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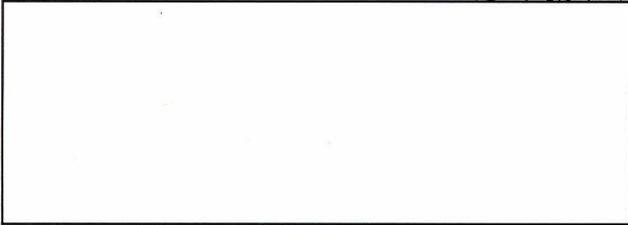
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Central Intelligence Agency



25 March 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON: Reconnaissance on Behalf of a Front Offensive Operation

1. 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.

[redacted]
Richard F. Stolz
Deputy Director for Operations

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13 pp



Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. 1985

DATE 25 March 1988

SUBJECT

USSR GENERAL STAFF ACADEMY LESSON: Reconnaissance
on Behalf of a Front Offensive Operation

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The attached intelligence report is a translation from Russian of the text of a lecture at the Voroshilov General Staff Academy on the subject of reconnaissance in support of front operations. The subject is divided into three main sections: (1) Objectives, tasks, and capabilities, (2) Planning and organization, and (3) Conduct of reconnaissance. Most of the lecture deals with the first section, the other two being addressed in rather more general terms with only a few concrete details.

End of Summary

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RECONNAISSANCE ON BEHALF OF A FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATION

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... 600 km. This means it covers the operational sphere, the depth of operational disposition of front troops, and possibly a bit further. And accordingly this causes a problem: How to fool the enemy at the moment we are stepping up efforts. This means commitment of second echelons, commitment of an operational maneuver group, movement of second echelons and reserves of the front. They too are under enemy pressure there. Hence front reconnaissance faces more serious tasks. Order 0078 of 1976, on upgrading the effectiveness of operational and tactical reconnaissance, assigned the task of improving the effectiveness of reconnaissance forces and means during the preparation and conduct of front operations, army operations, and battle, of increasing capabilities to 80 percent. Reconnaissance could [1 word illegible] the enemy.

A number of our most recent exercises, ZAPAD-84, or special reconnaissance exercises, KARPATY-80, were held and this effectiveness did not go above 55-60 percent. During combat actions effectiveness will most likely be somewhat less. Today's lecture will address three issues:

- Objective, tasks, and forces and means of front reconnaissance and their capabilities.
- Principles of planning and organizing reconnaissance in a front offensive operation.
- Principles of doing reconnaissance during preparation and conduct of a front offensive operation.

The objective of reconnaissance, as with any undertaking, is the final result it is to achieve. When is the objective of reconnaissance determined and who determines it? If we are to speak of front offensive operations, the objective of reconnaissance is determined in peacetime during the planning of this front offensive operation. First front offensive operations, as you know, are [pre-planned] and regularly updated. For some reason, textbooks, including the textbooks of the General Staff, say that the objective of reconnaissance is determined by the front commander. This is probably not quite accurate, because once the front receives a directive to prepare and conduct a front offensive

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operation, this document will be accompanied or followed by reconnaissance instructions of the Main Intelligence Directorate or the staff of the high command for the axis or theater of military operations. The first point here formulates the overall objective of front reconnaissance. [Part of sentence apparently missing] ... General Staff, if the front is operating independently or the staff of the high command for the axis. The same for the front commander; he works out the details for the objective which he is assigned in the interests of front troops.

To achieve this reconnaissance objective, front reconnaissance must accomplish a number of tasks at very different periods of time. If we are speaking of a first front offensive operation, front reconnaissance is faced with tasks that must be carried out in peacetime. In peacetime front reconnaissance must, first of all, ascertain changes in the military-political situation in the theater of military operations, determine the beginning of a transition of troops to a higher readiness level, detect enemy plans for mobilization and operational deployment of the armed forces, learn of the concept and plans for conduct of the first operations, determine changes in the combat and numerical strength, in the grouping and disposition of ground forces, air forces, and air defense forces, establish the exact location of enemy means of nuclear attack, particularly the basing airfields of delivery aircraft and cruise missile and operational/tactical missile units, and identify the troop and weapons control system. All of this is nothing new. A new component of this task is that front reconnaissance is faced with the task of detecting the ground control centers of reconnaissance/strike complexes. Where are these located? They are not far away, but right there at the command post for [2 words illegible]. Reconnaissance must also determine the operational defense in the theater of military operations and the political attitudes and morale of enemy troops and population.

