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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

10 May 1977

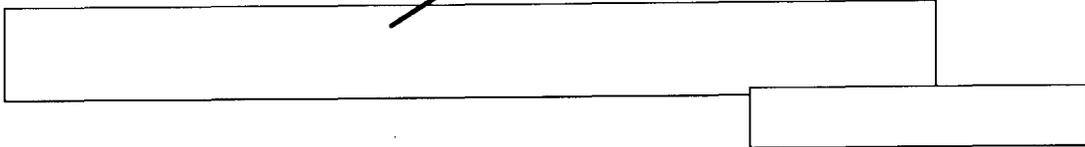
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): A Meeting
Engagement of Large Groupings of Troops
in the Initial Period of a War

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 summarizes the results of a military science conference on the subject of meeting engagements held by the Odessa Military District in 1962. Discussions covered the use of frontal and flank attacks and containment as operational maneuvers, the planning of meeting engagements while the troops are moving forward, the employment of missile units to destroy enemy nuclear weapons, and missile technical support. It was noted that the organizational structure of missile units and their servicing elements must be improved to ensure better performance of technical units and replacement of losses, and that technical units should be considered combat units for purposes of control. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (68) 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

William W. Wells

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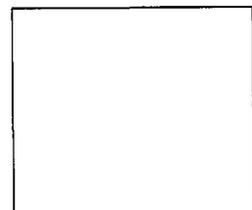
Director, National Security Agency

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. Early 1963

DATE 10 May 1977

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): A Meeting Engagement of Large Groupings of Troops in the Initial Period of a War

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (68) for 1963 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The author of this article is Colonel K. Yefimov. This article summarizes the results of a military science conference on the subject of meeting engagements held by the Odessa Military District in 1962. Discussions covered the use of frontal and flank attacks and containment as operational maneuvers, the planning of meeting engagements while the troops are moving forward, the employment of missile units to destroy enemy nuclear weapons, and missile technical support. It was noted that the organizational structure of missile units and their servicing elements must be improved to ensure better performance of technical units and replacement of losses, and that technical units should be considered combat units for purposes of control. End of Summary

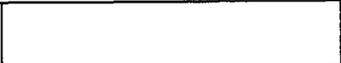
[Redacted] Comment:

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

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A Meeting Engagement of Large Groupings of Troops
in the Initial Period of a War

(From the materials of a military science conference)

by
Colonel K. Yefimov

At a military science conference of the Odessa Military District held 27-28 September 1962, there were discussed the problems of the organization and conduct of a meeting engagement by front troops with their commitment to the engagement after regrouping over a great distance (800 to 1,000 kilometers) in the initial period of a war.

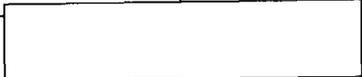
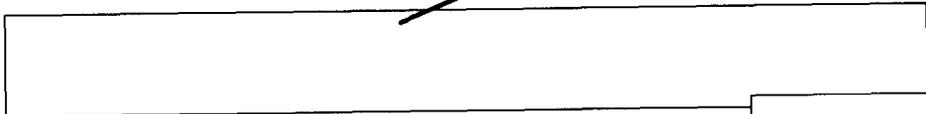
Participating in the work of the conference, in addition to the generals and senior officers of the military district, were representatives of the Military Science Department of the Main Staff of the Ground Forces, the Academy of the General Staff, the Academy i/n M. V. Frunze, the Academy of Rear Services and Transportation, the Black Sea Fleet, and a number of military districts.

The main report on the subject was presented by the first deputy commander of the military district, Colonel General M. I. Potapov. Twenty-three persons participated in a discussion of the report.

The following represent the most interesting of the very large number of matters discussed during the conference.

The forms of operational maneuver. Massed employment of nuclear weapons can put out of action a great number of enemy large units and formations. This means that huge gaps will be made in his operational disposition. The main groupings of the enemy may be destroyed or paralyzed. Under these conditions, in the opinion of the conference participants, it is hardly advisable to employ the "classical" flanking movements, envelopments, and attacks on the enemy's rear and flank, since this will involve a loss of time during which the enemy can recover and restore his combat effectiveness.





