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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

21 December 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems
of Operational Training

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, reviewing a previous article, advocates including division staffs in high-level exercises, which are usually limited to front and army staffs, to improve the training of army staffs. It discusses the place and functions of the operational training department of a front operations directorate and recommends special training courses for front operations officers and adjustment of their ranks. It criticizes the usual long and needless briefings at the start of command-staff exercises, urges the periodic replacement in exercises of higher staffs by lower ones to simulate battle losses, discusses the functions of front chiefs of axes, dwells on the deficiencies of exercise critiques, and recommends improvements in umpire actions and reports. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963.

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

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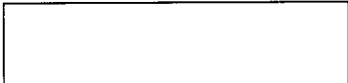




Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 15 Pages

COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Late 1963

DATE
21 December 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems of Operational Training

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This two-part article, the first part written by Colonel A. Uspenskiy and the second part by Colonel A. Bulatov, reviews a previous article. It advocates including division staffs in high-level exercises, which are usually limited to front and army staffs, to improve the training of army staffs. It discusses the place and functions of the operational training department of a front operations directorate and recommends special training courses for front operations officers and adjustment of their ranks. It criticizes the usual long and needless briefings at the start of command-staff exercises, urges the periodic replacement in exercises of higher staffs by lower ones to simulate battle losses, discusses the functions of front chiefs of axes, dwells on the deficiencies of exercise critiques, and recommends improvements in umpire actions and reports. End of Summary

Comment:

Colonel Bulatov has contributed other articles to this publication including "Ways of Increasing the Rates of Advance of a Combined-Arms Army" in Issue No. 1 (71) for 1964. 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 cited in the text was disseminated as



Some Problems of Operational Training

by

Colonel A. USPENSKIY

Colonel A. BULATOV

The article of Colonels G. PROKOPENKO and N. ANDRYUSHCHENKO,* which deals with matters of the organization and conduct of operational training on the basis of the experience of the Southern Group of Forces, has aroused much interest among generals and officers of staffs and troops. And this, in our opinion, is not by chance, since, as a result of the continual changes in military affairs, the forms and methods of operational training are in need of constant improvement. Some of them have simply become obsolete and do not meet the requirements for the conduct of an operation and battle under conditions of nuclear war.

The close connection of operational training with tactical training has acquired great importance. A modern combined-arms (tank) army, as an operational formation, is directly involved with the division level of control, and a motorized rifle (tank) division in an operation can accomplish not only tactical, but also operational tasks.

Two-level operational-tactical exercises at the army (corps) -- division levels would play an important role here. However, such exercises are not usually planned within the overall training system for officers and staffs, as a result of which they very seldom take place. Military districts, against the background of an operational-strategic situation, most often conduct command-staff exercises in which the front and army (corps) levels are represented. The inclusion of division staffs in such exercises is of an incidental nature. Division command-staff exercises with the inclusion of regimental staffs are, as a rule, conducted separately under the direction of the army (corps) commander.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought," No. 6 (67), 1962.





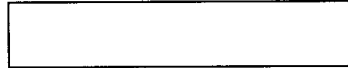
In these cases, the latter acts the role of exercise director and his staff plays the role of directing body staff.

The lack of exercises with the joint participation of army (corps) and division staffs is, in our opinion, a serious deficiency, since it does not afford these levels of control the opportunity of achieving teamwork under the complex conditions involving the conduct of modern operations. The staffs of armies (corps) suffer especially here; they are deprived of the opportunity of getting necessary practice in controlling the troops of a full-strength army, as the exercises are usually conducted with one or two divisions at a maximum. Besides that, the staff of an exercise directing body and the staff of an army are still not one and the same thing. In the role of staff of a directing body, the staff of an army, as we know, fulfils additional duties and has to be diverted from the accomplishment of its own tasks and actions as the army's organ of troop control. Here it is harder for the army staff to achieve cohesiveness and to use organic technical means, and some officers are completely taken away from the work which they must do in actual combat.

