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## OPERATIONAL AND MOBILIZATION MEASURES OF THE SOVIET STATE SECURITY BODIES IN 1939 – JUNE OF 1941

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the study is to elucidate, through the prism of declassified documents, the real state of implementation of mobilization measures in Ukraine and operational mobilization plans of the Soviet special services on the eve of World War II and Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity, systematics and dialectical combination of cause-effect relationships, the use of general scientific methods – historical and logical, abstraction, analysis, synthesis, generalization, and specific scientific methods – historical genetic and historical comparative. The scientific novelty of the article consists in elucidating the role of the USSR state security agencies in the elaboration of mobilization plans in 1939 – June of 1941, control over their implementation and development of specific operational and mobilization tasks. The shortcomings and misjudgments in the measures taken have been elucidated and the real state of combat readiness of the USSR has been clarified. The publication is prepared on the basis of previously inaccessible to researchers archival documents. The Conclusions. The documents do not show the intention of the USSR to be the first to strike at Nazi Germany in the summer of 1941, but in the event of aggression, the plan was clear – to relocate hostilities outside the territory of the state quickly and defeat the enemy at its territory. In this aspect, the communist leaders likened their plans, albeit in a different sequence, to the Nazi plans for a “Blitzkrieg”. According to the imaginary scenario of the coming war, intelligence and operational measures of the Soviet intelligence and counterintelligence were envisaged in the west of the USSR, in particular in Ukraine, and abroad. Organizationally and materially unsupported strategy of defeating the enemy even on the far frontiers and the frontal transition to the offensive resulted in weak defense and mobilization training of the Soviet troops and civilians. Despite attempts made by the state security authorities to exercise a total control over the activities of the mobilization services, a single mobilization plan was not developed in the country. The incessant informing of the higher party and state bodies about the disruption of the disparate mobilization tasks by the Soviet Union and republican departments, and defense enterprises testified that the reaction to the intelligence services' reports was belated and ineffective. To verify the conclusions, it is perspective to study the peculiarities of the air defense system formation during this period and the network formation of command posts and fortified areas.*

**Key words:** *Ukraine, World War II, state security agencies, mobilization, operational measures.*

## ОПЕРАТИВНО-МОБІЛІЗАЦІЙНІ ЗАХОДИ РАДЯНСЬКИХ ОРГАНІВ ДЕРЖАВНОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ У 1939 – ЧЕРВНІ 1941 р.

**Анотація.** *Мета дослідження* – крізь призму розсекречених документів розкрити стан виконання мобілізаційних заходів в Україні й оперативно-мобілізаційні плани радянських спецслужб напередодні Другої світової війни та нападу нацистської Німеччини на Радянський Союз. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах об'єктивності, системності й діалектичного поєднання причинно-наслідкових зв'язків, використанні загальнонаукових методів – історичного та логічного, абстрагування, аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення, конкретно-наукових методів – історико-генетичного й історико-порівняльного. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у тому, що в ній показано роль органів державної безпеки СРСР у розробленні в 1939 – червні 1941 р. мобілізаційних планів і контролі за їх виконанням, опрацюванні специфічних оперативно-мобілізаційних завдань. З'ясовано недоліки і прорахунки проведених заходів і уточнено справжній стан боеготовності СРСР. Публікація підготовлена на основі раніше недоступних для дослідників архівних документів. **Висновки.** Із документів не вбачається намірів СРСР першим завдати удару по нацистській Німеччині влітку 1941 р., проте у разі агресії розрахунок однозначно був на швидке перенесення бойових дій за межі держави і розгром противника на його території. У цьому комуністичні лідери уподібнювали свої плани, хоч і в іншій послідовності, до нацистських планів на “бліцкриг”. Згідно з уявним сценарієм майбутньої війни, передбачалися агентурно-оперативні заходи радянської розвідки й контррозвідки на заході СРСР, зокрема в Україні, та за кордоном. Із організаційно та матеріально невідкріпленої стратегії нанесення поразки ворогу ще на дальніх рубежах і фронтального переходу до наступу впливала слабка оборонно-мобілізаційна підготовка як радянських військ, так і цивільного населення. Незважаючи на спроби тотального контролю за діяльністю мобілізаційних служб з боку органів державної безпеки, єдиного плану мобілізації в країні не було розроблено. Безупинне інформування вищих партійних і державних органів про зрив союзними й республіканськими відомствами й оборонними підприємствами розрізаних мобілізаційних завдань свідчило, що реакція на повідомлення спецслужб була запізнілою і неефективною. Для подальшої верифікації висновків перспективним вбачається дослідження особливостей формування у зазначений період системи протиповітряної оборони і розбудови мережі командних пунктів та укріплених районів.

