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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

24 February 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM : John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director for Operations  
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Forms and  
Methods of Operational Training

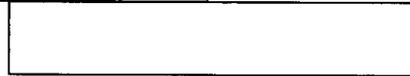
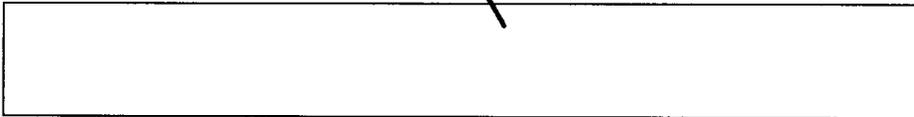
1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article, commenting on a previous article, describes the difference between combined-arms command-staff exercises and war games, pointing out the advantages of the latter. It elaborates the functions of the exercise or war game director, of his staff, and of the role-playing groups; then presents recommendations on the directing body staff and on the organization, concept, planning, and play of a war game or exercise. Lastly, it discusses the methods of achieving the training goals of the war game or exercise and of conducting its critique. This article appeared in Issue No. 6 (67) for 1962.

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

*for* John N. McMahon

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# Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR



DATE OF INFO. Late 1962

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Forms and Methods of Operational Training

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 6 (67) 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 A. Shramchenko. This article, commenting on a previous article, describes the difference between combined-arms command-staff exercises and war games, pointing out the advantages of the latter. It elaborates the functions of the exercise or war game director, of his staff, and of the role-playing groups; then presents recommendations on the directing body staff and on the organization, concept, planning, and play of a war or exercise. Lastly, it discusses the methods of achieving the training goals of the war game or exercise and of conducting its critique.

End of Summary

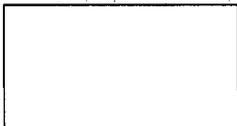
Comment:

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.

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Forms and Methods of Operational Training\*

by  
Colonel A. SHRAMCHENKO

In his article, General-Leytenant V. MERNOV raised extremely important questions. Modern conditions urgently require improved forms and methods of operational training. In the process, along with seeking new forms and methods of training, a great deal of attention should be given to improving existing techniques of preparing and conducting exercises, and to accurately determining the relative importance of any given forms and methods of instruction in the course of operational training.

We cannot but agree with the statement by the author of the article that under modern conditions command-staff exercises on the terrain constitute the highest form of operational training. As experience shows, a certain number of combined-arms large units and units, as well as large units and units of various branch arms, should as a rule be brought in to take part in operational command-staff exercises. The Minister of Defense gave the following assessment of the participation of troops in the DON command-staff exercise: "The actual participation of large units and units in the exercise benefited the work of commanders and staffs, since many of their calculations and decisions were put to a practical test in troop actions."

But although command-staff exercises are an extremely effective form of instruction, for a number of reasons they cannot ensure the accomplishment of all operational training tasks. At the present time the role of those forms of training, which permit commanders and staffs to be trained in accomplishing the basic tasks of troop control in a short period of time, without the large-scale diverting of generals and officers to work on teams of umpires, and without excessive expenditure of motor resources and materiel, is growing considerably. Among such forms of operational training are short operational problems and group exercises, staff training sessions, war games, and field training trips.

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\* Comment on an article by General-Leytenant V. Mernov in Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" No. 3 (64), 1962.

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Short operational problems, in our opinion, should be presented at various types of assemblies, but should be given more often in the form of individual written assignments.

Prior to the Great Patriotic War field training trips were widely used. Unfortunately, at the present time they are given very little of the attention they deserve. We fully agree with General-Leytenant V. MERNOV that they must be brought into wider use so that we can study the possible nature of combat actions, the conditions of troop movement, engineer, materiel, and technical support, and resolve a number of other questions.

I should like to dwell especially on war games. It is customary to divide them, depending on the composition of the trainees, into command-staff and command war games. On the question as to what the difference is between command-staff exercises and war games, particularly command-staff war games, there is a great diversity of opinion. Some even believe that command-staff exercises and command-staff war games are one and the same thing and that the only difference between them is that the former are carried out with existing staffs while the latter are carried out with staffs made up of generals and officers for only the duration of the game.

In our opinion, command-staff exercises and command-staff war games are different forms of operational training, each of which has its own characteristic features which determine the various work conditions of the trainees.

A command-staff exercise, as we know, is held on the terrain, with not only the combat support and service staffs, units, and subunits, but also as a rule a portion of the troops being brought out and deployed. Command-staff war games, by contrast, are held on maps, and if the staffs move out of their permanent garrisons, then in this case too, the control posts, as a rule, are not actually moved during the game.

Whereas in a war game only the most interesting and instructive operational-tactical episodes are played out, with operational transitions interspersed between them, in a command-staff exercise the situation usually builds up steadily and successively as in an actual operation, for otherwise it would be impossible to actually move staffs or for the troops



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brought in for the exercise to actually function.

