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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 November 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Cooperation Between a Front and a Fleet in Protection Against Weapons of Mass Destruction During an Offensive on a Coastal Axis

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 defines the areas of cooperation required to protect ground and naval forces from the effects of nuclear weapons in an offensive. The cooperative measures include observation of nuclear bursts, a unified information system utilizing a common grid system for mutual warning and exchange of information, reconnaissance, coordinated deployment, and medical assistance. The author recommends designating full-strength units reinforced with special units to eliminate the aftereffects of nuclear strikes and to assist in decontaminating fleet shore units. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (75) for 1965. [redacted]

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. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned [redacted]

William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

[redacted]

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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

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DATE 11 November 1975

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Cooperation Between a Front and a Fleet in Protection Against Weapons of Mass Destruction During an Offensive on a Coastal Axis

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (75) for 1965 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel V. Chagorov. This article defines the areas of cooperation required to protect ground and naval forces from the effects of nuclear weapons in an offensive. The cooperative measures include observation of nuclear bursts, a unified information system utilizing a common grid system for mutual warning and exchange of information, reconnaissance, coordinated deployment, and medical assistance. The author recommends designating full-strength units reinforced with special units to eliminate the aftereffects of nuclear strikes and to assist in decontaminating fleet shore units.

End of Summary

[redacted] Comment:

The SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970. [redacted]

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Cooperation Between a Front and a Fleet in Protection Against Weapons of Mass Destruction During an Offensive on a Coastal Axis

by

Colonel V. Chagorov

A front offensive operation on a coastal axis may be carried out for the purpose of routing an opposing enemy grouping and securing strategically important coastal areas, islands, straits, and naval bases. The operation will begin with the first nuclear strike by strategic missiles, and possibly by the forces of the front, against the nuclear attack means, naval basing points, aircraft and the ground forces grouping of the enemy.

We must assume that the enemy will also respond with nuclear strikes, some of which will come from the direction of the sea. Thus, in the first two to three days a carrier-based strike large unit of the US Navy is capable of delivering a total of up to 280 nuclear strikes, of which up to one-third would be against nuclear means and the ground forces grouping.

The simultaneous destruction of all enemy missile/nuclear means, particularly missile-carrying submarines and carrier-based strike large units, can prove to be difficult. In addition, other ship groupings will offer resistance to offensives by front troops and a fleet. Under such conditions, the efficient execution of measures to protect the troops against weapons of mass destruction, along with the destruction of enemy missile/nuclear means, one of the primary tasks of an offensive operation, can significantly reduce the effectiveness of the employment of nuclear weapons by the enemy. Hence, it is especially important to organize cooperation between a front and a fleet on the main problems of protecting the troops against weapons of mass destruction. This is verified by the experience of exercises.

The observation of nuclear bursts, the determination of their type and yield, as well as the identification of areas that have been subjected to attack and contamination by radioactive materials and biological warfare means must be organized on the basis of a prior agreement between the staffs of the front and the fleet and, if necessary, on the basis of the precise delimitation of areas or zones to be observed.

We may assume that as a result of reciprocal nuclear strikes, there will be extensive zones of destruction and of radioactive, chemical and bacteriological contamination. The commands of the front and the fleet will require a great deal of time and effort to examine the situation which has developed and make a decision since communications may be disrupted, many control posts put out of action, and since the troops will suffer great losses.

It is fully understandable that it would be impossible to manage without mutual warning and the exchange of information and without cooperation among the branch arms of the front, the staff of the front, and the fleet and its staff. At the present time such information is relayed by radio, telephone and telegraph (with the necessary communications security measures).

It seems to us that a unified information system which would be acceptable for the strategic rocket forces, the air defense forces, the navy and the ground forces must be developed for large units and units of the branch arms and for formations and large units of branches of the armed forces participating in an operation. In our view, it is advisable to have appropriate information organs within computation and analysis stations or the operations directorates and departments of staffs of branches of the armed forces which would be linked by radio and telephone and have standardized information plotting boards or maps with a common coded grid. Until now each branch of the armed forces has been using its own map coding system: the Air Defense Forces of the Country -- a single warning grid; the navy -- a graticule grid; and the ground forces -- coded grid squares.

In an attempt to study this particular problem, the department of chemical troops of our army developed a map plotting board (having a scale of 1:500,000) on which are drawn the warning grid of the Air Defense Forces of the Country, the azimuthal information grid of the navy and the coding of the ground forces. Although this map plotting board has not yet been tested in joint exercises, we believe that it may be used satisfactorily for the mutual exchange of information.

If common plotting boards and continuously operating radio communications are available, information can be transmitted or received in the shortest possible periods of time.