On the whole, [several words illegible] of these tasks, the performance of these tasks in peacetime makes it possible to do more precise planning of the first front offensive operation. But it would be wrong to say that if we carry out all these tasks, the operation will be all planned and require no refinements. Why is it wrong? Take the concept and changes in the military-political situation, the Western Theater of Military Operations, and the Northern Group of Armies. In peacetime where are the troops located? Mainly in garrison. They may be on exercises, but then these troops belong to the forward based troops of NATO. Before the start, this group, where there were 13 divisions in peacetime, according to the exercises they conduct, will grow to double or more in size, some 27-29 divisions.

For successful conduct of a front offensive operation, very great importance attaches to the tasks which front reconnaissance must perform in a threat period or the period immediately prior to the start of combat actions. Having established the [enemy's] immediate preparations for an operation,

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reconnaissance must further clarify the concept of actions of the enemy and ascertain the time of his transition to the offensive and the axis of his main thrusts, i.e., establish where the enemy intends to focus his main efforts in order to inflict damage on our groupings.

Then reconnaissance must necessarily detect the locations and coordinates of the means of nuclear attack and preparations to use them. This can now be said of means of nuclear attack and precision-guided weapons systems. Already during immediate preparations, in one or two days, all the means of nuclear attack will be deployed at launch sites or firing positions. Reconnaissance must also ascertain the strength and the time and areas of operational deployment of enemy attack groupings, their combat readiness, and the morale and mental condition of the personnel and establish the axes of thrusts where the enemy intends to concentrate his main efforts. What groupings of ground forces, aviation, and missiles is he forming? What systems may he use?

The next task is to further clarify the [enemy's] air defense system. This is a very important task, because at this point one of the tasks to be performed by the front is participation in an air operation. In addition to breadth and depth, altitude is also becoming increasingly important in front offensive operations. That is, increasing use is made of vertical envelopment of the enemy, meaning air landing by various types of landing forces -- tactical, operational-tactical, etc. In order to be able to drop these forces it is necessary to know where the enemy's active and passive air defense means are located, so that on the main axis over which the forces pass these systems are suppressed in good time.

The next thing is to detect the control system. Again, "detect" is probably the wrong word -- further identify the system of troop and weapons control, since we are trying to detect it already in peacetime. The control system cannot be said to exist in peacetime, it is true, and it works under the peacetime regime in a threat period. All the same, control posts will change their location, there will be mobile posts used, [1 word illegible] are possible and some buried ones and airborne posts.

To determine the coordinates of targets to do counterpreparation. What relation does counterpreparation have to the offensive? If we take a purely offensive operation [2 words illegible]. In the west the situation has again reached the point where what the enemy has and what we have to conduct such an operation are being [counted]. It turns out that in some areas we are better off, but in other forces and means the enemy has the edge, and the overall relation is just about one-to-one. It works out that in the first operations both sides intend to accomplish their tasks through an aggressive offensive operation, does it not? Therefore, detecting counterpreparation targets is in fact to defeat enemy preparations. A vivid example of this can be taken from the Great Patriotic War, in the Battle of Kursk, when the enemy was preparing

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for an offensive and our counterpreparation delayed it for some time and seriously weakened the enemy groupings that were going to advance.

And finally to identify measures for operational preparation of the theater of military operations, to establish defense lines and nuclear minefields. Accomplishment of these tasks will, of course, facilitate the performance of the tasks facing the front troops and allow the front commander and staff to refine the decision on the conduct of the front offensive operation in good time.

These are the tasks before the operation begins. With the start of the operation, the tasks which were being carried out will go on being carried out and updated. But a certain group of tasks can be identified. These are first of all, to determine or do final reconnaissance of the location of enemy targets scheduled for the first nuclear strike of the front and the results of nuclear and conventional strikes on them. What effect have we achieved? Which enemy targets have remained intact, battleworthy, able to oppose and affect us?

Establish the location, strength, status, and nature of actions of the groupings of ground forces and tactical aviation, along with the status of air defense forces, SAM launch positions, radars, etc. In other words, how combat-effective now are the enemy groupings established before the start of combat actions?

Detect changes in the enemy troop and weapons control system, particularly the locations of command posts, communications centers, means of electronic warfare, and precision-guided weapons control centers and determine the enemy's intention for the conduct of further actions. This task is very important, i.e., what does the enemy intend to do further, to try to carry out some kind of regrouping and continue the attempt to invade our territory, or are enemy forces so weakened that they are forced to go over to a defense and even withdraw on certain axes? This is very important in order to change the axis of the main thrust in good time or reinforce our grouping on the axis of the main thrust.