These principal differences between exercises and war games determine the particular features of the training goals that may be achieved at each of them. Thus, during a command-staff exercise staffs can be trained, and their ability to control troops in the dynamics of combat operations while moving over great distances can be tested. A command-staff war game should not have this type of goal: its training goal may be training in the making of operational calculations, in preparing various documents, and in observing measures of secure troop control.

This, of course, does not mean that since command-staff war games more closely approximate combat reality, they can replace command-staff exercises altogether. Both have their strong and weak points. Command-staff war games can be held far more often, since they are simpler to organize, do not involve prolonged absences by staffs, and do not require a large directing body or large expenditures of materiel.

Experience shows that the differences between exercises and games are not always taken into consideration. As a consequence, during command-staff war games the situation sometimes builds up continuously or for the most part continuously, and as a result the game is not conducted dynamically, staff work is made too easy, that which is most important is lost in minor details, much time is expended, and commanders and staffs do not receive the proper practice. At the same time, operational pauses and transitions are sometimes misused during command-staff exercises, which lowers the level of realism in the work of the trainees.

In order to improve operational training under modern conditions, the practice of combining command-staff exercises and war games should be more widely employed. For example, before staffs reach the state border a command-staff exercise may be held, and when they reach it -- a command-staff war game on maps.

Since combat actions have become increasingly dynamic, the trainees must make a variety of operational calculations, make decisions, and transmit combat tasks to subordinates in extremely short periods of time, the work of the director of an exercise or war game has become considerably more complex. In view of this fact, a large number of staffs should not be called in to

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participate in war games, and particularly not in exercises. Three-stage exercises and games may be considered exceptional. Two-stage exercises and games should be conducted more often, and war games can be successfully conducted with one stage.

In our opinion, we should not be excessively enamored with two-stage games and exercises. Apart from the fact that one-stage exercises and games provide the most favorable training conditions and are simpler to organize, it is only at such games that an actual enemy can be studied. Indeed, it is no accident that it is only recently, when operational training began to be carried out in the light of conducting combat operations against probable enemies, that command-staff exercises began to be one-sided, with role-playing groups being set up.

During one-sided exercises and war games, a role-playing group should act for the side not represented by real staffs, in accordance with the views of the army of the probable enemy. Its very name indicates that it is not the equivalent of the real staffs involved in the exercise. A role-playing group does not control subordinate staffs (it has none), and as a rule it does not prepare combat documents. Therefore, it usually should be small in size. It is located either with or near the directing body staff. However, the role-playing group, like the real staffs, should not be informed of the operational-tactical concept, and during the exercise or game the group should not know the decisions of the trainees. Unfortunately, this rule is not always observed. Sometimes the directing body displays the maps in front of the role-playing group. When this is done the trainees can achieve success only when there is a considerable imbalance in the forces or if the directing body lacks objectivity in assessing the enemy's combat capabilities. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that if the role-playing group knows the decisions of the other side when it makes its own decisions, any sense of combat, or a duel, disappears; some officers and generals even sincerely try to explain their errors by saying that their decisions were known to "the enemy".

The staff of the directing body should be of great assistance to the director in accomplishing the tasks confronting him. The efficiency of its work depends largely on how efficiently it is organized. Like the authors of the article, we believe that information groups, planning groups, groups for

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playing out combat operations, etc., should not be set up. A large number of groups only complicates the work of the staff of the directing body, particularly in the playing out of combat actions.

The main center where the work of those being trained is analyzed and the playing out of combat actions is prepared, should be an operations department or a directorate composed of branches. For example, during a front two-sided exercise, an operations department consisting of two branches -- one for the front of each side -- may be set up in the directing body staff. On the basis of an analysis of information received on decisions made and orders given to the trainees, and an analysis of actual troop capabilities, the branch chiefs, under the direction of the chief of staff, work up a variant of the playing out of the combat actions of troops for a report to the director. It is advisable to involve the senior umpires of both sides in this work.

Since up to now the trainees have not taken full account of the results of the employment of missile/nuclear weapons, the operations department (directorate) should have a small recording group, which would work in close contact with the branches.

The question of which persons should be appointed to the directing body staff is of no small importance. Its staffing should be based on the principle that senior chiefs and staffs should teach their subordinates and subordinate staffs. When war games and exercises are conducted with the staffs of military districts, the staffs of the directing body should be made up mainly of officers and generals of the Main Staff of the Ground Forces and the General Staff. Their operations departments (directorates) in this case should draw their personnel from the actual branches of these staffs. In addition, instructors from military academies also should be brought in to serve on the directing body staffs.

Organizing the staff of the directing body in this way will raise the level of its work, permit the respective commanders to get to know their subordinates better, and enable senior staffs to work with their staffs under conditions that approximate combat reality.

