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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

17 August 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems of
The Defense of an Army Corps on a Separate
Mountain Axis During the Initial Army
Operation 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 relates the proceedings of a military science conference which was held in the 29th Army Corps. Questions of organizing and conducting the defense of a corps during an army offensive operation were discussed, as were the following related topics: setting up defense in short time limits, uninterrupted control, and materiel-technical support of the troops. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (64) 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

John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF
INFO. Mid-1962

DATE 17 August 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems of the Defense of an Army Corps on a Separate Mountain Axis During the Initial Army Operation 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. 3 (64) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are Colonel D. Chayka and Colonel V. Ushakov. This article relates the proceedings of a military science conference which was held in the 29th Army Corps. Questions of organizing and conducting the defense of a corps during an army offensive operation were discussed, as were the following related topics: setting up defense in short time limits, uninterrupted control, and materiel-technical support of the troops. End of Summary

Comment:

Colonel V. Ushakov also wrote "The Employment of Underwater Nuclear Bursts in Repulsing an Amphibious Landing" in Issue No. 3 (70) for 1963. 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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Some Problems of the Defense of an Army Corps on a
Separate Mountain Axis During the Initial Army
Operation in the Initial Period of a War

(Based on materials of a military science conference)

by

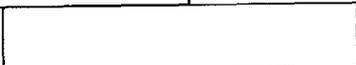
Colonel D. CHAYKA
Colonel V. USHAKOV

A military science conference was held in the 29th Army Corps which discussed questions of organizing and conducting the defense of a corps during an army offensive operation on a separate mountain axis in the initial period of a war.

In the main address and in the speeches of the conferees special attention was devoted to the conditions of going over to the defense, to requirements for setting up defense in short time limits, to uninterrupted control, and to questions of the materiel-technical support of the troops.

An opinion was expressed that, stemming from the nature of the initial period of a war and the conditions of the theater, an army corps, operating on a separate axis in the first echelon of the army, can go over to the defense at the beginning of an operation if, when advancing to the border, the large units sustain considerable casualties as the result of strikes of the missile/nuclear weapons of the enemy, and also when the outcome of a meeting engagement in the border zone is unsuccessful, and in addition, in the course of the development of the offensive operation.

The conferees said that under the conditions of a given theater of military operations, the army corps will most often go over to the defense at the moment the army offensive operation has been carried out. This is explained by the fact that the grouping of the corps will be weakened, the battle formation will be extended, and the combat capability of units and large units will be reduced as a result of the casualties sustained. There will be insufficient nuclear and conventional munitions, and transporting them will be more difficult in view of the extended supply lines.



At this time the enemy may have a certain superiority in manpower and in means of attack due to reserves concentrated in the depth. The more so that with the initiation of a war, the combat actions of our probable enemies will have a delaying nature. It is assumed that they will go over to active offensive actions from the main defensive line which is up to 300 kilometers from the border, that is, virtually at the moment our initial army offensive operation has been completed.

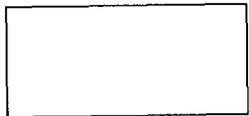
During the work of the conference, the question of organizing defense in short time limits evoked special interest.

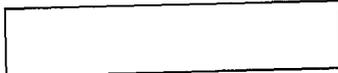
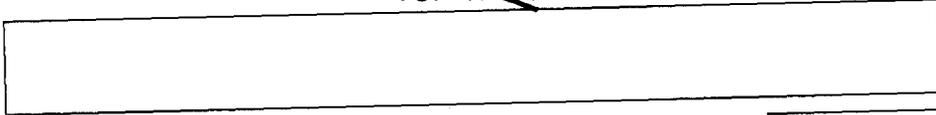
Some conferees were inclined to make the readiness of the defense dependent on the readiness of engineer works which, as we know, can take from one to several days to carry out; others, relying on the available experience of organizing defense in limited time periods at the regiment level (three to four hours), feel that this experience can be transferred to the corps.

As a result of the discussion, the participants came to the conclusion that the readiness of the defense is determined by the distance of the enemy attack grouping, by the support of the army corps with missile/nuclear weapons, and by the nature of the line attained by the corps during the offensive. The main measure of the readiness of the defense in short time limits will be the readiness of the system of fire of all types in conjunction with engineer obstacles, and also the organization of control and cooperation.

According to the majority of generals and officers who addressed the conference, carrying out the necessary measures in setting up a system of fire (preparing fire means, planning the fire, relaying fire tasks to subunits, etc.) will take no more than four to five hours. In this time, control must be set up and instructions must be given on the main questions of cooperation on the axes of the probable attack of the enemy. In addition to this, we must keep in mind that, in connection with going over to the defense, obviously, measures will have to be taken to improve the situation of our own troops, such as relocating individual components of the battle formation and, in a number of cases, seizing advantageous areas and lines for which no less than three hours will be required.

Consequently, the overall time for preparing the defense of a corps should be no greater than six to eight hours. This calculation assumes that the decision to go over to the defense and the relaying of the combat tasks to the subordinates are carried out during the offensive.





