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1638

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

26 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Bringing the Troops of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness

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, based on experience in the Baltic Military District, explores certain aspects of the problem of bringing the troops of a border military district to full combat readiness for immediate operations at the beginning of a war. Because of limitations imposed by the threat of detection, any advance preparations such as deployment of missile units should be handled under the pretense of exercises with strict prohibition on electronic emissions. The troops may be brought to combat readiness in two stages, and continuous control may be maintained through operations groups and backup control centers. This article appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962. [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

[redacted]

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Intelligence Information Special Report

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Mid-1962

DATE 26 April 1976

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Bringing the Troops of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel V. Prokhorov. This article, based on experience in the Baltic Military District, explores certain aspects of the problem of bringing the troops of a border military district to full combat readiness for immediate operations at the beginning of a war. Because of the limitations on advance measures imposed by the threat of detection, any advance preparations such as deployment of missile units should be handled under the pretense of exercises with strict prohibition on electronic emissions. The author recommends that the troops be brought to combat readiness in two stages to reduce the time required to move them out of garrisons and into battle formations. Time also may be saved by employing a collective-call notification system, as opposed to successive notification down the chain of command, and moving troops to dispositions within a front without using intermediate concentration areas. Continuous control may be maintained through operations groups and backup control centers.

End of Summary

Comment:

After 1962 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.

Bringing the Troops of a Border Military District to Combat Readiness

by

Colonel V. Prokhorov

The principles of high combat readiness of the troops of a border military district, who must begin operations without delay at the beginning of a war, are set down in peacetime. Nevertheless, even the border troops require a certain period for the transition from the routine of peacetime life to the initial status for the start of vigorous combat actions.

Under present-day conditions it is hardly possible to count upon a drawn-out period of threat during which the troops could bring themselves to full combat readiness. It is more likely that the troops of a border military district must be ready for the sudden unleashing of a war by the aggressor. At the same time it is impossible to maintain the troops continuously in the initial status for an offensive or in readiness for a march without prematurely revealing their grouping and the concept of the forthcoming operation, without depriving them of the opportunity to participate in combat training and, finally, simply depriving them of the conditions of normal life and relaxation over a long period of time.

Consequently, to bring the troops of a border military district to full combat readiness under all conditions, it is necessary to adopt a large number of measures which vary in both their nature and periods of execution. Some of these may be carried out in advance, even in peacetime, while others may be performed in the event of an immediate threat of an enemy attack.

We should note first of all that the specific content of these measures will be influenced by the operational assignment of the troops of a district, by the distance separating the district territory from the state border and from the line of possible encounter with the enemy's ground forces groupings, by the characteristics of the theater of military operations as well as by certain other conditions. In this article we will have in mind, first of all, a military district which is contiguous to probable enemy countries or is located a short distance from them, which will permit the troops of a district (front) to go into action immediately.

The troops of a border military district are brought to full combat readiness for the purpose of establishing the grouping provided for in the operational plan and for the purpose of deploying all support organs. For this purpose, as is known, the missile large units and units are deployed in siting areas ready to immediately deliver strikes against the enemy: the aviation is made ready to engage enemy manned and unmanned aircraft in the air, to strike ground targets and, first of all, to become airborne in order to avoid destruction, maneuvering partially to alternate airfields; the large units and units of the ground forces are brought with their mobile materiel reserves from the permanent deployment points; the field air defense plan is changed, control post sites are shifted, field reconnaissance is placed under combat operating routine, and the operational rear is deployed.

All large units, units, control posts, and main facilities are removed from their permanent deployment areas in the expectation of a nuclear strike by the enemy which, it must be assumed, will be planned against targets that have been reconnoitered in peacetime. This movement of forces will be, in its way, an anti-nuclear maneuver. A fundamental change in the grouping of district troops, carried out rapidly while the troops are being brought to full combat readiness, will help achieve the purpose of operational camouflage and in itself will reduce the value of the reconnaissance data collected by the enemy before the war. The additional simulation of the axes of relocation of combined-arms large units and the display of dummy rocket troop siting areas and tank concentrations will prove most effective during this period, since enemy reconnaissance will hastily designate the targets for nuclear strikes and there will be no time to recheck them.