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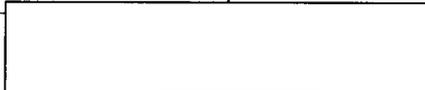
The experience of exercises shows that staffs assigned to exercises do not pay enough attention to work for the superior staff -- which in their case is the staff of the directing body -- concentrating instead on work with subordinate staffs. The requirement that work with the staff of the directing body be like work with a superior staff, and that the situation, decisions, orders of the commander be reported to it, is often taken badly, as diverting trainees from their work. It need not be said how incorrect this is. Having the staff of the directing body composed mainly of generals and officers of the respective directorates of the central administration will help eliminate this shortcoming to the greatest possible degree.

One of the extremely important and interesting questions constantly giving rise to discussion is: does defining the overall subject, training goals, and training problems in advance conflict with the requirement that the exercise be conducted on the basis of decisions made and orders given to the trainees? Other questions that arise are: in how much detail should the operational-tactical concept be worked out and is there any need at all, in view of the above requirement, for a plan for the exercise?

We can state with confidence that to conduct an exercise in accordance with the decision of the trainees does not in the least eliminate the need for purposeful preparation and advance drafting of a number of documents, including the concept and plan of the exercise. The exercise must not be conducted unless its subject, training goals, and training problems have been spelled out, i.e., unless there is a precise understanding of why the exercise is being conducted and what results are expected from it.

Once the operational-tactical concept has been approved, it becomes an integral part of the plan of the exercise, and it is advisable to work it out on a map with a legend. It specifies how and in what operational-tactical situation the director intends to work out the training problems for each stage of the exercise. The concept, in our opinion, should include: the initial situation, decisions by the senior commanders of the two sides for this situation, the areas where the operational-tactical episodes are to be played out, and the approximate time required for each stage of the exercise.

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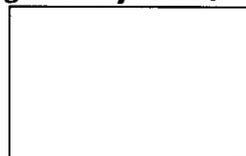
The initial situation should reflect: the general nature of previous combat actions; the make-up and position of the forces of the two sides (one to two levels higher); the degree to which the forces of the two sides have been affected by nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction and by aviation; the radiation situation; the make-up, position, and status of the forces for which the commanders and staffs being trained are acting.

The initial situation, like the entire concept, should be complex and instructive, so that from the beginning of the exercise generals and officers find themselves working under conditions which require them to make decisions in a short period of time, draw them up quickly, transmit the tasks to their subordinates, and organize all-round support of the combat actions of the troops. The initial situation should be based on the subject of the exercise and particularly on the contents of the first stage.

By developing the decisions for the senior commanders of the trainees, the director is able to determine the operational (combat) tasks and combat make-up of the two sides, the location of any given large unit in the operation, as well as which means of destruction he will employ, in his role as senior commander, in support of the combat actions of the two sides.

At the present time the working out of the operational-tactical concept on a map is also often limited to working out the initial situation and the decisions of the trainees. We feel that in this form the concept is incomplete. At best it shows in what operational-tactical situation the training problems of the first or first and second stages of the exercise will be worked out, but the situation to be used in the working out of the training problems of the subsequent stages is not planned even in general form. This complicates the work of the director and can lead during the exercise to considerable deviations from the working out of the training problems that have been planned.

In our opinion, the operational-tactical concept should also specify the areas for playing out the operational-tactical episodes, as, for example, the areas for playing out the delivery and repelling of a counterattack, for a meeting engagement, etc.



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In these areas -- which should ensure the most instructive possible playing out of the operational-tactical episodes in question -- the possible position of adjacent units, their tasks, and the probable line of encounter of the two sides are plotted on the map.

Since at the present time exercises are conducted to a great depth, decisions made for the senior commander relating to the initial situation will not always determine the operational (combat) tasks for the trainees over the entire period of the exercise. Moreover, depending on the situational conditions, the initial task of the troops may be changed altogether. Therefore, the decision made for the senior commander -- or the portion of it relating, for example, to the employment by him of nuclear weapons and the operational (combat) tasks of the trainees -- should be worked out and plotted on a map in those areas where the forces will have to perform the new tasks.

When developed in this form, the concept makes it possible to determine in general terms in what operational-tactical situation the projected training problems will be worked out. This does not mean, however, that during the exercise we should shift from one training problem to another without the decisions of the trainees being taken into consideration. The art of leadership lies in achieving the assigned training goals and at the same conducting the exercise in accordance with the decision of the trainees. We shall dwell on only a few of the methods that may be employed by the directing body to ensure that the exercises are instructive.