A corps will go over to the defense most frequently in the zone of its own offensive, the width of which may reach 100 kilometers. Therefore, the defended areas of large units and units along the front will be 45 kilometers for divisions, ten to 15 kilometers for regiments, and five to seven kilometers for battalions; the distances between battalions may be two to three kilometers, up to six kilometers between regiments, and ten to 15 kilometers between divisions.

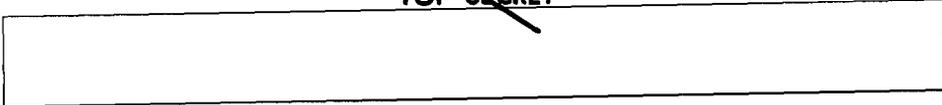
According to the conferees, the stability of this defense of a corps is achieved by properly exploiting the advantages of mountainous terrain and all types of fire, especially missile, artillery and tank fire.

In several speeches the opinion was expressed that, when the forces and means of a corps are limited, the stability of the defense and the disruption of the enemy offensive can be achieved under favorable meteorological conditions by setting up a zone of radioactive contamination, consisting of a nuclear barrier in conjunction with strikes of chemical weapons. Under these conditions it is advisable to move a part of the forces and means of the defending corps forward to the area of the nuclear barrier which has been created, as a cover or for setting up a forward position.

At the conference they discussed the fact that the extension of the front of the corps and the limited forces and means will not permit all components of the battle formation to be deployed immediately. Apparently, there will not be a second echelon, an antitank reserve or antitank areas in the corps. The depth of the defense will be set up in the course of the battle by units re-establishing their lost combat effectiveness, and also by means of transferring troops from areas which have not been attacked or are less active.

Certain conferees emphasized that the regulations about concentrating the main efforts of the troops in order to hold sectors and areas on which the stability of defense, in its old meaning, depend, do not conform to the nature of a modern combined-arms battle, since the observance of these regulations enables the enemy, when evaluating the terrain, to rather easily discover the intention of the defending corps and determine its main grouping and subsequently deliver missile/nuclear strikes against it. Therefore, we must regard the main principle of defense in the mountains as the camouflaged employment of nuclear and chemical weapons, and the wide-scale maneuvering of the troops of the first and second echelons of divisions and regiments in order to set up the necessary groupings at the necessary time and in the specified place for delivering strong flank





counterattacks against the enemy.

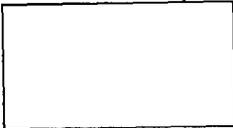
In connection with this, it was pointed out that the battle formation of the corps should be set up so that a negligible amount of forces and means should be located in the areas of the most probable enemy strikes with means of mass destruction. The main forces should be located where their destruction would be ruled out, and where the movement to threatened axes and areas in which it is most suitable to rout the enemy would be ensured.

Due to the considerable remoteness and severe isolation of the axes of action brought about by almost inaccessible mountain areas, and the limited maneuvering of fire and troops from one axis to another, the large units and units of the corps which are operating on separate axes must be prepared to conduct a battle independently without any fire and tactical cooperation with adjacent units and without the support of the forces and means of the senior commander.

In order to ensure uninterrupted troop control it was proposed to have a command post, a forward command post and a rear control post in the corps, and to place them in echelons on the main axis. In so doing, there should be a commander with a group of officers in the forward command post, while the command post should be headed by the chief of staff. If troop control is not reliably ensured from these two posts, an auxiliary control post headed by the deputy corps commander can be set up on a less dangerous axis.

The conferees proposed to allocate a reconnaissance group for each nuclear element in order to successfully conduct reconnaissance of the nuclear means of the enemy. These groups must not only discover, but must also destroy the means of nuclear attack, for which task they should be supplied with demolition and sabotage means.

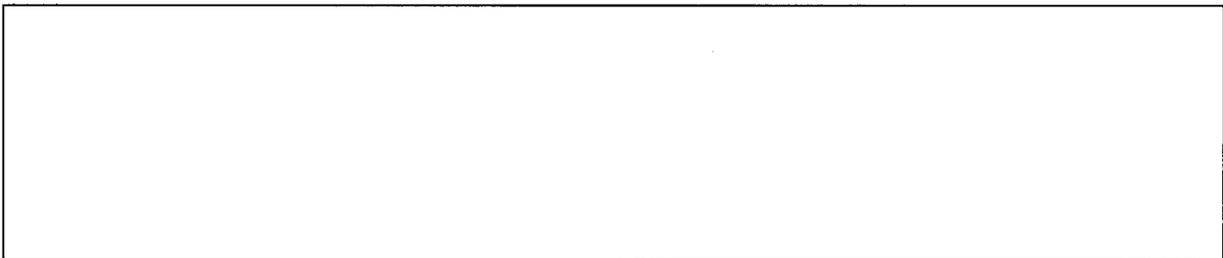
In mountains, under conditions where the troops are very much isolated, it is difficult for the army rear services to supply the large units of the corps, especially if it is operating on a separate axis. In this regard it was proposed that the corps have its own rear services with the necessary units and facilities and also mobile reserves of materiel.



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