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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

23 August 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Air Defense
of Troops in a Front Offensive Operation

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, discussing a previous article on organizing and controlling the joint air defense actions of front fighter aviation and surface-to-air missiles, advocates an area system of air defense rather than the direct cover of units and installations, thereby requiring centralized control over all front air defense forces and means and with the front chief of air defense troops exercising this control rather than the front air army commander. It states that although such centralized control has been tested and found effective, the joint actions of fighter aviation and surface-to-air missiles in the same air zone were not possible at the time of writing due to safety and control difficulties. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) 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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Page 2 of 8 Pages

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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 8 Pages

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Early 1962

DATE 23 August 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Air Defense of Troops in a Front Offensive Operation

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (63) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are General-Mayor A. Kurykin and Lieutenant Colonel D. Kremlyakov. This article, discussing a previous article on organizing and controlling the joint air defense actions of front fighter aviation and surface-to-air missiles, advocates an area system of air defense rather than the direct cover of units and installations, thereby requiring centralized control over all front air defense forces and means and with the front chief of air defense troops exercising this control rather than the front air army commander. It states that although such centralized control has been tested and found effective, the joint actions of fighter aviation and surface-to-air missiles in the same air zone were not possible at the time of writing due to safety and control difficulties.

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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Page 4 of 8 Pages

Air Defense of Troops in a Front Offensive Operation

by

General-Major A. KURYKIN
Lieutenant Colonel D. KREMLYAKOV

In modern war, the role of air defense as an integral part of the combat actions of troops is increasing considerably. Surface-to-air missile units, which are capable, regardless of weather conditions, of hitting high-speed targets with great accuracy even when these are traveling at high altitudes, are right now one of the most effective means of air defense. Surface-to-air missile units do not operate by themselves, but in close cooperation with the fighter aviation of the front air army and the air defense radiotechnical units conducting radar reconnaissance and radioelectronic countermeasures. The presence of heterogeneous air defense forces and means requires appropriate organization of their actions.

The article of Generals N. OSTROUMOV and M. KOZHEVNIKOV "Aviation Operations in an Initial Front Offensive Operation,"* sets forth an organization for the covering of front troops and rear installations with which we are not in full accord. Actual exercises in the combat employment of the air defense troops of the ground forces have not corroborated, in our opinion, the recommendations put forth by these authors.

It is well known that the air defense of troops and rear installations of a front is carried out by the air defense forces and means of the antiaircraft artillery subunits of the motorized rifle (tank) regiments and the surface-to-air missile subunits of the combined-arms large units, by the organic and attached surface-to-air missile units of the armies and the front, and also by the fighter aviation of the air army and the air defense troops of the frontline formations (large units) of the air defense of the country.

* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1961, No. 5
(60).

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Page 5 of 8 Pages

Right now the basic air defense means of a motorized rifle (tank) division are short-range surface-to-air guided missiles; and using them along with army and front medium-range surface-to-air guided missiles opens the way for a changeover from the methods of directly covering large units and installations to an area system of air defense that provides for the covering of operational axes, troop disposition areas, and rear installations. Naturally, the establishment of such a system is based on the integrated use of troop, army, and front surface-to-air missiles and radiotechnical units. Here, an indispensable condition for the organization of an area system of troop coverage is to centralize the control of all forces and means in the hands of one superior, at the present time this being the chief of the air defense troops of the front.

In the interests of establishing an area system of air defense, the chief of the air defense troops of the front very often must indicate to the chiefs of air defense of army formations and combined-arms large units the siting areas for their surface-to-air missile units (taking into consideration the positioning of the means of the front, adjacent units, and of the Air Defense Forces of the Country) and, when repulsing massed enemy air strikes, assume control of the main forces of the surface-to-air missile units. The chief of the air defense troops must also maintain continuous contact with the indicated subordinate chiefs of air defense, be constantly well informed on the ground situation, even on insignificant changes in it, and react to this in an appropriate manner, changing the structure of the area system of troop coverage. Will the air army commander be able to do this?

In addition, there are difficulties of another order. Radar reconnaissance of the air enemy by the forces of the air defense radiotechnical units is organized on a front scale. All the radiotechnical means of the ground troops are brought into the organization, and the radar reconnaissance center, which is under the authority of the chief of the air defense troops of the front, gathers data on the air enemy from all types of reconnaissance including data from air reconnaissance and from the organs of the front intelligence directorate. Thus, having complete data about both the ground and air situation, the chief of the air defense troops of the front is better able than anyone else to most correctly exercise control over the air defense means. In view of this, the recommendations made in the above-cited article are not well-founded in proposing that, to successfully repel the enemy's winged means of attack, it is enough to operationally subordinate front surface-to-air missile units to the commander of the air army, who also has authority over the fighter aviation. Such centralization offers little utility. To assign to

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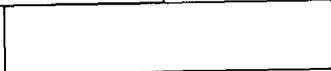
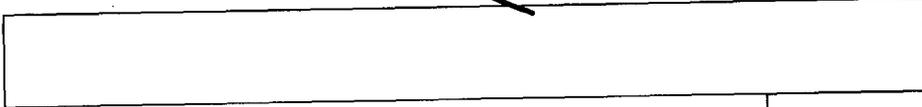
Page 6 of 8 Pages

the commander of the air army the functions of deputy front commander for air defense is to create extremely complicated conditions for him and thereby deprive him of the possibility of fulfilling his direct responsibilities of directing air combat actions. And too, the staff of the air army will hardly be able to cope with functions that are not inherent to it -- of controlling ground units and large units. Even reinforcing the staff of the air army with means of communications and a definite number of air defense officers will not allow it to exercise such control fully. It may be said with confidence that this organization of the coverage of front troops and rear installations will always fall short of the requirements for troops conducting their actions in a relatively wide zone at high speeds. Therefore, it seems to us, only from the front command post, where direction is exercised over all the troops of the front and where all data about the enemy and the situation of its own and adjacent troops are received, is it possible to control continuously and purposefully the air defense troops through the chief of air defense of the front.