The necessity of planning and conducting operational-tactical exercises with the inclusion of the army and division levels in them also stems directly from the nature of the initial period of a modern war. It is well known that in the composition of some armies (corps) there are divisions at full and at reduced T/O&E strength. Their tasks are different, and this makes its imprint on the nature of the work of the staffs of the armies (corps). For instance, the army (corps) commander and his staff, along with the matters of planning and preparing an operation (battle) in the system of troop control, must at the same time concern themselves with the full mobilization of the reduced-strength divisions.

The practical working out of the problems of full mobilization that have been carried out with the staffs of divisions and regiments shows that in this area there are still a good number of shortcomings and obsolete rules requiring a new solution that is in conformity with the specific operational situation. Therefore, we should not limit ourselves only to special mobilization exercises on the scale of a division or regiment. The problems of full mobilization need to be worked out within the framework of an army and front, and not only in isolation, but also against the background of an operational-strategic situation. But all this is possible only by conducting two- or three-level command-staff exercises with the inclusion of army and division levels in them.





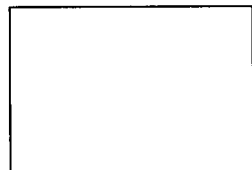
We should also like to direct attention to the following circumstance. Training the staffs of military districts, armies, and corps formally pertains, as we know, to the sphere of operational training and is a function of the corresponding operations directorates (departments), whereas the training of division and regiment staffs is included in troop training and is a function of the combat training directorates (departments).

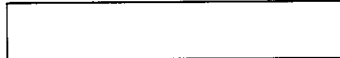
In practice, though, this formal division of functions has not been adhered to for a long time. In most cases, the preparation and conduct of division tactical and command-staff exercises is entrusted to the operations directorates of the staffs of military districts (operations departments of armies). It seems to us that this is worthwhile and correct and should be made official, especially in the conduct of exercises that include army and division levels of control at the same time.

We cannot agree with the authors' proposal to remove the operational training department from the makeup of the operations directorate and subordinate it directly to the chief of staff of the district. In this we base ourselves both on the nature of the work of the operational training department and chiefly on the mobilization expansion capabilities of the operations directorate.

True, at certain periods in the development of a front command-staff exercise, during its conduct, and during staff training sessions, the operational training department fulfils duties immediately under the direction of the chief of staff or the district commander and is, as it were, above the chief of the operations directorate by acting in the role of a higher staff. But we see nothing wrong, much less harmful, in this.

First, this occurrence is, after all, temporary. Second, according to existing regulations, the operations directorate as a whole has been given the task of directing operational training. The operational training department is the immediate executor and occupies itself with the planning of operational training in the district and with the development of training methods materials; it participates in the conduct of operational exercises, commanders' assemblies, and other undertakings (we emphasize, it participates, but does not conduct), and monitors them. In doing this, all the activity of the department is based on the decisions of the troop commander and the instructions of the district chief of staff and is conducted under the direction of the chief of the operations directorate.



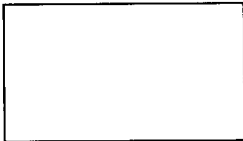


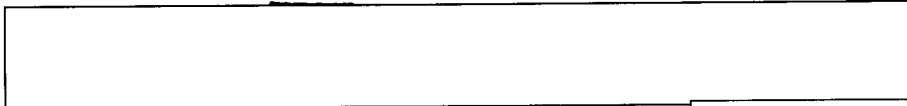
By itself the operational training department is not in a position to resolve all matters connected with operational training in isolation from the operations directorate and the staffs of the branch arms. Even in a front command-staff exercise, which is far from being the only operational training measure, although it is one of the main ones, the operational training department constitutes only the basis of the staff of the directing body. Actually, forming part of the latter are also officer specialists of the staffs of branch arms and services, who, in their turn, are also subordinate to the corresponding chiefs, and with them, too, "some friction" can arise.