In our opinion, the most important requirements for bringing troops to full combat readiness are the following.

First, it must be accomplished in the shortest possible time. It cannot be begun on a full scale in advance, during a period of tense military-political conditions or when there is a period of threat, since the mass movement of troops will obviously be detected by enemy reconnaissance within a few hours and will serve as a signal to him to accelerate his delivery of a strike. In addition, the longer large units and units remain in their field areas of concentration, the greater will be the probability that the enemy will strike them with nuclear weapons. But the shifting of concentration areas is not desirable since this brings about a disruption in the grouping of troops that has been established for the offensive.

The completion of measures to bring the troops of a district to full combat readiness under those conditions most difficult for us -- in the case of a sudden enemy attack -- must be accomplished at that moment when the first indications are revealed that the enemy is initiating a nuclear attack. Thus, modern means of radio reconnaissance and the radar detection of air targets make it possible to detect the flight of large forces of enemy strategic bombers toward our state borders within at least one hour before they cross the border, while the flight of tactical aviation and cruise missiles can be detected within 30 minutes before they cross the border. Since three-fourths of the enemy's nuclear warheads will still be delivered to target by aviation, we may assume that one hour is the minimum time that will be available to the military district troop commander to bring his troops to full combat readiness.

Second, extreme security measures must be taken to delay as long as possible enemy detection of the movement of troops from their permanent deployment areas. The chief means of maintaining this security are the timely preparation of the troops for making the maneuver, the rapid movement of the troops to concentration areas in the field, and the dispersal of troops within these areas.

And, third, it is necessary to carefully take into consideration the radiation situation which may occur after a massed nuclear attack by the enemy. An analysis of the exercises conducted by the NATO command in the last three years shows that our probable enemy almost never uses nuclear ground bursts in zones up to 200 kilometers from the state border and that beginning only at this point and deeper does he attempt to create widespread zones of nuclear contamination. Therefore, the main body of troops of a district, including the large units and formations that have been designated to act as reserves, should move closer to the border, to a distance no greater than 200 kilometers from it. Depending upon average wind speed and direction, the district staff may provide additional forecasts of the radiation situation and give instructions to the troops on changes in areas of concentration, if there is a danger that the previously designated areas will be subject to radioactive contamination.

The rocket troops of the border military district (front) may take part in the initial nuclear strike conducted by the strategic rocket forces. Their main targets will be the enemy's operational-tactical nuclear attack means, control posts, and tank large units and units, that is, they will be mainly those targets which will be located in a certain area for a relatively short period of time. The certain destruction of these targets is possible only after careful final reconnaissance

immediately before the strike.

An analysis of the grouping of NATO forces in peacetime in the Northern European and Central European theaters of military operations shows that the operational-tactical nuclear attack means of the probable enemy, the tactical aviation and units armed with Redstone missiles and Mace and Matador cruise missiles, and the major staffs and aviation control centers are located no closer than 200 kilometers from the border. Tank large units and units are located approximately 120 kilometers from the border or farther. Tactical missiles and nuclear artillery should not represent the primary targets for the initial nuclear strike by the rocket troops of a district, since they may be committed to action by the enemy only in the course of an operation. Consequently, if we take into consideration the distance to the enemy targets, we can use for the initial strike only missiles having considerable range (R-300, KR-500, and, in part, the R-170).

If we assume that our missile large units in peacetime are situated 150 to 200 kilometers from the border and their siting areas will be 50 to 90 kilometers from the border, then three to five hours will be required for their movement to and deployment within siting areas. Therefore the missile units participating in the initial nuclear strike should deploy in advance, before the general combat alert signal is given. This can be done under the pretense of training exercises.

