

~~TOP SECRET~~

3986

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

27 October 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Suggestions Regarding
the Methodology of Command-Staff Exercises

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 suggests that operational exercises be structured to reflect the advance planning required for a future war and to give the participants more practical experience in the tasks to be performed in the first days of a war, rather than have them become involved in the preparation of operations plans from scratch. Other critical comments are addressed to the use of operational transitions and pauses and to the coordination of operational and sidereal time in an exercise. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (77) for 1966.

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

JN John N. McMahon

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



Distribution:

The Director of Central Intelligence

The Director of Intelligence and Research
Department of State

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence
Department of the Army

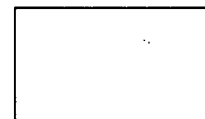
Director, National Security Agency

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Director of the National Foreign Assessment Center

Director of Strategic Research

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~



[Redacted]

Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 9 Pages

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Early 1966

[Redacted]
DATE 27 October 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Suggestions Regarding the Methodology of Command-Staff Exercises

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (77) for 1966 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The authors of this article are Lieutenant Colonel N. Afanasyev and Lieutenant Colonel L. Mariyev. This article suggests that operational exercises be structured to reflect the advance planning required for a future war and to give the participants more practical experience in the tasks to be performed in the first days of a war, rather than have them become involved in the preparation of operations plans from scratch. Other critical comments are addressed to the use of operational transitions and pauses and to the coordination of operational and sidereal time in an exercise.

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]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~

[Redacted]



Suggestions Regarding the Methodology of
Command-Staff Exercises

by

Lieutenant Colonel N. AFANASYEV
Lieutenant Colonel L. MARIYEV

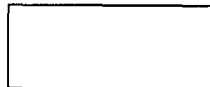
Operational command-staff exercises are the final stage of training of staffs, a check on the level of their proficiency, coordination, and readiness for troop control in the complex conditions of a modern operation. Therefore, the constant improvement of the methodology of their organization and conduct is one of the most important tasks of operational training. As direct participants in many exercises, we feel it is suitable to share certain observations on this matter.

First of all, we would like to note that, according to the operational situation which is established, and also according to the nature of the questions which are being worked out, the command-staff exercises being conducted do not always fully correspond to the most probable conditions of the work of staffs in the initial period of war.

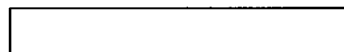
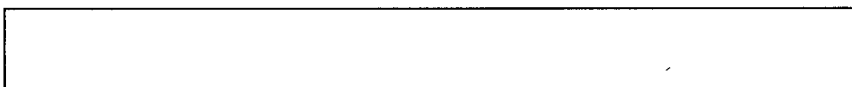
As we know, our military theory is based on the premise that under modern conditions we should first of all orient ourselves toward surprise massed missile/nuclear strikes immediately followed by combat actions of troops. Evidently, in the majority of cases, there will not be a period of threat during which an operation could be planned, organized and prepared.

Therefore, the successful conduct of an operation in the initial period of war is possible only when it is planned and organized in advance. This situation is reflected in the appropriate guidance documents.

However, in operational exercises, during a rather short "period of threat" the staffs usually plan the entire operation completely anew, and the trainees are faced with the necessity of fulfilling a considerable number of tasks which, under actual combat conditions, should be resolved in advance. It is completely natural that, in these circumstances, staffs are often not in a position to do everything necessary for planning and organizing an operation with the proper quality. Certain matters are left



~~TOP SECRET~~



Page 5 of 9 Pages

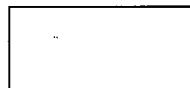
undecided and many are resolved in a hurry, without sufficiently thorough substantiation. The officers of the staffs usually do not have the time necessary for monitoring the fulfilment of assigned tasks in the troops; staffs must at times set too high standards for fulfilling various measures by the troops (completing marches, moving by railroad, deploying, preparing for the delivery of strikes, for firing and others). As a result, some measures are often superimposed on others, and the officers of the staffs do not develop the skill for correctly evaluating the capabilities for actually carrying out the measures in the allotted time, and one cannot be completely confident of the practicability of the plans which have been made.

Thus, excessive overloading of operational command-staff exercises with a great number of complex and labor-consuming matters leads, in the final analysis, to such a serious deficiency as the lowering of the quality of the planning and organization of an operation. Hence, the experience of many exercises cannot be fully utilized for confirming actual operational calculations and it cannot always be regarded as the basis for theoretical generalizations.