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Друга світова війна, органи державної безпеки, мобілізація, оперативні заходи.

**The Problem Statement.** The period of 1939 – 1941 is one of the most controversial in the world history. Layering of ideological and propaganda clichés, limited documentary sources, a prolonged ban on the access to archival information resources led to incompleteness and distortion of knowledge about the causes, course and consequences of World War II, the culprits of its incitement, winners and the defeated. The issues of the war nature, the responsibility of the Nazi and communist regimes for escalating pre-war tensions and the outbreak of war also remain open and not fully elucidated. The topicality of the problem is confirmed by the results of a study by Yuri Nikolaiets, set out on the pages of the “Eastern European Historical Bulletin” (Nikolaiets, 2019, p. 226): “On the eve and during World War II, achieving goals by the warring countries involved a large-scale manipulation of ethnic values and historical memory. Being included into the basis of the people mobilization to war, such manipulations inevitably affected the nature of the organization of propaganda campaigns, and in some period of time, the coverage of the war events by researchers ... The policy of commemorating World War II is still used as an obstacle to the development of the Ukrainian statehood and a means of mobilizing some Russian citizens to conduct combat in Ukraine by the Russian Federation”.

**The Analysis of Recent Researches.** For obvious reasons, the study of many aspects of the history of World War II became possible in the former Soviet Union only at the end

of the XXth and in the XXIst centuries. Under different historical conditions, the priority in analyzing the problems of the Soviet-German war objectively belonged to Russian and Western researchers. Viktor Koval, an authoritative researcher of World War II, emphasized rightly that 85% of the published materials purchased abroad for hard currency by the citizens of the USSR were brought to Moscow. The absence of many documents in the original language in Ukraine caused a catastrophic situation to the Ukrainian historians (Koval, 1996, p. 52). Such a valuable source as the documents of the Soviet state security agencies was out of the questions because of an obvious inaccessibility.

The complete reversal in the discourse of World War II took place owing to the hypothesis of Viktor Suvorov, a former Soviet spy, expressed at the end of the 1980s on the pages of the documentary book “Kryholam” (“Icebreaker”). This hypothesis consisted in the fact that in 1941 the Soviet Union was at the final stages of readiness to invade Europe (Suvorov, 1993, pp. 333–334). According to Mark Solonin, a modern Russian military historian, who studied the Russian and German archives, the documents found make it possible to formulate such assumption by means of a documented truth. Without elucidating the details, he wrote about the unfinished covert mobilization in the USSR, held until June 22 (Solonin, 2013, p. 15). Owing to M. Solonin, the author of numerous publications on “alternative history”, the scientific world received a documentary answer to the question of the defeat causes of the USSR during the first months of the war. One of the reasons – the unwillingness of the enslaved peoples, in particular the Ukrainians who survived the Holodomor genocide of 1932 – 1933 and the Bolshevik terror, to fight for the Communists – is a *fait accompli* in modern historiography.

In 2021, for the first time in two decades in Western historiography, the thesis of the Soviet Union’s preparation for the attack on Germany was analyzed by Sean McMeekin, American historian, who analyzed “The Politburo Special Folders”. However, in an interview with Oleksandr Gogun, the Russian researcher of World War II, he stated that neither his research nor researches of other historians provide answers to the question of the exact date of the attack: “My main archival find is the information about the active planning of offensive actions and aggressive deployment of military bases on the border between the USSR and Germany by Stalin” (Gogun, 2021).