In the air army in peacetime, one hour is sufficient for the purpose of bringing the large units and units to a ready condition and getting them airborne from the main airfields. In this case the nuclear weapons delivery aircraft and their support forces will be able to participate in the initial strike. As the remaining aviation units become ready for take-off they should be moved to the dispersal airfields in the field. However, the aviation rear units needed to receive aircraft and prepare them for subsequent combat sorties cannot arrive at these airfields within one hour.

In order to create the necessary conditions for the dispersal of the aviation, it would be advantageous to send small advance teams from the aviation rear units to all alternate airfields with means of communications and materiel-technical support as well as enough reserves of fuel and ammunition for one combat sortie. These teams could maintain the airfields in operating condition and support the landing and preparation of aircraft for flight, even if only for a time period just somewhat longer than that required at the main airfields. In our opinion, such advance teams should

not be kept at the alternate airfields on a continuing basis, otherwise these fields could be prematurely revealed to the enemy.

Alternate airfields can be prepared more rapidly if some unit or subunit is detached to each of them in advance from the servicing units of the district's ground forces and sometimes from the combined-arms large units that have been designated to act as reserve. This is especially necessary in the winter when a large number of vehicles and personnel are required to clear the airfields of snow.

The surface-to-air missile units and radiotechnical units of the district's air defense troops might also be deployed at new positions in advance, but this must be done very carefully since their activities involve a significant amount of electromagnetic radiation produced by the numerous electronic devices; this radiation can be used by enemy reconnaissance to rapidly fix the movement of these units. Of course, the air defense system of a border district must be set up even in peacetime in conformity with the concept of the deployment of troops for participation in the first operation. Its survivability in this case is ensured by the periodic relocation of large units and units, by the strictest observance of the established operating routine for radiotechnical and electronic devices, and by prohibiting reserve units from conducting combat work at deployment points in peacetime. However, when the time comes for secretly bringing a district's troops to combat readiness, some units of the air defense troops, in our opinion, will, in any case, have to move and be strictly forbidden from producing emissions into space.

If there are formations or large units of the air defense forces of the country in the territory of the district, everything that has been said above also applies to them. It is impossible to believe that the surface-to-air missile units and radiotechnical units of the air defense forces of the country will be able to carry out their task of repelling the enemy's initial air strike unless they are able to maneuver in anticipation of this strike.

The ground forces of a front also require a certain amount of preparation in order to be able to move from their permanent deployment points within one hour of the combat alert signal. The most complex and time-consuming process in this preparation is the loading of units of fire and mobile reserves of all types onto combat and transport vehicles.

For example, in a tank division it is necessary to load approximately 340 tanks with ammunition. Depending upon local conditions, it is the

general rule that no more than one company of a tank regiment, that is, 30 tanks, can be loaded at the same time. Practice has shown that 10 to 15 minutes are required for the complete process of moving each group of vehicles into a depot, loading them with ammunition using a wide variety of mechanized means, and driving them away from the depot. This process would take from two to 2.5 hours for an entire division. But in most cases ammunition depots are located five to 10 kilometers from military garrisons, and if the route of travel to them does not coincide with the direction to the concentration areas, an additional expenditure of time is unavoidable.

In addition, each tank must be supplied with machinegun belts and the required number of grenades, and spare fuel tanks or containers must be loaded. Up to 40 to 50 minutes are spent for the complete preparation of one tank for travel. If we consider that a combat alert may be signalled at night, when at least another 30 minutes will be required for the officers to assemble from their quarters, then the first tank subunits will only be ready to move from their permanent deployment points to the concentration areas in one to 1.5 hours, and the other subunits -- within two to 2.5 hours.

The rear units of a division will not be able to begin moving until even later, in fact -- within 2.5 to three hours, since they will not load the ordinary types of mobile reserves and special equipment until after they have completed loading the combat units. And there are relatively few personnel for these jobs. All means for the mechanization of loading operations in the special equipment depots must be used in order to accelerate the preparation of rear units for a move. All depots should be equipped with platforms so that cargo may be rolled out to load vehicles from above and need not be raised from the floor into the vehicle bodies. Large spare parts and some heavy items of engineer equipment should be loaded by means of hoists mounted on platforms. Standard-weight containers should be used for small loose stores, right up to steel helmets. Rations must be stored in suitable containers also of approximately standard weight.