And so, if one proposes an independent operational training department, then it is necessary to include in it not only operations officers but also officers of the rocket troops, aviation, etc. That is, it must be a matter of establishing a completely new T/O&E organ parallel to the existing one. Is this advisable? Of course not. And the attempts of the authors to base their proposal merely on "some friction" in the interrelationships of persons in authority do not appear convincing enough, and, in any case, they do not stem from the overall interests of the operational training of officers, generals, and staffs. In addition, within a district headquarters itself, operational training undertakings are only part of the whole array of undertakings in this area. A large part of the time the operational training department, immediately under the direction of the chief of the operations directorate, participates in the organization and conduct of command-staff exercises for the armies and corps (divisions), of commanders' assemblies, etc.

There is also, for instance, the situation where in a given training year, according to the operational training plan, the field headquarters of a military district is included in a major exercise to be conducted under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces or the Minister of Defense. How, one asks, is the operational training department to be used here, and what duties are to be entrusted to it? We are far from accepting the idea that, in the instance cited, this department will not work as part of the operations directorate.

Let us cite one more possible case. In a given front exercise, the chief of staff of the district acts in the role of chief of staff of the front (as a player) and not in the role of chief of staff of the directing body. That is, here the operational training department is now above the chief of staff of the district. According to the logic of the authors, it follows that this department has to be removed from the district staff and be subordinated directly to the commander of troops. Clearly, this "logic"





will lead us wrong.

Thus, it should not be a matter of detaching the operational training department from the composition of the operations directorate, but of more closely coordinating the work of the officers of the operational training department with the officers of the operations directorate, avoiding, of course, all "friction", and of having them guide themselves by common sense, the actual situation, and a striving to carry out every operational training undertaking better.

It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that in wartime the operational training department will be committed to be a part of the operations directorate as an information department or a department to study and generalize the experience of the war. This circumstance in turn makes it urgent that at least periodically the officers of the department become involved in practical work that is in line with their mobilization mission.

A few words about the training of operations officers. At the present time, as we know, we have no special courses of instruction at all for the officers of operations directorates (departments), whereas courses of instruction for officers of the branch arms and services (intelligence, engineer, chemical officers, etc.), though given only once a year, are still being conducted; and, as experience has shown, are very useful.

The only exception to this rule were the courses of instruction conducted by the Main Staff of the Ground Forces in 1960 for the chiefs of operations directorates and chiefs of operational training departments of military districts, and for the chiefs of operations departments of armies. In addition, some operations officers are being assigned to study nuclear weapons at the artillery academy. But the main body of the officers of the operations directorates of military districts and of the operations departments (sections) of armies and corps (divisions) have not taken any special training for many years, limiting themselves to everyday practical work and participation in operational training undertakings.

This does not seem right to us, since operations officers no less than others need to systematically improve their specialized training by attending appropriate courses of instruction.

As for the authorized grades of operations officers, here too, in our opinion, not all is in order. It is known that the authorized grade of the deputy chief of staff of a regiment is major, and the assignment of any





company commander and even some battalion officers to this position is an advancement in service for them.

The case is different in a division, where the table of organization stipulates that the assistants to the chief of the operations section have the ranks of major and captain. It is clear that this limits the opportunities for staff officers to advance in service along the line of operations work. Furthermore, the well-proven principle of having an officer alternate his service in command, staff, political, and administrative positions is not being adhered to.

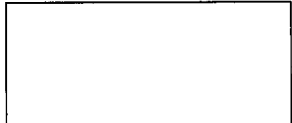
Some revision of the existing authorized grades in favor of operations officers would promote the development of the appropriate cadres, which play an important role in the system of officer training and activity.

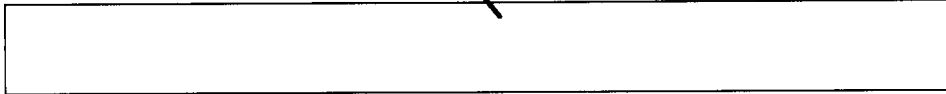
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The article of Colonels G. PROKOPENKO and N. ANDRYUSHCHENKO is of practical interest in connection with the fact that it examines important matters which the staffs of military districts (groups of forces), armies, corps, and divisions systematically occupy themselves with in the operational training system.