So much about the tasks that must be carried out in peacetime, in the period of immediate preparation and during the actual course of combat actions. But, whatever we say about the tasks of peacetime, of the period of immediate preparation, and the period of conduct of the front operation, in all cases front reconnaissance must primarily concentrate on detecting the intentions and the strength of groupings and their capabilities, and above all concentrate on final reconnaissance of those targets slated to be hit in the first nuclear strike or the first mass strike with conventional means. This is reflected in the delineation of a new group of targets, top-priority [pervoocherednoy] targets, which has been in evidence since the ZAPAD-84 exercises and particularly since the fall meeting of the chiefs of intelligence of the military districts and groups of forces.

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When we speak of targets, the division is as follows: targets of strategic importance, operational importance, and tactical importance. This division is not so much for the intelligence collection and planning organs; it is primarily for the commanders and staffs, i.e., the staffs that plan and conduct operations. As you already know, strategic reconnaissance engages in collection against some [2-3 words illegible] category of targets which we call operational reconnaissance. And, vice versa, part of the targets of strategic importance are included as targets of operational agent reconnaissance, such as naval bases and some other targets.

What the number of such targets is and where they may be merits a few words. At the present time we say that in the zone of a front (in the Western Theater of Military Operations) there may be 600-900 such targets. Analysis of the last major exercises which we held allows us to say that the number of targets is a bit larger and that there is a tendency for the total number to grow further. Today we can probably dare to say that there may be up to 1000 or more such targets. By 1990 the number of such targets may grow to an estimated 1200 or more. Why? Because, as you surely recall, the Americans are first of all carrying out a reorganization of the divisions, the so-called Division 86. Then there is to be some reduction of a certain number of servicing subunits and replacement of them with combat subunits. [2 lines mostly illegible with 3 references to "Pershing".] The appearance of cruise missiles will also affect the total number of targets there may be in the zone of a front.

Where are these targets located? Up to 75 percent will be somewhere between 15-75 and 150-200 km from the border. Here there are means of nuclear attack, Pershing, Lance, and Rafale -- the whole enemy first echelon. Also many materiel and technical support targets and rear services control installations. It would not be so bad if these targets were stationary or nearly so. But of the total 1000-1200 targets, up to 75 percent are mobile, so that it is not enough for front reconnaissance during the immediate preparation for and conduct of the operation to detect the target. It is necessary to keep track of it until it is destroyed. Mobile targets include means of nuclear attack and air defense means such as the [improved] Hawk and Nike Hercules. High mobility imposes a certain responsibility on reconnaissance.

Accordingly, in order to accomplish tasks [1-2 words illegible], it is necessary to detect the target. And in order to detect it requires reconnaissance forces and means. Reconnaissance in a front offensive operation employs the following forces and means. These are, first of all, the forces and means which belong to the front reconnaissance complement [komplekt razvedki fronta], which we shall speak about later. In addition, reconnaissance may involve the reconnaissance forces and means of combined-arms and tank armies. That is, they [2 words illegible] reconnaissance forces and means [3 words illegible]. But part of the forces and means may be drawn upon to perform reconnaissance tasks directly in the interests of the front. And in the very

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same way, there are some forces and means which can be drawn from the first-echelon divisions. In individual cases, particularly at the forward edge, reconnaissance can draw upon motorized rifle and tank subunits to do reconnaissance in force, particularly in those sectors where a breakthrough of the enemy defense is planned on the axis of the main thrust.

What is directly included in the front reconnaissance complement? On the whole, it is correct to say that, in the first place, to do reconnaissance in the interests of preparation of a front offensive operation, the reconnaissance complement includes forces and means of special reconnaissance, as it is now divided. As you know, this is done by agent organs and special-purpose [SPETSNAZ] brigades. A front has an intelligence center [razvedyvatel'nyy tsentr] and two or three -- sometimes one -- reconnaissance post [razvedyvatel'nyy punkt]. So that there can be communications with these sources of the active agent network, there is a separate special-purpose reconnaissance cluster [razvedyvatel'nyy uzel osobogo naznacheniya]. What are the capabilities? On the whole, it is regarded that the intelligence center, the reconnaissance groups [during the preparation and all throughout] the front operation can allocate various agent [sources] (meaning agent groups, [1 word illegible] of reconnaissance, and agent special-purpose groups [agenturnyye gruppy spetsial'nogo naznacheniya]) not only to do reconnaissance and carry out [3 words illegible] -- [up to 100 of them?]. The numbers work out that each agent source can handle one or two targets. Perhaps in peacetime they can somehow handle two targets, but in wartime, on the whole [line illegible]. ... agent reconnaissance forces may be able to detect up to 100 enemy targets.