Calculations show that, without preliminary preparation for movement to field areas of concentration, large units of the ground forces may require from 2.5 to three hours to leave their permanent deployment points, even if they are well organized to respond to a combat alert and the personnel have received sufficient training. The overwhelming part of this time is spent on loading ammunition into tanks. Therefore, if the tanks in large units that are in constant combat readiness were to be loaded, even

in peacetime, with ammunition, additional fuel reserves, and other items, then the tank battalions would be able to leave their military garrisons in 40 to 50 minutes. Practice has verified this.

Motorized rifle battalions can leave their garrisons in the same time, but the loading of mobile reserves into regimental and divisional transport requires a longer period of time. In fact, about 250 vehicles must be loaded with ammunition in a motorized rifle division. If 30 vehicles can be loaded at one time and they can be loaded with ammunition in 10 minutes, then the loading of the division's entire motor transport would require 1.5 hours and this transport would be able to leave for the area of concentration in two hours at best. When there is a period of threat, all mobile reserves can be loaded in advance on the division's motor transport and it could then leave the military garrison within one hour.

Checks of combat readiness have shown that up to one hour is required for the notification and assembly of the officers of large units. It appears this time cannot be shortened easily. It is therefore desirable that officers be brought to barracks status early.

Field control posts also cannot be deployed in a one-hour period, since a considerably greater time is required for the movement of communications subunits from their permanent deployment areas to these posts.

The deployment of the operational rear should be initiated early. First of all, materiel reserves should be dispersed and moved close to the first operational echelon of the troops. Obviously, the simplest thing to do would be to move out onto the ground those branches of the district's permanent depots that can be deployed to forward front bases in the course of an offensive operation. It is also necessary to complete all preparatory work for rapid deployment, on the basis of a combat alert signal, of the system providing the troops with road support.

It is our view that, on the whole, the troops of a district should be brought to full combat readiness in two stages, establishing respectively two levels of troop combat readiness. These levels are of an operational nature and should not be identified with the technical levels of readiness that have been established in the rocket troops and in aviation combat units. The latter characterize the readiness of each type of combat equipment for action and are wholly determined by the properties of that specific system. In addition, the technical levels of readiness are applied, as is known, after a given unit or large unit has already been

brought to full combat readiness and is located in its siting areas or combat airfields but has not yet received the signal to act.

The first (increased) level of combat readiness of the troops of a district, which should be established in the event of a worsening of the military-political situation, consists of the concealed execution of all preparatory measures in large units and units under the pretense of exercises or ordinary combat training. These measures will enable the troops, upon receipt of instructions (a signal) to go to full readiness, to move rapidly and in an organized manner from their military garrisons, and will permit the units of the rocket troops and front aviation to prepare to deliver the initial strike or repel an enemy attack.

The chief measures in bringing the troops to increased combat readiness may be to bring all officers to barracks status; to appoint a duty officer from the command personnel who could independently and rapidly make decisions under emergency conditions; and to prepare combat vehicles, including the launchers of the rocket troops as well as transport vehicles with all mobile materiel reserves, for immediate deployment to the areas of concentration.

The units of the rocket troops designated to participate in the initial strike will occupy their siting areas and establish an alert status for combat.

The aviation large units will designate subunits on alert which will be in No. 1 and No. 2 readiness status, and advance teams will be sent out to prepare alternate dispersal airfields to receive and service aircraft.

At the same time, the operational control posts, that is, the command posts and rear control posts of the district and armies, must be made ready to function. As for the control posts of the divisions, it seems to us that they should be completely mobile and should not require advance deployment, particularly in a border district.

Under the increased level of combat readiness, combined-arms large units should disperse as though conducting exercises, but they should remain in the vicinity of the points of deployment for the purpose of receiving subsequent signals and conserving the fuel and engine mileage reserves of their vehicles. On the other hand, the aviation large units should limit their combat training flights for the same reasons.

