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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON:
Spetsnaz Forces and Means in a Front
Offensive Operation1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series
now in preparation, classified ~~TOP SECRET~~, prepared in 1985 for use in the
Voroshilov General Staff Academy.

25X1, E.O.13526

2. [redacted] this document
should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies.A handwritten signature in ink, appearing to read "Clair E. George".
Clair E. George
Deputy Director for OperationsTS #878433
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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF
INFO. 1985

DATE 12 June 1987

SUBJECT

USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON:
Spetsnaz Forces and Means in a Front Offensive Operation

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of the first in a series of lectures given at the Voroshilov General Staff Academy in 1985. The lecture provides a brief history of the Spetsnaz forces, outlines their mission, capabilities, organization, and planning, and describes some of their latest weapons and equipment, including the strong and weak points of this equipment as demonstrated by recent experience in Afghanistan.

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SPETSNAZ FORCES AND MEANS IN A FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATION

Gen.-Lt. KOLODYAZHNYI

The following is a lecture on the fundamentals of planning, organizing and conducting special reconnaissance in a front offensive operation. This lecture will address the following topics: the history of the creation of special reconnaissance, its forces and means, planning and conducting special reconnaissance, and present-day experience in conducting special reconnaissance in Afghanistan.

Special reconnaissance originated during the Civil War and continued to develop almost up to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. However, with the advent of aviation, long-range aviation, bomber aviation, various comrades in the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff began to disparage the role of special reconnaissance on the grounds that we had aircraft which could [locate] a target and destroy it in the shortest time possible. The very first days of the war with Finland demonstrated that without special-purpose groups and detachments it was very difficult to conduct reconnaissance. Those years saw the formation of the first detachments, which consisted of volunteers from the Komsomol, mainly athletes who trained and studied at the Leningrad Physical Training Institute. Finally, the first Spetsnaz battalions were organized on Stalin's orders at the end of 1941. They were trained hastily; they had no equipment, including radio equipment, so that one failure occurred after another. Separate Spetsnaz battalions were formed in 1943. It is on the basis of these battalions that Spetsnaz brigades were organized in 1962-1963. The Spetsnaz brigade is a front large unit under the command of the chief of intelligence of the military district or front. At present there are Spetsnaz companies within the corps and independent Spetsnaz battalions within the armies, both tank armies and combined-arms armies. However, special reconnaissance is planned by the Third Department of the military district intelligence directorate. This department does the planning for the Spetsnaz brigade only; other Spetsnaz forces and means are under the chief of army intelligence and the chief of corps intelligence.

What are the main tasks assigned to special reconnaissance? It should be pointed out that special reconnaissance is performed by agent intelligence organs as well as Spetsnaz units and large units. This lecture will deal only with Spetsnaz units and large units. The main tasks assigned to these units and large units are:

1. Collection of intelligence on the combat strength, grouping, and nature of the actions of the enemy's nuclear missile means, air forces, ground forces,

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air defense means, and navy, and identification of the enemy's troop and weapons control system, reconnaissance-strike complexes and rear support systems and the operational preparation of the theater of military operations.

2. Destruction or incapacitation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, depots, warehouses, and assembly points, troop and weapons control posts, electronic equipment, and other important enemy targets.

3. Disruption of the operation of the enemy's rear services, disruption of regular rail, motor, water and air transport of troops, combat equipment, weapons, materiel, and technical equipment.

4. Providing assistance to democratic and other progressive forces in organizing partisan and popular liberation movements in the enemy's rear and utilization of these forces in carrying out reconnaissance and special operations.

Special reconnaissance can thus perform both reconnaissance tasks and special tasks, including incapacitation of important targets in the enemy's rear. "Special tasks" refers to a set of measures designed to locate and destroy various elements of key targets whose destruction or incapacitation will significantly weaken the combat capabilities of the entire target. For example, if we consider the Pershing II, the destruction or incapacitation of its control centers for several hours or perhaps even days can disrupt the entire control system and combat capabilities of this target.