It is quite obvious that operational training occupies a leading place in the business of knitting together and training the staffs, in achieving teamwork, efficiency, and accuracy in their work, and in the further improvement of their activity as organs of control. The experience of troops convincingly shows that the quality of operational training greatly depends on its skilful and purposeful organization. But in this area it is still not uncommon for staffs to be guided by rules established in the past, many of which either have become obsolete or are beginning to lose their significance and do not fully correspond to the demands made for the conduct of operations under conditions of nuclear war.

One of the most serious defects in the conduct of operational training is the fact that, in spite of the drastically increased pace of operations, in exercises up to this time the time factor still continues to be underestimated. It is still not uncommon to practice a long, "excruciating" hearing of wordy reports by commanders and chiefs of branch arms and services. Each such meeting, as a rule, lasts several hours; in this time the ground and air situation is changing drastically, and the troops,





advancing at a high rate, are moving dozens of kilometers forward. Thus, by the end of such meetings, the reports are getting considerably, if not completely, out-of-date, the time in preparing them is spent for nothing, and the decisions no longer correspond to the situation which is actually developing at the front at the time they are taken. During the hearings, command personnel of the front (army) are kept away for a long time from the practical activity of controlling troops, and the playing-out of combat actions, as a rule, virtually comes to a standstill.

We believe that the time has come not only to shorten such meetings, but to give them up altogether, even with a limited circle of responsible officers. If the situation requires carefully studying and working out in more detail some important matter, then for this it is better to stop the playing-out of exercises temporarily by means of an appropriate hypothetical situation, shut down the operational time, and conduct training sessions with all the officer personnel participating in the exercise. Such training sessions will be instructive and useful.

Some exercise directors in a number of cases have completely refused all interruptions, using a different method of instruction, namely this: they have held very brief hearings on the matters they were interested in from the chiefs of branch arms and services by turns, without taking them away from current work and without holding any official meetings. This method has completely justified itself. The playing-out of actions in this case could be conducted almost at the actual rate of an operation and the course of the exercise was not disrupted, which considerably reduced the artificiality and brought all of the work of the control organs closer to the actual operational situation.

This method of work of the exercise director led to where those being trained did not have to compile detailed textual reports and type them up, especially during the exercise, as is usually done. The chiefs of the branch arms and services used only their maps and the notes in their workbooks.

We would like to set forth a few more observations about the conduct of operational exercises.

First, it seems to us that the staff of the directing body should so structure its work that those being trained look upon it as an actual higher command level, and not just a monitoring level. The front (army) commander in an actual combat situation will obviously not be able to run out to subordinate staffs as often as the director of an exercise usually



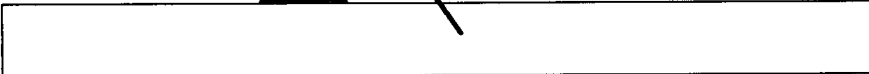
does. There is little good in the sort of practice where the assistant directors for branch arms and services and staff officers of the directing body merely accompany the director, appearing, as it were, as sideline observers, and are not used as representatives of the higher staff to transmit decisions and instructions, organize their implementation, and coordinate matters of cooperation.

Second, it is desirable that during an exercise not only the chiefs of branch arms and services, but also the chiefs of departments and even some senior officers -- the immediate executors -- present brief hearings (by the above-mentioned method). This would make it possible to give better instruction to the cadres and at the same time to study them better, and, in particular, to discover the most capable officers. In addition, this would increase the responsibility of the entire group for the exercise and would permit one to see better the state of training and cohesiveness of all field headquarters, since it would be possible to judge the quality of their work not merely by the actions of their chiefs.