The second (full) level of combat readiness of the troops of a district involves the movement of large units and units to their concentration areas and staffs to their field control posts, which will permit them to maintain their combat effectiveness at the moment of an enemy nuclear strike and immediately transform them into mobile, highly maneuverable groupings capable of conducting an offensive at a high rate of speed or making long marches to the front line. It is important that the large units and units of the ground forces arrive at their areas of concentration with full or even greater mobile materiel reserves which will be sufficient to conduct a battle for a period of three to four days. The troops should move from the status of increased readiness to that of full combat readiness on the basis of a combat alert signal, and in our opinion this should not require more than one hour.

Thus, the successive steps of bringing troops first to increased readiness and then to full combat readiness, even if there is only a short time interval between them, will significantly reduce the time required to move the troops from their permanent deployment areas.

Undoubtedly the situation may occur in which the district will not be able to successively bring all of its troops to combat readiness in advance, before the initiation of a war. It may be necessary to bring the troops immediately to full combat readiness and complete this task in the very first hours of the war. Under such conditions a certain part of the troops may be subjected to enemy strikes at their permanent deployment points, certain junctions of the transportation system will be knocked out of action, and sections of the terrain may become contaminated with radioactivity. The deployment of troops will be hampered and delayed.

However, even under such complex conditions the troops must move to a status of full combat readiness and begin carrying out their assigned combat tasks in the shortest period of time. Here an important role will be played by the efficient organization by large unit and unit commanders of further reconnaissance of the routes of movement, the repair of damage to them as well as the revision of deployment lines or assembly areas and the rapid elimination of the aftereffects of enemy nuclear strikes. In any case the commanders must immediately dispatch advance guards and combat groups to carry out the assigned combat task and at the same time restore the combat effectiveness of the units and subunits that have been struck.

A reliable system of notification is extremely important in reducing the period required to bring the troops to full combat readiness. The notification of formations, large units and units located in separate

garrisons can be organized only by technical means of communications. Sound signals using sirens, horns, or loudspeakers are best used within the large units and units located in one garrison.

One shortcoming of the technical means of communications and the personnel that man them has been until now the use of the principle of successive notification of troops along the chain of command. The signal passes over the communications means in turn from district staff to army staff, then to division staff, and finally reaches the staff of the regiment, the subunits of which are usually located in one garrison and are notified by sound signals.

Experience has shown that two to three minutes are required for the transmission of a signal at each of these levels if the staff duty officer does not have to obtain special instructions from the formation commander or commander for the further transmission of the signal to subordinates, in which case another three to five minutes are required. Thus, if the notification passes from duty officer to duty officer, six to nine minutes are required for the signal to pass from the district staff to the regimental staff, but if the notification must pass through the formation commanders and commanders, 15 to 25 minutes are required. If the signal is transmitted over wire communications means, this time is increased by a factor of one and one half or two, depending upon the number of switchboards making up the communications channel.

A system of collective-call notification of troops is much faster: a powerful radio station in the district staff transmits the signal simultaneously to all subordinate staffs (of formations, large units and units) without passing through the intermediate levels. Consequently, the signal will be received by all regiments within two to three minutes. If the missile large units are in dispersed locations, each of their units should receive the radio signal independently.

For the purpose of collective-call notification, it will suffice for each unit to have a radio receiver tuned to the notification waveband. If the district staff uses internal signalling for the transmission of commands from the duty officer directly to the duty radio operator in the main radio room, the collective-call notification of the troops will require no more than one minute. But even this is not the limit. The district staff duty officer could press a button which would remotely activate an automatic transmitter of the coded notification signal; this signal would immediately trigger automatic siren sound systems located in each unit and each subunit in the district's territory. In this case the

notification of all the troops in the district would take a fraction of a minute.

Replies regarding the receipt of the signal can in any case be transmitted from subordinate to superior in the chain of command over wire communications means. The need for repeating the signal in this case will be less, since the army and division staffs, having received the signal, can immediately monitor the receipt of the same signal by their subunits and as well as the actions of these subunits.