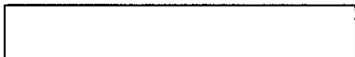
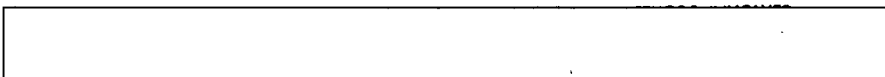
In our opinion, command-staff exercises should be more purposeful, directed first of all toward resolving those matters which staffs must actually decide in the "period of threat" or in the first days and hours of the initial period of war. It seems to us that it is not obligatory to start each exercise from the initial planning of the operation.

If it is absolutely essential in the exercises to play out the tasks of planning operations, then, in this case, while organizing them it is necessary to think out everything especially carefully, having determined which matters the staffs must decide in advance and which ones should be fulfilled immediately before the start of the operations. In accordance with this, it is necessary in the exercises to focus primary attention on the latter matters, and not work on those measures which are fulfilled by the staffs over a long period of time in the course of their daily work. In other words, in such instances, exercises should be begun not from the preparation but from the refinement of operations plans which should have already been prepared before the start of the exercises.

We feel that this can be done in the following manner. The exercise plan of the "operation" is worked out in advance. It is kept sealed up in the corresponding staff and is given to the trainees at the beginning of the exercise, together with the assignment, in which changes in the operational situation and updated tasks for the front (army) in the



~~TOP SECRET~~



operation are indicated.

This plan is worked on for most of the training time without disrupting the daily work routine of the staffs, using, for example, the days allotted for independent (joint) staff training exercises.

The main complement of generals and officers of a future front (army) field headquarters should take part in working out the training exercise plan of the operation. This will give them an opportunity to become more fully acquainted with the nature of the work involved in the planning and comprehensive support of an operation, it will promote the establishment of proper relationships among all organs of the field headquarters of a front (army) and will permit them to allocate duties among the organs more efficiently and to eliminate duplication of work. In the final stage of advance planning of an operation, the number of personnel assigned to this work should be limited.

The possibility of working out basic matters of planning even in the operational exercises themselves is not ruled out. However, in this case, it must not be begun "from scratch", but rather should be based on some starting data, documents, and calculations, for example, on regrouping and deployment, preparation and supplying of missiles, materiel-technical support, etc., which are given to the staffs in advance or are worked out by them before the beginning of the exercise.

For a more correct determination of the time necessary for planning and organizing an operation, it is advisable to distribute the entire process of staff work connected with fulfilling these tasks by elements, and on the basis of practical experience to determine what time limits are needed for working out each of them, taking into consideration the table of organization strength of directorates and departments, their coordination and technical equipment, and the state of preparedness of generals and officers. It is necessary to very carefully specify the rational work load of generals and officers, who more often than not work almost around the clock throughout the exercise. This practice does not produce the proper results, since the productivity and especially the quality of work are inevitably sharply lowered by it.

In our opinion, the methodology of conducting operational command-staff exercises needs further improvement in regard to other matters, such as the coordination of sidereal and operational time, and the organization of operational transitions and pauses.



TOP SECRET

Page 7 of 9 Pages

As we know, in the exercises they often resort to "freezing" the operational time and do not coordinate it with sidereal time. This leads to a situation wherein it becomes very difficult for the trainees to judge the practicability of the plans they have worked out and to objectively estimate just how much time is necessary for preparing and carrying out both individual measures and the operation as a whole. Therefore, we feel that in the first stage of the exercise -- during the planning and organization of the operation -- there should be no discussion of "operational" time at all. It can be introduced only when the key questions are worked out in the dynamics of combat actions. But in this instance it is advisable, if possible, to coordinate the operational time with sidereal time, so that the officers of the staffs will not lose the sense of reality.

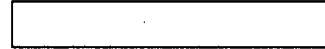
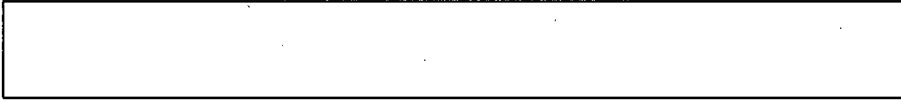
In our opinion, operational transitions are not made quite correctly. They usually time the transition to coincide with the resolution of such key matters as the commitment to battle of the second echelon or reserves, the repulsing of a counterattack, the assault crossing of water obstacles, etc. This being the case, situation data for the transition (most often in the form of a hypothetical situation introduced into the exercise) are presented, as a rule, not gradually, but all at once in their entirety at the specified operational time. As a result, the situation arises as a surprise and does not follow from a previous course of combat actions, as it would under actual conditions. The main decision immediately becomes clear after receiving this hypothetical situation and all that remains for the trainees is to work out the details.

