons and for protecting the landing of our aircraft.

In the event of a surprise nuclear attack by the enemy, the air army's on-alert forces, employing 41 nuclear bombs (3 of 300; 19 of 200; 11 of 100; 3 of 20; and 5 of 10 kilotons), are to destroy the on-alert launchers of the 2nd Pershing-1A Missile Wing, the 650th and 150th Lance missile battalions, the 24th and 50th Lance missile regiments, and 450th Sergeant Battalion (7 of 200; 2 of 100; 3 of 20; and 5 of 10 kilotons); to hit the Brown 6th Motorized Infantry Division (2 of 200; 2 of 100 kilotons), 13th Motorized Infantry Division (2 of 100; 2 of 200 kilotons), 16th Tank Division (5 of 200 kilotons), and 7th Tank Division (2 of 200 kilotons), the Blue 1st Armored Division (3 of 300; 1 of 200 kilotons) and 4th Armored Division (5 of 100 kilotons). As the air army's units are brought to full combat readiness, the tasks assigned for the front initial nuclear strike are to be fulfilled.

In the first massed strike of the air operation, the main forces of the air army are to destroy: aircraft of the Brown 3rd Long-Range Aviation Regiment; the Blue air force command in the Federal Republic of Germany /FRG/, and the Lilac 1st Fighter-Bomber Wing at the airfields; the on-alert batteries of the 2nd Pershing-1A /Missile/ Wing, the 650th and 150th Lance missile battalions, the 24th and 50th Lance missile regiments, and the 450th Sergeant /missile/ battalion. Forces of the fighter aviation, in cooperation with the air defense troops of the front and the country, are to destroy enemy aircraft in air battles and blockade enemy fighter aviation airfields.

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To support the transit of the 3rd Separate Bomber Corps of Long-Range Aviation, the aviation of the Combined Baltic Fleet and the main forces of the air army are to break through the enemy's air defense in two zones: on the JUTLAND axis -- to the right -- STRALSUND and HUSUM; to the left -- NEUBRANDENBURG and CUXHAVEN; on the HANNOVER axis -- to the right -- SALZWEDEL and WALSRODE; to the left -- HELMSTEDT and HILDESHEIM. /This is to be done/ by exploiting the strikes of air army forces, front rocket troops and artillery, Long-Range Aviation, and Combined Baltic Fleet aviation against enemy air defense and radio-electronic means; by exploiting to the maximum electronic neutralization means of the air army and front, and by performing flights at low and maximally low altitudes executing anti-missile, antiaircraft, and anti-fighter aircraft maneuvers.

The air army is to be operationally disposed in three echelons:

The first echelon (support), made up of four fighter regiments, three fighter-bomber regiments, the main forces of reconnaissance aviation, and an electronic countermeasures regiment, from H /hour/ minus 0.03 to H plus 0.50 is to neutralize 17 Hawk and Thunderbird /missile/ batteries and 11 control and warning centers and posts, blockade three fighter airfields, destroy in air battle the enemy aircraft that have taken off, render the runways inoperative and mine 12 airfields, including four airfields against which the 3rd Separate Bomber Corps of Long-Range Aviation is to deliver a strike.

The second echelon (strike), made up of three bomber regiments, five fighter-bomber regiments, two fighter regiments, and part of the forces of reconnaissance aviation, in the period H plus 0.05 to H plus 0.45 is to destroy the on-alert launchers of the 2nd Pershing-1A Missile Wing, the 650th and 150th Lance missile battalions, the 24th and 50th Lance missile regiments, and of the 450th Sergeant Battalion, enemy aircraft at seven airfields, and enemy aircraft in air battles; and is to conduct air reconnaissance.

The third echelon, made up of three fighter regiments, is to augment the fighter forces of the first and second echelons and to safeguard the landing of air army aircraft.

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In the event of a surprise massed raid by enemy aviation employing conventional means of destruction, all combat-ready forces are to become airborne. The main efforts of the air army are to concentrate on repelling the enemy air raid; to deliver strikes against planned and newly-detected missile/nuclear means and air defense installations and to render inoperative the runways at airfields having reinforced concrete shelters. Strikes against aircraft at airfields are to be delivered from the zones of airborne alert upon receipt of air reconnaissance data that aircraft have landed at them.

is/ : During the offensive operation of the front /the air army

-- to continue covering the troops and rear installations of the front in cooperation with the air defense troops of the front and the country. The flight resources of air army fighter aviation for the immediate task of front troops are 66 regimental sorties;

-- to conduct a continuous search for and destroy the enemy's missile/nuclear means with the 8th Fighter-Bomber Regiment in the zone of the 4th Army, with the 2nd Fighter-Bomber Regiment in the zone of the 7th Army, and with the 6th Bomber Division over the entire zone of the front by the expenditure of 16 regimental sorties of front aviation;

-- to destroy enemy aviation at the airfields and in the air in its basing area by the expenditure of 27 regimental sorties of front aviation;

-- to provide air support to the troops and nuclear strikes in support of the operations of the armies with the expenditure of 55 regimental sorties of front aviation, 90 regimental sorties of army aviation, and 26 nuclear bombs;

-- to destroy and neutralize the enemy's operational reserves by the expenditure of 30 regimental sorties of front aviation;

-- to concentrate the efforts of air reconnaissance on detecting missile/nuclear means, home airfields, and ground forces groupings, primarily in support of the initial nuclear strike of the front.

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Students in the capacity of air army commanders are to report the following using the training material for Lesson No. 4: the tasks of the air large units and units and the instructions of the air army commander on the basing of the air army, on the organization of cooperation and control; and on radioelectronic warfare.

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