Unfortunately, the document published by the author of this article on the pages of “The Ukrainian Historical Journal” in 2006 remained practically unnoticed by researchers. In the document it goes about the instruction of Foreign department of the State political administration of the UkrSSR to special divisions concerning wartime in case of invasion to the enemy’s territory by the Soviet army units (Instruction, p. 123). In this regard, in the document, dated August of 1932, Poland, Romania “and other countries” were mentioned.

**The Purpose of the Article.** The disclosure of “special funds” and archives in independent Ukraine, where many confidential documents were kept, created qualitatively new opportunities for the development of the Ukrainian historiography. Unlike previous researchers, who relied on the documents published abroad or taken from the archives of the Ministry for Defense of the USSR and covered the military and political aspects of the problem, in this article, the author aims at elucidating operational, mobilization measures and plans of the Soviet state security agencies in 1939 – June of 1941 through the prism of legal and informational documents.

**The Main Material Statement.** Willingness to deter and punish the aggressor is determined, primarily, by the presence of well-trained and technically equipped armed forces, ability in the shortest possible time to rebuild the economy militarily, to mobilize society to fight against

the enemy. On the eve of World War II, the mobilization conscription and subsequent wartime conscription in the Soviet Republics were to be made on the basis of a resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR by orders of the People's Commissar for Defense. It was supposed that when mobilization was announced, all those who served in the army and the navy would continue their service until further notice, and conscripts assigned to military units come there at the time appointed in the mobilization order.

Inspections carried out systematically by authorized members of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (the NKVD) showed that coordination efforts were not enough, and that mobilization was neglected in the country.

In military units, officers of special departments had the right to inform of the mobilization readiness state of personnel and conscript personnel, and to make report on it to the leaders of the NKVD and party bodies. However, their efforts to obtain information on the mobilization readiness of the Red Army led to aggravation of relations between the representatives of the People's Commissariats for Internal Affairs and Defense. According to Directive No. 78245 of February 27, 1939 by K. Voroshylov, Marshal of the USSR, the People's Commissar for Defense, the military commissars did not allow the NKVD to check the mobilization readiness and did not provide such information themselves. It did not seem possible to assess the situation according to the agency's reports, because in order to prevent information leakage, a narrow circle of people with strict segregation of duties was allowed to be informed of mobilization campaign (Sectoral State Archive of Security Service of Ukraine (SSA SSU), f. 16, d. 32 (1951 r.), c. 72, p. 88).

According to Order No. 00433 of April 20, 1939 of the NKVD of the USSR, to elaborate a unified mobilization plan for the preparation of the NKVD bodies and troops for war and to establish control over the mobilization readiness, the mobilization department of the NKVD of the USSR was established with the entry into force of the correspondent provision (SSA SSU, f. 9, c. 8, p. 189). I. S. Sheredeha, a major of the State Security, was appointed a head of this department. Until that period of time, there was another permanent body, established as the part of the Joint State Political Administration, – Mobilization council, which coordinated mobilization campaign. With the outbreak of World War II, L. Beria, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, to assess the forces subordinate to the People's Commissariat, ordered to establish a general alphabetical file of personnel of the NKVD, troops and the active reserve of the Main Directorate of the State Security (the GUDB) and the NKVD troops, the reserve of the GUDB of the NKVD of the USSR within a month.

The next step was the order of the NKVD of the USSR of September 25, 1939 on the development of intelligence and operational measures in case of war and the preparation of operational and mobilization plans. According to the instruction, the mobilization plans were to include a number of tasks, the implementation of which was entrusted to the departments of the state security bodies, and it was required not to postpone the work for the mobilization period, and without prejudice to operational interests to prepare for war and implement the planned measures.

First of all, it was proposed to keep records of the agency personnel, who was mobilized in the army and sent to special units of the NKVD during the mobilization period, the register persons, whose surnames appeared in the lists of the state security agency checks and cases-forms, to replenish the intelligence network of territorial and transport departments, among the commanding and rank-and-file staff of the Red Army and the NKVD troops. The departments of the Main Directorate of the State Security of the USSR were to take measures to identify the defeat sentiments of the “counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet elements”, and

not only those, who were registered, but also those, who during the war, could be the basis for the subversive work of the enemy.