We feel that the working out of the key questions in the dynamics of combat actions should proceed in such a way that the data given out during operational transitions at first only introduce the trainees to a new situation, and are not comprehensive enough for making a decision. These data should only be a basis for building up the situation and for subsequently bringing it to such a state whereby it would be suitable to require from the trainees a decision based on the key question which is being working out. The necessary information must, naturally, come in from the same command levels and over the same channels as it would under actual conditions.

Concerning operational pauses. Operational pauses, as we know, are used for a critique of one or another episode of an exercise and are conducted usually with one of the participating staffs or with a specific group of trainees. The remaining trainees are virtually excluded from the exercise for the time of the critique.

TOP SECRET

~~TOP SECRET~~



Page 8 of 9 Pages

It seems to us that, in principle, it is advisable to give up such pauses. When necessary, the director of the exercise can by turns hear the respective chiefs, rather than gathering them at special conferences for this purpose and taking the officers from their ongoing work. This allows actions to be played out almost at the actual tempo for conducting an operation, considerably lessens conventionality and allows the work of staffs to approximate that of an actual operational situation.

We also feel that, on a number of matters, it is necessary to hear not only the chiefs of directorates of branch arms and services, but also those directly involved -- chiefs of departments and senior officers. This provides an opportunity for the commander to learn better the level of preparedness of the respective chiefs and of the staff as a whole.

A hearing of the decisions should be conducted each time that the front (army) commander or his representatives visit subordinate staffs, and it must be concluded with the approval of the decision or with instructions on what is needed to amend it.

Of course, general assemblies of trainees can be held, but obviously not for each episode of the operation, but mainly on individual training matters which are very basic and which are of interest to all.

Recently, in the practice of operational exercises and exercises with the troops, combat actions have been played out, as a rule, according to the decisions of the trainees. This procedure brings the exercises closer to combat reality. But, along with this, sometimes the variants which are played out are hardly any better than the others. But after all, the purpose of exercises is primarily to teach commanders and staffs to make the most desirable decisions. Therefore, the directing body of the exercises evidently should actively influence the actions of the trainees in all instances, getting them to make the best decisions on the fundamentals right in the course of the exercises, and should not correct them only in the critique.

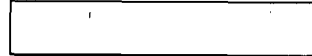
We would like to make certain observations concerning within what organization and from the viewpoint of which army (our own or that of the probable enemy) the role-playing side should perform.

The experience of exercises shows that, when the role-playing side performs according to the organization and views of the probable enemy, it must more carefully study the organization, operational views, tactics and armament of the enemy, and must become accustomed to thinking like him in



~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

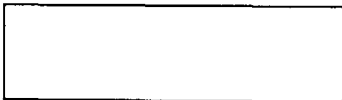
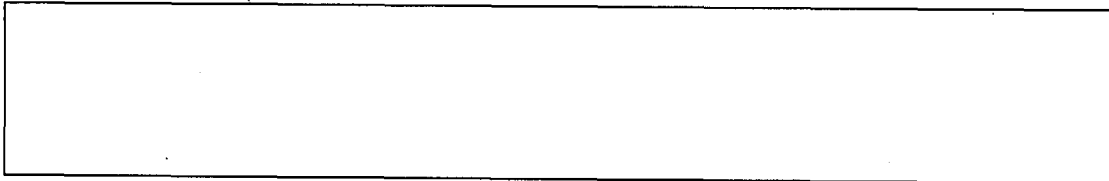


Page 9 of 9 Pages

these categories. This opportunity is especially useful for officers and generals who make up a specific body of personnel. But it is unfortunate that, in the main, the role-playing sides are made up of generals and officers of various directorates, academies, and military schools. Therefore, they sometimes are insufficiently coordinated in their work, and their decisions and actions in the role of the probable enemy are often unsophisticated.

It is obvious that the preparation and setting up of the role-playing sides should be done in advance for all exercises. For example, it is possible to set up a role-playing group for a front operational exercise using officers from the intelligence directorate of an adjacent district, reinforced with generals and officers of intelligence departments of military academies or the field headquarters of one of the armies. In an army exercise the intelligence directorate of a district (the intelligence department of an adjacent army) or the staff of one of the army corps can play the role of the enemy.

These are certain matters of preparing and conducting command-staff exercises which in our opinion require intensive study in the course of operational training.



~~TOP SECRET~~