The rapid notification of all the troops of a district that are already in a state of increased combat readiness will ensure subunits and units complete their preparations for moving to concentration areas within 30 to 40 minutes. During this time each soldier, sergeant, and officer will take his assigned combat crew position; all tanks, combat vehicles, and motor vehicles will be brought from their pools and formed up in columns of subunits.

The movement of subunits and units from their permanent deployment points to concentration areas must be rapid and well organized. One cannot be guided simply by considerations for the most rapid movement of troops from populated areas. It may be that, for an interior military district whose troops are moving to areas of concentration for completion of mobilization, it would still be permissible to follow the principle: those who are first ready to march should be the first to leave the garrison. But the troops of a border district must move in that march formation which will permit them to deploy rapidly for an offensive or a meeting engagement or to destroy an airborne landing made by the enemy along the path of their movement. The means for reinforcing combined-arms divisions must be dispersed among the regiments; a missile unit should move at the head of the column of the main forces in order to be able to swiftly deploy under cover of the advance guard and preempt the enemy in delivering nuclear strikes, while air defense means must be ready to repel an enemy air attack. The commanders of the large units and units must maintain strict and continuous control, particularly during movement from a garrison.

An attempt should be made to see that a division moves from its military garrisons by battalion columns and that each regiment has its own march route to the area of concentration. Then, even if a division is located in a single military garrison but leaves it simultaneously through four gates, where the total length of a regimental column is 10 to 15 kilometers (with intervals between battalion columns of 300 to 500 meters), the time required for the division to leave the garrison will be 30 to 40

minutes.

A complex matter is that of the passage of troop columns across railroad lines at points where there are no overpasses. Each regiment must have at least one prepared railroad crossing. But when the capacity of the line is 30 to 40 paired trains per day, the intervals between trains will be 20 to 25 minutes and the crossings will be open for 10 to 15 minutes. The crossing must be opened three times to permit a regiment to cross the line, which will require more than half an hour. In our opinion, it would be best to prepare reserve crossings in advance or, as a last resort, to make preliminary arrangements with the organs of the railroad administration to temporarily interrupt the movement of trains on lines that intersect troop columns when troops are being moved from an inhabited locality.

The movement of troops from deployment points does not end the task of bringing them to full combat readiness to conduct a swift offensive in the wake of the first nuclear strike. Each large unit and each unit must take its position in the operational disposition of the front. According to existing views, the majority of the large units and units should stop for some period of time in a certain area which will be for some a waiting area, for others -- a phase line, and for still others -- a departure line.

The question arises whether in this case the ground forces of a border district need intermediate areas of concentration separated 10 to 15 kilometers from their permanent deployment points. We believe they do not. Upon receiving a combat alert signal aviation large units are redeployed to alternate airfields, missile and surface-to-air missile units immediately occupy their siting areas, operational staffs move to field control posts, while rear services facilities are moved to rear field bases, distances not taken into consideration. In the same way, large units and units of the ground forces, upon receiving a combat alert signal, must move directly to those areas that have been designated as their departure areas according to the plan of the operation. Only in certain cases, for example, in the expectation of a long march, should a concentration area be designated for a large unit where the commanders could check the readiness of their subordinate units for march and correct any deficiencies, taking advantage of the closeness of a permanent materiel-technical base.

The elimination of intermediate areas of concentration which have no operational or tactical purpose will speed up the occupation by troops of departure positions for an offensive, and will help in the selection of disposition or temporary stopover areas in accordance with the requirement

for concealed disposition and protection against weapons of mass destruction.

