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Military Exercise: Report of a Representative of the Chief of USSR Armed Forces Communications at an Assembly of Signal Troops Command Personnel of Warsaw Pact Member Countries

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REPORT

of a representative of the Chief of USSR Armed Forces Communications at an assembly of signal troops command personnel of Warsaw Pact member countries (December 1981)

DOCUMENTS OF A SIGNALS PLAN FOR A FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATION

Comrade generals and officers!

There is no need to demonstrate in this auditorium that a modern front communications system is a complex and dynamic organism which consists of many elements deployed over a great distance, subject to constant enemy influence, and integrated into a single whole. It is for this reason that at the present time exceptionally great importance is attached to its careful planning and support to the continuity of operations. And this is understandable. In many respects the stability of the command and control of troops and the effectiveness of the use of troops in an operation depends on how timely, completely, and well communications are organized.

The planning of communications is the crowning achievement of that enormous creative work which the chief of communications of a front and the directorate of communications subordinate to him do. All this work is done on the basis of a decision of the commanding general of the front, taking into account the composition and manning level of subordinate signals troops.

After the commanding general makes the decision and the communications instructions are received from higher headquarters the chief of signal troops of the front: defines the mission; briefs subordinates about impending operations; calculates the time; assesses the situation; makes the decision to organize the communications; assigns tasks to subordinate signals formations and units; gives instructions concerning signals planning; organizes the management of communications, and prepares signals units to carry out the impending tasks.

Of the entire assortment of these tasks I have been charged with reporting to you about the main signals planning documents as they apply to a front offensive operation based on the experience of the Soviet Armed Forces.

When planning an offensive operation the main substance of the work of a front's chief of signals troops is:

- determining the most rational structure for configuring a communications system which would provide stable command and control of troops in the impending operation and the preparation of the necessary information for its operation;
- the creation of a group of men and communications equipment ensuring the timely deployment and continuous functioning of the communications system;
- defining the tasks for signals formations and units for the deployment of the elements of the communications systems;
- the elaboration of measures to ensure the continuity of communications during relocation and when control posts are out of order;

- the elaboration of measures to protect a communications system from enemy technical reconnaissance equipment and jamming;
- an assessment of the stability of the communications being organized when under the influence of enemy weapons and electronic equipment;
- the organization of the command and control of communications and signals troops;
- the planning of measures for the technical support of communications and the PASUV.

All this work should be based on specific basic data, on a forecast of the possible development of the situation, on objective assessments and accurate calculations, and on qualitative and quantitative criteria of both individual equipment and the deployed communications system as a whole.

Allow me then to briefly dwell on the working methods adopted in the practice of the staffs of the large formations of the Soviet Armed Forces.

At the present time in all operational exercises when decisions are made, tasks assigned, and operations are planned methods of successive or parallel work or their combination are employed at various echelons. The employment of a particular working method of work is determined by the operational situation, the nature of the assigned tasks, and the availability of time.

The method of successive work is employed when there is a long time to prepare an operation. In this method each subordinate echelon is involved in the work after the decision is made by the senior chief on the basis of the written instructions given them, that is, planning is done successively as the signals plan at the higher staff is completed.

When there is limited time to prepare an operation the parallel work method is the main one, in which decisionmaking and planning in lower-level staffs and subordinate troops begin right after the senior chief works out only the first element of the decision - the planning of the organization of communications on the basis of the preliminary instructions which were given.

The command of the Soviet Armed Forces Signals Troops thinks that all the work of the chief of a front's signals troops and his subordinate directorate during the period of preparation for an offensive operation should be reflected in detail in the work schedule. The schedule of the chief of a front's signals troops usually shows: the stages of the work and the time devoted to each stage; the sequence of the work of the chief of signals troops; the tasks or documents being worked on by each department and the deadline for their report to the chief of signals troops; and the approximate sequence of the work of the subordinate commanders of signals formations and units and also the lower-level chiefs of signals troops. The content of the work schedule of the chief of signals troops is rigorously entered into the overall schedule of the work of the front staff.

Based on the experience of exercises six stages are normally included in the schedule:

First - a definition of the concept of the organization of communications (ascertainment of the task, assessment the situation, briefing department chiefs) and distribution of preliminary instructions.

Second - conclusion of decisionmaking work.

Third - communicating the tasks to the commanders of subordinate signals formations and units and also to lower-level chiefs of signals troops.

Fourth - conclusion of the preparation of the signals plan.

Fifth - examination and approval of the plans for the combat use by subordinate signals formations and units.

Sixth - monitoring and helping the troops.

A signals plan, a set of documents in which a decision is detailed and the sequence, the means, and timeframes of the organization of the communications in the course of an operation are specified, is developed on the basis of a decision of the chief of the front's signals troops and his planning instructions.

Three documents constitute the basis of a signals plan: the general operational part done on a chart (the communications system), the diagram of the organization of operational communications prepared on a separate sheet of paper, and a textual explanatory note.

When determining the structure and content of the main documents of the signals plan the Soviet signals troops command is guided by the desire that they reflect all the main issues concerning the organization of communications which require the approval of the chief of staff, are as descriptive as possible, informative, and easy to read.