The basic form of operational maneuver in a meeting engagement under conditions of the massed employment of nuclear weapons will obviously be the delivery of powerful frontal attacks. In developing these frontal attacks, deep flanking movements can also be extensively employed to isolate an enemy grouping that is being destroyed from its approaching reserves and to move troops swiftly into the depth.

When there is a shortage of nuclear warheads or when the enemy has delivered preemptive nuclear strikes, it is more advisable to deliver several strong flank attacks combined with a rapid development of the offensive into the depth.

With this form of maneuver it is possible to rapidly split up and disorganize enemy groupings, to swiftly complete their destruction with attacks from different sides, and to destroy approaching reserves in detail. In this manner, favorable conditions are created for the rapid advance of troops into the depth of the enemy's disposition and for development of the offensive at a high rate of advance.

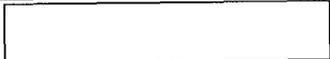
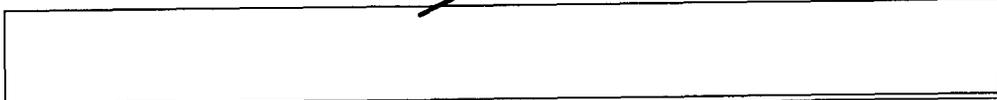
Depending on its combat strength, the front can deliver two to three attacks. The grouping of troops on each of the axes must be strong and must be capable of carrying out a swift maneuver into the flank of the enemy and destroying him.

The distance between the axes of actions of the groupings may vary. The experience gained from the exercises of recent years shows that it is as much as 10 to 30 kilometers in the army and 100 to 120 kilometers and more in the front. In the mountainous part of the Southwest Theater of Military Operations, the distance between the axes will be determined by the distances between the valleys in which combat actions by troops, particularly tanks, are possible.

When there are insufficient forces and it is necessary to gain time in order to form a grouping from the large units coming up from the depth, it is the opinion of several conference participants that there can also be employed such a form of maneuver as containment of the main groupings of the enemy with a part of the forces and subsequent delivery of powerful attacks against both his flanks. It is best to contain the main groupings of the enemy with offensive actions, but temporarily going over to the defense is not excluded.

In a number of presentations, mention was also made of such a form of maneuver as delivery of strikes against the flank and rear of an advancing





enemy grouping by deploying our troops who are advancing on an adjacent axis in the direction of the flank. This form of maneuver is proposed for a situation in which the enemy attempts to exploit gaps in the operational disposition of our troops for an offensive. After drawing the enemy more or less deeply into a gap in the operational disposition, groupings of our troops will be able by deploying in the direction of the flank to sharply change the direction of concentration of efforts and destroy the penetrating grouping of the enemy with an unexpected attack on the flank and rear.

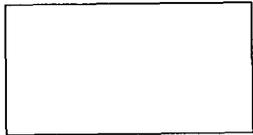
The organization of a meeting engagement. Much attention was given at the conference to the organization of a meeting engagement. The speakers stressed the complex nature of this work, which is carried out during the movement forward of the troops.

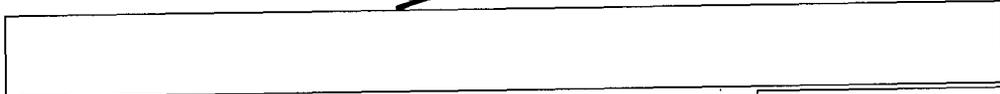
Already during the planning of the initial offensive operation, the front command and staff must anticipate the possibility of meeting engagements taking place. This will make it possible for them to specify a number of measures that will ensure the swift destruction of an enemy grouping that has gone over to the offensive at the moment of the commitment of the front to the engagement. Measures taken in advance, even tentatively, will assist in the organized entry of troops into the engagement in a shorter period of time.