Next the SPETSNAZ brigade. Here there are six detachments. The capabilities of the brigade: its capabilities allow it to allocate some [240] SPETSNAZ reconnaissance groups. This is not to say that all 240 will be operating [in the rear] of the enemy. This is made up into squads of 6 men. Or 80 reconnaissance groups made up into standard groups of 16-18 men. And in individual cases the brigade [3-4 words illegible] to destroy various targets can infiltrate SPETSNAZ reconnaissance detachments. The makeup of such a detachment is from several standard SPETSNAZ groups to a reinforced company. This is where the specialists from the demolitions and special weapons company, etc., are included.

Capabilities. Each reconnaissance group is given one -- or actually two -- targets when six men [1 word illegible]. So two will be a bit hard to cover, will they not? On the whole the brigade can deal with up to 100 targets throughout the operation, from the beginning of the operation, during the immediate and subsequent tasks.

There are also radio and radiotechnical brigades. [One or more lines missing] capabilities and shows the basic means of radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance. Here I would only stress that radio reconnaissance in the

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shortwave is to 1000 km, and radiotechnical reconnaissance is to the depth of the immediate task, that is, some 350-400 km.

To do air reconnaissance, front air forces have one or two operational reconnaissance air regiments and one or two tactical reconnaissance air regiments. It relates to the types of aircraft located there. Tactical reconnaissance can be done out to 400 km, and operational out to 800-1000 km. Besides this there are three separate reconnaissance drone squadrons. They can do telereconnaissance or photo reconnaissance to a depth of as much as 400 km.

Besides this there are various reconnaissance forces and means which are directly subordinate to the commanders and chiefs of branch arms and special troops. This means the three regiments of radiation and chemical reconnaissance troops, the air defense brigade, various [reconnaissance] detachments, and engineer reconnaissance. With these forces and means, plus the forces and means which the armies and divisions have, reconnaissance can detect somewhere up to 55-60 percent of all the enemy targets in the zone of the front. In order to provide the commander with the necessary data it is necessary, first of all, to plan carefully when and on what axes and targets to focus. Second, in order that data be reliable, double and triple coverage is required. Basically, single coverage is special reconnaissance; second coverage must be provided by air reconnaissance; and radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance [next line illegible] coverage. Or, in the worst case, if only as an alternative, special and radiotechnical reconnaissance, or special and air reconnaissance. Then we may obtain more or less reliable data. But if we only target radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance and consider that the odds are such and such in terms of target detection effectiveness, this will not be quite right; there will be the area and the axis, but not the exact location of the target.

Let us go on to the second question, the principles of planning and organizing reconnaissance. On the whole, speaking of planning and organizing reconnaissance, it is necessary to say at once that the first front operations are planned in peacetime, and, accordingly, the planning and organization of reconnaissance in the interest of the first front offensive operation likewise begins in peacetime, [1 word illegible] certain materiel and technical support.

What are the initial data needed for planning and organizing reconnaissance? First, [we need] the combat task of the front. Second, the decision of the front commander. Third, the reconnaissance instructions of the higher staff, which will be the General Staff or the staff of the high command in the theater of military operations. Fourth, there is the level of knowledge of the opposing enemy. And, fifth, our own capabilities. It says in the operational reconnaissance manual [2 words illegible] that lack of this or that information does not relieve the front chief of intelligence of timely planning and organization of reconnaissance. And it says this very clearly.

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Ranked among the basic reconnaissance planning and organization measures are determination of the objective, tasks, and targets of reconnaissance. Who determines the objective we have already discussed. The tasks are determined in a general way by the front commander, specifically defined by the chief of staff, and elaborated by the chief of reconnaissance. The same can be said for reconnaissance targets.

The next step is to allocate the necessary forces and means to perform the task. On the whole, the task is clear. You have the reconnaissance complement and you go and try to carry out the task. But it is not always this way. There are parameters involved, i.e., means of nuclear attack must be detected with a minimum of 0.95 or 1.0 [probability]. If we take the enemy ground forces in the first echelon, the figure is 0.8, reserves a bit lower, aviation is 0.7, etc. In the period of reconnaissance planning and organization, the chief of staff must precisely determine how to allocate the available reconnaissance forces and means -- what reconnaissance forces and means of the armies, and perhaps even of divisions, to bring into the first echelon, or what forces and means of motorized rifle and tank divisions to set in motion to do reconnaissance in force and surveillance of the forward edge -- and he reports all this to the front commander. Until recently this matter was purely subjective; but now it is taught more objectively. In the Main Intelligence Directorate, as well as the General Staff Academy, the Frunze Academy, etc., the seventh-year classes took part in this effort and the tasks are now worked out. The chief of intelligence, having the task, a computer center, and the reconnaissance forces and means, gets several versions giving the coefficients of detection of targets and determines which version is best to use. That is, [1 word illegible] the preplanned task, input the data, and get [several words illegible].