The overall operational part of the signals plan is shown on poster N^o 1. It was drawn up on a map with a scale of 1:5000000 and essentially represents the structure of the configuration of a communications system in the zone of advance of a front.

At the present time it is our rule to depict [the following] in the operational part of the signals plan:

- the line of contact of the troops;
- the sector boundaries with neighboring fronts and between armies in a given front;
- the lines of commitment of an operational maneuver group and second echelons, and the drop zones of airborne assault groups;
- the immediate and subsequent objectives of the front;
- the locations at the initial position of the control posts of the commander-in-chief of the combined armed forces in the theater of military operations, of a front, of immediate subordinates, and also of coordinating large formations and formations and the directions of movement in the course of an operation;
- the fixed communications network (at the initial position).

Fixed lines are in brown regardless of their relationship to a government communications network or an armed forces network;

- the planned communications arteries and lateral routes, supporting and auxiliary communications centers of the field communications grid;

- the control posts communications centers' reference lines and the auxiliary centers for the backbone network.

The arteries and lateral routes are represented on the chart in a single thickened line regardless of the communications equipment used for their deployment. The arteries and lateral routes of the field communications grid and also the control posts communications centers' reference lines for the backbone network are represented in black: deployed ones in a solid line, planned ones in a dotted line. The number of channels in a given artery or lateral communications route and the equipment of which they are composed are shown in a break in the line in three two-digit numbers. When this is done the first number indicates the number of channels formed in a cable line, the second, in a radiorelay [line], and the third, in a tropospheric [line].

Battalion sectors of cable, radiorelay, and tropospheric lines on arteries and lateral communications routes are designated by a perpendicular line intersecting from both sides which indicate the units and deploying lines.

The numbering of the supporting [communications] centers on communications arteries is three-digit. The first digit indicates the artery number and the remaining digits the one-up numbers of the supporting centers;

- a communications network with satellite equipment;

- a communications network from a front airborne control post;

- a grouping of front communications troops at the initial position and in the course of an operation;

- [communications] centers and courier and postal communications exchange points;

- a grouping of enemy electronic warfare men and equipment, zones of possible enemy communications intelligence, and the creation of jamming by the enemy.

Three zones are usually designated: a zone of possible reconnaissance and suppression of UHF radio communications by jamming, a zone of possible reconnaissance and suppression of UHF radio communications from air-transportable equipment, and a zone of possible reconnaissance and suppression of HF radio communications (in dark blue).

In addition, [the following] are shown on the chart:

- the composition of the signals troops of the front and the chief of the communications division of the high command in the theater of military operations for [k frontu] the front, down to independent battalion inclusively;

- indicators of the extent of the front's communications system separately in table form when performing immediate and subsequent objectives. Such indicators might be: the depth and width (taking the width of the zone of a front's advance and the depth of a front's immediate and subsequent objectives as equal); the amount of the communications centers of control posts, supporting, and auxiliary [communications] centers being deployed; the extent of the field cable, radiorelay, and tropospheric lines of the communications grid being planned and deployed; the amount of radio

nets and links organized;

- estimates of the use of signals formations and units at the initial position and by operational objective, with an indication of active and reserve signals units and subunits.

A diagram of the organization of a front's operational communications is the second primary document of a signals plan. One version of this document is shown in poster № 2.

The channelization equipment and the types and amount of communications organized from the communications centers of the command post, its elements of airborne and forward control posts, the alternate command post, the rear control post, and the joint front air forces/air defense forces command post are usually reflected on the operational communications diagram.

The channelization equipment in information links is designated by letters: OS for the channels of the backbone network; R - for radio; RR - for direct radiorelay communications lines; T- for direct tropospheric communications lines; K - satellite communications lines; and P - direct landline communications lines. The types of communications (telephone, telegraph, facsimile, data transmission) are designated by the generally accepted symbols, but the amount of communications (if more than one) is indicated next to the conventional symbol for the type of communications.

It is recommended that the information links on it be described in different colors in order to simplify the reading of the diagram. It is recognized advisable to use the following color lines when doing so:

a) from the command and reserve command posts of the front:

- to the control posts of higher and coordinating headquarters - red;

- to the control posts of directly subordinate large formations, formations, and units - black;

b) from the joint command (joint reserve command) post of the front air forces/air defense forces to the control posts of higher and coordinating headquarters - red, to control posts of subordinate air formations and units and also air defense formations and units - light blue (dark blue);

c) from the rear control post of the front to the rear control post of the senior headquarters - red, from the control posts of subordinate rear formations, units, and institutions - brown.

A calculation of the communications (by type) from front control posts and the conventional designators are also placed on the operational communications diagram.