Heads of departments were also required to work out specific mobilization tasks and to be ready to perform them during the war: Department 1 of the GUDB – special protection measures; Department 2 – control of the press and entertainment; Department 3 – operational supervision over the activities of foreign diplomatic and trade missions; Department 5 – special operations abroad; Department 7 – introduction of new rules for maintaining, storing and forwarding information and mobilization correspondence. Even at that time, special units began preparing instructions on work among the civilian population on the enemy's territory, among prisoners of war, defectors and interned foreign citizens, military and political control (Sovietskije orhany, 1985a, pp. 84–85).

The mobilization tasks required the deployment of the state security bodies, taking into account the conscripts assigned to them, and the staffing of special units in accordance with the mobilization plans of the People's Commissariat for Defense of the USSR. Intelligence and operational measures included the transfer of connection of special departments of the intelligence apparatus with conscripts in the army and the use of the reserve to replenish the ranks of informants in industry and transport. Valuable agents involved into the work with foreigners, especially diplomats, may not have been conscripted into the army at the request of the NKVD. Counterintelligence units relied on them as a proven source of information, by means of which the enemy could be disoriented.

A particular importance was attached to the replacement of people potentially dangerous to the Soviet authorities from the border areas and defense strategic sites. Even before the start of the hostilities, the plans of mobilization measures were to provide information on the following: from which areas and facilities to replace the unreliable, their quantity, who and by what criteria will be the subject to be replaced from defense facilities, eviction, imprisonment, etc. In case of war, all people on whom there was compromising material and whose surnames were included into special lists were the subject to isolation and sending to camps. This instruction requirement played a sinister role, because even those people mentioned by the arrested during the investigation, during the years of mass political repression were registered. Soon some of these people disappeared on the basis of standard charges or without any explanation in the camps and prisons.

Operational and mobilization measures of the Soviet state security bodies included strengthening of anti-sabotage activities as well. By special services there was demanded a close supervision of objects, ruining or seizure of which by saboteurs could seriously impede the movement of manpower and equipment – bridges, roads overpasses, tunnels, etc.

The Special Department of the NKVD, the Main Economic and Main Transport Departments had to focus on fortified areas, airfields, military ports, firearm bases, military warehouses, depots, defense-industrial enterprises, electric power stations, oil depots, and other regime buildings.

By regional and official means, the regional departments of the NKVD in Ukraine checked the mobilization readiness of all defense enterprises, which after the announcement of mobilization were to expand the production of military products significantly, switching to day and night work or using reserve capacity. According to the mobilization plans, the union and republican People's Commissariats and enterprises were to produce the required number of strategic military or dual-use goods in due time – aircraft, tanks, guns, tractors, locomotives, engines, special tools. The mobilization fund, which consisted of reserve units, was formed

within the needs for 1 – 2 months. During mobilization fund formation, it was important to calculate labor needs correctly (workers, employees, engineers, service personnel) and sources of substitution after conscription into the Workers ‘and Peasants’ Red Army.

The NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR used operational means to study the mobilization and technical condition in detail, in particular, of Kharkiv machine-building enterprises, Kyiv Engine Plant, and “The Red Excavator” Plant. In 1939, the latter was responsible for the production of 30 000 shells of steel cast iron, 92 000 shells and 69 000 air bombs. According to the information of the NKVD of the UkrSSR, sent to the Main Economic Department of the NKVD of the USSR, the mobilization plan for the production of special goods by “The Red Excavator” Plant was not fulfilled during the specified period of time (Radianski orhany, 2009, pp. 84–85).

There were significant problems in the implementation of mobilization measures by sewing and knitting factories of the People’s Commissariat of Light Industry in the UkrSSR. Disorganization and negligence of the mobilization departments of the Union and Republican People’s Commissariats disrupted the implementation of the state order for the manufacture of uniforms and underwear for the needs of the Red Army. There was no necessity to refer to the insidiousness of the enemy forces, because there were obvious disputes among the People’s Commissariats, the lack of raw materials and the actions inconsistency of the mobilization units. Mobilization tasks failed because of lack of proper units, inconsistency with the raw materials supply, transfer of tasks from one mobilization department to another.