What forces does the front have at its disposal in an offensive operation? The front unit of special reconnaissance is the independent Spetsnaz brigade. Organizationally it consists of a brigade staff, various rear services, deputy brigade commanders, and combat subunits. The basic combat subunit of the Spetsnaz brigade is the detachment, the independent Spetsnaz detachment or simply Spetsnaz detachment. There are three types of Spetsnaz detachments in the Spetsnaz brigade as presently organized. The first type is the independent Spetsnaz detachment created within the brigade for conducting reconnaissance and carrying out special measures on individual front axes of operations. This detachment can perform tasks on an individual axis of operations on an independent and autonomous basis; it does not need a base because it has everything it needs. The second detachment is the brigade's core detachment [rodnoy otryad], which cannot exist without the brigade's support services and subunits. This type of reconnaissance subunit is directed by brigade staff. The third type of Spetsnaz detachment was created for the purpose of performing high-priority tasks assigned by the government or higher staffs. This detachment leads an almost autonomous life within the brigade. No outsiders, including brigade personnel, are allowed inside the detachment compound, and the detachment is trained along the lines of agent intelligence reserves.

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The special radio communications detachment is of great importance within the brigade. It should be noted that it is the reserve communications center of the chief of intelligence. This special radio communications detachment can receive up to 180 subscriber stations, both on the march and in a stationary position. The minelaying company is another capable subunit. The minelaying company was created to support the combat actions of all Spetsnaz reconnaissance groups equipped with special means which are employed only by order of the Party Central Committee. Personnel undergo special training at various centers throughout the country. Officers in this subunit are not given overseas assignments. They advance and are promoted within the system of special reconnaissance. The last subunit is the radio/radiotechnical reconnaissance company, which is equipped with the latest radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance means. This company almost never operates independently. It includes personnel from various reconnaissance [units].

What forces are used to conduct special reconnaissance? Special reconnaissance is conducted in the enemy's rear by Spetsnaz groups or reconnaissance detachments. The reconnaissance detachment is generally set up in accordance with a particular task and assigned to a large, high-priority target. As a rule, the reconnaissance detachment is organized to include two regular groups with appropriate reinforcement. In turn, the regular Spetsnaz group, which consists of 14 men [word illegible] without reinforcement, can conduct reconnaissance either as a regular group or as a squad, depending on the type of task. If the task involves reconnaissance only, the Third Department of the intelligence directorate makes plans for a squad-strength group. If special measures are planned, the group goes out in full strength, and a minelaying group and radio/radiotechnical reconnaissance group can be included as well.

The depth of infiltration of Spetsnaz groups into the enemy's rear can be up to approximately 1000 km, the entire depth of a front operation, and can extend even further, since special radio communications means can support communications up to 2000 km. This means that special measures can be supported to the same depth, because in accordance with reporting from these groups, the detonation system can be activated on our territory. This is something new with us; the means have been developed whereby detonation can be controlled by radio. That is, we have the means, which are at the disposal of Spetsnaz groups exclusively, whereby at a certain distance from the target the group itself can destroy the target by radio within 3 to 5 km, while brigade staff can carry out detonation at a distance of up to 2000 km. This equipment was tested here in the Soviet Union, and the guarantee is 100%.

What means does the Spetsnaz brigade have at its disposal? The Spetsnaz brigade currently has the most modern reconnaissance means and both special and standard conventional armament; "special" here refers to all silenced weapons. In Afghanistan we are currently testing a small-arms system which is based on the 5.45 assault rifle. This system consists of the assault rifle and a grenade

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launcher mounted under the barrel. The range is 400 meters. According to information coming in from Afghanistan, this small-arms system is proving its value, except that the automatic mechanism has not been perfected yet; the 5.45 cartridge is not able to push back the bolt, so that the user is forced to reload [manually]. The PPS [Sudayev submachine gun] which we have has automatic reload, but in this case we have been unable to achieve it yet.

We also have mine and explosive means which are very small and very effective. We have developed a certain type of munitions, the KZG-5, which penetrates the ground to a depth of two meters. When cable lines or nuclear mine holes are located, it can break up the soil and penetrate up to two meters. If [two words illegible] further -- for instance, if the nuclear mine hole is ten meters deep -- then it can even reach the nuclear mine. There are various circular charges which are small but very powerful. With the third-year [students] we detonated several such charges at the Spetsnaz training regiment base, where we became convinced of the effectiveness of these charges. We have another grenade launcher mounted under the barrel, the SM-19, [but it has also already entered service with the Ground Forces]. [Line illegible.] ... have new rifles, sniper rifles [line illegible].

Night vision devices and laser rangefinders are currently also entering service. At present the brigade is equipped with two kinds of special-purpose binoculars, the BN-1 and BN-2. With BN-1 night binoculars reconnaissance can be conducted at night at a distance of up to [300] meters, and with the BN-2 -- up to 500 meters. We also have night vision goggles with which reconnaissance can be conducted to a depth of 50 meters. They are primarily used for reconnaissance patrols. There is also the scout's laser rangefinder for determining the distance to a target. The Spetsnaz regiment is currently [word illegible] a special satellite communications device for fixing [one's] position [line illegible].

