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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

14 January 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems
in Moving a Tank Army to Its Area of
Operational Assignment and Committing It to
an Engagement from the March

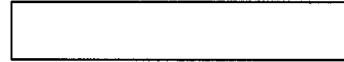
1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the ~~SECRET~~ USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article comments on a previous article published under the same title and examines certain questions which the author feels need further discussion. These include the dispersed deployment and movement of a tank army to prevent destruction by enemy nuclear weapons and the problems involved in conducting night marches. In particular, the author points out the difficulties of moving a tank army by organic means and, after discounting the feasibility of employing railroad means for this, he proposes widely deploying tank armies during peacetime to eliminate the need for moving them over great distances in the event of a war. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (81) for 1967.

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

William W. Wells

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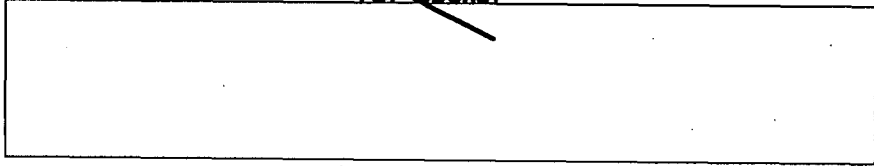
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COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Mid-1967

DATE 14 January 1977

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems in Moving a Tank Army to Its Area of Operational Assignment and Committing It to an Engagement from the March

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (81) for 1967 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The author of this article is General-Leytenant I. Tolkonyuk. This article comments on a previous article published under the same title and examines certain questions which the author feels need further discussion. These include the dispersed deployment and movement of a tank army to prevent destruction by enemy nuclear weapons and the problems involved in conducting night marches. In particular, the author points out the difficulties of moving a tank army by organic means and, after discounting the feasibility of employing railroad means for this, he proposes widely deploying tank armies during peacetime to eliminate the need for moving them over great distances in the event of a war.

End of Summary

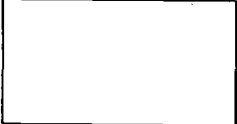
Comment:

General-Leytenant I. A. Tolkonyuk was identified as First Deputy Commander of the Siberian Military District until 1970. Since 1972, he has been identified as being involved with civil defense. 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.

The article to which it refers was



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Certain Problems in Moving a Tank Army to Its
Area of Operational Assignment and Committing
It to an Engagement from the March
by
General-Leytenant I. Tolkonyuk

The article of Marshal of the Soviet Union I. Yakubovskiy "Certain Problems in Moving a Tank Army to Its Area of Operational Assignment and Committing It to an Engagement from the March"* has important theoretical and practical significance.

While we fully agree with the author's opinion, we shall permit ourselves to make some observations on individual questions which, in our view, are disputable and call for clarification.

The author correctly points out that as a tank army approaches the front line, the threat of nuclear strikes and strikes with operational-tactical means against its large units increases. But it should be emphasized that strikes against a tank army are equally dangerous regardless of where they occur: in the deployment area, combat alert assembly area or during the march. The more so when we remember that the further an army is from the line of troop contact, the greater the danger of strikes against it with the most powerful strategic means.

For this reason, the author's proposed plan for moving an army forward over a great distance is less than convincing. A tank army, being an easy target for a strike with strategic nuclear weapons, must be deployed and moved forward in such a grouping as would prevent its being destroyed at any time. To have an army move along five or seven routes, as is suggested, is hardly advisable. It must be moved forward to the battlefield on a wider front, allowing at least three or four routes for each division. The march formation itself must be organized so that it would be impossible to destroy more than one battalion with a single nuclear warhead. This, of course, complicates the control and support of the march, but it maintains the combat effectiveness of the army. Otherwise, the army may lose its combat effectiveness even before it is committed to an engagement.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 3 (79), 1966.

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Also, in our view, the movement of a tank army to the departure area to commit it to an engagement is treated in an oversimplified manner. Specifically, it is proposed that for purposes of camouflage, the last movement of the army be begun and ended during periods of darkness in order to surprise the enemy with a morning offensive. It is plainly evident that such a procedure for committing it to an engagement presupposes a stable front and a passive enemy. And what is more, our troops will hardly be expecting the approach of a tank army.

It is evident that committing the army to an engagement from the march will generally be accomplished under conditions where there is no time for its planned movement to the departure area. It seems to us that a tank army will very likely be committed to an engagement from the march to build up the attacks of troops operating forward on the main axis, to swiftly transfer efforts to the operational depth, and also to complete the destruction of opposing enemy groupings or replace the great losses suffered by the troops attacking forward in order to keep the operation from losing momentum. The tank army may also be committed from the march after the enemy has already delivered nuclear strikes and has moved forward rapidly or when our forces, attacking forward and exploiting the results of their own nuclear strikes, have moved rapidly into the depth of enemy territory and, somewhere, a powerful enemy grouping is detected against which the tank army is directed.

