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1 April 1963  
OCI No. 1230/63

MEMORANDUM FOR: PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTER-AGENCY DISCUSSION GROUP

SUBJECT : Nuclear Missile Weapons in Soviet Planning of Theater War Operations

FROM : [Redacted] CIA/DDI Research Staff

1. At a meeting of the Informal Inter-Agency Discussion Group, held on 25 March at the RAND Corporation, the problem of Soviet thought and planning for theater warfare was aired. In the course of the discussion, following Dr. [Redacted] presentation, the chairman raised the question: does Soviet military doctrine assign a leading or supporting role to nuclear missile units of a front. In responding to the question, I said that according to Soviet doctrine the planning of operations of ground divisions is based on the role, mission and estimated capabilities of the nuclear missile units of front commands; and that, consequently, NIE 11-14 of 5 December 1962, "Capabilities of the Soviet Theater Forces," is incorrect in characterizing nuclear/missile weapons of a front as "support" elements "geared to" motorized armored and ground forces. (See p. 13 of the Estimate.) This phraseology, I maintained, puts the cart before the horse and does not take account of a fundamental change that has taken place in Soviet doctrine. (I am not making a judgment here on the actual capabilities of Soviet tactical nuclear/missile weapons, but on Doctrine.) I assured the participants in the discussion, some of whom took issue with my viewpoint, that I would substantiate my argument with evidence from the IRONBARK materials. This memorandum serves that purpose. The fact that every school of thought reflected in the IRONBARK materials is represented by the passages cited below strongly suggests a unity of views on the matter.

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2. Lt. General V. Baskakov, Top Secret MILITARY  
THOUGHT No. 1, 1960:

/Nuclear Missile weapons/ cannot and must not be used any longer as a means of supporting the operations of divisions of ground troops. Nuclear weapons must be considered and used as an independent and decisive means of defeating the enemy.

It is not for supporting a partial advance of this or that division and neutralizing an ordinary strongpoint that these weapons must be used, but for defeating the main forces of the enemy, and first and foremost the means of nuclear attack.

3. Major General I. Zavyalov, Top Secret MILITARY  
THOUGHT, No. 1, 1960:

Under modern conditions operations by missile troops and nuclear/missile strikes on the enemy will form the basis of the troop combat activities designed to fulfill the tasks of an operation and to attain its goals. If the missile troops and nuclear weapons are allotted the main role in an operation, the methods and sequence of use of these missiles must form the basis of the plan, which aims at inflicting decisive destruction on the basic groupings of the enemy. In accordance with and bearing in mind the possible results of nuclear strikes, it is necessary to determine the sequence and methods of operations by the infantry, tanks, and other means of armed combat in order to exploit these results to the fullest for the final destruction of the enemy.

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Questions concerning the planning of an operation, which must be based on the use of nuclear weapons, should be resolved in the same fashion. This position provokes objection from no one. However, in practice, during our exercises, the reverse is often done: operations by the infantry and the tanks are made the basis of the plans in these cases, while nuclear weapons are seen as means for their reinforcement and support.

Under modern conditions, nuclear weapons alone, without the aid of other means of combat, are able to inflict such losses on the enemy that they can seriously reduce and even completely deprive his basic groupings of combat ability and can thus ensure a correlation of forces advantageous to us. Therefore, in determining the direction of the main strike, it is now necessary to begin by considering the possibilities offered by the most effective use not of the infantry or of the tanks, but primarily of the nuclear weapons.

4. Colonel General G. Khetagurov, Top Secret MILITARY THOUGHT, No. 2, 1960:

A detailed elaboration of the questions of the use of front nuclear/missile weapons will now form the basis for the planning of a front operation. We must proceed from the fact that with the modern scale of use of nuclear/missile weapons, they can no longer be considered only as a means of supporting the combat operations of the troops. Within the framework of the front, this weapon now becomes the primary and decisive means of combat which determines the possibility of the fulfillment of the majority of the tasks of an offensive operation. Therefore, the

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concept of the delivery of front (army) nuclear/missile strikes appears to be the most important pivotal element of decision and plan of the operation. The operations of division ground troops must be planned in conformity with the selected method of the use of the nuclear/missile weapon and not the reverse.

5. Colonel General Ye. Ivanov, Top Secret MILITARY THOUGHT, No. 2, 1960:

Only after deciding all the problems connected with the use of nuclear/missile weapons do operations of the remaining forces and weapons of the front, combined-arms formations and large units, conventional field artillery, aviation, and other arms of troops and special troops become reflected in the plan of the operation.

6. General A. Zhadov, Top Secret MILITARY THOUGHT, No. 2, 1961:

...Large units of combined arms (tank and motorized rifle divisions), other arms of troops, and aviation will as a rule, successfully carry out their tasks only if the results of missile-nuclear strikes are ably utilized. Specifically, during battles and engagements these strikes will be the main means of destroying the enemy. There is no need to prove the truth of this statement.

The role of tank troops in achieving the goals of a battle, an operation and of the war as a whole will be great, but this role should be examined from the point of view of effectively utilizing the results of missile-nuclear strikes, for these in the final analysis constitute the principal force for the destruction of the enemy.

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7. Marshal of Artillery S. Varentsov, Top Secret  
MILITARY THOUGHT, No. 2, 1961:

It is generally acknowledged that firepower (ogon) has become the deciding factor in an operation, determining its planning, the sequence in which it is conducted, its course and its final results. The main constituent of modern firepower, understood in the broad sense, is nuclear strikes directed against the most important enemy troop formations, against his nuclear weapons, his communications centers, his control posts, and the objectives in his rear area.

A modern front has various means of delivering nuclear strikes. These can be provisionally divided into two groups: the nuclear-missile weapons of the ground troops and airborne (aviatsionnyy) nuclear weapons (in combined operations involving a front and a fleet there will be a third group - naval nuclear weapons). The first group - the nuclear missile weapons of the ground troops - plays the decisive role in front and army links (zveno). This is confirmed by an analysis of the capabilities of the various delivery vehicles (nositel) for nuclear charges (zaryad), by the level of missile technology which has been reached, and by the perspectives of the further development of armament which have been projected.

8. Colonel General V. Chizh, Top Secret MILITARY  
THOUGHT, No. 3, 1961:

The enormous role of the new means of combat, which they can play in a future war, requires a new approach to the planning of their use. With the modern scales of using nuclear/missile weapons, they should not be looked upon as a means for supporting

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the combat operations of ground troops. Now, these weapons are the main and decisive means of combat, determining the possibility of accomplishing the majority of the tasks confronting the troops of a front in an offensive operation. Consequently, problems of the employment of nuclear weapons play a determining role in the planning of a front offensive operation.

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