As for radio communications means, both operational agent intelligence and Spetsnaz units have excellent sets, from the 394 to the 397. We have been pressing for this for a long time, and we have finally received equipment which enables the center to call a field station at any time. While before we had two fixed transmission sessions, that is, the reconnaissance group had to contact the center every 12 hours, this is no longer the case, and the center can call a reconnaissance group at any time. A slightly worse situation prevails, not only for Spetsnaz units but also for agent operational intelligence, with ultrashortwave communications means for directing intelligence officers in the enemy's rear. These means are somewhat cumbersome, although we already have the 392-M set, which has six [concealed] bands but still does not provide adequate coverage of the distances that we require. This is because the Spetsnaz group is tasked to reconnoiter an area of 100-150 km² per day. If this time is used to search for contact, these means do not ensure reliable, continuous

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communications. It has been reported that the project is under development and that this set will soon be available as something like a walkie-talkie.

The brigade also has radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance equipment which is very effective but still quite heavy, up to 20-25 kg. Even if the equipment itself does not weigh too much, up to 9 kg, the remaining weight is added by the antenna system. There are some very powerful means which are being tested only at the special proving grounds. These means are designed to destroy key targets, including atomic power stations, defense industry enterprises, factories which produce munitions, gunpowder, explosives, etc. A parachute system has been developed, as well as a group container which can land an entire group of up to nine people.

What capabilities does the Spetsnaz brigade have? First of all, the number of men the brigade can allot can never be determined precisely. This is because in different theaters of military operations the brigade will be organized differently, that is, the number of Spetsnaz detachments will vary. For example, the Far Eastern Theater has nine Spetsnaz detachments, the Central Asian Theater has six, the Transcaucasian Theater has five, in accordance with the critical axes on which these groups can be used effectively. On the average, however, there are six detachments. Such a brigade can contain up to 80 regular Spetsnaz groups and 240 squad-strength groups, as well as five minelaying groups, 18 radio reconnaissance posts, and up to 30 radiotechnical reconnaissance posts.

What [special reconnaissance] forces and means does an army have? The army intelligence section has an independent Spetsnaz battalion. This Spetsnaz battalion can detail up to 30 squad-strength groups and 15 regular groups. The battalion conducts special reconnaissance within the army area of responsibility. The depth of infiltration for these groups is up to 400 km. The army corps has an independent Spetsnaz company, which contains four regular groups and eight squad-strength groups. It conducts special reconnaissance within the army corps area of responsibility.

In order to conduct special reconnaissance systematically, purposefully, and effectively, it should naturally be organized by lines. For some reason, however, the policy of late has been the so-called, "Plan first, then organize." Yet it is practically impossible to plan special reconnaissance without some sort of prior deliberation. This is because the operational instructions of the chief of staff of the military district cover only forces and means, but say nothing about when these means are to be detailed to various organizations. This results in the need for pure interaction with the various large units and subunits of the front. At the same time it is also necessary to prepare a plan for special reconnaissance. At present it is not called the "Plan of Combat Employment of Forces and Means," according to a requirement that was recently issued, but the "Plan of Combat Employment of the Forces and Means of the

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Spetsnaz Brigade," since the regulations state that the front prepares a plan for the Spetsnaz brigade only, so that the plan deals with the forces and means of the Spetsnaz brigade. This is the most specific document in the front intelligence directorate. It is drawn up by the chief of the Third Department, which also includes two [senior] officers, one of whom deals with agent intelligence. A year ago, in accordance with a directive issued [by General Ivashutin], the Spetsnaz brigades began to study various topics in agent intelligence. It should be noted that all the Spetsnaz brigade group commanders know a foreign language. They are trained for four years in a Spetsnaz [word illegible] battalion, where they acquire an adequate command of the language. However, officers who work with interpreters in our liaison missions have thus far not been censured by their commanders as far as language is concerned. We have also issued the first Persian set for first-year students of Dari.

Again, the most specific document drawn up by the Third Department of the military district intelligence directorate is the "Plan of Combat Employment of the Forces and Means of the Spetsnaz Brigade." It contains practically everything for all 80 groups. This document is drawn up in peacetime, and each group has tasks within its own theater of military operations. One might naturally wonder how combat training is conducted. The Fifth Directorate, which has several more brigades under central command, that is, under the command of the Chief of the GRU, sends out envelopes which contain three tasks: one is the main task and the others are related training assignments which are to be carried out in the course of [remainder of sentence illegible].