The authors of the article have left out the important matter of working out in exercises the interchangeability of staffs, and within staffs, of the individual directorates and departments. Let us assume that during an operation a considerable part of the staff of an army or division, coming under an enemy nuclear strike, is put out of action -- and such cases may be rather frequent. What shall we do in such a situation so that troop control is not disrupted?

Thus far not enough attention has been given to this matter in exercises. It was no coincidence that Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ya. MALINOVSKIY, speaking at a military science conference in the M. V. Frunze Military Academy, bluntly said that staffs are as yet not taking into account the type of situation where control organs will be partially or completely destroyed by enemy nuclear weapons during a war.

It is desirable that in operational exercises we practice the transfer of control functions from higher staffs to lower ones. It is useful during an exercise, by means of an appropriate hypothetical situation, to periodically put out of action the main body of, let us say, the staff of an army (division) and to organize control (bringing in the generals and officers that are left) by transferring these functions to the commander and staff of one of the corps or divisions (regiments). By solving the problem in this manner it will hardly be necessary to defend the proposition that alternate command posts must be established, bearing in mind in this case the tendency to reduce the personnel of staffs.



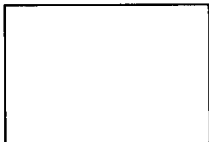
The article says nothing about the work of the chiefs of axes, who at the present time belong to the operations department of the operations directorate of a front (district) staff. As the experience of exercises shows, they have almost been reduced to ordinary technical executors.

Indeed, in exercises, the chiefs of axes as we know, occupy themselves with collecting, or more precisely "wresting out," and reporting the situation and systematically posting it on the maps of the commander, the chief of staff, and the chief of the operations directorate, awaiting orders and instructions from them for the troops, with the formulation and transmission of these orders and instructions constituting the second part of their essentially technical work.

It seems to us that the chiefs of axes should evaluate the situation in depth from all sides, analyze and generalize it, and also prepare suggestions for the commander (chief of staff) concerning the decision to be made and the necessary instructions to troops. But in some matters, especially those connected with the support of the combat actions of the troops of their own axes, it is their responsibility to make an independent decision and subsequently report it to their seniors. Furthermore, under conditions of the sharply increased role of operational fire means, the chiefs of axes must participate more actively and in detail in resolving matters of fire planning and even of fire control.

Of course, the successful resolution of these matters depends on the preparedness, level of knowledge, and skills of the operations officers and on their ability to competently perform their job. In connection with this, it has become necessary to pay more attention to the practical training of the officers of operations directorates and departments. As for the chiefs of axes, in our opinion it is advisable to take them out of the complement of the operations department and subordinate them directly to the chief of the operations directorate.

There are substantial shortcomings in the preparation and conduct of exercise critiques. Frequently critiques are limited to a simple enumeration of the mistakes made in the exercise by those being trained and to the assignment of very general tasks in the area of operational training. The formulation of such tasks is also given in a general form, for instance: "To improve practical skills in controlling troops," "To pay more attention to independent training," "To achieve cohesion in the work of staffs as organs of control," etc.





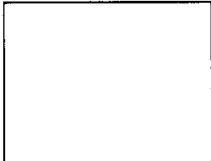
The main thing in a critique is the analysis and evaluation of the decisions of those being trained and of the work methods of each commander and staff and of directorates and departments on the basis of that concrete situation which developed during the exercise. The critique must bring to light the reasons for deficiencies and cogently show how one should have acted in a situation of this kind and why.

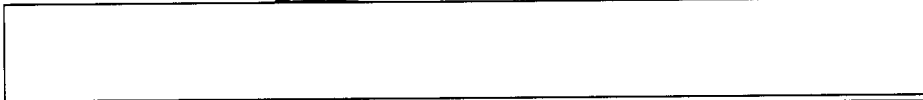
It would be wrong to critique only the negative occurrences in an exercise. One must be sure to mention also the correct and original decisions of those being trained, with their theoretical validation. Finally, routinism in the make-up of the critique ought to be discontinued. Why, for instance, repeat each time the already well-known theoretical propositions on a given subject? It should be noted that the theoretical part of the critique sometimes constitutes nearly half of the material of the critique. It is obviously more worthwhile to show what is new in the area of the development of theory, tying this in with the practical actions of those being trained. Then the critique will undoubtedly become creative in nature, provoke a lively exchange of views, and force people to think in depth about the results of the exercise and go more deeply into those matters which have not yet been adequately investigated and worked out.