The direct organization of the meeting engagement will be carried out during the period of the movement of the front troops to the sector where the front will be committed to the engagement, and as data are received about the enemy and about the situation of the troops operating up ahead.

The decision must be made soon enough so that the front troops will have an opportunity to regroup while the movement is going on, to prepare themselves, and to deliver a strike first against the nuclear attack means of the enemy and his advancing groupings. The absence of complete data about the enemy and his intentions must not affect the timeliness of making the decision or the organization of the meeting engagement.

Since the destruction of an enemy meeting grouping is one of the intermediate tasks of a front on the way to achieving the goal of a front offensive operation, the concept of the meeting engagement must ensure the creation of the most favorable conditions for development of the offensive at rapid rates of advance to the entire depth of the task.





For successful realization of the commitment of a front to an engagement and of the conduct of a meeting engagement, it is necessary that all detected enemy missile, aviation, and naval means of nuclear attack be destroyed or reliably neutralized by the time the troops move into the zone of combat actions.

A part of these tasks, the conference participants believed, must be assigned to the strategic rocket forces and long range aviation and, when possible, to the rocket troops and aviation of the troops operating up ahead. For this purpose they must be allocated an additional amount of nuclear warheads. A large part of the tasks can be carried out by the front missile large units and units, who with the necessary reserve of ready missiles must be moved beforehand to a line that ensures the destruction of the enemy's nuclear attack means by the time that the troops approach to a distance of 200 to 250 kilometers from the presumed line of encounter, that is, to a distance from which such nuclear attack means as Redstone, Matador, and Mace could take action against the front troops.

In this case, it was stated in a number of presentations, the siting areas of the front missile large units and units must be located 100 to 150 kilometers from the line of possible encounter with the enemy, that is, 100 kilometers in front of the main front forces. In other words, the front missile units must move as much as a half day ahead of the main forces. Later on, remaining in these areas, they will be able to fulfil tasks to support the commitment of the front to the engagement and its subsequent operations.

Depending on the situation, missile large units and units with a range of fire of 170 kilometers can also be moved beforehand to projected siting areas so as to be ready to deliver nuclear strikes when the front troops move forward to within 60 to 70 kilometers from the possible line of encounter with the enemy. This is because from this distance enemy action against our advancing troops is already possible. The distance of the siting areas of the rocket troops from the line of presumed contact under these conditions must be 50 to 60 kilometers. In this case, the residual range of 110 to 120 kilometers will make it possible to battle not only the Corporal guided missile, but the Redstone guided missile as well. Consequently, the army brigades must move four to five hours ahead of the main forces.

The movement forward and deployment of the missile battalions of the motorized rifle (tank) divisions, as a rule, must take place simultaneously with that of the troops. When the forward units become involved in battle,

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the battalions deploy immediately near the routes of movement, ready to deliver strikes against enemy nuclear attack means of the Honest John type and to support the maneuvering and attack of the main forces of their divisions. The advance deployment of tactical missile battalions is not excluded. This is possible particularly when there are reliable data about the enemy and assurance that the presumed line of encounter will not change.

Thus, in a meeting engagement of large groupings of front troops, fire against the enemy will be carried out in approximately the following sequence.

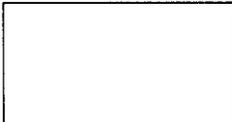
At the start of and during the movement forward of the front troops, strikes are delivered by strategic missiles, long range aviation, and front aviation.

Upon moving to within the range of the Redstone guided missile (200 to 250 kilometers from the presumed line of encounter), the advancing troops are covered by front rocket troops with a range of fire of 300 and 500 kilometers. When possible, the rocket troops of the formations operating up ahead are also included here.