For example, according to the exercise plan, it was planned that after the playing out of the meeting engagement, the "western" side would work out the transition to defense and the "eastern" side would follow up the success of the meeting engagement and complete the destruction of the enemy. However, it turned out that during the exercise the "western" side made a more expedient decision, which ensured its success in the meeting engagement. In this case the directing body had to pronounce the "western" side successful, and force the "eastern" side to take all possible measures to halt the enemy advance. Only after this should the kind of operational situation be created (by the actions of adjacent units or the employment of means of destruction by the senior commander of the "eastern" side) which

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would force the commander of the "western" side to make the decision to go over to the defense. This and similar variants of playing out one operational-tactical episode or another should be provided for by the plan of the exercise.

To achieve the assigned training goals, the director must guide the work of the trainees along the required channels, avoiding in the process direct corrections and suggestions, for this would impede the fostering in commanders of independence and initiative and make them inclined to act overcautiously. The director may listen to the calculations and reasons for the decisions, and may also ask questions which, upon consideration by the trainees, would enable them to correctly assess the situation and make the proper decision. In all these actions the director should act as would a senior commander directing his subordinates. Finally, the director may order the furnishing of additional information on the situation which, when analyzed by the trainees, would assist them in making the proper decision.

In conclusion, let us dwell briefly on certain problems of improving the method of conducting critiques. At present, in the majority of operational exercises the theoretical part of the critique, which precedes the consideration of the concept of the exercise and the evaluation of the work of the trainees, usually is no longer given separately. However, in exercises on a tactical scale this kind of artificial division of the critique into two parts may still be encountered. A critique thus structured dampens the interest of the trainees from the outset, for after an exercise it is difficult psychologically to switch over to hearing what is essentially a lecture at a time when everyone is waiting for the evaluation of his work. Also, when the evaluation of the practical work of the trainees begins, without theoretical calculations it appears unsubstantiated. If, however, this evaluation is supported by theoretical substantiation, it becomes a repetition of the theoretical part. During the critique the theory of the problem must be organically intertwined with the examination of the work of the trainees, in order for the evaluation of this work to be convincing and objective.

At the end of the critique there must be an analysis of the work of the team of umpires and of the staff of the directing body. This will help to improve the methods of conducting



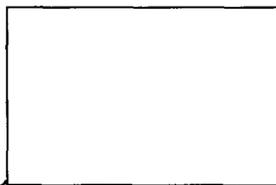


exercises and will increase the responsibility of umpires for the work.

At the present time the director of the exercise usually conducts the critique with the aid of the chief of staff of the directing body. Thus, the trainees do not actively participate in the critique. We believe that there may be another way of structuring the critique, particularly at command war games held at assemblies for command personnel.

At the beginning of the critique the chief of staff of the directing body announces the subject, training goals, operational-tactical concept, and course of the exercise. Then the senior commanders of the two sides explain the basis of their decisions on the most interesting operational-tactical episodes. The critique ends with a summing up by the director, who delivers a comprehensive evaluation, with theoretical substantiation, of the actions of the trainees. It is advisable to permit generals and officers to bring to the attention of the director before the beginning of the critique any remaining questions that were not cleared up for them during the exercise.

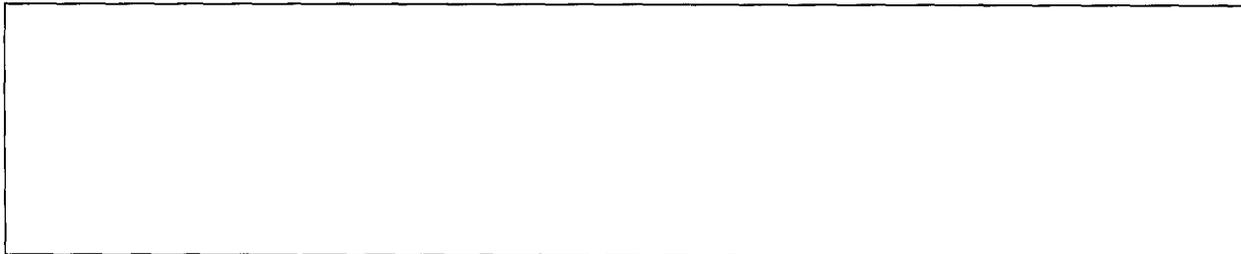
There are a number of advantages to structuring the critique in this way. The statements of the trainees during the critique permit the director to gain a clear understanding of the reasons for their decisions. This makes the critique more instructive and objective. It should be borne in mind that even should the director wish to do so, there is no opportunity to determine during the exercise how thoroughly the trainees have considered all the elements in the situation when they make their decisions. Experience shows that when the director begins to analyze in detail the reasons for the decisions, it often becomes necessary to have operational pauses. Having the trainees state the reasons for their decisions makes it possible to evaluate the training of generals and officers as accurately as possible, and to judge such traits as independence, initiative, and readiness to deliberately take risks, and permits the trainees to analyze their own decisions. Of course, this type of critique would take more time, but this would be fully compensated for by a better understanding of the problems and a thorough analysis of the level of training of the trainees.



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