The assignment of subsequent tasks resulting from the critique must not be general, but specific, and must be based completely on the analysis of the exercise. When assigning tasks it is necessary to point toward those matters which have been poorly worked out and to make clear with what methods and by what time the deficiencies are to be eliminated.

In our opinion, one of the reasons why exercise critiques are still not always conducted on a high level is the obviously inadequate attention devoted by staffs to this important matter. We are not even mentioning war games, staff training sessions, and short problems, for which in a number of cases critiques are not conducted at all.

Frequently, the critique group (department) includes persons in secondary positions who lack sufficient theoretical training and the necessary practical skills in this area. It sometimes happens that officers of lower staffs not even directly involved in matters of an operational scale are allocated to prepare the critique of a front (army) command-staff exercise. An analogous situation occurs also with the manning of the information department of the operations directorate of the front staff. Clearly, in such cases it is pointless to even think about the effective preparation of critique materials.





The work of the critique group (department) is not always correctly organized and carried out. In our opinion, the main complement of this group should not be located at the headquarters of the directing body and await data from the umpires, as is usually done in exercises. The officers of the critique group (department) must go out to the staffs allocated to the exercises and right there analyze the overall actions of these staffs and the decisions of the individual generals and officers being trained. It is most advisable of all for the chief of the critique group (department) to be located with the exercise director and periodically receive from him preliminary observations and instructions on the preparation of the critique, and in a number of cases, he should analyze the actions of the trainees himself and arrive at the appropriate conclusions.

The officers who are entrusted with the preparation of the critique must constantly know not only the actions of those being trained but also the situation in the course of the exercise. Therefore, they must study in detail the concept of the exercise and the training topics, the composition of the staffs and troops allocated to the exercise, and other data. Regrettably, this is by no means always observed. Officers in the critique group arrive only immediately before the start of the exercise and they have to hastily "immerse" themselves in the situation. It seems to us that the group (department) that prepares the critique must be formed back when the materials for the exercise are being prepared and be immediately subordinated to the chief of staff of the directing body.

A few words about the umpire organization. The role of the umpires and the requirements for their selection, training, work procedures, etc., have already been written about in the pages of the military press. We should merely like to mention the fact that due attention is still not given to that part of the activity of the umpires which consists in their systematic presentation of reports to the staff of the directing body. These reports are usually limited to a detailed description of the actions of those being trained, whereas main attention should be devoted to an all-round analysis of the positive and negative aspects of the decisions of those being trained, to an objective and well-founded evaluation of their actions, to the specific results obtained in working out specific problems, and to the new methods of troop and staff actions which have occurred in the exercise.

However, the reports of the umpires, as experience has shown, are more frequently so poor that they are merely read through by the exercise director and staff officers of the directing body and cannot be used for





the critique. It seems to us that in the system of operational training of staffs it is necessary to conduct special training sessions with the working out of the task of the high-quality preparation of critiques of exercises, war games, staff training sessions, etc.

We cannot agree with the proposal of the authors to remove the operational training department from the make-up of the operations directorate and resubordinate it directly to the chief of staff of the district. In the first place, this department performs all of its work under the direction of the chief of the operations directorate, who is charged with the duty of organizing and conducting operational training in the district. Second, if the authors' proposal is adopted, then it will be necessary to considerably increase the authorized strength of the department by including in it officers of the branches of the armed forces and branch arms. Consequently, a new organ would be established, one analogous to the existing operations directorate. Clearly, this is quite inadvisable.