What means of infiltration does the brigade have? Unfortunately, our Spetsnaz brigades have no means of infiltration except for one Far Eastern brigade which has a squadron of MI-8 helicopters. The other brigades do not have any means, so there are plans for infiltrating the Spetsnaz groups through the use of military transport aviation. However, an analysis of recent exercises has shown that no matter how well we coordinate our efforts with the commander of front-controlled air forces, there are not enough aircraft to infiltrate the agent intelligence reserves and Spetsnaz groups. The Chief of the General Staff has asked us to work out an option whereby several groups could be set up for infiltration in peacetime, before the start of combat operations. This issue will be covered during the forthcoming exercises for the operations personnel of special reconnaissance scheduled to take place in September of this year. In the old directives the basic means of infiltration was by air, but this is now being rejected by many, since infiltration by air is almost impossible, especially in the sophisticated theaters of war, and infiltration by land is now being considered.

As far as gear is concerned, our gear was developed five years ago and can [last] only in the sophisticated theaters of war. The gear which we use in Afghanistan holds up for three or four operations and then has to be replaced,

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patched up, etc. The Airborne Troops and the Border Troops have already developed new gear, and I do not know whether we will lag behind or not.

What can we boast of in the realm of operational reconnaissance? We now have outstanding parachutes, parachutes which have no equal in the entire world -- the PO-9 and PO-30. These parachutes enable the men to draw up behind the group commander in the air from an altitude of 8000 meters, and follow him into the enemy's rear for more than 50 km. We held demonstration exercises on the training regiment base in Pechory, and [our students] were convinced. The PO-30 has already been tested, and the Moscow intelligence center already has two. The PO-30 is convenient because it requires no special preparation, while the PO-9 has to be prepared. This allows for mental preparation and helps to avoid getting flustered. It is a different matter when we jump from 200 meters; then there is no time to think. Our minimum jump is from 200 meters. A [word illegible] brigade jumps from 200 meters, and the parachute canopy opens instantaneously. That is considered to be a difficult jump, however. The jumper suffers a strong dynamic blow, especially from the aircraft itself, not the AN-8 or AN-12, but the IL-76. As for [dropping cargo], we have the "Krasnaya Tara" parachutes, both in agent intelligence and in Spetsnaz units. [Line illegible.] They are equipped with the R-255PP, a [small] transmitter. The transmitter emits a signal, and the RPP [mobile radio direction-finding set] receiver is used to locate the transmitter.

We have developed something which in principle is nothing new; nevertheless, we do change the contents of our dry rations, the standard issue-5A. First there was simply the standard issue, then there was the standard issue-5, and now it is the standard issue-5A. It supports 24-hour normal vital activity. We lag slightly behind foreign models in calorie content, behind the British ones in particular and especially in the south; however, the Institute is now working on this. Frankly, the area in which we compare most poorly to the American Green Berets and the "Green Frogmen" [Navy Seals], etc., particularly in Southeast Asia, is that we do not have a long-lasting medical kit. We are unable to supply our agent intelligence and Spetsnaz groups with a good medical kit. Your field stations should therefore obtain and send us some sample medical kits to see why they last for more than 10 years. We received a medical kit taken from Pakistani soldiers, and even their kits last longer than ours. [Several lines illegible.]

What is the composition of the Spetsnaz group? We have information from various overseas rezidenturas. For example, I used to deal mainly with Southeast Asia. [Two words illegible] are more powerful than the American ones. Each of the groups has a medical instructor, which we do not have. The medical instructor can even perform appendectomies, but it should be kept in mind that their special forces are mercenaries and will stay for up to 20 years, whereas ours serve for two years. Medical support is therefore our weakest point. However, our weapons are more powerful. There was a chart on our

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training grounds near Moscow on the special weapons possessed by the Americans, Japanese, and Turks. Our weapons are somewhat more powerful, as well as more silent. We have heard various stories -- that the Americans have silent weapons, and that the West Germans in particular have silent weapons, but ours are still more effective. For example, just this year agent intelligence and special troops have been equipped with a new six-round "PSS" pistol developed by the KGB which can penetrate at 25 meters what our "P" pistol cannot. It is very powerful and totally silent because the principle of operation involves the cartridge rather than the pistol's mechanical parts. The [word illegible] is in the cartridge itself. The grip is slightly uncomfortable and it is also somewhat wider than our "PM" pistol's grip because the cartridge is [word illegible]. These pistols are already being issued to the Spetsnaz units.

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