On November 15, 1939 I. Sheredeha signed instructions on drawing up mobilization plans of the NKVD territorial bodies. In the document the inevitability of a future war was stated: “Mobilization is the transition of the Red Army, the Navy and the whole country from a peaceful situation to a military one... The mobilization of the NKVD bodies consists in their systematic and timely transition from a peaceful to military situation on the basis of mobilization plans elaborated during peacetime” (SSA SSU, f. 9, c. 6–Sp, p. 162). The instruction provided for the procedure according to which the mobilization plan was elaborated by each NKVD body independently on the basis of instructions from senior authority. The People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR or his deputy had orders to put into effect the mobilization plans elaborated by the NKVD.

The state security bodies took on the role of the total controller of the mobilization preparation in the country, because the shortcomings in the implementation of mobilization plans permeated the activities of nearly every enterprise. For the sake of secrecy, even secretaries of the party committees or bureaus of local party organizations and party members of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) were prohibited to participate in mobilization work. They had to pass a special inspection by the NKVD officers of the republics, regions and oblasts. According to the decision of the directive-making bodies, this practice was abolished by a separate order of the People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR in October of 1939. The procedure for access to the secret-mobilization work of the heads of city, district institutions and enterprises, who were ex officio admitted to secret documents, remained in force. In response to inquiries from a number of the NKVD departments and executive committees of the western regions of Ukraine with the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, it was clarified that local leaders could participate in the elaboration of mobilization issues only with the sanction of the NKVD. The special inspection was accompanied by intelligence surveillance and, if compromising material was found on anyone, the party organizations were asked to expel a person.

In a separate order of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR (January of 1940) there was listed the most important information which was the state secret in the field of the mobilization measures (SSA SSU, f. 9, c. 15–Sp, p. 44–44bs.). This order included documents on the preparation of the country and the army for mobilization, plans, reports, correspondence on mobilization, mobilization needs, accumulated resources (people, equipment, raw materials), training materials, evacuation plans. A limited number of certain individuals could know about the mobilization system, the terms and procedure for its deployment.

A wide range of information scattered in various documents that many people had to deal with could not protect against information leakage. The lack of material preconditions for the implementation of the mobilization tasks gave rise to new stages of calculations, agreements, correspondence on the organization of activities and interaction of the party, economic and military authorities. It took much time to resolve issues related to construction and repair work, to establish reliable notification and timely arrival of conscripts at certain places during mobilization.

As a result, during the period of 1940 – 1941, the disparate mobilization plans prepared by the central apparatus of the NKVD of the USSR, the People's Commissariats of the Union Republics, and regional administrations were adjusted many times. Unified measures for the mobilization period and during the war were almost never elaborated, the list of measures was kept in units, each of which provided for a separate list of priority actions. The leading body in the mobilization was the special departments of the NKVD. In January of 1941, instructions on mobilization work in special units appeared, but the document became obsolete as soon as these units were reorganized into Department 3 of the People's Commissariats for Defense and the USSR Navy.

In order to prepare the Soviet special services for operation under the most difficult conditions of a military attack and large-scale hostilities anticipation, the People's Commissariat for State Security (the NKGB), recently separated from the NKVD of the USSR, turned to the mobilization plans in March of 1941. The main directions, forms and methods of mobilization preparation of the Soviet state security bodies were disclosed according to Order No. 00148 of April 26, 1941 of the NKGB of the USSR. The departments and divisions of the NKGB of the USSR, the People's Commissariats for State Security of the Union and Autonomous Republics, and the departments of the NKGB of the regions and oblasts were tasked with elaborating measures in case of war within a month according to the list of mobilization issues. The heads of state security bodies and their deputies were personally responsible for high-quality measures elaboration.

The list of tasks set out in Order No. 00148 during the mobilization period and during the war included carrying out activities abroad, on the main transport arteries, industrial and energy facilities, on the territory occupied by the enemy, among prisoners of war, internees and defectors.