When speaking of moving an army forward by means of night marches, it should be kept in mind that night has positive as well as negative effects on such movement. Nighttime provides a degree of concealment during the march, but this cannot be a determining factor in planning a troop movement. Many present-day technical means of reconnaissance operate equally well both day and night. Aerial reconnaissance will probably be carried out more effectively at night than during the day, in view of the opposition from air defense forces, though, for agent reconnaissance, the time of day has no significance. In addition, it is more difficult to prohibit flights of reconnaissance aircraft at night.

The following are some negative factors associated with night: increased fatigue of personnel, difficulties in control, conditions which restrict the monitoring of the technical condition and servicing of vehicles, slowness of column movement, the short duration of darkness, especially during the summer, which, in turn, reduces the time available for the movement and also the scale of the movement, difficulties in maneuvering when roads and crossings are damaged, more complex conditions for supporting the march, and also the danger of halting in place during



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daylight hours. Therefore, it seems to us that there should be a reexamination of views as to the advisability of carrying out troop movements exclusively at night.

The author quite correctly states and substantiates the difficulties which arise when moving a tank army forward over great distances by organic means. Here we have in mind the range limitation of tanks, primarily in respect to the tracks, the large volume of shipments of spare sets of tracks, difficulties connected with the delivery of large quantities of fuel, etc. In order to economize on between-overhaul mileage reserves and decrease fuel consumption and the volume of replenishment shipments, it is even proposed that tank transport should be carried out over individual sections of railroads which may remain after nuclear strikes and on heavy-load trailers, that pipelines be used for delivery of fuel, and also that reserves of tank tracks be set up during peacetime on the axes of forthcoming movements of tank armies. All of these measures will undoubtedly be beneficial. We feel, however, that one cannot place high hopes on the use of railroads. The enemy, in fact, will undoubtedly attempt to put the main rail lines out of operation and stop the movement of trains altogether with the massed employment of nuclear weapons. If, under these conditions, the use of rail transport for the movement of tank army troops becomes impossible, they will be forced either to carry out a long march by organic means, after which they may have lost their combat effectiveness, having used up nearly all of their mileage reserves, or else to abandon the idea of moving the tank army forward over a great distance.

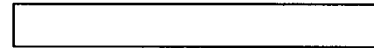
Of course, certain sections of railroads should be used if the opportunity presents itself. But this matter requires special study in view of the modified types of locomotion, the increased dependency of railroads and rail traffic control on electric power sources, the possible lack of steam and diesel locomotives on those sections, and so on.

At the present time, is there no other way out of the situation which has been created?

It seems to us that tank armies, already reliably camouflaged and concealed in peacetime, must be deployed in a dispersed manner and at a distance which would permit them to meet our probable enemy and deliver strikes against him, without having to make a long unproductive run. There may, of course, be objections that since the troops must be positioned at such a distance from the enemy until a certain time, this thus prevents them from delivering nuclear strikes against the enemy with operational-tactical means. This is correct in principle, but not for such

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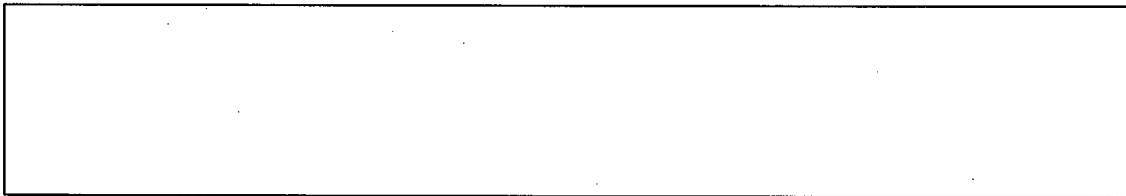
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units as armies, inasmuch as strikes may be delivered against them at any time with more powerful strategic means even before strikes with tactical means, since the importance of destroying such a target is obvious.

As we know, during peacetime when planning operations, any country possessing powerful military potential will, in anticipation of a war, build up and appropriately distribute forces and means upon axes and in areas taking into account the objective and concept of military operations, the enemy grouping, the probable nature of enemy actions and other factors. It is proper, as well as a great art, to deploy one's forces and means during peacetime: the area for each army, especially tank armies, must be determined with particular care. In particular, we are convinced that both tank and combined-arms armies must be located in areas in which they will not have to carry out a march by organic means over a distance of more than 1,000 to 1,500 kilometers. As regards the support of the movement of troops forward within such limits and the economical expenditure of mileage reserves, the recommendations put forth in this article may contribute to a positive solution.



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