When the front troops come within the range of fire of the Corporal guided missile battalion (60 to 70 kilometers), fire action against the latter is built up using the strikes of missiles with a range of fire of 170 kilometers. When the forward units become involved in battle, strikes by the tactical missile battalions and artillery are delivered against the missile means of the Honest John type and against the deploying enemy troops.

The conference participants doubted the possibility of centralized control of rocket troops at the front level under existing conditions in the Southwest Theater of Military Operations, since the attack groupings here will operate, as a rule, on disconnected axes. The distances between the attack groupings can reach 100 to 120 and more kilometers, and the launch range of fire of army missiles, as is known, is not greater than 170 kilometers.

Under such conditions, to provide the greatest independence of action to all the attack groupings, the commander of the army or of the corps must himself command the missile units. Only in this way is it possible to preempt the enemy in the delivery of nuclear strikes and to effectively exploit the results of the strikes. By maneuvering the trajectories of





front missile means and by retargeting bomber and fighter-bomber aviation, the front commander can render the necessary assistance to one grouping of troops or another.

Missile technical support. A particularly complex matter in conducting a meeting engagement after regrouping front troops over a great distance will be the supplying of the front missile large units and units with ready missiles. The conference participants proposed the following measures for accomplishing this matter: the establishment in peacetime or in a period of threat of reserves of ready missiles near the area of combat actions, the preparation of missiles by missile technical organs of the troops operating up ahead, the advance movement of one's own missile technical organs into the area of combat actions, the delivery of missiles to the siting areas by helicopters and by aircraft, and the preparation of the missile delivery vehicles in the technical batteries of the brigades.

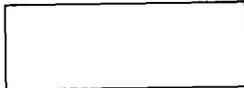
The experience gained from the exercises has shown that the missile rear services are still far from perfect. As yet the matters of continuous work on the preparation of missiles, engineer and chemical support, security, provost and traffic control service, the supplying of missile propellant, and the delivery of missiles have not been resolved.

In the opinion of the conference participants, the organizational structure of the missile units must ensure them complete independence in carrying out technical and rear services tasks. To do this, a missile brigade must include an assembly brigade for the preparation of warheads, and all the technical subunits must be brought together into the technical battalion in order for the latter to increase its productivity to four to six missiles a day. In the missile battalions of motorized rifle divisions there should be special subunits for mating the missiles. In the front it is advisable to have two to three mixed mobile missile technical bases.

The organizational structure of the above bases must make it possible, when necessary, to replace missile technical subunits of the brigades or a brigade's individual components when they are put out of action.

In addition, the table of organization of the missile brigades, the front technical bases, and the separate missile transport battalions must include communications subunits, engineer subunits, chemical subunits, security, and provost and traffic control subunits.

There is also the need to have in the front a transport regiment made up of two battalions, each of which would be equal to the existing separate





missile transport battalion with regard to transport capabilities. In the transport regiment there probably should be heavy-load helicopter subunits to supply missiles to the missile units, particularly during an operation when the length of the supply routes will increase considerably because of the rapid rates of advance.

Several of the speakers maintained that the existing system of control of the front missile technical units does not satisfy the requirements for conducting modern operations. In their opinion, missile technical units should not be considered rear services units, but rather combat units directly associated with the delivery of nuclear strikes. It is more desirable to assign control of them to the chief of the rocket troops and artillery of the front and his staff and to exercise it from the front command post.

For the purpose of organizing and exercising reliable control of the missile technical units, there should be a thorough examination of the table of organization and equipment of the communications subunits of these units. At the same time, it is necessary to accomplish the matter of reinforcing the organization of the chief of communications troops of the front with a group of officers to be occupied with planning, organizing, and directly providing communications with the rocket troops.

Summing up the work of the conference, the commander of the military district, Colonel General A. Kh. Babadzhanyan stressed that it made possible the discussion of a number of timely matters regarding the organization and conduct of a meeting engagement by front troops after the front had moved forward a great distance in the initial period of a war. On a number of subjects the conference drew definite conclusions which can be used in the operational and combat training of the staffs and troops.