The mobilization plans of Directorate 1 of the NKGB of the USSR provided for priority actions upon the entry of the Red Army into enemy territory. Operational materials concerning the whereabouts, abroad of those considered anti-Soviet elements were to be kept in full readiness, – the White Guards, Trotskyists, nationalists, kurkuli (kulaks), the so-called “non-returnees” who settled in capitalist countries and were the subject to immediate neutralization, liquidation or transfer to the Soviet counterintelligence.

The Soviet intelligence worked out in advance the task of registration and studying strategic, economic and political objects on the territory of probable enemy – railway centres and highways, waterways, bridges, mineral deposits, military plants, warehouses (Sovietskije orhany, 1985a, p. 371). It was planned to intensify sending a qualified reserve agency and

illegal residencies to these objects for performing special mission during the war. Particular attention was paid to the development of intelligence activities in neutral and oriented to Nazi Germany and its allies states. Already on these days it was required to prepare residency materially and financially for work under special conditions abroad – to provide means of communication, to make passports, to create money funds, to outline additional channels of information transmission by means of couriers, radio transmitting devices, etc.

In accordance with the tasks assigned in the Union Center and in the republics during peacetime, urgent issues of mobilization preparation were put forward for being worked out in the units of (counterintelligence) Department 2. Much guardianship was established over foreign embassies and consulates, trade and economic missions, including spying on the Soviet citizens, staff and visitors to foreign missions. There was no trust concerning political immigrants to whom the Bolshevik leadership had granted asylum in the Soviet Union on the basis of far-reaching plans to expand their influence in international relations. Counterintelligence agencies drafted and prepared government resolutions on the internment of certain categories of foreigners. With the start of hostilities, special task forces were to operate at strategic defense facilities and in transport to ensure the safety of military production and transportation. During the mobilization period, the Soviet counterintelligence agencies were required not to arrest identified foreign intelligence agents in order to control them and misinform the enemy. Counterintelligence agents interfered in the conscription campaign and, if necessary, exempted from conscription especially valuable agents who could bring greater benefits by their work for intelligence.

Confidence in the inevitable transfer of hostilities to the territory of the aggressor stemmed from the need to work together on the issues of intelligence and operational activities abroad by Departments 2 and 3. To do this, it was already necessary to elaborate a plan for the formation of the NKDB units on the border sections of the railways by the analogy with the former road transport departments of the NKVD. The mobilization plan paragraph on the use of border agents outside the country, agreed with the Main Directorate of the Border Troops of the USSR, directed the NKGB personnel of counterintelligence and secret-political departments at the successful campaign of the Red Army. Organizationally, these agents were at the disposal of the NKGB, and with the advance of the Red Army units into enemy territory, the agents were to stay in place (Sovietskije orhany, 1985a, p. 373). The NKGB bodies had to determine the contingent of people who were to be isolated or relocated inland during the mobilization period immediately, as well as measures to clean up border areas, industrial centers and defense facilities from anti-Soviet elements.

The central and regional bodies of the NKGB also planned their mobilization actions concerning the control of telephone conversations, radio intelligence, neutralization of hostile propaganda, personnel, administrative, economic, and financial work. Archival units formed displacement lists order of intelligence, investigative personnel and other materials from dangerous areas, supported the readiness to accept documents from special units of military units that went to the front.

The NKGB of Ukraine, like the rest of the Soviet republics, during the last months before the Soviet-German war received detailed instructions to elaborate special measures of mobilization preparation and take them under control, as well as to ensure the implementation of all previous directives concerning the “German line” and to inform the central apparatus of the NKGB of the USSR about the results obtained. Further events development did not provide a chance for thorough preparation and testing of mobilization plan and the latter

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remained unfulfilled in practice. The role of mobilization plan was to clean up border areas, defense and important industrial facilities from unreliable elements, to strengthen the security regime and a number of measures with the use of intelligence. It was planned to replenish mobilization plan significantly in case of war, registration of agents and informants mobilized in the army, registration of people, who were recorded in operational cases, intensification of intelligence work with foreigners suspected of espionage and subversive activities, organization of intelligence and operational work at conscription points.