The existing method of selecting areas of concentration does not take into consideration the fact that the fallout pattern of a radioactive cloud from the surface burst of a large nuclear warhead used by the enemy against a permanent troop deployment point may create extremely high levels of radiation in those very areas that have been selected at the present time for the concentration of a garrison's troops. In addition, difficulties arise when the troops of one garrison are separated from areas of concentration which may be approximately one to two hours march away. Swamps, wooded mountains, and other types of terrain that are difficult for modern equipment to negotiate, as well as open terrain with no natural cover near cities and training areas (which are, in all likelihood, known to the enemy) are not suitable for the disposition of troops after they have left their garrison following an alert. One must also consider that wooded areas are dangerous for the disposition of troops because of the threat of fire. Also, one large unit should not be positioned on opposite banks of a river.

In moving troops immediately upon receiving a combat alert signal to the disposition or siting areas that have been assigned to them according to the operational plan, we are in fact dispersing the troops of the district as in combat and we can locate them in the most convenient positions according to natural terrain conditions. This also makes it possible to create regimental areas of disposition separated 10 kilometers or more from each other, rather than overall divisional areas of disposition.

But for the purposes of training and exercises, it would be advantageous to use, as before, those already-established areas of concentration which are not related to the operational assignment of the troops.

The bringing of troops of a border military district to full combat readiness requires precisely organized control. One particular difficulty is that all the troops of the district will be moving at this time and the district staff will also be moving to its field control post. Therefore, in order to maintain continuous control while the troops of a district are being brought to the increased level of combat readiness, it is our opinion that operations groups should be deployed to the field control posts of a district where they could not only prepare these posts for operation but could also assume full control immediately upon receiving a combat alert

signal. The operations group at a district command post must be headed by the first deputy district commander and should consist of the deputy chiefs of staff of the district and chiefs of the branch arms and services or their responsible representatives. The operations group at the rear control post should be staffed in a similar manner.

At the field command post there must be backup control centers for the rocket troops and the air defense troops of the district, which must at any given moment have at their disposal all data on the ground and air situation and be able to assume control for the purpose of repelling an enemy attack and delivering the initial strike against the enemy.

The operations group must be in a position to supervise the transition of reconnaissance organs and means from peacetime to wartime operating methods through the intermediate stages involved in bringing the troops to the levels of increased and full combat readiness. The command post will organize the service which observes the radiation and chemical situation and warns the troops of the direction of movement of radioactive clouds following nuclear bursts. This warning will ensure the timely removal of large units from threatened axes, since 30 minutes or more may pass between the time of the warning and the occurrence of radioactive dust and fallout.

The main command personnel of the district will arrive at the command post and rear control post in helicopters or aircraft after the troops have reported the initiation of combat alert actions.

The process of bringing the troops of a border district to full combat readiness must be directed in accordance with a previously developed plan. The basic content of this plan may be:

-- measures necessary to bring formations and large units of the branches of the armed forces and large units and units of the branch arms to increased combat readiness (a list of exercises conducted for the purpose of the advance deployment of troops, particularly missile units, air defense large units, and control posts; the establishment of combat alert status; and the removal of equipment from long-term storage, loading of materiel supplies, etc.);

-- estimates on the movement of troops to field locations and siting areas with the allocation of transportation lines and implementation of measures for road support and the organization of a provost and traffic control service;

-- the organization of the maneuvering and dispersal of the air army;

-- the deployment of the operational rear;

-- the completion of manning of the troops;

-- operational and combat support of all types (protection against means of mass destruction, air defense, reconnaissance, electronic countermeasures, organization of communications, operational camouflage, etc.);
-- the organization of control.

It seems to us that such a plan should be restricted since it leads directly to an operational plan, but its measures can be checked while training troops to reach full combat readiness and while testing combat readiness.

* * *

It is impossible to cover the entire problem of the combat readiness of troops in one article since it concerns literally each subunit, unit and facility and each branch arm and service. In addition, the diversity of the specific conditions under which troops are actually brought to combat readiness does not allow a single solution which would be applicable in all situations. We have attempted to present those questions which, in our opinion, are basic, and to answer them on the basis of the practice of the Baltic Military District. A similar wealth of experience in solving this problem has also been gained in other districts. The exchange of experience and its theoretical interpretation will play an important role in further increasing the combat readiness of the troops.