An explanatory note is the third primary document of a signals plan. It is drawn up as free-form text. It should usually be expressed [as follows]:

- the primary tasks of signals troops in the impending operation and their composition;

- the structure of the configuration of a field communications grid and the signals units designated for the deployment of arteries and lateral communications routes;
- the planned rates of deployment of the field communications grid;
- measures to ensure the interfaces with the field communications grids of neighboring fronts;
- when (by time or boundaries) and what lines, supporting and auxiliary [communications] centers are torn down, the time and concentration areas of signals units after teardown;
- the missions of the signals units or subunits of chiefs of communications divisions for [k armiyam] armies and a front missile brigade;
- the characteristics of the organization of communications via radio, tropospheric, and satellite communications - direct communications lines;
- the basic measures to ensure the continuity of communications when relocating and when the US KP [CP communication center] and front ZKP [alternate CP] are down;
- the procedure for organizing communications with an operational maneuver group and measures to increase the stability of the communications of the headquarters of an operational maneuver group with subordinate formations;
- the modes of operation of various communication equipment and their activation sequence;
- the procedure for using the communications equipment of the forward and airborne control posts;
- the communications personnel and equipment designated to carry out operational deception measures;
- an assessment of enemy communications intelligence and electronic suppression equipment and the most important measures to counteract them;
- the main issues of organizing technical communications and PASUV support;
- the readiness periods of the signals troops to carry out the assigned missions;
- other issues not reflected in the graphic documents of the signals plan.

The signals plan is signed by the chief of signals troops and approved by the chief of staff of the front.

Considering the inseparable unity of all three primary signals plan documents we have come to the conclusion that approval by the chief of staff of the front of the overall operational part on the chart also means automatic approval of the operational communications diagram. The chief of signal troops of the front signs all three documents.

Besides the primary signals plan documents examined by the directorate of

communications of the front staff the following] are developed and listed:

- a working map of the chief of signal troops of the front;
- a diagram or table of the distribution of the channels of the communications grid and the organization of communications via them;
- a diagram or table of the organization of communications via direct radio and satellite lines;
- a diagram or table of the distribution of the channels of a network of tropospheric direct communications lines between control posts;
- a diagram of secure and non-secure telephone, telegraph, facsimile, and data transmission networks in automated troop control systems;
- information for the operation of radio, radiorelay, tropospheric, and satellite communications lines;
- a table of keying documents for secure communications equipment, including in the event of compromise;
- a schedule or estimate of the relocation of the communications centers of command and reserve command posts during an operation;
- tables of the callsigns of control post communications centers and headquarters officials;
- measures to protect a communications system from enemy jamming;
- a plan to organize and monitor communications security;
- a diagram of courier and postal communications and a schedule of the operation of mobile facilities;
- a diagram of the organization of service communications to manage communications;
- a team of officers of the communications directorate for the control posts of large formations;
- a plan for the technical support of communications and automated field troop control systems.

The most important area of the work of a front's chief of signal troops during the time an operation is being prepared is the timely briefing of the chiefs of signals troops of armies and the subordinate commanders of signals formations and units, and the assignment of missions to them.

[The following] are prepared to assign missions on the basis of the decision to organize communications which has been made:

- signals instructions for the chiefs of staffs of armies, army corps, front air forces, and front missile brigades;

- operational instructions to signals formations and units which are subordinate to the front.

An inalterable rule which we have put into practice when preparing instructions is the requirement that their content be brief and exclude any possible of a different interpretation. A minimum of information of an explanatory nature and a maximum of specific and clear instructions about organizing communications is presented in them.

Signal instructions usually indicate:

- the place and readiness time of the control posts' communications centers at the initial position and the direction of their movement during the course of the operation;

- the directions of the deployment of communications arteries and the planned locations of supporting and auxiliary communications centers in a large formation's zone;

- what type of communications to set up with the control posts of directly subordinate large formations and to one command echelon lower, and also with the control posts of coordinating large formations and formations;

- instructions to maintain the continuity of communications when the front command post and reserve command posts are out of order;

- missions to organize the protection of a communications system from enemy electronic warfare equipment;

- the locations of [communications] centers and courier and postal communications exchange points;

- the areas where the landing fields and airfields for liaison aircraft and helicopters are located;

- the readiness times for communications and for the submission of reports concerning communications.

In addition, orders can be given in the signal instructions concerning the organization of communications intelligence, the procedure and times to put new communications data [Translator's note: probably signal operating instructions] into operation, and other issues based on the conditions of the situation and the special features of the conduct of the operation.

As a rule, [the following] are indicated in the combat instruction of signals formation or unit:

- information about the operational situation in the amount needed to accomplish the missions;

- the locations of the communications centers of a large formation's control posts at the initial position and the directions of their relocation in the course of an operation;

- the mission to the signals formation or unit, and the procedure and times to carry it out;
- the mode of operation of the communications equipment;
- the organization of control [upravlenie];
- the times to submit reports.

Preliminary instructions are issued in order to orient subordinate [signals formations and units] and grant [them] more time to carry out impending missions. The chief of signals troops of a front might issue such instructions after determining the plan of the organization of communications for an impending operation.

The issues reported to you about the signals documents being prepared by the chief of signal troops of a front during the period of preparation for an offensive operation do not exhaust all the aspects of his complex, large, and multifaceted activity in good planning, timely deployment, and support to the stable functioning of communications. Your attention was drawn chiefly by the primary signals planning documents which we think might also be employed in the armies of all Warsaw Pact member countries.

Let [me] conclude the report with that.