The next measure is the actual planning of reconnaissance and assignment of tasks. We will discuss reconnaissance planning a bit later on. The assignment of tasks is done by the intelligence directorate. Preparation of the large units and units for the performance of tasks is done by the commanders and staffs, and the function of the intelligence directorate is oversight and assistance.

Organization of cooperation of reconnaissance forces and means. Within a front, organization is done by the front chief of intelligence; organization of cooperation with adjacent fronts and contiguous formations is done by either the Main Intelligence Directorate or the staff of the high command in the theater of military operations.

Development and implementation of measures to effect survivability of the intelligence system. There are many controversies, of course, but such measures are necessary. One of the chief ones is the task of getting our reconnaissance organs that are doing reconnaissance out from under our strike. The task is very complex. How to carry it out in practice? To begin with, it is already

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considered necessary to have some kind of "marker sensor" which is always on. The thing is to get out. But where? From under one strike they may wind up under another one.

There are also issues of organizing control and communications with [reconnaissance forces and means], working out [several words illegible], implementing oversight of the performance of assigned tasks. I would like to direct your attention to the reconnaissance plan. To say what is reflected in the plan, there is, first of all, the forward edge of our forces and the enemy, elements of the commander's decision which are necessary for the planning and organization of reconnaissance. Until recently [next line illegible except for "forward edge"]. Then they say to concentrate [2 words illegible] on the axis of the main thrust and where the second echelon is being committed and then where the OMG is being committed. The map has nothing on it; the chief of intelligence [next 2 lines illegible] ... plot the immediate and the subsequent tasks. Also enemy groupings, main targets, and areas of special attention. The scale is 1:500,000, and it is signed by the chief of staff and the chief of intelligence and approved by the front commander. The plan is worked out in greatest detail for the period of preparation of the operation, in the interest of the first nuclear strike [on] the enemy, in the interests of turning back an enemy invasion, and to the depth of the immediate task; to the depth of the subsequent task it is worked out in general outline. The reconnaissance plan is updated daily, towards the end of the day, for the next day.

The plan must necessarily indicate reconnaissance forces and means and their movement during the operation. It is accompanied by an explanatory text which indicates the objective and principal tasks of reconnaissance and the times to carry them out, the [axes?] on which the reconnaissance efforts of the front are to be concentrated, the makeup of reconnaissance forces and means and their allocation by tasks, measures to ensure survivability, main questions of control and communications [2 words illegible], procedure and times for filing reconnaissance reports. The number of sections in the explanatory text is very large, and it sometimes turns out to be 30-40 pages long.

I will add a few words about the actual conduct of reconnaissance. Since the first front operation is planned in peacetime, reconnaissance is also done in peacetime.

Who does reconnaissance in peacetime from among the reconnaissance forces and means of the front? First of all, there is the active agent network from the intelligence center and reconnaissance posts to the entire depth of the target country or theater of military operations without restriction. Next, radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance is conducted to the entire depth. What are the restrictions here? One, this reconnaissance is on a peacetime regime and not all the posts are deployed, and then they are working three shifts. In

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wartime or in a threat period or period of immediate preparation, all posts go into operation and go over to two shifts.

Radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance tasks in peacetime and in the period of immediate preparation are basically the data it obtains, i.e., direction finding, determining siting areas and changes of position; and it often helps find out certain information about the enemy by intercepting messages.

Air reconnaissance is likewise done in peacetime and particularly in the period of immediate enemy preparation through flights along the border without border violations, and so its zone is 30-40 km.

Special reconnaissance is not done in peacetime. A threat period will experience a buildup of the active agent network by tapping part of the sources from the agent reconnaissance reserve.

A SPETSNAZ brigade in peacetime has first- and second-round constant readiness groups. The third round will be mobilized resources. Introduction of increased readiness means the first-round constant readiness groups will begin according to special instructions to prepare for combat tasks. A separate instruction will bring them to the departure area [3 words illegible], and when war starts they will take off.

Air reconnaissance in the threat period. With authorization of the General Staff, flights can be made with violation of a national border. This [3 words illegible] one or two aircraft which can make such flights. In a threat period immediately before the start of war, again with General Staff authorization, [2 words illegible] can infiltrate a small number of SPETSNAZ reconnaissance groups. With the start of war reconnaissance is conducted with no restrictions to the entire depth.

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