Although all staffs and headquarters are involved in forecasting radiation conditions, we believe that close cooperation is also required on problems of radiation, chemical and bacteriological reconnaissance. In

particular, the lines and areas where radiation, chemical and bacteriological reconnaissance is to be conducted should be precisely determined, and the exact procedure for the mutual transmission and reception of data, especially from aerial radiation reconnaissance, should be established. This is dictated by the fact that contaminated areas may be extremely large and will require a great deal of forces and means to reconnoiter. At the same time, it is possible that a front and a fleet may spend their time carrying out radiation reconnaissance of the same nuclear ground burst if it occurs in a coastal zone where ships are based and shore units and installations are located.

Because of the increased number of small nuclear warheads in service with the ground forces and the navy, the dispersal of battle formations is becoming even more essential to the conduct of combat actions, and the front and the fleet require more space on sea and land. Therefore, to prevent bunching and to better use the protective features of the terrain and of the routes for maneuvering, it is necessary to coordinate the deployment and the actions of front troops and the fleet shore units in the coastal zone.

Cooperation in carrying out sanitary-hygienic and preventive measures will be organized in the event that the enemy uses biological warfare means and centers of infection appear. The mutual exchange of information and, possibly, practical assistance by preventive means and medical units can be required. In addition, questions of rendering mutual medical assistance in the event of massed nuclear strikes and the use of chemical weapons and biological warfare means should be coordinated.

The front and the fleet will repeatedly be faced with the problem of eliminating the aftereffects of the employment of weapons of mass destruction by the enemy in order to quickly restore the combat effectiveness of units and subunits and create conditions under which they can successfully carry out their tasks. The nature of these basic measures can be found in the Field Service Regulations. However, some commanders erroneously believe that only the chemical troops are concerned with the elimination of aftereffects. This may be explained by the fact that during exercises the chemical service has been overzealous in decontaminating troops at decontamination stations. There is no question that this is an important measure, but the elimination of the aftereffects of enemy employment of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction does not involve only the decontamination of troops. It is a very complex set of measures aimed at restoring the combat effectiveness of troops.

We therefore are convinced that the outdated concept of "elimination of aftereffects" must be replaced by the concept of "restoration of the combat effectiveness of troops and elimination of the aftereffects of the enemy employment of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons". This will serve to direct the attention of command personnel to the fact that the completion of the subsequent tasks of an operation depends upon the restoration of the combat effectiveness of the troops. In fact, in the system of combat and operational training and troop exercises we pay very little attention to training in the restoration of combat effectiveness and the elimination of the aftereffects of enemy employment of means of mass destruction.

The common nature of all measures available for protection against weapons of mass destruction in a front and in a fleet, as well as enemy capabilities for devastating enormous areas, permit us to conclude that cooperation between a front and a fleet on problems of protection is extremely necessary. Well-organized cooperation and mutual assistance in restoring the combat effectiveness of troops and in eliminating aftereffects provide the front and the fleet with more combat-effective units and subunits and intensify the force of a strike during a front offensive operation. "Restore combat effectiveness and carry out the task", even under conditions in which the enemy employs weapons of mass destruction, must be the guiding principle for commanders at all levels.

Restoration of the combat effectiveness of troops and elimination of the aftereffects of enemy employment of weapons of mass destruction is carried out, as a rule, by the forces and means of troops that have been subjected to the action of such weapons, without interrupting the performance of their combat task. Each commander must first take all measures necessary to restore control and the combat effectiveness of his unit or subunit and organize procedures for rendering assistance to casualties.

According to existing views, elimination of the aftereffects of an enemy strike in centers of severe destruction is carried out by the motorized rifle, chemical, engineer, medical, and other subunits that usually are assigned after an enemy strike is delivered. Experience gained in exercises shows that the control of such diverse subunits is extremely difficult and, in practice, they are uncontrolled. A great deal of time must be spent in organizing their joint actions.

In many exercises the elimination of the aftereffects of strikes was the responsibility of the deputy commander of a large unit who, in a

majority of cases, assigned the task personally, making the rounds of all the special units and subunits, in order to avoid spending time assembling the commanders of these units. When work starts in a center of destruction, each unit and subunit operates independently since it is very difficult to organize control of them without the appropriate communications means.

In our view, for this purpose it is desirable to designate full-strength units, for example, a motorized rifle regiment, and reinforce them with engineer, medical and chemical units and subunits. In this case the commander of the regiment can independently organize work in two or three centers of destruction to rescue and assist casualties.

In organizing cooperation, a front must plan to assist a fleet with its motorized rifle, engineer, medical and chemical units in the event that nuclear or chemical strikes are delivered, or biological warfare means used, against shore installations and fleet bases. The experience of exercises shows that sometimes only special units will be required to offer mutual assistance. For example, in the TAYFUN exercise the combined-arms army assigned a chemical defense battalion to decontaminate fleet shore units.

Cooperation of a front and a fleet in protection against weapons of mass destruction is, in our opinion, a prerequisite to the successful conduct of a front offensive operation on a coastal axis. Therefore, proper attention should be devoted in troop and command-staff exercises to studying the basic problems involved and finding practical solutions to them.