With the existing subordination of fighter aviation to the air army commander, one of the most acceptable methods of utilizing in combat all air defense forces and means can be that of controlling their joint actions from the control post of the chief of the air defense troops of the front, where an air operations group headed by the deputy commander of the air army must be stationed. This is especially necessary to control the surface-to-air guided missiles and fighter aviation when they are committed to battle at the same time. Such a colocation of the control posts of the ground air defense troops and fighter aviation offers the possibility of shortening working time, permits having identical and more complete data about the air situation, and fosters the integration of the efforts of all means used in reconnoitering air targets.

By being located at the control post of the chief of the air defense troops of the front, the air army operations group is constantly informed on the entire ground and air situation and also on the combat employment of all the surface-to-air missile, antiaircraft artillery, and radiotechnical units, and of the radioelectronic countermeasures of the air defense troops of the front and the adjacent forces. From the air defense control post it maintains constant communications with the command posts of the fighter air divisions, the air army command post, the command posts of the cooperating fighter aviation of adjacent fronts, and with the fighters of the air defense of the country. This practice of jointly employing all air defense forces and means from the control post of the chief of the air defense troops of the front has been tested in a number of command-staff exercises

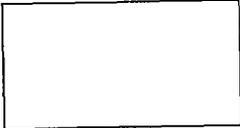
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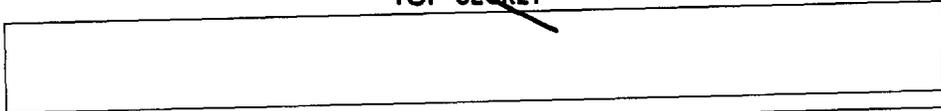
and produced good results.

For a number of years this has been precisely the organization of air defense troops in all the command-staff exercises of the Moscow Military District and it has fully justified itself. In this case, conditions have been established for the full-fledged employment of equipment that facilitates the command of forces. Thus, for instance, a semiautomatic control system that makes it possible to considerably increase the speed with which air target data are transmitted and to shorten the time in which instructions (commands) are transmitted to the troops has made possible the fullest utilization of the combat capabilities of fighter aviation and surface-to-air guided missiles.

We also do not agree with the view concerning the assignment to fighters of zones of combat actions forward of the effective zone of fire of surface-to-air guided missiles. If the zone of surface-to-air missile fire is established over the main grouping of troops, then the zone of combat actions of fighter aviation will apparently have to be moved forward into the airspace over enemy territory. But will the enemy allow this? After all, the practice of exercises in recent years has shown that all air targets located above the troops or flying over them must immediately be destroyed. Evidently, the enemy will do the same thing. Therefore, moving the zone of combat actions of fighter aviation forward over enemy territory should be regarded as an exceptional case, namely, when the enemy happens to have a weak air defense. Such a situation cannot be considered typical. Therefore, the zones of combat actions of fighter aviation, in our opinion, will always be located over our own territory, i.e., in the rear area of the front behind or between the zones where surface-to-air missiles fire against air targets. In view of this, the covering of troops by fighter aviation is primarily carried out in the most economical manner -- from an "airfield alert" status, and only in crucial periods by the "airborne alert" method. In so doing, the cooperation of fighter aviation with surface-to-air missiles must be based upon the demarcation of their zones and space. The existing recognition systems and discrimination ability of missile guidance radars do not yet fully ensure the safety of fighter aviation in the zone of surface-to-air missile troops. Therefore, at the present time, the simultaneous destruction by both fighters and surface-to-air missiles of air targets in the same zone, especially in a complex air situation, is obviously impossible. To distribute the efforts of the surface-to-air missile troops and fighter aviation in the same zone without mutual interference and without subjecting our fighters to danger is possible only by fully automating the control of all the air defense forces and means.



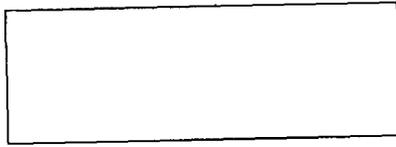
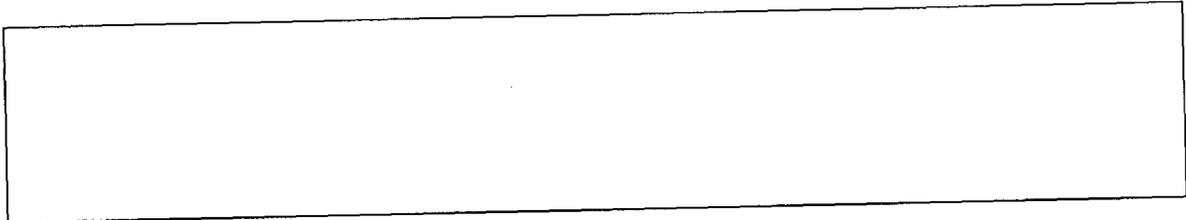
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Page 8 of 8 Pages

The article has correctly examined, in our opinion, the covering by fighter aviation of the combat actions of a tank army when it is conducting an offensive out of contact with the other troops of the front. Generals N. OSTROUMOV and M. KOZHEVNIKOV have correctly recommended allocating special fighter aviation forces for this purpose. To this should be added that, to solve the problems of the cooperation of an army's air defense troops with fighter aircraft, it is necessary that the commander of the air large unit, or at least of the air unit, be at the control post of the chief of the air defense troops of the army, i.e., they must be located together.

These are our main comments on the matters of air defense touched upon in the article "Aviation Operations in an Initial Front Offensive Operation."



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