The drawbacks of the combat readiness of the Red Army units and the NKVD troops were clearly shown by their joint training held in April – May of 1941. Realizing that in case of hostilities the first attack will be made on frontier guards, the frontier troops authority of the NKVD of the USSR came to the conclusion on the need to implement immediate changes into the combat and mobilization preparation of their subordinate units. By June 15, 1941, the task was to complete the organization of defense, and the approval of plans to carry out directly on the frontier guard units. Having exact, reliable data on the increased concentration on the opposite side of the border of enemy manpower and equipment, the command of the border troops of the NKVD of the USSR decided to restructure the internal operational communication service and to establish contacts with its posts in the units of the Red Army that were drawn up to the border. Awareness of external threats and the belated response to them were evidenced by the requirements for increasing the combat readiness of border troops: “By August 1 to achieve excellent training of personnel of the frontier guard units for defense tasks, combats with the overwhelming enemy and maneuvering under difficult conditions” (Pohranichnyje vojska, 1970, p. 381).

In the orders and instructions of the Soviet border troops command concerning service in the summer, in accordance with the plans of combat training, there were combined both adequate calculation and underestimation of the realities of the situation at that time. On the one hand, special attention was paid to actions in case of combat with a numerically superior enemy troops, to the skills acquisition of new automatic weapons, the ability to fire at night and on rough terrain, on the other hand, at the border they had to practice the methods of prosecution, search and elimination of violators, put in order the control and investigative strip, which is typical of peacetime.

The measures, taken to increase the mobilization readiness of the Soviet military units stationed at the border, had no prospects. The inspections of the plans implementation scheduled for June – July coincided with the beginning of the war.

In accordance with the directive of the NKGB of the USSR, sent on the morning of June 22, 1941, the People’s Commissariats and the Department of the State Security of the republics, the regions and oblasts reported on the operative-NKGB mobilization (Sovietskije orhany, 1985b, p. 24). In one of the reports, in particular, it was written about ensuring the security of Moscow city and Moscow region. At that time the most organized forces were the border troops, which together with the internal troops, were previously brought into a full combat readiness and occupied the lines of defense. The Soviet armed forces showed inability to mobilize quickly; in a number of regions of Ukraine, the mobilization of conscripts and other measures were not carried out at all (Nikolalets, 1997, p. 170). The orders of the Soviet military command on the first days of the war to launch offensive operations could not be carried out.

**The Conclusions.** The institutionalization of the Soviet state security agencies led to the identification of several main areas of their operational and mobilization activities, which became especially important with the outbreak of World War II. These activities include

counterintelligence support of the military units and defense facilities, information support of military orders, covert control over the mobilization preparation of units of all types of troops, development of plans and maintenance of their own mobilization readiness.

According to operative reports received, in particular from Ukraine, the mobilization plans had unrealistic deadlines and were the proof of organizational disorder in the army and infrastructure preparation for the war. Disturbing signals about the real state of affairs in the military industries and the disruption of preparatory plans for mobilization in case of war were ignored in fact. The country's top military and political leadership did not take into account the possibility of advancing enemy troops to territorial depths.

According to the documents of the Soviet state security bodies, the increase in the mobilization and combat training of the Soviet military formations was the part of the measures of the Soviet state, aimed not so much at averting the threat of war, but at its localization and rapid transfer of hostilities to the enemy's territory.

In the spring and summer of 1941, the Soviet Union was neither ready to be the first one to strike at Nazi Germany, nor it was ready for a defensive war. The Soviet secret services had exact, reliable information about the situation on the western border, where the Ukrainian lands were. From the orders and secret information of the NKGB it becomes clear that in the nearest future (April – May of 1941) operational and mobilization measures of the Soviet state security agencies were taken by the analogy with organization of activities during the offensive campaign of the Red Army in September of 1939. It did not prevent the border troops, which had always been the part of the NKVD–NKGB, from carrying out mobilization plans and preparing to repel the obvious enemy.

At the beginning of the Soviet-Nazi war, not only the means and well-thought-out tactics were lacking to mobilize the country to fight against the enemy and prevent the advance of enemy troops into the territory, but also the desire of the Red Army to defend the communist power. The mistakes made on the eve of Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR led to enormous human and material losses, in particular on the Ukrainian soil, and allowed the aggressor to capture the initiative from the first days and gain a strategic advantage.

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